

# Shared Measurement to Monitor Progress on the Good Food Charter Goals: Results from Interview and Survey Data

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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RESEARCH \* PARTNERSHIP \* EVALUATION

*About the Gretchen Swanson Center for Nutrition*

The Gretchen Swanson Center for Nutrition is an independent research institution providing scientific expertise, partnership and resources to improve diet and physical activity behaviors among youth and their families to help grow a healthier next generation.

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# Executive Summary

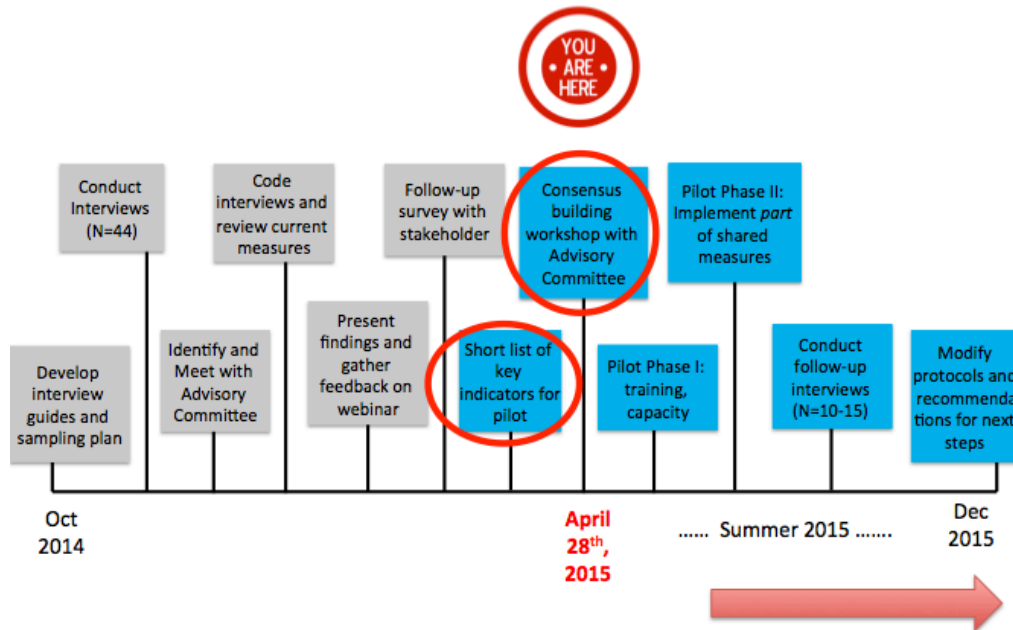
## Introduction

Using a Collective Impact framework, the overarching goal of the shared measurement project is to build the case for collectively measuring statewide food systems change in Michigan. Specific objectives include:

- 1) Identify currently collected data that could also be used to measure progress toward Good Food Charter goals; determine overlap, strengths, and gaps in currently available data that could measure progress toward Good Food Charter goals.
- 2) Identify what data is needed to indicate successes and challenges.
- 3) Consider current and future capacity for data collection.
- 4) Prioritize a short list of key indicators and data-sharing solutions.
- 5) Establish consensus on which measures and methods will be best to pilot.
- 6) Provide training and support to stakeholders.

## Methodology

This report summarizes the mixed methods data that has been collected and analyzed. An earlier draft of this report was presented to an Advisory Committee during a consensus building workshop. The Committee also discussed a short list of key indicators. See below for a timeline of the project:



## Interviews

Interviews with stakeholders conducting work on one or more of the Good Food Charter Goals were conducted between October 2014 and January 2015 with a subset being conducted in person (N=11) and the rest over the phone (N=33). All interviewees were selected from a working list of interested stakeholders and interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. Transcripts were coded for meaning units and summarized into themes and categories.

## Surveys

A follow-up online stakeholder survey was conducted with a final sample of 71 complete responses and 8 partial responses (56% response rate). Twenty-two of the survey respondents also completed the interview (31%). The target audience for the survey was identified iteratively, informed by those who indicated interest in the shared measurement project. The survey asked more detailed questions on some of the themes that arose in the interviews (e.g., food access and economics as an area of potential interest). In addition, the survey was conducted in order to gather information from a broader, more representative sample of Good Food stakeholders.

## Results

Interviews and the stakeholder surveys both indicate that there is a strong interest in shared measurement and willingness to participate moving forward. However, interviews and surveys also revealed that many stakeholders desire to increase their understanding of data collection and implementation, indicating a need for trainings to help build capacity and momentum.

### Interview Results

From the 44 interviews conducted, the rank order of Good Food Charter goals that are addressed by the interviewees' organizations (from most commonly worked on to least commonly worked on) was as follows: #4 Access, #3 Agri-Food Business, #2 Farmers, #1 Institutional Procurement, #5 Nutrition Standards, and #6 Food/Ag Education.

Interviewees described the type of work they were involved with and specific populations and measures that they are currently employing. Different types of data have been collected and utilized by Good Food stakeholders including, at the broadest level, population-level surveys and surveillance. Other populations/topics that have been assessed among stakeholders include urban farm/community garden production, farmers markets (both vendor and customer), and institutional purchasing. Some of the main methodologies that interviewees reported using included many instances of qualitative methods (e.g., interviews, focus groups), program outcome surveys of varying levels of sophistication, simple

### Goals of the Michigan Good Food Charter

1. Michigan institutions will source 20 percent of their food products from Michigan growers, producers and processors.
2. Michigan farmers will profitably supply 20 percent of all Michigan institutional, retailer and consumer food purchases and be able to pay fair wages to their workers.
3. Michigan will generate new agri-food businesses at a rate that enables 20 percent of food purchased in Michigan to come from Michigan.
4. Eighty percent of Michigan residents (twice the current level) will have easy access to affordable, fresh, healthy food, 20 percent of which is from Michigan sources.
5. Michigan Nutrition Standards will be met by 100 percent of school meals and 75 percent of schools selling food outside school meal programs.
6. Michigan schools will incorporate food and agriculture into the pre-K through 12th grade curriculum for all Michigan students and youth will have access to food and agriculture entrepreneurial opportunities.

tracking methods (e.g., attendance), economic impact, and specific uses of software and technology.

When interviewees discussed potential interest in the shared measurement pilot, constructs or variables of interest included: production and sales, a more comprehensive agriculture census (e.g., including smaller farms), land use and urban agriculture, economics, consumer behaviors and attitudes, and access and mapping. In addition, several interviewees stressed the importance of gathering a true baseline in order to begin to have valid assessment of progress on Good Food Charter goals. Some of the other factors that the interviewees described as important to consider in moving forward centered on the validity of data as well as how the collective group interacts, such as having transparency between stakeholders. In order to build a more cohesive group of stakeholders, many would benefit from capacity building and training of various kinds (e.g., data collection methodology and resources for data collection).

Funders interviewed described a potential role in shared measurement, starting with alignment of funding and collaborating with other funders as well as convening groups around common interests. However, foundations have not (and it may not be a future focus) compiled or extracted results from reporting requirements of their grantees or required specific measurement tools.

The benefits of implementing a shared measurement pilot were described as including an improved ability to tell the “Good Food story,” while bolstering the science and credibility behind food system research and measurement. This credibility and storytelling ability will enhance the ability of stakeholders to garner further funding and make policy changes. Despite the positive reaction to a shared measurement pilot, interviewees also described potential challenges in terms of each individual stakeholder group being able to maintain their identity and integrity. In order to facilitate collecting and sharing data, incentives and structures may need to be in place, as well as further development of relationships and common understandings.

### **Survey Results**

From the 71 survey respondents, the rank order of Good Food Charter goals most addressed in respondents’ work (from most addressed to least addressed) was as follows: #4 Access, #1 Institutional Procurement, #2 Farmers, #3 Agri-Food Business, #6 Food/Ag Education, and #5 Nutrition Standards. When respondents were asked to rate the importance of potential areas of assessment in order to measure progress on the Good Food Charter Goals, institutional purchasing, access to good food, and economic impacts were rated highest.

Given that training opportunities and capacity building arose from the interviews as a logical “next step” in the shared measurement pilot, respondents were asked which types of training would be most beneficial and of interest to them. Results revealed that the most popular choices included using existing primary and/or secondary data, survey development, and qualitative methods.

Food access and economic impact were highlighted during the interviews as important areas and were probed on further in the survey. Discussions about economic impact included reference to being able to capture progress towards goals 1-3 in the charter with overarching metrics (e.g., jobs created). Respondents suggested that the most important area to address with food access was the capacity of retailers to increase good food in low-income communities and measurement of the food environment (e.g., distance to nearest food outlet, affordability, and drivers of shoppers to make food purchasing decisions at farmers markets, grocery stores, etc.). In terms of measuring the economic impact of Good Food work, data on jobs and money generated through good food work, including a multiplier effect, was of most interest. It is important to note that the quality (e.g., fair wages) of jobs created through good food work was also described by respondents.

Finally, a plurality of respondents reported being interested in participating (41.4%). Others reported being somewhat interested but needed more information (30.0%), some were undecided (18.3%), a few reported interest but are not able to participate now (5.7%), and very few reported not being interested (4.2%).

## Conclusions

Interviews and surveys resulted in a few consistent themes and recommendations for next steps. Based on the findings in this summary, the Advisory Committee met on April 28, 2015 to discuss findings and brainstorm and build consensus about the next steps for the project. Potential training opportunities for Good Food stakeholders were discussed in order to build capacity for data collection and moving stakeholders towards common measures. Some of the training ideas discussed included: selection of measurement tools, sampling, survey development and design, qualitative methods (e.g., interviews and focus groups), embedded data as evaluation (e.g., tracking food grown, sales at farmers markets/food hubs), and utilization of secondary data. The survey and interview data collected from stakeholders suggested the value of having secondary data available in an easily digestible format with relevancy to local level data. Different ways of meeting this need are being explored. Finally, the committee discussed the areas of greatest interest to good food stakeholders based on the survey and interviews: economic impact, healthy food access, and institutional procurement. Discussions from this meeting will inform the narrowing of scope to a short list of indicators and potential areas to pilot test shared measurement with the overarching focus on measuring progress on Good Food Charter goals.