

2015 Food Systems Survey

With support from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) and Michigan State University (MSU)'s Center for Regional Food Systems conducted this survey of local government activity around food systems in follow-up to the *2012 Food Policy and Program Survey for Local Governments*. **The survey seeks to understand how local government policies, programs, plans, and other activities support food production, processing, distribution, access, or disposal.** Preliminary results are summarized in this document.

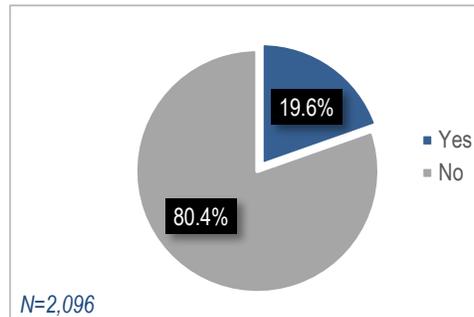
The survey was distributed to all counties and to all municipalities that are in ICMA's database, which generally includes those with populations of at least 2,500. Hard copies were distributed twice, in May and August of 2015, and included a URL to an online response option. Surveys were addressed to the local government's chief administrative officer. The survey response rate is 15.7%, with a total of 2,237 local governments responding via hard copies and online. The following table provides a detailed breakdown of responses.

2015 Food Systems Survey Response				
		No. of municipalities/counties surveyed (A)	No. responding	% of (A)
		14,233	2,237	15.7%
Population Group	Over 1,000,000	44	8	18.2%
	500,000 - 1,000,000	99	7	7.1%
	250,000 - 499,999	177	25	14.1%
	100,000 - 249,999	551	90	16.3%
	50,000 - 99,999	965	132	13.7%
	25,000 - 49,999	1,677	233	13.9%
	10,000 - 24,999	3,220	467	14.5%
	5,000 - 9,999	3,179	518	16.3%
	2,500 - 4,999	4,191	734	17.5%
	Under 2,500	130	23	17.7%
Geographic Division	New England	866	150	17.3%
	Mid-Atlantic	2,476	286	11.6%
	East North-Central	3,891	695	17.9%
	West North-Central	1,515	282	18.6%
	South Atlantic	1,615	293	18.1%
	East South-Central	872	68	7.8%
	West South-Central	1,341	162	12.1%
	Mountain	740	127	17.2%
	Pacific Coast	917	174	19.0%
Metro Type	Municipalities/Cities	11,170	1,892	16.9%
	Counties	3,063	345	11.3%

Please note the following when considering the subsequent figures for highlighted questions:

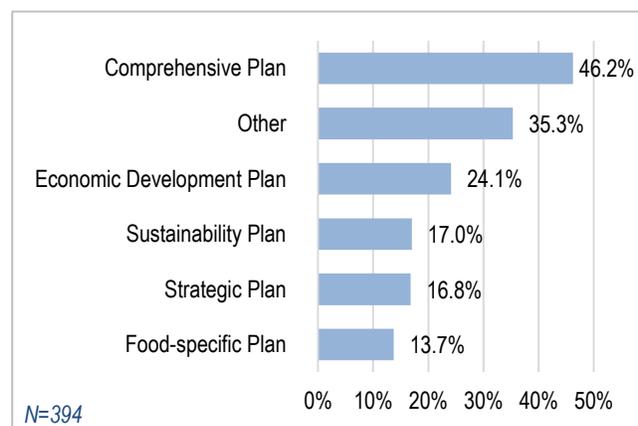
- This summary shows the percentages that provided answers in response to *each individual question*. Not all local governments answered each question, so the percentages are not based on total survey respondents. The number reporting (N) is provided for each question.
- Open-ended responses were screened for “none” or “N/A” responses only. The remaining response counts could include answers that overlap with the choices provided or are not directly relevant to the question posed.

1. Does your community address any aspects of food systems (such as food production, processing, aggregation, distribution, access, consumption, recovery, disposal, etc.) in any official plan or strategy? (N=2,096)



2. If “yes,” please check which type(s) of plans addresses food topics. (Check all applicable.) (N=394)

a. Comprehensive/Master/General Plan	46.2%
b. Sustainability Plan	17.0%
c. Economic Development Plan	24.1%
d. Strategic Plan	16.8%
e. Food-specific Plan	13.7%
f. Other (Please describe.)	35.3%



There are 133 open-ended responses to the “Other” option excluding “none”/“N/A” responses. The most common responses described health, farms, city/town codes and ordinances, food distribution and pantry, zoning, food policies and plans, waste management, community gardens, and agriculture programs.

3. If your local government addresses food in a type of plan other than those listed above or in a standalone plan please briefly describe it in the space below. (N=140)

There are 109 responses excluding “none”/“N/A” responses. Responses will be available upon the release of the dataset.

4. Does your community have policies or programs that support the following local food system activities? (Check all applicable.)

	Local govt. has a policy	Program exists; local govt. alone implements	Program exists; local govt. is a partner	Program exists; local govt. not involved	No policy or program in place
a. Establishing and managing farmers markets (N=1,985)	9.2%	6.8%	21.5%	20.5%	47.3%
b. Establishing grocery stores in under-served areas (N=1,940)	1.4%	0.5%	2.3%	2.9%	93.1%
c. Encouraging corner stores to stock healthy food (N=1,948)	0.9%	0.4%	2.3%	3.6%	92.9%
d. Expanding acceptance of food assistance benefits (e.g., SNAP, WIC) at farmers markets, stores, etc. (N=1,960)	1.9%	2.1%	7.4%	12.4%	77.4%
e. Expanding purchasing power of food assistance benefits (e.g., bonus vouchers) (N=1,940)	1.1%	1.1%	3.0%	6.0%	89.3%
f. Encouraging food trucks, mobile food vending, and/or pop-up food businesses (N=1,962)	8.6%	2.5%	7.1%	8.0%	75.5%
g. Buying local in government facilities (N=1,926)	6.8%	4.0%	4.8%	2.7%	82.5%
h. Providing healthy food options in government facilities (N=1,953)	4.2%	4.9%	4.7%	3.3%	84.0%
i. Promoting municipal or backyard composting (N=1,965)	7.3%	7.7%	12.2%	8.2%	67.0%

	Local govt. has a policy	Program exists; local govt. alone implements	Program exists; local govt. is a partner	Program exists; local govt. not involved	No policy or program in place
j. Providing land for community gardens (N=1,960)	6.6%	9.4%	15.5%	9.9%	61.8%
k. Providing water for community gardens (N=1,940)	5.1%	8.5%	12.1%	6.0%	70.6%
l. Keeping chickens, goats, bees, etc., in residential or other non-traditional zones (N=1,973)	29.7%	4.8%	3.6%	4.5%	59.2%
m. Encouraging green roofs and/or edible landscaping (N=1,943)	4.1%	1.9%	3.3%	4.2%	87.5%
n. Preserving farmland (N=1,966)	17.9%	3.9%	11.3%	8.4%	62.8%
o. Selling produce at/from community gardens or farm stands (N=1,977)	8.8%	1.7%	6.9%	14.9%	69.5%
p. Encouraging production and/or processing of value-added food products (N=1,957)	2.6%	1.0%	3.8%	4.8%	88.5%
q. Redeveloping brownfields for food-related activity (N=1,945)	1.1%	0.8%	1.9%	2.5%	93.9%
r. Creating/operating food hubs (N=1,938)	0.9%	0.4%	3.0%	4.0%	92.2%
s. Creating food jobs (in food production, retail, service, etc.) (N=1,950)	2.1%	1.3%	5.9%	5.0%	86.4%
t. Promoting agri- or food-related tourism (N=1,949)	4.4%	1.7%	10.6%	9.2%	75.2%
u. Promoting healthy eating/obesity prevention (N=1,940)	5.6%	4.2%	15.7%	10.7%	66.6%
v. Restricting or taxing the location or sale of fast food, junk food, or unhealthy food (N=1,941)	0.8%	0.3%	0.6%	1.8%	96.8%
w. Providing emergency food to those in need (N=1,953)	5.5%	2.7%	18.9%	21.2%	54.2%
x. Donating surplus food from restaurants or stores to food banks or shelters (N=1,951)	1.2%	0.6%	4.2%	22.1%	72.4%

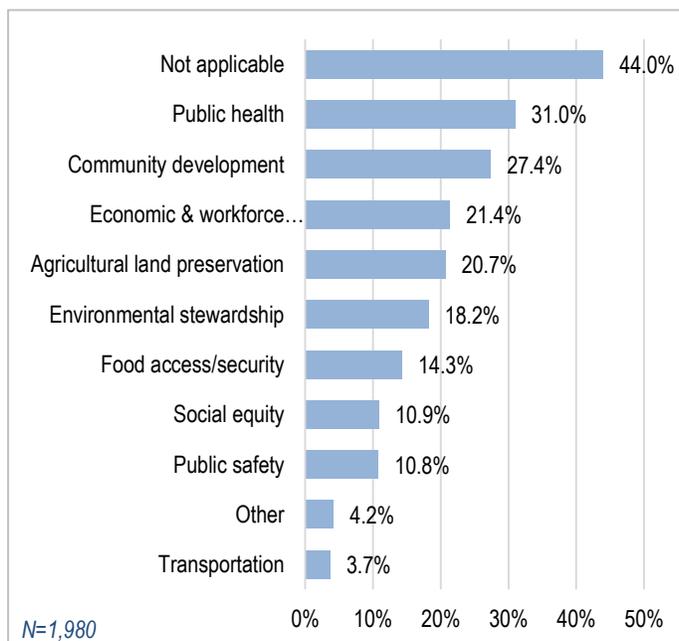
5. If your community has other food-related policies or programs not listed above, please briefly describe them here. (N=397)

There are 177 open-ended responses excluding “none”/“N/A” responses. Responses will be available upon the release of the dataset.

6. What priorities motivate your local government’s food-related plans, policies, and/or programs? (Check all that apply.) (N=1,980)

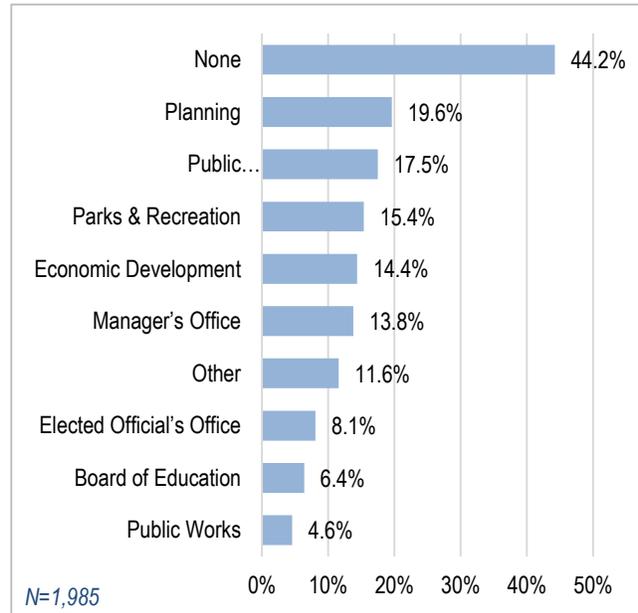
a. Not applicable	44.0%
b. Agricultural land preservation	20.7%
c. Environmental stewardship	18.2%
d. Food access/security	14.3%
e. Economic and workforce development	21.4%
f. Community development	27.4%
g. Public health	31.0%
h. Public safety	10.8%
i. Social equity	10.9%
j. Transportation	3.7%
k. Other: (Please describe.)	4.2%

There are 73 open-ended responses to the “Other” option excluding “none”/“N/A” responses. The most common responses included public need and demand, farmers market, funding opportunities/need, health programs and regulations, helping people in need, public welfare, quality of life, tourism, state or regional regulations, zoning, education and youth programs, and environmental programs.



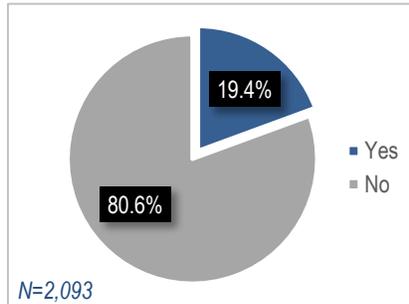
7. What departments have food programs or policies within their scope of responsibility? (Check all that apply.)
(N=1,985)

a. None	44.2%
b. Public Health/Environmental Health	17.5%
c. Planning	19.6%
d. Economic Development	14.4%
e. Public Works	4.6%
f. Parks & Recreation	15.4%
g. Manager's Office	13.8%
h. Elected Official's Office	8.1%
i. Board of Education	6.4%
j. Other (Please describe.)	11.6%



There are 219 open-ended responses to the "Other" option excluding "none"/"N/A" responses. The most common responses included Human Services/Social Services, Community Development/Neighborhood Services, Cooperative Extension Program/Office, and Council on Aging/Senior Programs.

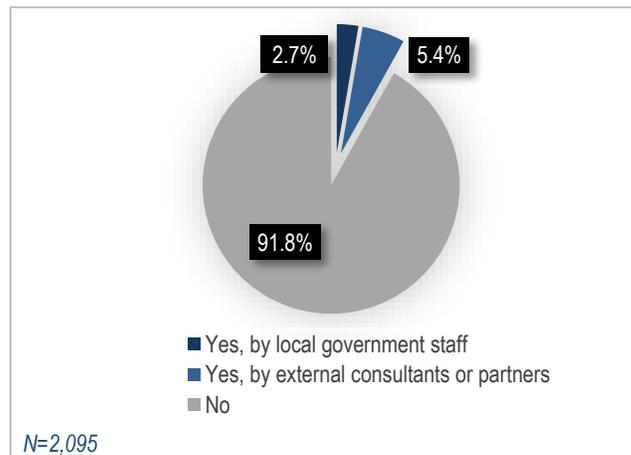
8. Does your government collaborate or coordinate on any food-related projects or programs with surrounding communities/regions? (N=2,093)



9. If "yes," please describe. (N=389)

There are 389 responses excluding "none"/"N/A" responses. Responses will be available upon the release of the dataset.

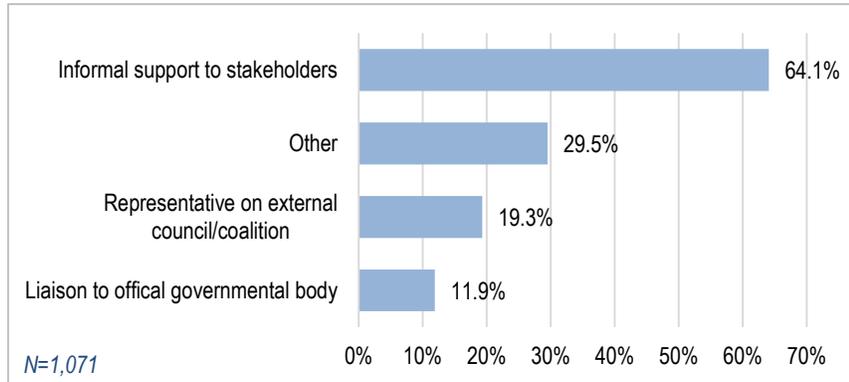
10. Has your community conducted any food assessment or mapping exercises? (N=2,095)



11. In what other ways does your government staff provide support to local food efforts in your community or region? (Check all that apply.) (N=1,071)

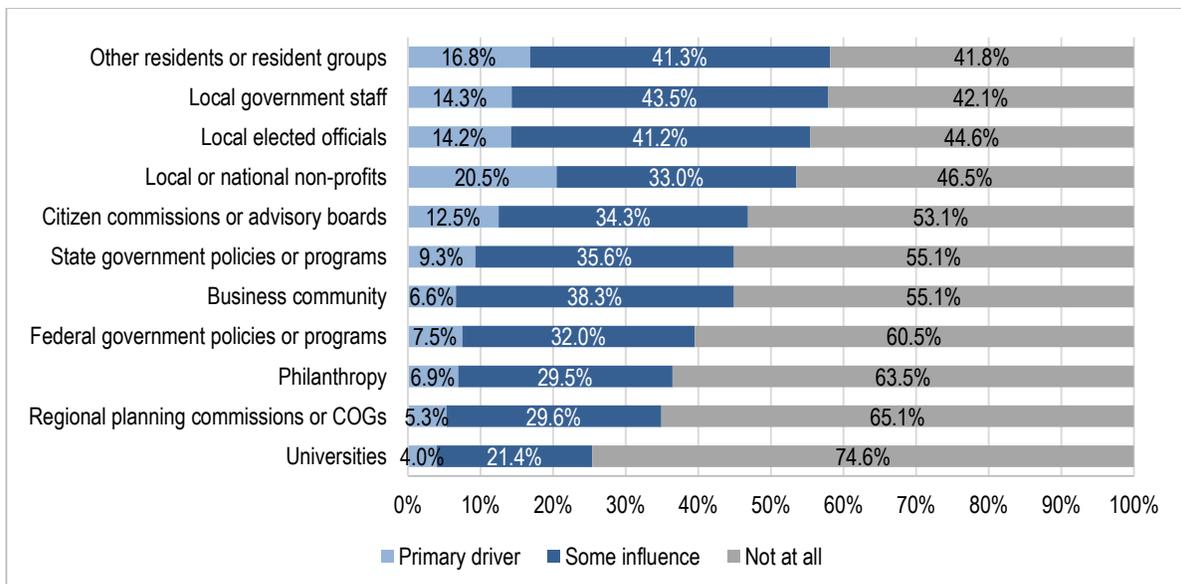
a. Staff serves as a liaison to or coordinator of an official governmental body on food issues (food policy council, commission, etc.)	11.9%
b. Staff represents the local government on an externally-coordinated food council or coalition	19.3%
c. Staff provides informal support (sharing information, facilitating connections, etc.) to community stakeholders on an ad-hoc basis	64.1%
d. Other (Please describe.)	29.5%

There are 157 open-ended responses to the "Other" option excluding "none"/"N/A" responses. Responses will be available upon the release of the dataset.



12. To what extent do the following serve as drivers to continue and enhance your community's local food system efforts?

	Primary driver	Some influence	Not at all
a. Local elected officials (N=1,911)	14.2%	41.2%	44.6%
b. Local government staff (N=1,913)	14.3%	43.5%	42.1%
c. Citizen commissions or advisory boards (N=1,878)	12.5%	34.3%	53.1%
d. Other residents or resident groups (N=1,872)	16.8%	41.3%	41.8%
e. Local or national non-profits (N=1,869)	20.5%	33.0%	46.5%
f. Business community (N=1,865)	6.6%	38.3%	55.1%
g. Philanthropy (N=1,829)	6.9%	29.5%	63.5%
h. Regional planning commissions or councils of governments (N=1,856)	5.3%	29.6%	65.1%
i. State government policies or programs (N=1,861)	9.3%	35.6%	55.1%
j. Federal government policies or programs (N=1,846)	7.5%	32.0%	60.5%
k. Universities (N=1,830)	4.0%	21.4%	74.6%



13. Please indicate your awareness of the following federal program examples AND whether your local government has utilized them to fund food system activities. (Check all applicable.)

Program	I am aware of this program	I am not aware of this program	We have used this program	We have not used this program but would be interested	We have not used the program and/or the program is not applicable
a. Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food (USDA) (N=1,912)	20.0%	56.7%	3.2%	13.5%	33.2%
1. Marketing assistance, e.g., Farmers Market or Local Food Promotion Program (N=1,869)	30.1%	43.2%	10.5%	18.0%	28.8%
2. Rural Business Enterprise or Opportunity Grants (N=1,872)	25.5%	48.2%	5.2%	14.9%	34.6%
3. Community Facilities Grants (N=1,860)	26.8%	46.2%	7.0%	19.3%	29.2%
4. Urban & community forestry programs (N=1,857)	33.9%	39.6%	12.7%	14.8%	30.6%
5. Conservation & working land programs (N=1,855)	28.2%	46.3%	7.8%	14.3%	32.3%
6. Hunger & nutrition programs (N=1,831)	34.1%	39.7%	9.0%	14.0%	32.4%
b. Community Development Block Grants (HUD) (N=1,983)	62.8%	10.2%	35.0%	8.4%	24.1%
c. Sustainable Communities Grants (HUD/DOT/EPA) (N=1,952)	43.8%	30.9%	11.7%	19.9%	27.2%
d. Brownfields Grants (EPA) (N=1,965)	53.2%	22.3%	12.7%	13.3%	34.0%
e. Communities Putting Prevention to Work, Community Transformation or Partnership to Improve Community Health Grants (CDC) (N=1,934)	15.0%	60.5%	3.6%	17.2%	31.4%

14. Please share additional comments related to food system activities in your community. Feel free to mention an activity about which you are proud, a challenge you are working to overcome, or any other thoughts.
(N=232)

There are 207 responses excluding "N/A" responses. Responses will be available upon the release of the dataset.

For more information about this survey, please contact:

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