



Multnomah Food Action Plan

Grow and Thrive

2025

Executive
Summary

Multnomah County
Office of Sustainability

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Executive Summary

The time has come to join together in creating a local, healthy, equitable and regionally prosperous food system. Multnomah County, like most of the nation, is at a critical juncture in fixing its food system. The good news is that there is a role for every organization and every person to transform our food system. Collectively, we can accomplish more together than we ever could alone.

With the Multnomah Food Action Plan our community embarks on a 15-year journey of strategic alignment, clear goals, and collaborative actions that will leverage results. Some changes will come easily, but others will present serious challenges and difficult decisions. To truly achieve a local, healthy, equitable, and regionally prosperous food system we need to accelerate education, community empowerment, planning integration, policy prioritization, and investment in our food system – in other words, we need to cultivate a culture that values and is committed to sustainable food system outcomes.

By the Numbers

- Oregon is ranked second in hunger by the US Department of Agriculture.
- About 36,000 people in Multnomah County access emergency food boxes each month.
- Only a small portion of the food we consume is locally grown.
- Over half of all adults in Multnomah County are overweight or obese.
- Chronic disease such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and stroke is on the rise.
- About 30% of Multnomah County children receive food through the SNAP food assistance program.
- The average age of an Oregon farmer is 58 years.



Executive Summary

What is the Multnomah Food Action Plan?

The Multnomah Food Action Plan builds upon the existing work of the community by providing a roadmap with a shared community vision and shared goals. This Plan is also a call to action and identifies key collaborative actions for our community that are critical for achieving our goals.

What Will We Accomplish?

Working together we can collaborate on solutions and speak with a collective voice to achieve our goals. The Multnomah Food Action Plan serves as a framework to guide collaboration and stakeholder efforts for improving our local food system. With this Plan we can secure funding and grants, create new economic opportunities, overcome barriers, catalyze policy change and investment, and raise awareness and support with our community and policymakers.

Envision a Sustainable Food System in Multnomah County...

By 2025, we envision a thriving regional food system that engages the community in healthy food production, equitable food access, opportunities for collaboration, low environmental impact, living wages and local economic vitality for Multnomah County and its people.

Food System Principles

1. We believe all people in our community should have equitable and affordable access to buy or grow healthy, culturally appropriate, sustainable, and locally grown food.
2. We believe food and agriculture are central to the region's economy, and a strong commitment should be made to the protection, growth and development of these sectors.
3. We believe in promoting and supporting a food system that provides economically sustainable wages.
4. We believe it is important to educate the community on the value of a healthy food system and healthy food products.
5. We believe that success in developing, linking and strengthening the food system will be achieved through community partnerships and collaboration.
6. We believe food brings us together in celebration of our community and is an important part of our region's culture.

Sustainable Food is...

Local

Produced close to where it is consumed and in an environmentally responsible manner

Healthy

Consumed with as little processing and additives as possible and as part of an active lifestyle

Equitable

Abundant and available to all and produced in a fair manner

Prosperous

Grown, processed, distributed, sold and served by a thriving regional economic cluster that produces local jobs



Actions at a Glance

Local Food

Increase viable local options in our food system

Goal 1: Protect and Enhance the Agricultural Land Base

- 1.1 Minimize expansion of the Urban Growth Boundary
- 1.2 Increase acreage of urban food producing land
- 1.3 Establish an agricultural land trust
- 1.4 Develop incentives for food producing land
- 1.5 Promote integrated land use
- 1.6 Promote policy education

Goal 2: Support Small- and Mid-Scale Farms

- 2.1 Increase opportunities for farmers
- 2.2 Strengthen local processing and distribution capacity
- 2.3 Increase local purchasing in the retail sector
- 2.4 Inventory and establish community assets
- 2.5 Develop and use local influence

Goal 3: Increase Urban Food Production

- 3.1 Establish an urban food hub and community food resource centers
- 3.2 Convert underutilized land into food production
- 3.3 Fund opportunities for urban food production
- 3.4 Host an annual Food Summit and Harvest Festival



Goal 4: Encourage Sustainable Resource Stewardship

- 4.1 Create resources out of food waste
- 4.2 Support third-party certification
- 4.3 Develop a regional seed library
- 4.4 Promote community awareness

Healthy Eating

Make the healthy choice an easier choice for all

Goal 5: Create Environments that Support Health and Quality of Life

- 5.1 Make healthy food more affordable and accessible
- 5.2 Develop coordinated food policy
- 5.3 Implement wellness policies
- 5.4 Incorporate healthy food environment planning



Goal 6: Increase Equitable Access to Healthy, Affordable, Safe, and Culturally Appropriate Food in Underserved Neighborhoods

- 6.1 Promote healthy food financing initiatives
- 6.2 Survey and develop community assets
- 6.3 Reduce unhealthy food availability
- 6.4 Build local influence

Goal 7: Promote Individual and Community Health by Encouraging Healthy Food Choices

- 7.1 Promote health and food system skills
- 7.2 Enhance community advocacy and education efforts
- 7.3 Promote community-wide health promotion campaign

Goal 8: Increase awareness of food and nutrition assistance programs

- 8.1 Promote enrollment in food assistance programs
- 8.2 Increase acceptance of SNAP/WIC
- 8.3 Connect surplus food with need

Actions at a Glance

Social Equity

Build systemic justice, health, and food security

Goal 9: Address the Causes of Hunger, Food Insecurity, and Injustice

- 9.1 Create sustainable living conditions
- 9.2 Create social equity criteria
- 9.3 Conduct community food assessments
- 9.4 Provide advocacy education on food access

Goal 10: Increase Community Resilience

- 10.1 Establish community food resources
- 10.2 Create more community gardens
- 10.3 Secure funding for OSU Extension
- 10.4 Reduce dependency on the emergency food system

Goal 11: Facilitate Equitable Community Participation and Decision-Making

- 11.1 Empower change agents
- 11.2 Amplify the voice of underrepresented communities
- 11.3 Adopt inclusive public involvement policies

Goal 12: Create Opportunity and Justice for Farmers and Food System Workers

- 12.1 Support federal policies to address inequities
- 12.2 Support new farmers
- 12.3 Support business practices that promote opportunity
- 12.4 Promote state agriculture reform
- 12.5 Uphold quality of life for food system workers



Economic Vitality

Promote a thriving local economy

Goal 13: Develop the Regional Food Economy and Infrastructure

- 13.1 Establish a linked industry economic development cluster
- 13.2 Assess and develop regional resources
- 13.3 Establish more local food hubs
- 13.4 Promote a complete regional food system infrastructure
- 13.5 Harness the power of the next three Farm Bills

Goal 14: Promote Local and Regional Food Products and Producers

- 14.1 Promote Oregon food
- 14.2 Facilitate a regional connection
- 14.3 Ensure regulatory support for food production



Goal 15: Encourage Farm-to-School and Institutional Purchasing that Support the Regional Food System

- 15.1 Secure increased federal and state reimbursement rates
- 15.2 Reinstigate fully functional school kitchens
- 15.3 Prefer Oregon food in contracts
- 15.4 Establish a regional alliance of institutional purchasers

Goal 16: Create Local Food System Jobs

- 16.1 Conduct economic opportunity analyses
- 16.2 Promote new farmer incubation
- 16.3 Support local food businesses
- 16.4 Create a Regional Food System Development Commission

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A Call to Action

It has become evident that the hidden costs of our broken food system are soaring. Health impacts and costs resulting from the 'western diet' are at a crisis level, the poor have few healthful food options in their communities, and the industrial food model has undermined local food system jobs. The Multnomah Food Action Plan presents an opportunity for our community to collaborate, plan and invest wisely on community-prioritized goals and actions. We invite you to imagine what a local, healthy, equitable and regionally prosperous food system economy could look like in the year 2025 and to use the strategies below for creating that intentional future.

Support the Vision: Sign the Declaration of Support to show your commitment to food system changes in Multnomah County! Sign online at www.multnomahfood.org.

Advance Strategic Priorities: This Plan represents our community's food system priorities; use the Plan's shared goals and actions as a guide when selecting strategic efforts to create policy, change business practices, make investments, and work to improve our food system.

Use a Collective Voice and Build Coalitions: To fix our food system problems, we cannot address each issue separately as we have done in the past. Integrate the four action areas in this Plan into coalition building efforts. Joining efforts and using a collective voice will increase leverage for policy changes and funding opportunities.

Funding: Demonstrate to granting organizations that your organization's efforts align within the Multnomah Food Action Plan, a community prioritized 15-year strategic action plan.

Alignment with Other Plans: We live in a region that plans for everything. Incorporate the Multnomah Food Action Plan's goals and actions into future planning efforts, as well as into existing plans through updates or amendments, to ensure the development of an intentional food system that reflects our values.

Framing Issues: Use the Plan to frame discussions about our local food system with elected officials, policy-makers, political candidates, and community leaders in efforts to elevate our food system as a community and policy priority.

Choices: As community members we choose which leaders to elect and which issues to support. As individual consumers we have the power to shape the market which supplies our food. Use the Food Citizen actions in this Plan to transform our food system.

Here's how the Multnomah Food Action Plan benefits you and your organization:

- a) Provides a shared vision and common goals for our community around a transformed food system
- b) Provides opportunity to collaborate and partner within a network of local food system stakeholders
- c) Provides opportunity to inspire leaders to champion food system efforts and projects
- d) Increases awareness and support in our community for food system issues
- e) Supports grant applications and leveraging of funds for project and planning efforts
- f) Promotes food system planning in our community and alignment with other regional plans
- g) Supports the local economy: promotes regional food system jobs, a food system economic cluster concept, local food and service demand, and keeping our money local so that we maximize capital capture within our region
- h) Provides opportunity for community recognition of stakeholder efforts