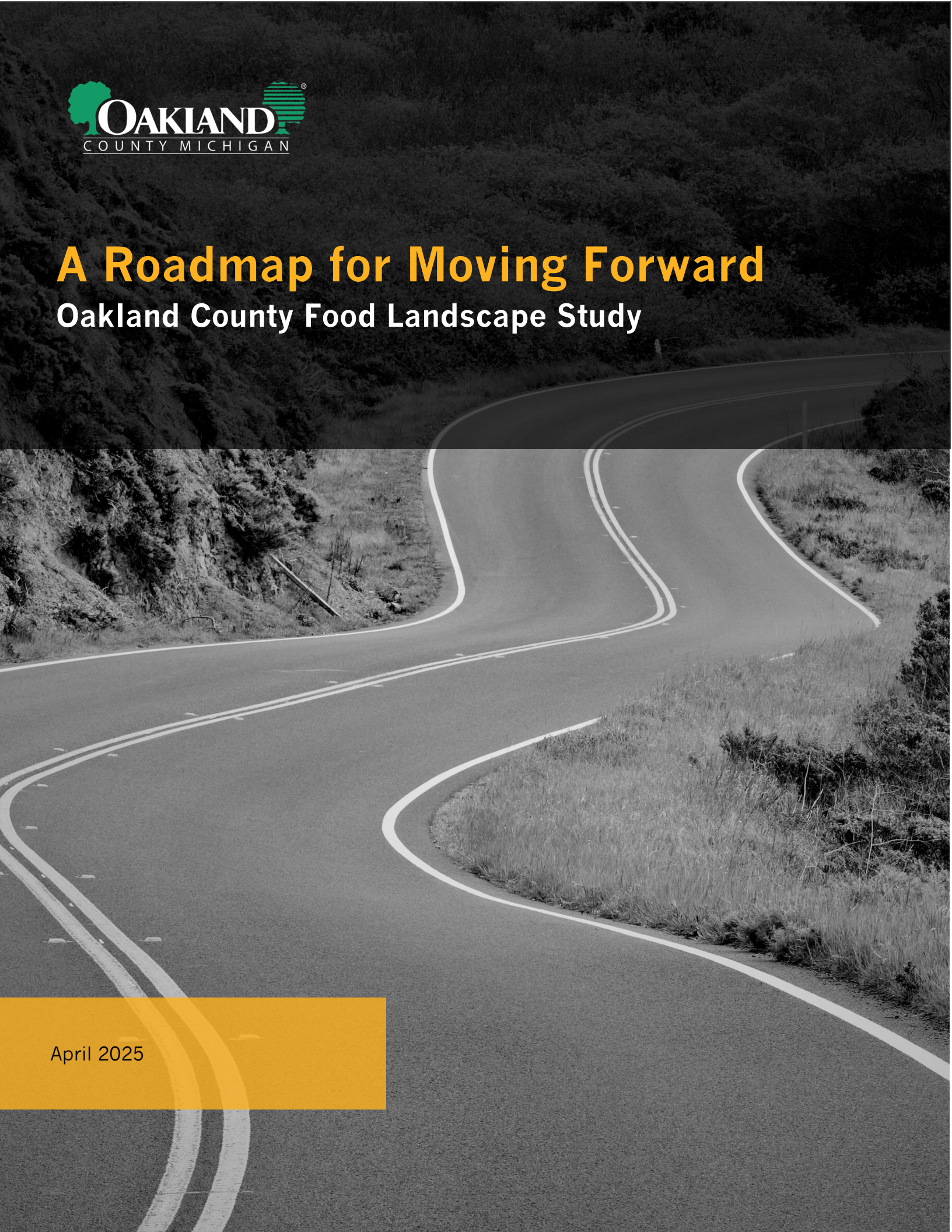


A Roadmap for Moving Forward

Oakland County Food Landscape Study

April 2025



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Oakland County Health and Human Services
https://www.oakgov.com/community/health



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Oakland County Food Landscape Study:
A Roadmap for Moving Forward

Oakland County Health and Human Services engaged Public Sector Consultants (PSC) to understand the food landscape in Oakland County, including food insecurity, food access, and disparities in the community. PSC surveyed community members, conducted interviews, and facilitated community discussions. An in-depth discussion of the data is available in the report, Oakland County Food Landscape Study: Exploring and Improving Access to Food, Food Security, and Supportive Programming for Oakland County Residents (March 2025), and a brief data overview is highlighted below.

The Food Landscape in Oakland County

What is food security?

Being food secure means that a household has access to enough food for an active, healthy life for all household members at all times, including ready availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods without having to resort to unsafe or unlawful methods to get it.[1]

11% **of Oakland County residents are facing food insecurity.[2]**

This equates to **140,000 community members** who don't have enough food for everyone in their homes at all times.



29% **of people surveyed in Oakland County cannot afford healthy and nutritious food.**

Food security is impacted by several factors, including people's identity and where they live. Increasing food costs only worsen some people's ability to access food.

Several areas of Oakland County qualify as food deserts, including:[3]

The majority of:

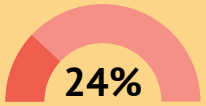
- Oak Park
- Pontiac
- Hazel Park

Areas of:

- Auburn Hills
- Farmington Hills
- Ferndale
- Keego Harbor
- Madison Heights
- Southfield
- Waterford



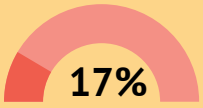
Black and Latino/a/x Oakland County residents have higher rates of food insecurity than white residents



24% of Black residents



10% of white residents



17% of Latino/a/x residents

Survey respondents said that cost is the top barrier to accessing food



The average meal cost has increased by more than $1 per meal per person from 2018 to 2022 in Oakland County — an additional cost of $1,183 per person annually.[4]



Food costs account for 23% of household costs for a household with two adults and two children in Oakland County, **which is 10% higher than the national average.**[5]

40% of survey respondents received some sort of food assistance (including public benefit programs, food pantries, and other forms of support).

But only **one-third of respondents** said they were getting enough food each month, even with food assistance support.

The Collaborative Process

An integral part of this work is the Oakland County Food Landscape Study Community Coalition, which includes stakeholders from food-focused community-based organizations, school districts, business and economic development organizations, nonprofit organizations, and community members. The coalition undertook several facilitated exercises and consensus building to create a series of goals and objectives to improve the food landscape. After drafting these goals, PSC held an additional series of community discussions to gather feedback and ensure the goals resonated with residents.

This report expands upon the following goals and objectives.

[1] U.S. Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service. January 10, 2025. "Food Security in the U.S.—Definitions of Food Security." Economic Research Service. https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-u-s/definitions-of-food-security/

[2] Feeding America. n.d. "Food Insecurity Among the Overall Population in Oakland County: 2022." Feeding America. https://map.feedingamerica.org/county/2022/overall/michigan/county/oakland

[3] Food deserts are defined as low-income census tracts with a substantial number of residents with low levels of access to retail outlets selling healthy and affordable foods.

[4] Feeding America. n.d. "Food Insecurity Among the Overall Population in Oakland County: 2022.

[5] United for ALICE. 2022. "Household Survival Budget, Oakland County, Michigan." United Way of Northern New Jersey. https://www.unitedforalice.org/county-reports/michigan

Goals and Objectives

The Oakland Food Landscape Study Community Coalition drafted a series of goals and objectives to improve the food landscape across the county. The Oakland County Health and Human Services Division, in partnership with the Oakland County Food Policy Council, will undertake an action planning process during 2025 to work toward implementing these goals.

Goal 1

Improve access to nutritious, local, culturally appropriate food for all Oakland County residents

Objective 1.1: Reduce barriers to accessing nutritious food

Objective 1.2: Foster food programs that meet the needs and preferences of the people using them

Objective 1.3: Increase food literacy among Oakland County residents

Objective 1.4: Decrease stigma related to food assistance programs



Goal 2

Reduce wasted food and support local farmers and food businesses

Objective 2.5: Maximize existing efforts to reduce wasted food

Objective 2.6: Support local farmers and food-based businesses

Goal 3

Increase collaboration among food system partners and community members

Objective 3.7: Establish and communicate clear goals to develop buy-in from food system partners

Objective 3.8: Promote collaboration and continued communication among established partners and new partners

Improving the Food Landscape in Oakland County

Goal 1: Improve Access to Nutritious, Local, Culturally Appropriate Food for All Oakland County Residents



Why Does This Matter?

Improving access to food is key to consistent food security—reducing barriers to access can help Oakland County residents get the support they need. Ensuring that available food is nutritious, locally sourced when possible, and culturally appropriate can help encourage balanced, healthy diets and contribute to improved health outcomes. People who are food insecure can become familiar with their local social support organizations, which offer food literacy resources, learning opportunities, and greater awareness of available emergency food services.

- **Objective 1.1:** Reduce barriers to accessing nutritious food
- **Objective 1.2**: Foster food programs that meet the needs and preferences of the people using them
- **Objective 1.3:** Increase food literacy among Oakland County residents
- **Objective 1.4:** Decrease stigma related to food assistance programs

What Did We Hear?

During interviews and small group discussions with a variety of food system partners and community members, people shared that food resources and programs can be improved in Oakland County to address challenges such as the high cost of food, limited culturally appropriate grocery stores, lack of transportation, and hard-to-navigate public benefit programs.

The cost of food has propelled residents into food insecurity who have never experienced it before. Families are forced to decide which of their needs they can meet and have to find support in various places, including schools, food rescue organizations, and community- and faith-based organizations. Accessibility is an especially significant challenge, given the inadequate number of nearby grocery stores in certain areas. Families in these food deserts often rely on school meals for children.

> **"Food is not a luxury; it shouldn't be reserved for only people that can afford it."**
> *—Community member*

Even when families are using the resources available to them, those resources may be insufficient to meet their nutritional needs and dietary preferences, and sometimes may require more time commuting than a family has available. Public safety net programs, like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and SNAP for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), offer benefits that help people access food but pose challenges to beneficiaries such as completing the required recertification, navigating poor case management, and limits on the types of food that can be purchased. Even with the assistance of public benefits like SNAP and WIC, the stress of accessing sufficient and appropriate food remains.

> **"The biggest challenge is the rising food costs. Food is unaffordable and people are really feeling that. People are coming into food pantries who have never needed to access these programs before."**
> *—Food system organizational partner*

What Are We Doing?

Objective 1.1: Reduce barriers to accessing nutritious food

Accessing nutritious food more easily can result in improved health outcomes for people experiencing food insecurity. The following is a list of potential activities to achieve this objective in Oakland County:

- **Activity 1:** Support and inform advocacy efforts to expand eligibility for food-related benefits at the state level
- **Activity 2:** Promote available incentives applicable to the development of food access points
- **Activity 3:** Partner with healthcare providers to promote nutritious food as preventive health measures
- **Activity 4:** Centralize, and expand, communication efforts about healthy food resources (e.g., SNAP, pantries, farmers markets)
- **Activity 5:** Improve delivery and transportation models and options to expand access to food

Where Is Similar Work Being Done?

Lighthouse Food Delivery Program | Pontiac, Michigan

Lighthouse's food delivery program began in 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure food services were available without people having to congregate at onsite locations. There are 1,200 households enrolled in the delivery program and each household receives a delivery every other week; the first consists of nonperishables, produce, and milk, while the second delivery consists of produce and milk only. Lighthouse uses Amazon Flex drivers to deliver about 70 percent of the deliveries, while the rest are delivered by volunteer drivers. Many of the delivery drivers are the same ones who began these routes in 2020 and have developed meaningful relationships with the community members receiving deliveries (Angela Gill, pers. comm.).

Because of the significant demand evident by their 700-household waitlist, Lighthouse is working to create a longer-term, sustainable program to continue benefiting Oakland County residents. Lighthouse now participates in a quarterly call with around 25 nationwide agencies that provide food delivery services to share and implement best practices to improve their existing program (Angela Gill, pers. comm.).

Read more about Lighthouse's food program on their website:
https://lighthousemi.org/service/food-services/

What Are We Doing?

Objective 1.2: Foster food programs that meet the needs and preferences of the people using them

Enhancing emergency food programming to be more dependable, comprehensive, and client-centered ensures that Oakland County residents can access food that suits their needs when they need it most. The following is a list of potential activities to achieve this objective in Oakland County:

- **Activity 6:** Make information about food pantry times more publicly and easily accessible
- **Activity 7**: Facilitate connection among food pantries to encourage coordinated service hours to reduce times when emergency food is not available to community members
- **Activity 8:** Support food pantries' capacity to carry culturally appropriate food and be more inclusive of diverse identities through sharing demographic data and facilitating community connections
- **Activity 9:** Determine and disseminate common distribution standards and best practices, such as providing culturally appropriate foods, to food pantries
- **Activity 10:** Support individuals accessing other supports (e.g., housing vouchers) in signing up and qualifying for various food assistance opportunities

Where Is Similar Work Being Done?

Hospitality House | Commerce Township, Michigan

Hospitality House Food Pantry provides a client-choice model designed to resemble a grocery store and serves anyone who needs emergency food. Families are eligible to shop twice a month and can choose their desired food from a selection of fresh produce, meat, dairy products, and shelf-stable items. Additionally, Hospitality House offers toiletries such as soap, toothpaste, and deodorant, allowing clients to reduce their time spent shopping at multiple places for essentials. Hospitality House partners with grocery stores such as Meijer and Kroger, as well as with restaurants, to redirect excess food and reduce wasted food. This further increases the options available to community members who shop at the pantry (Hospitality House Food Pantry n.d.a.). In 2025, Hospitality House reported that it serves nearly 900 households and distributes approximately 100,000 pounds of food each month (Hospitality House Food Pantry n.d.b.).

In addition to their client-choice pantry, Hospitality House offers a Weekend Food Program that offers shelf-stable foods to Walled Lake Consolidated School District students who otherwise rely on school meals. During the 2023–2024 school year, the program provided supplemental food for the weekends to 345 students weekly across 12 schools, equating to 50,628 meals (Hospitality House Food Pantry n.d.c.). Read more about Hospitality House Food Pantry on their website: https://www.hhfp.org/

Yad Ezra | Berkley, Michigan

Yad Ezra is the only kosher food pantry in Michigan and primarily serves Jewish families, though anybody who needs food can receive a package of groceries from Yad Ezra at least one time. In addition to kosher food items such as fresh produce, meat, and shelf-stable items, clients can receive toiletries. Yad Ezra uses a financial guideline; Jewish households that are within 250 percent of the Federal Poverty Guidelines based on household size are eligible to receive a food package every four weeks. However, the pantry also allows for households outside of the poverty threshold when extenuating circumstances arise (Yad Ezra n.d.a.).

To meet the cultural and linguistic needs of some of the Jewish families they serve, Yad Ezra recruits volunteers who speak Russian and bolsters their volunteer force around Jewish cultural observances such as Passover and Yom Kippur (Yad Ezra n.d.b.).

To learn more about Yad Ezra, visit their website:
https://www.yadezra.org/



Yad Ezra team members proudly display the harvest from their garden, which helps to supply fresh food to their pantry patrons.

What Are We Doing?

Objective 1.3: Increase food literacy among Oakland County residents

Developing Oakland County residents' food literacy can help establish nutrition as a pillar of food access and build community members' confidence in preparing food that benefits their families. The following is a list of potential activities to achieve this objective in Oakland County:

- **Activity 11:** Support and promote established food and nutrition education efforts with community partners (e.g., Michigan State University [MSU] Extension nutrition education and SNAP-Ed programming)
- **Activity 12:** Facilitate connections among established food and nutrition education efforts with community programs, markets, schools, and community meal sites

Where Is Similar Work Being Done?

MSU Extension | Michigan

MSU Extension is an organization that provides education, tools, and resources to communities across the state to improve the well-being of individuals, communities, and businesses through a wide array of health and nutrition education opportunities. In 2023 alone, MSU Extension staff delivered 4,226 health and nutrition programs either in person or virtually (MSU Extension 2024). Some examples are listed below, along with their impacts.

- **SNAP-Ed**: MSU Extension partners with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) to provide education on healthy eating habits and physical activity to SNAP participants (MSU Extension n.d.). In 2023, 40,680 youth received SNAP-Ed programming, 372,083 people were reached through indirect education such as podcasts and nutritional fact sheets, and MSU Extension collaborated with 945 partners and 168 coalitions (MSU Extension 2024).
- **Home Food Preservation**: People interested in reducing waste, gardening, supporting local growers, and preparing food to last can participate in a free virtual or in-person course on preserving foods at home. The courses cover everything from pickling to dehydration of foods in a way that avoids contamination. In 2023, over 3,300 people participated in food preservation classes (MSU Extension 2024).
- **ServSafe**: The ServSafe training program allows people to achieve economic stability through gaining employment in the food industry after learning about food safety practices and issues. Staff provide this training in English and Spanish, as well as offering it in a bundle with other nutrition education and food safety classes for participants who are refugees and immigrants. In 2023, 1,114 people participated in ServSafe (MSU Extension 2024).

Read more about MSU Extension programming on their website:
https://www.canr.msu.edu/outreach/about/

What Are We Doing?

Objective 1.4: Decrease stigma related to food assistance programs

The stigma against utilizing food assistance programs remains a significant barrier for food-insecure community members—addressing and eliminating these misperceptions can improve food access for those who need it. Included below is a list of potential activities to achieve this objective in Oakland County.

- **Activity 13:** Develop training for volunteers and organizations serving as food access points to better respond to community members' needs and reduce potential bias
- **Activity 14:** Increase public education on food challenges to reduce misinformation

> **"The challenge is that if you are accessing free food, [people think] it shouldn't be too nice or look like [grocery stores where] everyone else shops. That [perception] prevents the current system from changing."**
>
> *—Food system organizational partner*

Considerations for Nonfood Social Support Systems

During consensus-building conversations, coalition members highlighted ways that nonfood social support systems can partner with food organizations to ensure people experiencing food insecurity receive wraparound supports.

- Support individuals accessing other safety net resources (e.g., housing vouchers) in signing up and qualifying for various food assistance opportunities
- Improve delivery and transportation models and options to expand access to food
- Partner with health systems to promote nutritious food as a preventive health measure
- Work with economic development agencies to incentivize new food access points

Goal 2: Reduce Wasted Food and Support Local Farmers and Food Businesses



Why Does This Matter?

Much like a busy restaurant, each piece of the food system needs to function efficiently and effectively to successfully provide food to community members. Increasing efficiency and promoting environmental sustainability in the local food system can help improve service provision and reduce wasted food.

- **Objective 2.5:** Maximize existing efforts to reduce wasted food
- **Objective 2.6:** Support local farmers and food-based businesses

What Did We Hear?

During interviews with a variety of food system organizational partners, they shared that Oakland County is not set up to prevent food waste—awareness, ability, and opportunity are all necessary mechanisms to address waste. The current food rescue system is outdated, volunteer-based, and underfunded, meaning that food rescue is limited and thus offers a limited experience to participants. Additionally, lingering community stigma limits openness to creative, improved, and dignified grocery and pickup options.

One interviewee shared that Oakland County could learn from initiatives in other areas of the U.S. that are successfully addressing waste issues. They suggested implementing policies to encourage food donations and support food rescue, such as offering tax credits for donating food. However, while food rescue is an important, helpful supplement to traditional food supports, food rescue cannot be a stand-alone food access option for people who are food insecure. All pieces of the food system must work in tandem to support comprehensive food access.

What Are We Doing?

Objective 2.5: Maximize existing efforts to reduce wasted food

Reducing waste at the system and individual levels allows for more food to enter and exit the food system, serving as many community members as possible, and encourages dialogues and best practices related to food education. The following is a list of potential activities to achieve this objective in Oakland County.

- **Activity 15:** Promote food rescue and ease donation logistics via residential and restaurant education efforts
- **Activity 16**: Coordinate a more robust, responsive food rescue program through collaboration with businesses and restaurants

Where Is Similar Work Being Done?

Metro Food Rescue | West Bloomfield, Michigan

Metro Food Rescue partners with 55 community pantries, caterers, farmers markets, and other food-based businesses to rescue food that would otherwise go to waste and redistributes it to households across 31 communities (Metro Food Rescue 2023). Metro Food Rescue has highlighted some of the following food rescues, which represent only a small portion of their total impact:

- Over 30,000 pounds of food from Target after a power outage in August 2023
- 52,000 pounds of cookies from two abandoned storage units
- 800 catered food boxes from a catering event
- Over 1,500 pounds of apples from a small orchard

(Metro Food Rescue n.d.; Metro Food Rescue 2023).

Read more about Metro Food Rescue on their website:
https://www.metrofoodrescue.com/about

What Are We Doing?

Objective 2.6: Support local farmers and food-based businesses

Supporting local farmers and food-based businesses can better integrate local farm and food businesses into Oakland County's food system and support connecting farmers to business resources as well as community members to food literacy and education resources. The following is a list of potential activities to achieve this objective in Oakland County.

- **Activity 17:** Coordinate with community partners to promote local farmers and producers
- **Activity 18:** Increase the ability of local farmers to access additional resources (e.g., funding, landbanks, etc.)
- **Activity 19:** Increase the availability of, and flexible payment options at, farmers markets (e.g., support mobile farmers markets, increase the number of markets that accept SNAP, WIC, and Double Up Food Bucks)

Did you know?

The Bill Emerson Food Donation Act [110 STAT. 3011] offers federal protection from civil and criminal liability for both donors of food and grocery products and nonprofit organizations that receive donated food, so long as donations are made in good faith.

Farmers, gleaners, restaurants, and certain other types of individuals or entities that provide food are protected under the act (U.S. Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service n.d.). Michigan's Food Law offers additional protections that mirror, and even bolster, protections for food donations made in good faith (Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development 2024; Harvard Law School Food Law and Policy Clinic 2020).

Where Is Similar Work Being Done?

Michigan Farm to Family: Community Supported Agriculture (MF2FCSA)

The Michigan Fitness Foundation (MFF) partners with farmers, nonprofit organizations, and grant partners to implement the MF2CSA program to improve access to fresh produce for families experiencing food insecurity. Through the program, families can use their SNAP benefits to pay a portion of a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) share, and the remainder of the share is paid by the program, which is largely funded by a grant from the National Institute of Food and Agriculture and Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program. The MFF is also required to match funds (MFF n.d.).

The program's first pilot began in 2019 in Wyoming, Michigan, where MFF partnered with Crisp Country Acres farm and United Church Outreach Ministry. Crisp Country Acres delivered weekly shares of produce to the Ministry and received full price for each share. Twenty community members participated in the pilot and spent $4.25 per week on their share, which was also able to be combined with the Double Up Food Bucks program. Of the pilot participants, 100 percent ate more fruits and vegetables, and 91 percent ate a wider variety of produce than before (MFF 2019).

Learn more about the Michigan Farm to Family program on the MFF website: https://michiganfitness.org/food/mi-farm-to-family

Goal 3: Increase Collaboration Among Food System Partners and Community Members



Why Does This Matter?

Collaboration, both among food system partners and between food system partners and community members, is key to improving food access in Oakland County. Working together to establish clear, actionable goals and communicating those effectively will help build trust and ensure all participants are aligned. Eliminating lingering cultural and socioeconomic biases against community members seeking food assistance will allow food-insecure Oakland County residents to seek and accept the assistance they need.

- **Objective 3.7**: Establish and communicate clear goals to develop buy-in from food system partners
- **Objective 3.8:** Promote collaboration and continued communication among established partners and new partners

What Did We Hear?

During interviews and small group discussions with food system organizational partners and community members, they shared that community partnerships are making a big difference in getting food to people who need it. However, while community organizations have successfully partnered to organize food distribution, there is room for improvement in developing robust, trusting

partnerships with communities to best distribute food and services to Oakland County residents. Sustainable funding, interorganizational communication, and capacity building are the most vital elements of successful food programming.

> **"No one person [or organization] can fix the food system—everyone has a role, so let's all work together. The County could play an important role in getting everyone at the table to move toward a shared goal."**
> *—Food system organizational partner*

Smaller organizations may have limited capacity to address every challenge that community members face. Small grassroots organizations may not have adequate funding, which can create barriers to community outreach and service provision. They also may not have the knowledge or capacity to find additional funding to bolster their services, especially in supporting specific cultural and dietary needs. Funding is at the root of many programming concerns, including partnerships, sustainability, and innovation. One interviewee suggested that collaborative funding requirements may be a way to reinforce partnerships within the food system community. Others reinforced that relationship building is vital to successful partnerships.

Funding issues are not the only barriers; addressing residents' social determinants of health factors is crucial in getting food to people who need it. Transportation remains a significant barrier to accessible food options—creative approaches like public shuttle services and QR codes for translation services can help bridge access gaps. Food system partners should also consider how to innovate with non-food-related partners, such as organizations that offer transportation,

> **"Transportation can be a barrier [to accessing food supports]—people will show up to receive food for three households at one time."**
> *—Food system organizational partner*

Despite funding issues, community organizations are taking creative routes to supporting their food access programming, framing food access as a health priority. They are reimagining their messaging and including nontraditional partnerships to spread the word about available services. Organizational partners acknowledged that, while outreach to other partners can be difficult, many are open to more collaboration.

What Are We Doing?

Objective 3.7: Establish and communicate clear goals to develop buy-in from food system partners

Partners aiming to carry out the work outlined in this plan need clearly articulated goals and a straightforward communications plan to share information about events and findings. The following is a list of potential activities to achieve this objective in Oakland County:

- **Activity 20:** Create and implement a distribution and communication plan for the output from this project (e.g., social media, press releases, flyers)
- **Activity 21:** Collaborate with the Oakland County Food Policy Council to host recurring community conversations among food systems partners and other interested parties

What Are We Doing?

Objective 3.8: Promote collaboration and continued communication among established partners and new partners

Prioritizing and maintaining a permanent, accessible space for food system partners to share information and problem-solve is vital to continued collaboration. Food system partners should consider partnering with new and nontraditional partners to fully address community members' unique needs. The following is a list of potential activities to achieve this objective in Oakland County:

- **Activity 22:** Create a digital communication channel for food system partners to share information and coordinate resources between meetings
- **Activity 23:** Partner with groups that support newly arrived community members to better connect these communities with food programs
- **Activity 24:** Invite new partners to participate in food system efforts (e.g., entrepreneurs, farmers, economic development)

Where Is Similar Work Being Done?

The Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS) | Dearborn, Michigan

ACCESS helps Arab American community members meet a variety of needs, including immigration services and connection to food. Providing assistance related to human services all in one place allows for newly arrived and established community members to receive assistance finding and applying to programs that they may be eligible for. ACCESS has partnered with other organizations, such as the Legal Aid and Defender Association, the Accounting Aid Society, and The Senior Alliance to provide an array of services to community members (ACCESS n.d.a; ACCESS n.d.b).

To learn more about ACCESS, visit their website: https://www.accesscommunity.org/human-services/basic-needs

People who are interested in ACCESS's services should call to confirm current offerings. ACCESS is not currently offering their Emergency Food Voucher Program as of March 2025.

CitySeed Incubates | New Haven, Connecticut

CitySeed Incubates is an accelerator program that helps promote and empower early stage food entrepreneurs to create more economic opportunities and access to food. Entrepreneurs who are accepted to the program participate in a 12-week workshop that includes a series on leadership, legal and regulatory requirements, seed funding, use of a commercial kitchen during the program, coaching sessions, a mentor, and the opportunity to pitch in front of investors and community members, among other supports (CitySeed n.d.a.). The project's advisory committee consists of professionals that represent a variety of sectors to give direction and advice, as well as promote the food businesses. The program is especially focused on equity and aims to increase entrepreneurship among BIPOC- and women-owned businesses (CitySeed n.d.b.).

To learn more about CitySeed Incubates, visit their website:
https://cityseed.org/cityseed-incubates/

Prioritizing and maintaining a permanent, accessible space for food system partners to share information and problem-solve is vital to continued collaboration.



Considerations for Nonfood Social Support Systems

During consensus-building conversations, coalition members highlighted ways that nonfood social support systems can partner with food organizations to ensure that people experiencing food insecurity receive wraparound supports.

- Partner with agencies doing welcoming work to connect with immigrant and refugee populations
- Work with schools to offer resources to families who may be food insecure

Taking Action: Implementing the Plan

The Oakland County Health and Human Services Division, in partnership with the Oakland County Food Policy Council, is excited to take the next steps to put the goals and objectives outlined in the Food Landscape Roadmap to work over the next few years. Together, Oakland County Health and Human Services, the Oakland County Food Landscape Study Community Coalition, the Oakland County Food Policy Council, and other community partners are well-positioned to collaboratively implement and support the roadmap to improve the county's food landscape. These organizations are undertaking an action planning process to coordinate their response, prioritize activities, and define indicators of progress. Throughout the action planning and implementation process, they will prioritize maximizing the impact of established partners and practices, identifying opportunities for innovation, and continuing community collaboration. Oakland County Health and Human Services would like to thank all those who participated in the coalition and the community members who contributed their feedback via interviews, the community survey, and community discussions.



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Appendix A: Planning Process

After establishing a baseline for food needs and services in Oakland County, Public Sector Consultants (PSC) shared the collected data with coalition members and community members to inform their recommendations for a plan forward. The coalition met five times to complete strategic planning. During the strategic planning activities, coalition members:

- Reviewed data
- Created a vision of success for food access and food security across Oakland County
- Identified Oakland County's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT)
- Developed strategic goals and objectives
- Identified potential activities to achieve each objective
- Began creating implementation action plans

Visioning

Coalition members were asked, **"what does success look like if Oakland County addresses food insecurity?"** Their responses centered around the following ideas:



Situational Analysis

Coalition members completed a situational analysis, which identified what internal strengths and weaknesses, and external opportunities and threats (SWOT) could impact Oakland County's ability to succeed in understanding and improving its food system. The main categories of feedback for each component of the activity are listed below.



Consensus Building

During three coalition meetings in August and September 2024, coalition members identified three overarching goals through multistep brainstorming and consensus-building activities and developed objectives and activities to support the strategic directions. Using the three visionary goals developed during the visioning process, PSC facilitated a consensus-building discussion and asked coalition members, "What should be done within the food system to achieve the vision laid out in the victory circle?" Through individual, small group, and larger group activities, coalition members brainstormed strategies to achieve each of the three goals and refined that list to include the most important strategies.

Community Discussion and Reflection

After initially drafting the goals and strategies with the coalition, PSC held a series of six additional community discussions to share the data and findings thus far and hear feedback from community members regarding how the draft plan resonated within their community. Populations of focus for the discussions included residents of health equity zones, newly arrived community members, Latino/a/x community members, farmers, food-based businesses, and food system partners. In total, 52 community members participated in this series of personal and virtual discussions. Community members offered valuable insights into opportunities for collaboration and their perspective on the value of, and how they might implement, objectives and strategies.



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