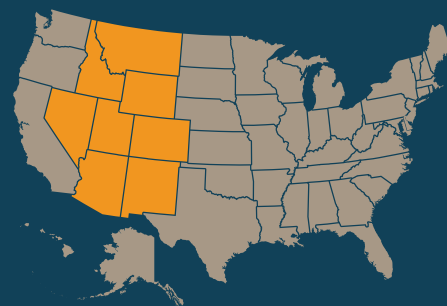


LOCAL GOVERNMENTS & LOCAL FOOD SYSTEMS

REGIONAL PROFILE SERIES

US Census Geographic Division: **Mountain**



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 a 2015 survey of local government activity around food systems. The survey sought to understand how local government policies, programs, plans, and other activities support food production, processing, distribution, access, or disposal. 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.

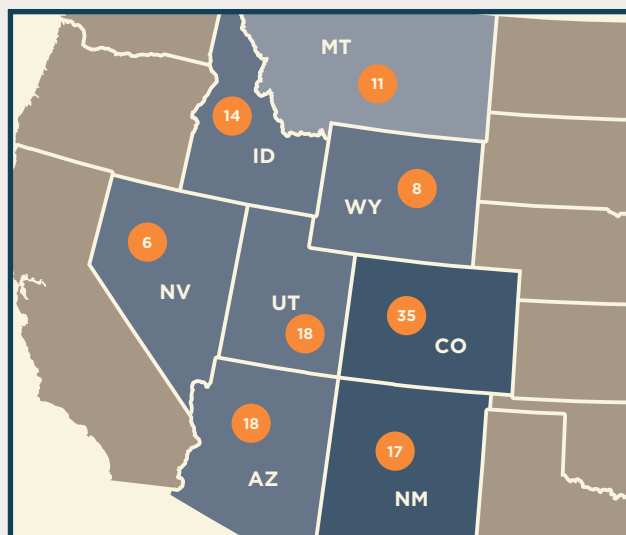
This series of briefings summarizes responses according to the nine geographic divisions as¹ defined by the US Census Bureau and provides complementary information from additional secondary data sources.

About the Region²

The Mountain region, comprised of Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming occupies 855,767 square miles of land in the western United and contributes approximately \$1.2 billion to the country's GDP. The region's 22.9 million residents account for 7.1% of the country's total population and are approximately 64% Caucasian, 3% African American, 24% Hispanic, and 3% Asian. Most are high school graduates (88.1%) and almost a third (29.7%) hold a Bachelor's degree or higher.

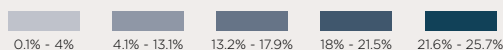
The region faces an unemployment rate of 7.9 which is lower than the national rate at 8.3%. The region's median household income is \$52,997 accompanied by a poverty rate slightly higher than the national rate (15.5%) at 15.6%. Its main industries are health care and social assistance, accommodation and food services, and retail trade. With 40% of the region's land is taken up by farms, 2.9% of the civilian workforce works in the agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining industries.

Responses to 2015 ICMA-MSU Food Systems Survey



LEGEND

Survey response rate



= Total responses to survey

¹ Note that while the Census defines "regions" as aggregated divisions/larger groups of states, we use the terms division and region interchangeably in this series.

² All demographic data from US Census, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, and US Bureau of Economic Analysis

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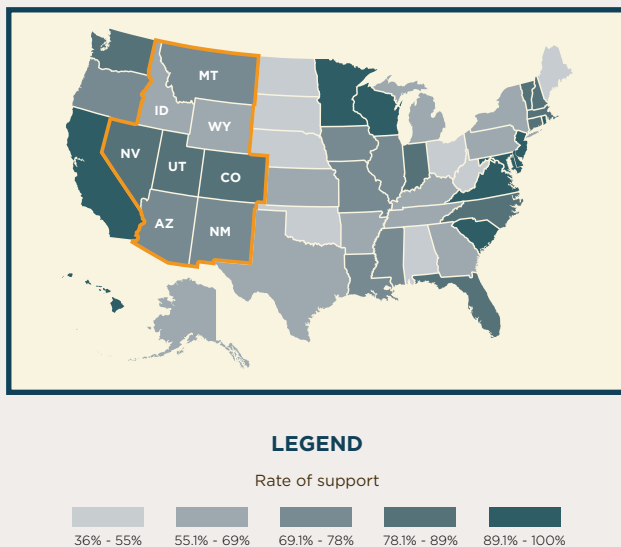
For more information: www.icma.org/food-system-profiles | www.foodsystems.msu.edu

Published March 2018

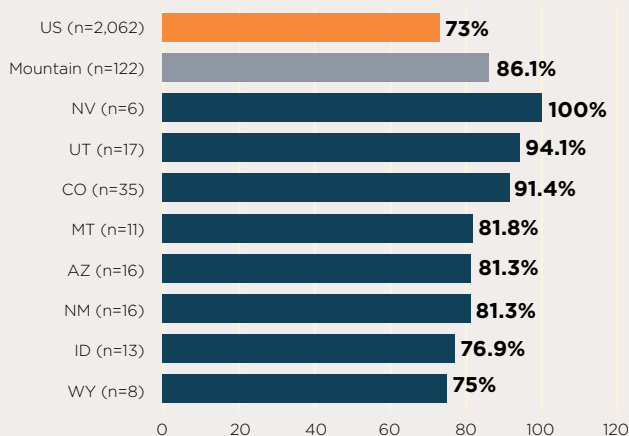
Overall Measures of Food Systems Support

While local governments may not necessarily consider food systems among their core responsibilities, there are innumerable opportunities for them to influence—intentionally or not—how food is produced, processed, distributed, accessed, and disposed in a community. Our survey included a list of 24 example activities local governments could support, such as farmers markets or other types of food retail, emergency food provision, agricultural or food-related economic development, or initiatives around health (see the subsequent “data by theme” discussion in this brief for the full set of activities). 73% of total local governments responding to this section of the survey indicated they support at least one, and an average of 3.44 of the 24 specific activities via policy, program, or matter of practice. The Mountain region ranks second in the country (just behind the Pacific) in terms of overall rate of local government support for at least one activity. In this region, the average number of activities supported by responding local governments in each state exceeded the national average — except for Arizona and Idaho. Nevada has the highest rate of local government support for at least one activity (100%, though from a notable small sample) and supports an average of 5.83 activities, second only to Colorado’s average of 6.17 activities.

Rate of Local Governments Reporting Support for any Food Activity, 2015



Percentage of Local Governments Supporting Any Food Systems Activity



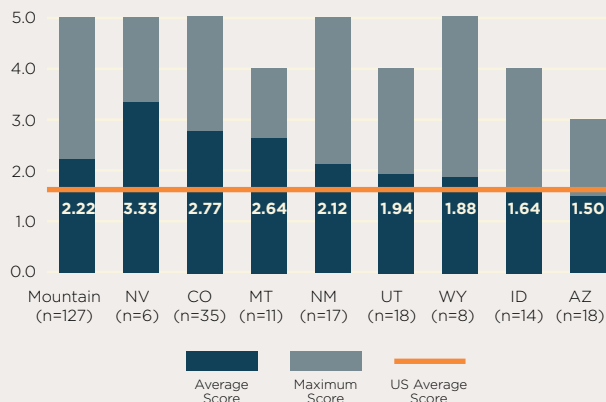
Average, Maximum Number of Food Activities Supported by Local Governments, 2015

	AVG NUMBER ACTIVITIES SUPPORTED	MAX NUMBER ACTIVITIES SUPPORTED
US (n=2,062)	3.44	24
Mountain (n=122)	4.60	21
CO (n=35)	6.17	18
NV (n=6)	5.83	13
NM (n=16)	4.63	21
WY (n=8)	4.25	16
UT (n=17)	2.24	10
MT (n=11)	3.73	10
AZ (n=16)	3.25	11
ID (n=13)	2.85	13

We calculated an overall measurement, the **Support Score**, on a scale of 0-5 based on the local government’s responses indicating various forms of support for local food activities:

- Food systems are addressed in an official plan or strategy, such as a master plan, economic development plan, strategic plan, or other specific type (1 point)
- The local government participates in some form in a food council, commission or coalition (1 point)
- Local government staff provides at least informal, ad hoc support to local food efforts in the community or region (1 point)
- The local government provides policy or programmatic support to any of the 24 specific food systems activities included in our survey (up to 2 points, scaled to the total number of activities supported)

Average, Maximum Support Scores

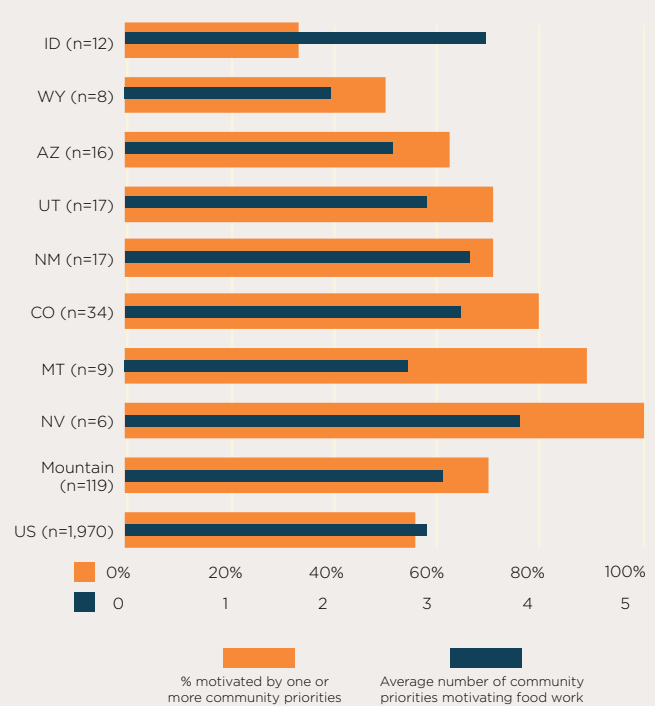


The average Support Score for the region and most of its states exceeds the national average of 1.69, except for Arizona and Idaho which fall below. The light green bars in the chart indicate the maximum score observed in each state and the region.

Local Government Motivations, Departments Responsible for Food Activity

Nationally, 56% of local governments associated their food-related plans, policies, and/or programs with at least one, and an average of 2.9 community priorities such as public health, community development, and economic development. This suggests that a majority of responding local governments see food as a topic that cuts across multiple community interests. We observed above-average levels of motivation in the Mountain region in all but two states (Idaho and Wyoming). Interestingly, the relatively few local governments in Idaho that were motivated to address food did appear to see it as a multifaceted issue and associated food with an average of 3.5 other community priorities. 68% of local governments in the Mountain region also indicated at least one municipal department had responsibility for food related programs or policies, as compared to 55% nationally.

Extent of Motivation to Address Food



The thick bars in this chart represent the rate of local governments in each state that indicated a motivation to address food issues. The thin bars indicate the average number of community priorities that local governments in each state linked to food systems.

	US	MNT
% local gov'ts where at least one dep't responsible for food programs or policies	55%	68%

IN PRACTICE

Santa Fe County, New Mexico (2015 population: 147,108) achieved the maximum support score of 5. Its Community Services department provides funding and support to the Santa Fe Food Policy Council, which advises both the County Commission and the City Council for the City of Santa Fe (2015 population: 83,008) on food system issues. The Food Policy Council led the development of the region's first food system plan in 2014. The county has supported implementation of the plan's goals around food access and production, including through a number of planning and zoning related strategies such as the creation of a Sustainable Land Development Code in 2015. For more information, see: <https://www.santafefoodpolicy.org/>.

DATA BY THEME

The following section contains primary and secondary data related to three thematic areas: community health and security, production and infrastructure, and economic development.

Within each theme, we developed an index reflecting the extent of local government support reported for related specific activities included in our survey. The specific activities included are listed under each theme; note that several appear in multiple themes (farmers markets, the most common activity supported overall, are included in all three). Average and maximum scores are provided for each index.



THEME: Community Health & Security¹²³⁴

SECONDARY INDICATORS	US	MNT	AZ	CO	ID	MT	NV	NM	UT	WY
% adults who are overweight or obese, 2015 ³	64.5%	n/a	65.3%	56.6%	65.2%	61.0%	64.7%	64.5%	59.7%	64.4%
% households receiving food stamps/ SNAP, 2015 ⁴	13.2%	11.5%	13.5%	8.7%	12.7%	10.7%	12.1%	16.2%	8.9%	5.9%
% household-level food insecurity and very low food security, average 2013–15 ⁵	13.7%	n/a	14.9%	12.1%	13.8%	12.2%	14.2%	14.4%	11.9%	13.2%
% children in households that were food insecure at some point during the year, 2014 ⁶	20%	19.7%	22.7%	16.7%	16.7%	17.8%	23.5%	22.1%	16.1%	19.5%
Estimated Children's Participation Rate in National School Lunch Program, 2015 ⁷	40.4%	34.8%	42.4%	26.7%	32.3%	29.1%	36.4%	49.9%	26.6%	26.1%

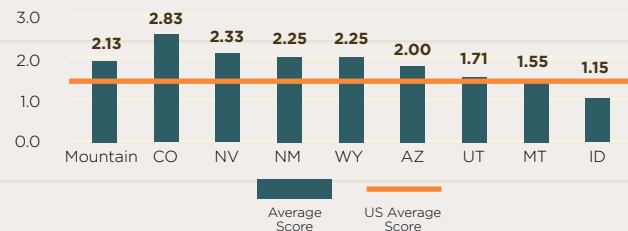
Index

This index is based on the following activities included in the ICMA-MSU survey:

- Establishing and maintaining farmers markets
- Establishing groceries in underserved areas
- Encouraging healthy food in corner stores
- Expanding acceptance of food assistance benefits
- Expanding purchasing power of food assistance benefits
- Providing healthy food in government facilities
- Promoting healthy eating, obesity prevention
- Restrictions on unhealthy food
- Emergency food provision
- Surplus food donation
- Providing land for community gardens
- Providing water for community gardens

Scores

A maximum score of 12 is possible for this index, and the national average is 1.67. While most states and the overall region score above the national average, Idaho and Montana fall below the national average.



IN PRACTICE

The City of Lakewood, CO (2015 population: 147,836) works with the regional Public Health Agency and its partners to ensure goals are being met across the region and best practices/lessons learned are being shared with communities aiming to improve their access to healthy, affordable foods. The City Council adopted a resolution in 2014 outlining its commitment to promoting healthy lifestyles and combating obesity. It also commissioned a food environment assessment, completed in 2017, to help identify assets and opportunities for healthy food access. This assessment was conducted in partnership with LiveWell Colorado, a statewide nonprofit that has worked with nearly 50 municipalities on healthy eating and active living policy campaigns, among other food system partnerships. For more information, see: <http://www.lakewood.org/LocalFood/> and <https://livewellcolorado.org/healthy-communities/>.

5

- 3 Kaiser Family Foundation State Health Facts
- 4 2011–2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates
- 5 USDA Economic Research Service, using data from the December 2013, 2014, and 2015 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplements
- 6 Annie E. Casey National Kids Count Database
- 7 Calculated using USDA Food and Nutrition Service and US Census data



THEME: Production & Infrastructure

12345

SECONDARY INDICATORS	US	MNT	AZ	CO	ID	MT	NV	NM	UT	WY
Land in square miles, 2010 ⁸	3.5 million	855,767	113,642	103,642	82,643	145,546	109,781	121,298	82,170	97,093
Number of farms, 2016 ⁹	2 million	163,400	19,600	33,800	24,300	27,400	4,000	24,600	18,100	11,600
% land in farms, 2012	40.3%	40%	35.6%	47.8%	22.3%	64.1%	8.5%	55.6%	20.9%	48.8%
Civilian workforce 16 years and over by industry: Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining, 2015 ¹⁰	2.0%	2.9%	1.5%	2.6%	5.2%	7.0%	1.6%	4.2%	2.0%	12.9%
% of principal farm operators classified as "beginning farmers" (<10 years of operation), 2012 ¹¹	22.1%	18.2%	19.0%	23.3%	24.0%	20.2%	21.6%	22.0%	23.9%	25.3%
Market value of agricultural products directly sold for human consumption, 2012 ¹²	\$1.3 billion	n/a	\$7.9 million	\$19 million	\$8.5 million	\$9.4 million	\$4.2 million	\$8.1 million	\$15.9 million	\$3 million

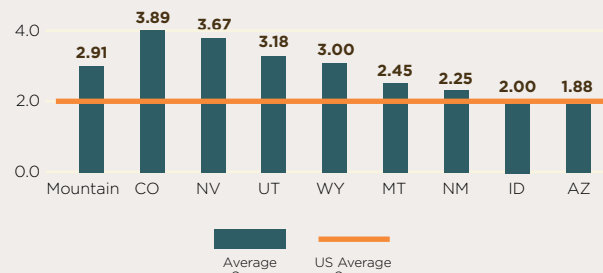
Index

This index is based on the following activities included in the ICMA-MSU survey:

- Establishing and maintaining farmers markets
- Providing land for community gardens
- Providing water for community gardens
- Encouraging green roofs, edible landscaping
- Farmland preservation
- Support for value-added processing
- Promoting composting
- Keeping of residential/urban livestock
- Allowing sales at farm stands, gardens, etc.
- Creating/operating food hubs
- Encouraging food trucks, mobile vending, pop-up food businesses

Scores

A maximum score of 11 is possible for this index, and the national average is 2.18. While most states and the overall region score above the national average, Arizona and Idaho fall below the national average.



IN PRACTICE

While community gardens are among the more common food-related activities observed, establishing one can sometimes be no small feat. The city of Helena, Montana (2015 population: 29,600) began planning its 6th Ward Garden Park in 2013, and construction took approximately 4 years. The park, located adjacent to public transportation, offers community garden plots to neighborhood residents with a preference for low-income residents. It also contains an edible forest with significant food production potential once fully completed. The city has worked with a coalition of community partners to realize this vision. For more information, see: <https://6thwardgardenpark.com/>.

8 US Census Master Address File/Topologically Integrated Geographic Encoding and Referencing database

9 National Agricultural Statistics Service

10 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

11 Calculated using Census of Agriculture data, National Agricultural Statistics Service

12 Census of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service



THEME: Economic Development ²³⁴

SECONDARY INDICATORS	US	MNT	AZ	CO	ID	MT	NV	NM	UT	WY
Median household income in the past 12 months (in 2015 Inflation-adjusted dollars), 2015 ¹³	53,889	52,997	50,255	60,629	47,583	47,169	51,847	44,963	60,727	58,840
People whose income in the past 12 months is below the poverty level, 2015 ¹⁴	15.5%	15.6%	18.2%	12.7%	15.5%	15.2%	15.5%	21.0%	12.3%	11.5%
Unemployment rate, 2015 ¹⁵	8.3%	8.9%	8.9%	6.9%	7.2%	6.2%	10.5%	9.2%	5.8%	4.9%
State minimum wage, 1/1/17 ¹⁶	\$7.25	n/a	\$10.00	\$9.30	\$7.25	\$8.15/ \$4.00	\$8.25/ \$7.25	\$7.50	\$7.25	\$5.15

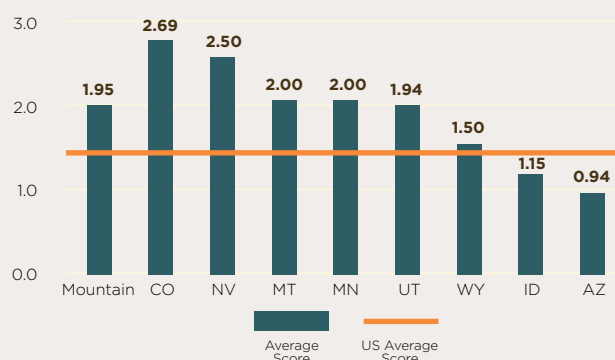
Index

This index is based on the following activities included in the ICMA-MSU survey:

- Establishing and maintaining farmers markets
- Buying local in government facilities
- Allowing sales at farm stands, gardens, etc.
- Creating/operating food hubs
- Food-related job creation
- Promoting agri- or food tourism
- Farmland preservation
- Support for value-added processing
- Encouraging food trucks, mobile vending, pop-up food businesses
- Food-related brownfield redevelopment

Scores

A maximum score of 10 is possible for this index, and the national average is 1.42. While most states and the overall region score above the national average, Arizona and Idaho fall below the national average.



¹³ 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

¹⁴ 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

¹⁵ 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

¹⁶ National Conference of State Legislatures, from US Department of Labor and state web sites

IN PRACTICE

The city and county of Boulder, Colorado (2015 populations: 103,919/city, 310,032/county) have been coordinating with each other and numerous external partners on efforts to foster a local food economy since at least 2010. In 2015, the city passed an ordinance enabling the sale of produce and specific prepared food products (known as “cottage foods” and defined by state legislation) as a residential occupation. As of 2017, the city has leased 15,000 acres of agricultural land for local food production. The county is in the process of launching a Sustainable Agriculture Research and Innovation Initiative to support the region's food producers. For more information, see: <https://bouldercolorado.gov/policy-advisor/local-foods> and <http://bouldercountysustainability.org/food-agriculture/>.