

LOCAL GOVERNMENTS & LOCAL FOOD SYSTEMS

REGIONAL PROFILE SERIES

US Census Geographic Division: Pacific



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.

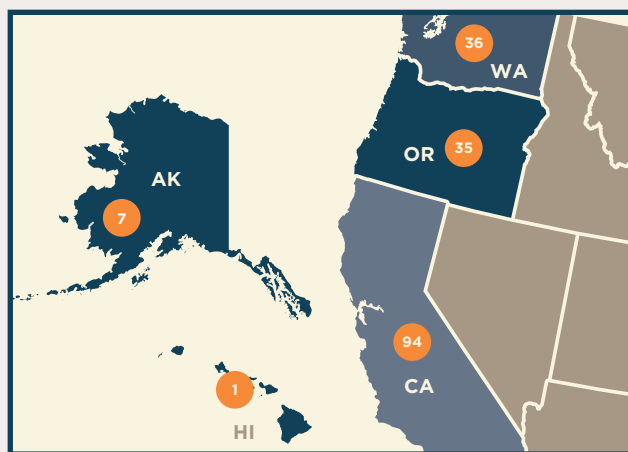
This series of briefings summarizes responses according to the nine geographic divisions as¹ defined by the US Census Bureau and provides complementary information from additional secondary data sources.

About the Region²

The Pacific region, comprised of Alaska, California, Hawaii, Oregon, and Washington occupies 895,287 square miles of land in the north western United States and Pacific Ocean and contributes approximately \$3.5 billion to the country's GDP. The region's 51.5 million residents account for 16% of the country's total population and are approximately 46% Caucasian, 5% African American, 32% Hispanic, and 13% Asian. Most are high school graduates (84%) and almost a third (31.5%) hold a Bachelor's degree or higher.

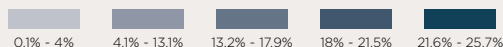
The region faces an unemployment rate of 9.4 which is higher than the national rate at 8.3%. The region's median household income is one of the highest in the country at \$61,095 accompanied by a poverty rate slightly higher than the national rate (15.5%) at 15.7%. Its main industries are health care and social assistance, and accommodation and food services. Although only 10% of the region's land is taken up by farms, 2.6% 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

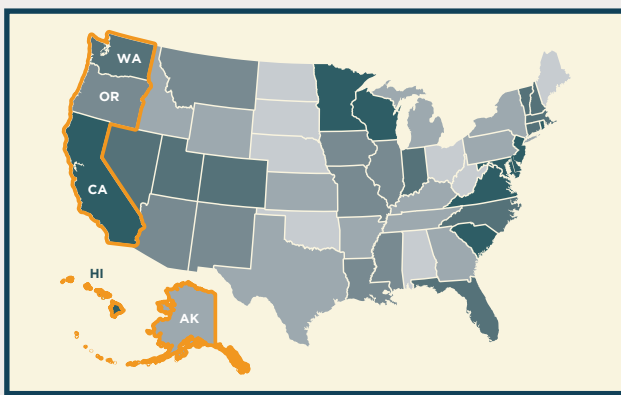
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Overall Measures of Food Systems Support

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).

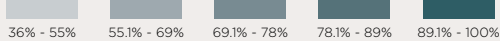
73% of total local governments responding to this section of the survey indicated they support at least one, and an average of 3.44 of the 24 specific activities via policy, program, or matter of practice. Support was more commonly reported in the Pacific region, where the average number of activities supported by responding local governments in every state with the exception of Alaska exceeded the national average. California’s local governments reported the highest average number of activities—6.87—in the entire country, followed by Washington’s average of 6.53.

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

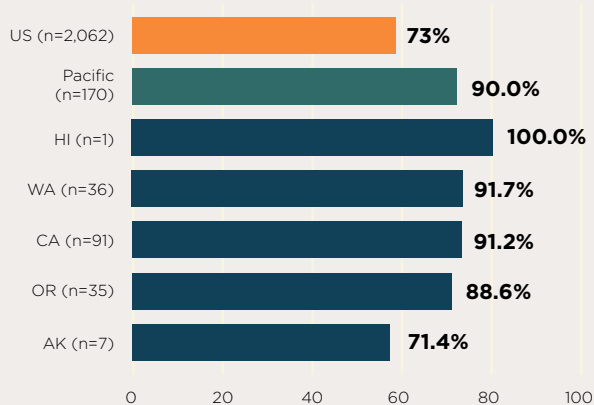


LEGEND

Rate of support



Percentage of Local Governments Supporting Any Food Systems Activity



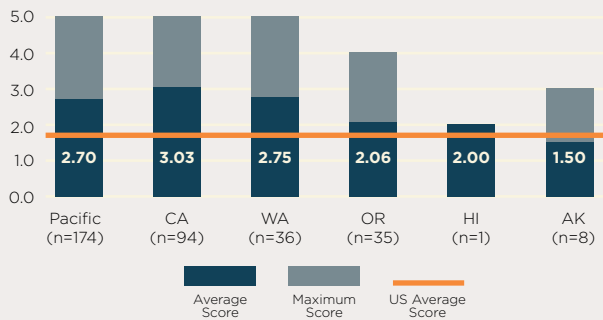
Average, Maximum Number of Food Activities Supported by Local Governments, 2015

	AVG NUMBER ACTIVITIES SUPPORTED	MAX NUMBER ACTIVITIES SUPPORTED
US (n=2,062)	3.44	24
Pacific (n=170)	6.18	24
CA (n=91)	6.87	24
WA (n=36)	6.53	13
OR (n=35)	4.71	12
HI (n=1)	4.00	4
AK (n=7)	3.14	9

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

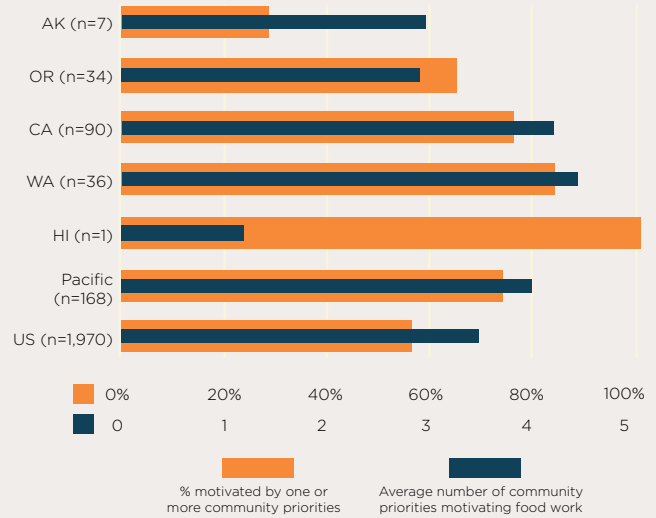


The overall average Support Score of 2.7 for the Pacific is the highest of all nine Census divisions. All but one of its states' average exceeds the national average Support Score of 1.69. California leads the region with an average Support Score of 3.03, followed by Washington's average Support Score of 2.75—both of which are among the top 5 state averages nationwide. 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. In the Pacific region overall, we observed higher levels of motivation and government activity around this topic: 76% of local governments reported a motivation to address food systems, and 77% indicated at least one municipal department with responsibility for food systems issues. California and Washington local governments were more likely to link food activities with at least three different priorities.

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	PC
% local gov'ts where at least one dep't responsible for food programs or policies	55%	77%

IN PRACTICE

The County of San Diego, California (2015 population: 3,223,096), achieved the maximum support score of 5. In 2014, it established the Live Well San Diego Food System Working Group, which engaged multiple county departments in developing collaborative, integrated solutions to food system challenges. These efforts led to the Board of Supervisors directing the county's Chief Administrative Officer to develop a comprehensive Live Well San Diego Food System Initiative, the framework for which was approved in 2016 and includes targets for research and planning, programs, and policies. The internal working group and its members are also linked with the San Diego Food System Alliance, a regional collective impact coalition of individuals and organizations, as well as the statewide food policy council network.

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 & Security^{1,3,4}

SECONDARY INDICATORS	US	PC	AK	CA	HI	OR	WA
% adults who are overweight or obese, 2015 ³	64.5%	n/a	67.2%	60.4%	57.0%	64.5%	62.5%
% households receiving food stamps/ SNAP, 2015 ⁴	13.2%	10.9%	10.5%	9.2%	11.3%	19.2%	14.3%
% household-level food insecurity and very low food security, average 2013–15 ⁵	13.7%	n/a	13.3%	12.6%	9.7%	16.1%	12.9%
% children in households that were food insecure at some point during the year, 2014 ⁶	20%	19.2%	20.3%	18.6%	15.8%	25.1%	19.7%
Estimated Children's Participation Rate in National School Lunch Program, 2015 ⁷	40.4%	38.5%	30.8%	40.5%	31.5%	35.5%	31.5%

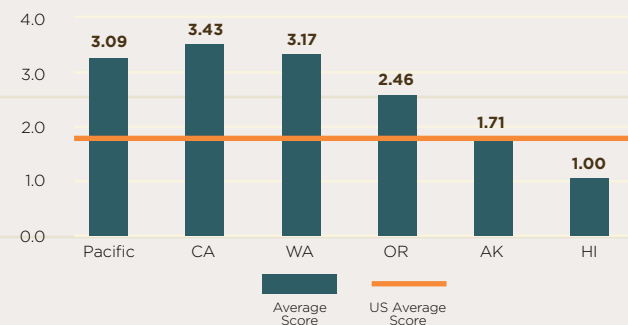
Index

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 the Community Health & Security Index and the national average is 1.67. Overall, the Pacific score of 3.09 is the highest of all nine Census divisions. All Pacific states besides Hawaii exceed the national average for this index, with California's score of 3.43 and Washington's score of 3.17 among the top five in the country.



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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

IN PRACTICE

The Public Health Department of Sutter County, California (2015 population: 95,247) has been active in documenting and communicating about the relationships between community health, chronic disease, the environment, and food access. Findings from assessments of the food environment in low-income census tracts and consequences of health inequities have been shared with local policymakers and the broader community through fact sheets, DVDs and in-person forums.



THEME: Production & Infrastructure

12345

SECONDARY INDICATORS	US	PC	AK	CA	HI	OR	WA
Land in square miles, 2010 ⁸	3,531,905	895,287	570,641	155,779	6,423	95,988	66,456
Number of farms, 2016 ⁹	2,060,000	154,760	760	76,700	7,000	34,400	35,900
% land in farms, 2012	40.3%	10%	0.2%	25.5%	27.2%	26.5%	34.6%
Civilian workforce 16 years and over by industry: Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining, 2015 ¹⁰	2.0%	2.6%	5.3%	2.5%	1.4%	3.5%	2.7%
% of principal farm operators classified as "beginning famers" (<10 years of operation), 2012 ¹¹	22.1%	21.0%	38.3%	26.9%	31.3%	22.5%	28.9%
Market value of agricultural products directly sold for human consumption, 2012 ¹²	\$1.3 billion	n/a	\$2.2 million	\$169 million	\$13.2 million	\$44.1 million	\$45.1 million

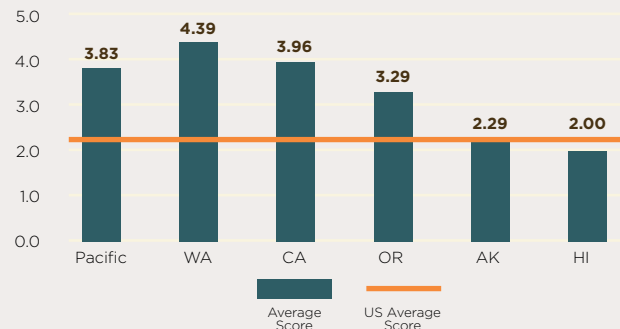
Index

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 the Production & Infrastructure Index, and the national average is 2.18. Overall, the Pacific score of 3.83 is the highest of all nine Census divisions. All Pacific states except Hawaii exceed the national average for this index. Washington's score of 4.39 and California's score of 3.96 represent the top two scores in the entire country.



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

9 National Agricultural Statistics Service

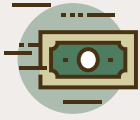
10 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

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

12 Census of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service

IN PRACTICE

In Whatcom County, Washington (2015 population: 207,100), both the Health Department and Planning and Development Services Department provide support to local and regional food system activities. Many strategies specific to production and infrastructure, including a Purchase of Development Rights Program are outlined in the county's Agricultural Strategic Plan, adopted in 2011. Other members of the regional Whatcom Food Network facilitate complementary efforts, such as funding programs aimed at scaling up local farm businesses.



THEME: Economic Development^{13,14}

SECONDARY INDICATORS	US	PC	AK	CA	HI	OR	WA
Median household income in the past 12 months (in 2015 Inflation-adjusted dollars), 2015 ¹³	53,889	61,095	72,515	61,818	69,515	51,243	61,062
People whose income in the past 12 months is below the poverty level, 2015 ¹⁴	15.5%	15.7%	10.2%	16.3%	11.2%	16.5%	13.3%
Unemployment rate, 2015 ¹⁵	8.3%	9.4%	8.2%	9.9%	6.1%	9.3%	7.9%
State minimum wage, 1/1/17 ¹⁶	\$7.25	n/a	\$9.80	\$10.50	\$9.25	\$9.75	\$11.00

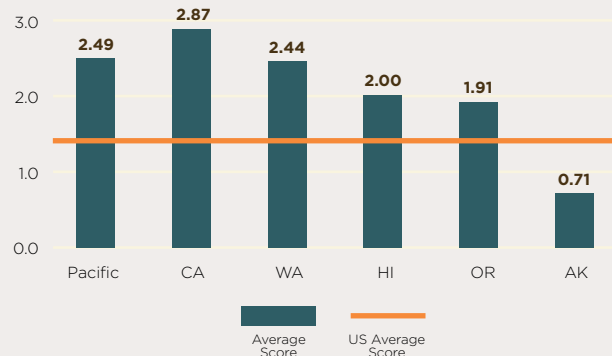
Index

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 the Economic Development index, and the national average is 1.42. Overall, the Pacific score of 2.49 is the highest of all nine Census divisions. All Pacific states except Alaska exceed the national average for this index, with California's score of 2.87 among the top five in the country.



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

Through a program administered by University of California Cooperative Extension, dozens of beginning farmers—including minority and socially-disadvantaged farmers—received “agropreneurship” training in Sonoma County, California (2015 population: 483,878) between 2011-2014. Building on its success, as well as a previously-conducted assessment of publicly-owned land suitable for food production, Sonoma has been exploring opportunities to establish an incubator farm on county land to mitigate startup costs and risk for new farmers that could otherwise be prohibitive.