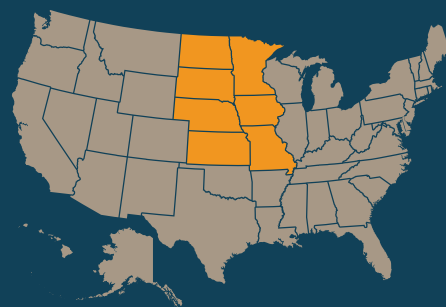


## LOCAL GOVERNMENTS & LOCAL FOOD SYSTEMS

## REGIONAL PROFILE SERIES

US Census Geographic Division: **West North Central**



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.

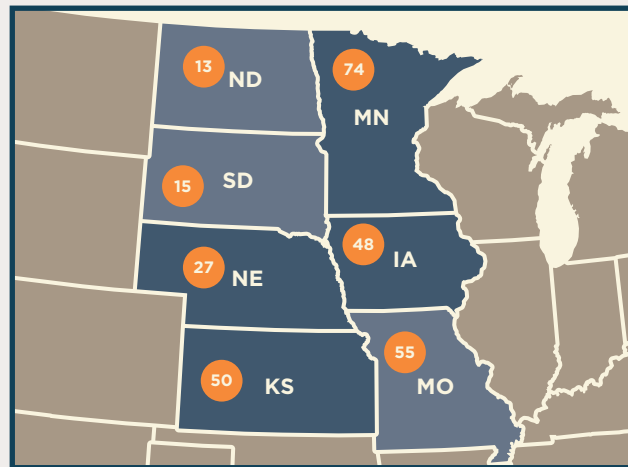
This series of briefings summarizes responses according to the nine geographic divisions as<sup>1</sup> defined by the US Census Bureau and provides complementary information from additional secondary data sources.

### About the Region<sup>2</sup>

The West North Central region, comprised of Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota, occupies 507,621 squares miles of land in the northern United States west of the Mississippi River and contributes approximately \$1.2 billion to the country's GDP. The region's 20.1 million residents account for 6.5% of the country's total population and are approximately 75% Caucasian, 12% African American, 8% Hispanic, and 3% Asian. Most are high school graduates (90.6%) and almost a third (29.5%) hold a Bachelor's degree or higher.

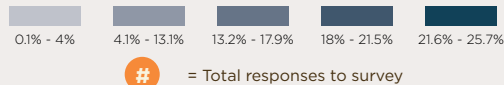
The region faces an unemployment rate of 5.8% which is the lowest in the country. The region's median household income is \$53,473 accompanied by a poverty rate of 13.3%. Its main industries are health care and social assistance, and manufacturing. With 80% of the region's land taken up by farms, 3.1% 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



<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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](http://www.icma.org/food-system-profiles) | [www.foodsystems.msu.edu](http://www.foodsystems.msu.edu)

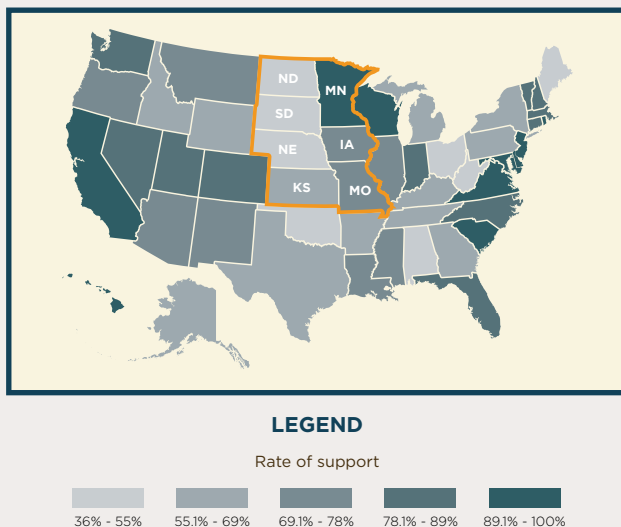
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## Overall Measures of Food Systems Support

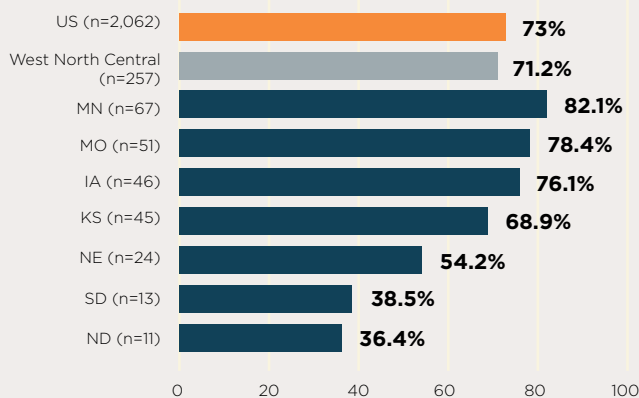
While local governments may not necessarily consider food systems among their core responsibilities, there are innumerable opportunities for them to influence—intentionally or not—how food is produced, processed, distributed, accessed, and disposed in a community. Our survey included a list of 24 example 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.

In the West North Central region, the average number of activities supported by responding local governments in each state fell below the national average — except for Minnesota where local governments had the highest rate of support for at least one activity (82.1%) and supported an average of 3.75 activities. While Nebraska’s average number of activities supported was second lowest in the region (3 tied with South Dakota), it also had the highest maximum of activities supported (24).

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



### Percentage of Local Governments Supporting Any Food Systems Activity



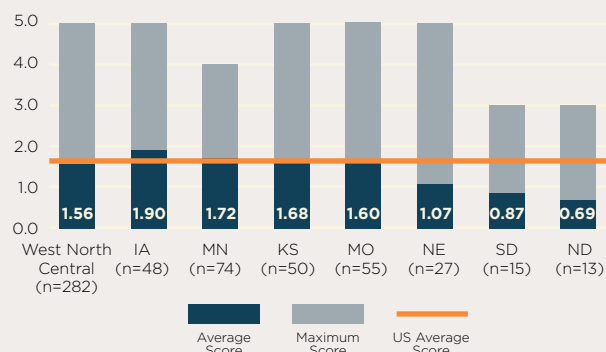
### Average, Maximum Number of Food Activities Supported by Local Governments, 2015

	AVG NUMBER ACTIVITIES SUPPORTED	MAX NUMBER ACTIVITIES SUPPORTED
US (n=2,062)	3.44	24
<b>West North Central (n=257)</b>	<b>3.21</b>	<b>24</b>
MN (n=67)	3.75	15
IA (n=46)	3.28	11
KS (n=45)	3.04	18
MO (n=51)	3.04	17
NE (n=24)	3.00	24
SD (n=13)	3.00	9
ND (n=11)	2.46	12

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

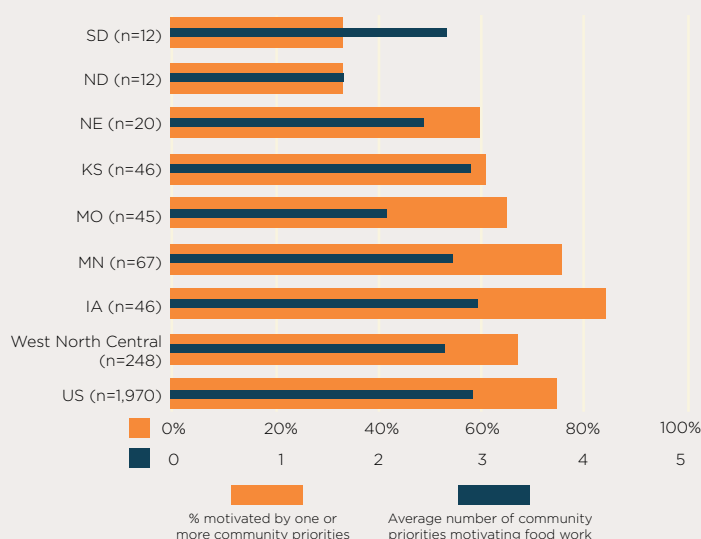


The average Support Score for the region and most of its states is below the national average of 1.69, except for Iowa and Minnesota which exceed the national average. The light green bars in the chart indicate the maximum score observed in each state and the region.

## 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 West North Central region, only Minnesota's responses were similar to the national data, and Iowa's local governments were the most frequently motivated at 63%. Less than a third of local governments in North and South Dakota indicated a motivation to address food, although those that did in South Dakota identified a higher number of motivations — so even in a state where it is much less common for local governments to articulate a connection to food, those that are motivated to do so still see it as multifaceted issue. 55% of local governments nationwide and 53% in the West North Central region also indicated at least one municipal department had responsibility for food related programs or policies.

## 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	WNC
% local gov'ts where at least one dep't responsible for food programs or policies	55%	53%

## IN PRACTICE

The City of Lawrence, Kansas (2015 population: 91,305), located within Douglas County (2015 population: 114,967), achieved the maximum support score of 5. The Douglas County Food Policy Council, established in 2013 by a joint city-county resolution, coordinates many of the food system activities across the region. It led the development of a Douglas County Food System Plan, which both the city and county adopted in 2017. The city supports these efforts by researching and implementing specific policies and programs, such as a land-lease program for community gardening and urban agriculture, and a matching program for food assistance beneficiaries shopping at farmers markets. For more information, see: <https://lawrenceks.org/sustainability/food/> and <https://www.douglascountyks.org/fpc/>.

## 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<sup>1234</sup>

SECONDARY INDICATORS	US	WNC	IA	KS	MN	MO	NE	ND	SD
% adults who are overweight or obese, 2015 <sup>3</sup>	64.5%	n/a	66.7%	68.0%	62.9%	66.3%	67.0%	67.0%	64.5%
% households receiving food stamps/ SNAP, 2015 <sup>4</sup>	13.2%	10.8%	11.7%	9.5%	8.9%	13.5%	9.0%	7.7%	11.1%
% household-level food insecurity and very low food security, average 2013–15 <sup>5</sup>	13.7%	n/a	10.6%	14.6%	9.9%	15.2%	14.8%	8.5%	11.5%
% children in households that were food insecure at some point during the year, 2014 <sup>6</sup>	20%	18.1%	13.9%	20.4%	14.8%	21.1%	22.7%	12.4%	19.0%
Estimated Children's Participation Rate in National School Lunch Program, 2015 <sup>7</sup>	40.4%	35.4%	34.6%	39.3%	31.2%	38.5%	36.3%	26.3%	34.8%

### Index

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

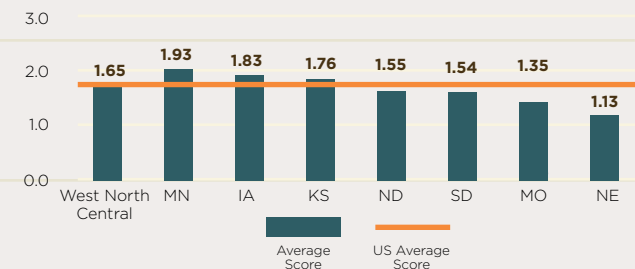
- Establishing and maintaining farmers markets
- Establishing groceries in underserved areas
- Encouraging healthy food in corner stores
- Expanding acceptance of food assistance benefits
- Expanding purchasing power of food assistance benefits
- Providing healthy food in government facilities
- Promoting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

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

### Scores

A maximum score of 12 is possible for this index, and the national average is 1.67. The region overall scores just below the national average despite Iowa, Kansas, and Minnesota scoring above.



### IN PRACTICE

Wyandotte County (2015 population: 160,806), part of the unified county-city government with Kansas City, Kansas (2015 population: 148,855) has convened a healthy communities coalition since 2010 that keeps the local government connected to ongoing healthy food access initiatives across the county. Examples include food assistance benefit matching programs in grocery stores and markets, efforts to increase healthy food access in corner stores and through food pantries, and gleaning programs. Following a Mayor's Food Summit in May 2014 with over 200 community leaders in attendance, the county has been working on policies to improve access to healthy and local foods, including passing an ordinance that will make it easier and cheaper to establish a farmer's market. For more information, see: <http://www.hcwco.org/>.



## THEME: Production & Infrastructure

12345

SECONDARY INDICATORS	US	WNC	IA	KS	MN	MO	NE	ND	SD
Land in square miles, 2010 <sup>8</sup>	3,531,905	<b>507,621</b>	55,857	81,759	79,627	68,742	76,824	69,001	75,811
Number of farms, 2016 <sup>9</sup>	2,060,000	<b>425,900</b>	87,000	59,600	73,300	96,800	48,400	29,800	31,000
% land in farms, 2012	40.3%	<b>80%</b>	85.3%	87.7%	50.8%	64.8%	91.9%	88.5%	89.2%
Civilian workforce 16 years and over by industry: Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining, 2015 <sup>10</sup>	2.0%	<b>3.1%</b>	3.8%	3.4%	2.2%	1.8%	4.5%	9.5%	6.7%
% of principal farm operators classified as "beginning famers" (<10 years of operation), 2012 <sup>11</sup>	22.1%	<b>15.4%</b>	17.0%	19.7%	15.7%	20.9%	19.1%	16.7%	16.3%
Market value of agricultural products directly sold for human consumption, 2012 <sup>12</sup>	\$1.3 billion	<b>n/a</b>	\$17.5 million	\$8.9 million	\$33.5 million	\$19.6 million	\$8.3 million	\$1.9 million	\$4.3 million

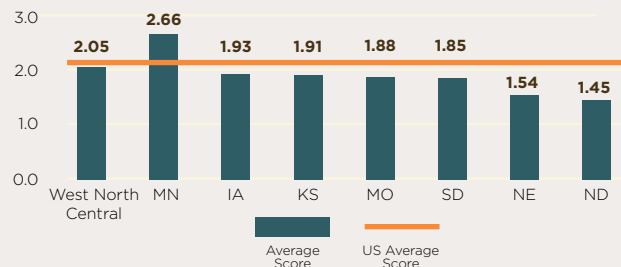
### Index

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 below the national average, Minnesota's average score of 2.66 exceeds the national average.



### IN PRACTICE

Kansas City, Missouri (2015 population: 467,990) supports local food production via the KC Grow Water Access Program, which provides technical assistance and funding to community gardens and farms in the county. The city sponsors the program and partners with two local nonprofits that oversee administration and technical assistance. The city also enacted an urban agriculture zoning ordinance in 2010, which expanded and codified food production and distribution opportunities in residential areas. For more information, see: <http://kccg.org/kcgrow/> and <http://www.farmlandinfo.org/kansas-city-missouri-urban-agriculture-ordinance>.

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 <sup>234</sup>

SECONDARY INDICATORS	US	WNC	IA	KS	MN	MO	NE	ND	SD
Median household income in the past 12 months (in 2015 Inflation-adjusted dollars), 2015 <sup>13</sup>	53,889	<b>53,473</b>	53,183	52,205	61,492	48,173	52,997	57,181	50,957
People whose income in the past 12 months is below the poverty level, 2015 <sup>14</sup>	15.5%	<b>13.3%</b>	12.5%	13.6%	11.3%	15.6%	12.7%	11.5%	14.1%
Unemployment rate, 2015 <sup>15</sup>	8.3%	<b>5.8%</b>	4.9%	5.9%	5.6%	7.5%	4.7%	2.9%	4.5%
State minimum wage, 1/1/17 <sup>16</sup>	\$7.25	<b>n/a</b>	\$7.25	\$7.25	\$9.50 / \$7.75	\$7.70	\$9.00	\$7.25	\$8.65

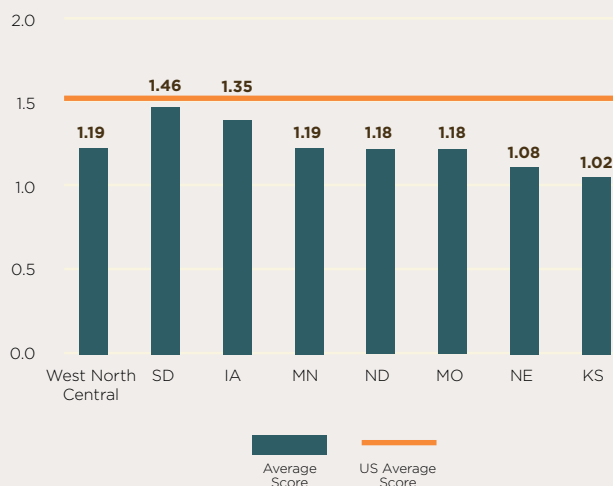
### Index

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. In the West North Central region, all states except South Dakota fall below the national average for this index.



<sup>13</sup> 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

<sup>14</sup> 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

<sup>15</sup> 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

<sup>16</sup> National Conference of State Legislatures, from US Department of Labor and state web sites

### IN PRACTICE

The Food Policy Council in Cass County, Iowa (2015 population: 13,590) serves as an appointed advisory body to the Board of Supervisors and to the overall community on food systems issues. Its bylaws, adopted in 2016, acknowledge opportunities for the county to enact policies that promote the viability of local farms, restaurants and retailers. The council has helped to facilitate relationship development between local food buyers and sellers.