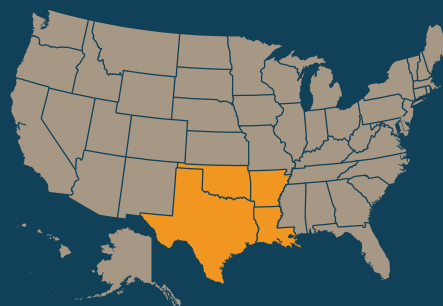


LOCAL GOVERNMENTS & LOCAL FOOD SYSTEMS

REGIONAL PROFILE SERIES

US Census Geographic Division: West South 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.

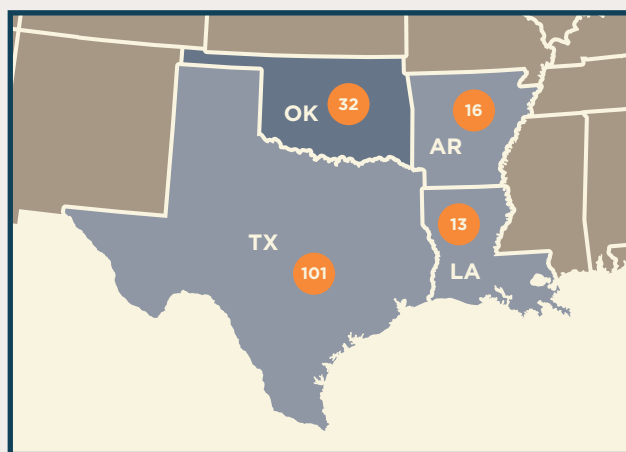
This series of briefings summarizes responses according to the nine geographic divisions as¹ defined by the US Census Bureau and provides complementary information from additional secondary data sources.

About the Region²

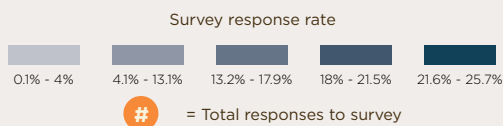
The West South Central region, comprised of Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas occupies 425,066 square miles of land in the southern United States to the west of the Mississippi River and contributes approximately \$2.2 billion to the country's GDP. The region's 37.9 million residents account for 11.8% of the country's total population and are approximately 50 % Caucasian, 14% African American, 29% Hispanic, and 3% Asian. Most are high school graduates (82.9%) and almost a third (26.1%) hold a Bachelor's degree or higher.

The region faces an unemployment rate of 7.1%. The median household income is \$50,555 accompanied by a poverty rate of 17.7%. Its main industry is health care and social assistance. With most of the region's land is taken up by farms (68%, second in the country), the region has the highest % in the country of the civilian workforce working in the agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining industries at 3.7%.

Responses to 2015 ICMA-MSU Food Systems Survey



LEGEND



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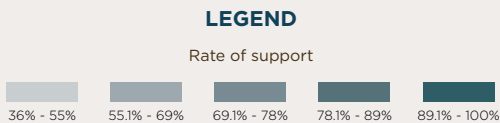
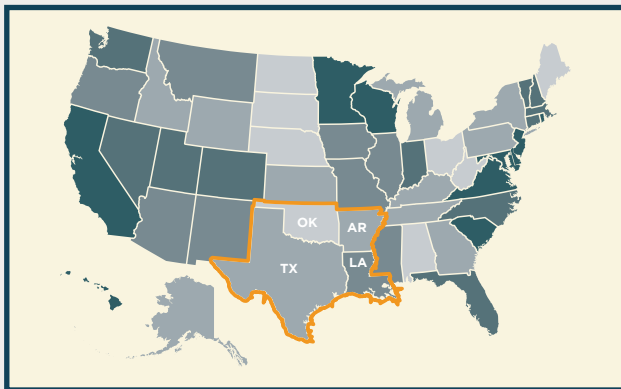
For more information: www.icma.org/food-system-profiles | www.foodsystems.msu.edu

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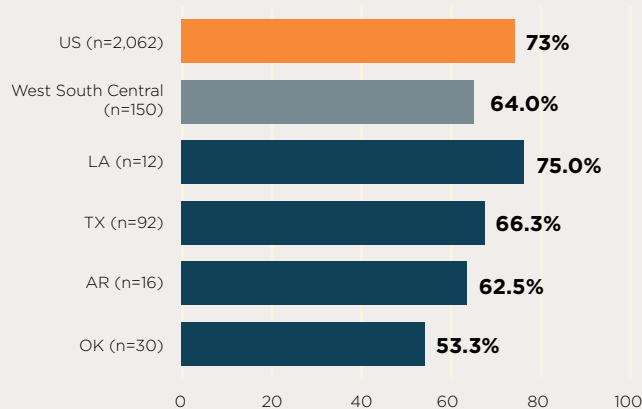
Overall Measures of Food Systems Support

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. In the West South Central region, the average number of activities supported by responding local governments in each state fell below the national average. 75% of Louisiana’s local governments did report supporting at least one food activity.

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



Percentage of Local Governments Supporting Any Food Systems Activity



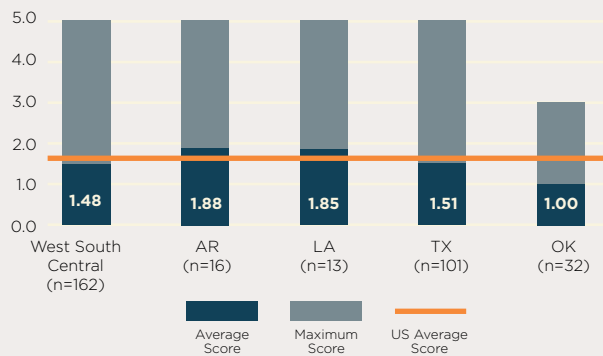
Average, Maximum Number of Food Activities Supported by Local Governments, 2015

	AVG NUMBER ACTIVITIES SUPPORTED	MAX NUMBER ACTIVITIES SUPPORTED
US (n=2,062)	3.44	24
West South Central (n=150)	2.85	20
LA (n=12)	3.17	10
TX (n=92)	3.14	20
AR (n=16)	3.13	11
OK (n=30)	1.70	6

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

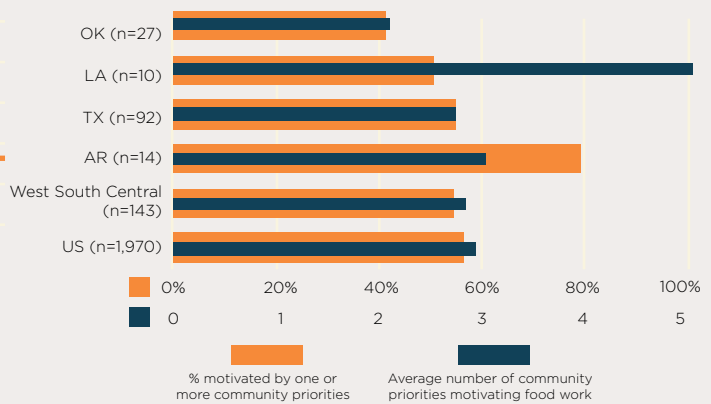


The average Support Score for the region and half of its states is below the national average of 1.69, with Arkansas and Louisiana exceeding the national average. The light green bars in the chart indicate the maximum score observed in each state and the region.

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. The West South Central region's responses were largely similar to the national data. Within Louisiana's small set of responses, just 50% were motivated to address food, but those that were linked food to a high number of other community priorities. In contrast, 79% of local governments in Arkansas indicated a motivation to address food but identified a fewer number of motivations. Overall, 55% of local governments nationwide and 51% in the West South 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	WSC
% local gov'ts where at least one dept responsible for food programs or policies	55%	51%

IN PRACTICE

The city of San Antonio, Texas (2015 population: 1,413,881) achieved the maximum support score of 5. The city's sustainability plan, adopted in 2016, includes a food system component that describes key indicators, strategies and outcomes related to a vision for a food system that is "accessible, secure, nutritious, and affordable" to all San Antonians. Food issues are also woven through its 2016 comprehensive plan update. Its food policy council was formed by the Metropolitan Health District in 2010 as part of a federal Communities Putting Prevention to Work grant, and exists as a standalone nonprofit comprised of community volunteers, but the city reported support for many policies and activities spanning themes of community health and access, economic development, and food system infrastructure. For more information, see: <https://satomorrow.com/> and <https://www.foodpolicysa.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 & Security¹³³⁴

SECONDARY INDICATORS	US	WSC	AR	LA	OK	TX
% adults who are overweight or obese, 2015 ³	64.5%	n/a	69.5%	69.2%	68.9%	68.7%
% households receiving food stamps/ SNAP, 2015 ⁴	13.2%	14.0%	14.8%	27.1%	13.9%	26.1%
% household-level food insecurity and very low food security, average 2013–15 ⁵	13.7%	n/a	19.2%	18.4%	15.5%	15.4%
% children in households that were food insecure at some point during the year, 2014 ⁶	20%	25.0%	28.9%	29.0%	23.7%	24.2%
Estimated Children's Participation Rate in National School Lunch Program, 2015 ⁷	40.4%	49.2%	47.8%	51.6%	45.6%	49.4%

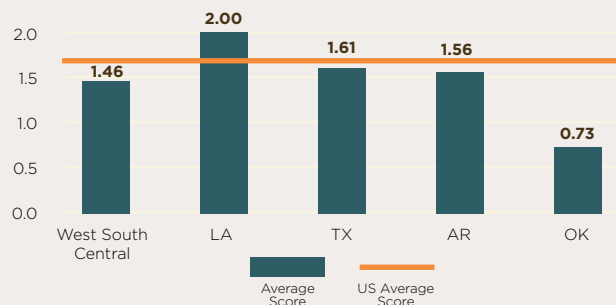
Index

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 below the national average, Louisiana's average score of 2 exceeds the national average.



IN PRACTICE

Baton Rouge–East Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana (2015 population: 228,320) launched the Mayor's Healthy City Initiative in 2008, which has since grown into a movement and nonprofit known as Healthy BR and addresses community health and wellness through a wide range of activities. Its Food Access Policy Commission—a partnership with a local community organizing coalition—studied food access issues for two years, researched best practices, and made recommendations to the City-Parish, such as improving public transportation and financing to local food retailers. For more information, see: <http://www.healthybr.com/>.



THEME: Production & Infrastructure

12345

SECONDARY INDICATORS	US	WSC	AR	LA	OK	TX
Land in square miles, 2010 ⁸	3,531,905	425,066	52,035	43,204	68,595	261,232
Number of farms, 2016 ⁹	2,060,000	389,500	43,000	26,900	78,100	241,500
% land in farms, 2012	40.3%	68%	41.1%	28.0%	77.9%	77.6%
Civilian workforce 16 years and over by industry: Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining, 2015 ¹⁰	2.0%	3.7%	3.2%	4.2%	5.0%	3.4%
% of principal farm operators classified as "beginning famers" (<10 years of operation), 2012 ¹¹	22.1%	20.9%	24.0%	27.3%	24.6%	27.3%
Market value of agricultural products directly sold for human consumption, 2012 ¹²	\$1.3 billion	n/a	\$6.3 million	\$7.4 million	\$7.6 million	\$27.9 million

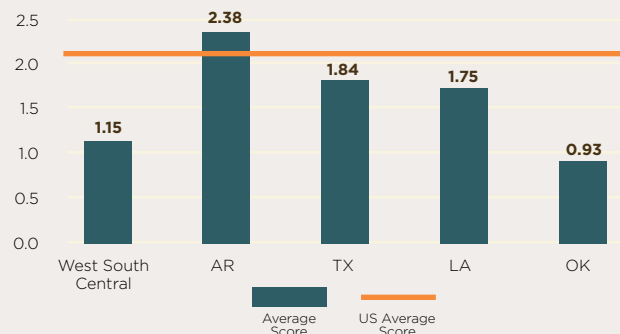
Index

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, Arkansas's average score of 2.38 exceeds the national average.



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

9 National Agricultural Statistics Service

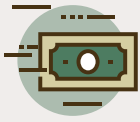
10 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

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

12 Census of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service

IN PRACTICE

The city of Dallas, Texas (2015 population: 1,260,688) reported working with local groups to address food distribution. In 2015, multiple municipal departments collaborated on recommendations to city council for amending the city code with respect to neighborhood farmers markets, making it easier for food growers/producers to sell their products locally. Additionally, a community garden grant program and guidelines were established. In 2016, the city was selected to receive technical assistance in developing a local food action plan through the federal Local Food, Local Places program. For more information, see: <http://greendallas.net/food/city-food/>.



THEME: Economic Development ²³⁴

SECONDARY INDICATORS	US	WSC	AR	LA	OK	TX
Median household income in the past 12 months (in 2015 Inflation-adjusted dollars), 2015 ¹³	53,889	50,555	41,371	45,047	46,879	53,207
People whose income in the past 12 months is below the poverty level, 2015 ¹⁴	15.5%	17.7%	19.3%	19.8%	16.7%	17.3%
Unemployment rate, 2015 ¹⁵	8.3%	7.1%	7.7%	8.1%	6.3%	7.0%
State minimum wage, 1/1/17 ¹⁶	\$7.25	n/a	\$8.50	none	\$7.25 /\$2.00	\$7.25

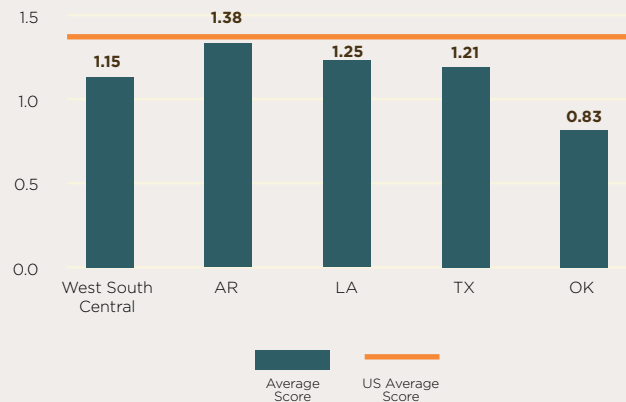
Index

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. The entire region scores 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 of Alexandria, Louisiana (2015 population: 47,985) reported collaborations with a wide range of external partners on food activities, including the Central Louisiana Economic Development Alliance and its Central Louisiana Local Food Initiative. Its web portal, Fresh Central, connects regional consumers and producers with each other and with related resources and opportunities such as the regional food policy council. The Central Louisiana Business Incubator, also located in Alexandria, offers commercial kitchen space as well as a bottling and labeling room for rent to food entrepreneurs. For more information, see: <http://www.cenla.org/freshcentral/>.