Exploring Community Wealth Building in San Diego County's Food System

Compiled by the San Diego Food System Alliance for San Diego County Food Vision 2030. Learn more at sdfoodvision2030.org.

January 2021
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This report is part of San Diego County Food Vision 2030—a bold, multiyear plan and movement to build a healthy, sustainable, and just food system in San Diego County. Food Vision 2030 is an initiative of the San Diego Food System Alliance, developed in support of many partners.

This report was produced by the Greater Foodprint for Enterprises Development (FRED). We thank FRED for their vision and partnership.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the Exploring Community Wealth Building in San Diego County's Food System.

Lead Author
- Sarah Sawyer, R.J. Del Hoyo

Reviewers
- Elly, Dirksen, Sofia Doezn

Lead Designer
- Margaret Chiu

Special Thanks
- To all of our interviewees and staff for sharing their time and expertise with us.

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PREFACE

Community wealth building is a key strategy of San Diego County Food Vision 2030. Transforming our institutions and our systems to allow for greater community ownership is imperative to cultivating "a food system that belongs to all of us.”

The San Diego Food System Alliance launched Food Vision 2030 with the understanding that the time to reimagine and reconfigure our food system is now. There is no question that the current path of our food system is unsustainable and transformational action must take root at this community level.

Food systems can be powerful vectors for change, providing significant opportunities to advance social, environmental, and economic equity for all. As such, Food Vision 2030 is being designed around the following three goals:

Goal 1: Cultivate Justice

In the food system, healthy food access, food and farm literacy, and land and business ownership are all drivers of racial equity. Communities of color experience the highest rates of poverty, food insecurity, and diet-related diseases, receive low wages and have few labor protections, and experience significant disparities in land and business ownership.

Through Food Vision 2030, we have an opportunity to reverse these trends. We can increase opportunities for healthy food access, ownership, and power across Black, Indigenous, and people of color in San Diego County. We can create a more just food system that belongs to all of us.

Goal 2: Fight Climate Change

One of the greatest impacts of climate change is connected to how we grow, move, eat, and waste food. Our industrial food system relies heavily on energy from fossil fuels, synthetic pesticides and fertilizers, and monoculture farming. It also produces a significant amount of waste. As a result of these practices, human health, soil health, and environmental health have been degraded for nearly a century. These same practices continue to accelerate climate change, causing droughts, fires, and other extreme weather patterns, and threatening farmer livelihoods and food security.

Through Food Vision 2030, we have an opportunity to reverse these trends and to create a more sustainable food system.

Goal 3: Build Resilience

In the food system, industrial agriculture, long supply chains, and concentration of power have compromised the health and sustainability of people and the planet. Now, in the face of increasing natural disasters, public health crises, and growing inequality, the highly concentrated industrial food system is exposing deep vulnerabilities and threatening the resiliency of people, cultures, livelihoods, and ecosystems.

Through Food Vision 2030, we have an opportunity to better prepare for and adapt to shocks in our food system. We can cultivate diverse local and regional economies, build climate-resilient and diverse food supply chains, and create stronger safety nets. We can heal relationships with the earth and one another. We can create a resilient food system that is capable of nourishing us today and for generations to come.

Food Vision 2030 is being developed over 18 months with various community and stakeholder input, and will be presented in March 2021 as a common agenda for the next decade.

Learn more at www.sdfoodvision2030.org.
INTRODUCTION
Learn about diverse community wealth building models and how they help us reimagine and reconfigure our food systems and local economy.

1. Making the Case for Community Wealth Building ........................................... 6
2. Community Wealth Building Models ............................................................. 8
3. Research Methodology ..................................................................................... 14

ANALYSIS
Explore supportive strategies and challenges of community wealth building and see examples around the U.S., including in San Diego County.

1. Understanding the San Diego County Context ............................................... 24

RECOMMENDATIONS
Consider five San Diego-specific strategies to build community wealth that are key to creating a more just, healthy, and sustainable food system.

1. Recommendations for Expanding Community Wealth Building in San Diego County’s Food System ................................................................. 34

Table of Contents
INTRODUCTION

Food systems can be powerful levers for change, providing significant opportunities to elevate social, environmental, and economic equity for all. On the other hand, San Diego County’s food system is—like every other food system in America—largely dependent on corporate-controlled foodways. We are culturally conditioned to favor “cheap food” while denying the significant environmental and labor costs absorbed upstream. We perpetuate underlying structural inequities that keep land and power out of the hands of marginalized communities and communities of color over generations. Deeply rooted issues in our food system have only been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the food system, industrial agriculture, long supply chains, and consolidation of power have been common since the 1950s. Philip H. Howard’s pioneering work on the concentration of ownership, wealth, and power among food system businesses shows that “just a few companies dominate almost all aspects of food production.” For example, four corporations control 82% of the market for soft drinks in the United States; 50% of the market for fresh cut salad; and 45% of retail grocery stores (Figure 1). Further, 20 percent of farms control nearly 70 percent of US farmland, four meatpackers slaughter 85 percent of beef, and four companies control 63 percent of the retail market. Compounded by increasing natural disasters, public health crises, and growing inequalities, the highly concentrated industrial food system perpetuates deep vulnerabilities and threatens the resiliency of people, cultures, livelihoods, and ecosystems.

Making the Case for Community Wealth Building

Community wealth building models, on the other hand, foster collaborative, inclusive, and local control over businesses, housing, and land use decisions. They have the capacity to directly address pressing social issues by building power and generating opportunities for the most vulnerable members of our society. For example, the Mondragón region of Spain has 96 cooperatives that collectively employ over 70,000 people. While the COVID-19 pandemic spiked unemployment and food insecurity around the world—and Wall Street earnings and shareholder dividends simultaneously soared—the Mondragón cooperatives were able to protect workers, precisely because they were engineered “to preserve paychecks.”¹ However, despite the promise of—or perhaps because of the promise of—creating more inclusive, equitable, and democratic systems, community wealth building models continue to be considered “alternative” or “non-traditional” solutions for social and economic issues.

Community Wealth Building Models

Community wealth building models require changes in how we define work, ownership, and public goods, function within our communities, and measure progress. As Matthew Cropp, Co-Executive Director of the Vermont Employee Ownership Center puts it, “Food can soften radical agendas.” And so we explore opportunities to normalize community wealth building models in the context of San Diego County’s food system. Our research focuses on four models of local, broad-based ownership: cooperatives, community land trusts, equitable-wealth oriented development, and employee stock ownership plans (Table 1).

Community wealth building models, including cooperatives, land trusts, EFODs, and employee stock ownership plans, are key strategies for re-mapping and reconfiguring our food system and local economy. More than 216,000 people are employed in San Diego’s food system as farmers, fishermen, grocery clerks, bakers, servers, chefs, delivery drivers, and much more. San Diego County has more than 21,000 food system businesses, including 7,000 farms, nurseries or greenhouses, over 13,000 retail food businesses, and 1,100 food processors or manufacturers (many bakers and breweries). San Diego County food system businesses make up 4% of all San Diego County businesses (this percentage does not include farms).

Our interviews with food system stakeholders and community wealth building experts, survey results, and data analysis have highlighted key barriers to community wealth building in San Diego County. They have also shown us that San Diego is increasingly aware of this flimsy of our food system and the need to revert back to brainwashing us, but build a better and more resilient food system. However, despite the scale of San Diego’s food system, community wealth building models are relatively rare within the county.

Food cooperatives are参照 entities in many parts of America, but less so in Southern California and San Diego County. Food cooperatives can be owned by workers, consumers, or producers who share in the value and profit collectively. San Diego County has one existing consumer cooperative (Organ Fish Cooperative) in San Diego County that has slowly built membership through education and outreach efforts. FairCraft, a cooperative distillery established in 2022, conducts itself a social value cooperative, which is owned by its workers, consumer, and investors and where voting is reflective of the total value they contribute to the company through work, volunteering, or promotional efforts. San Diego County also has a few very small worker and producer cooperatives that emerged recently, including FruitCraft, a producer cooperative, and Case Farms, a worker cooperative.

Community land trusts, whether focused on land-use development or agriculture, are also owned by members who own and manage land or property in perpetuity. San Diego County has a Community Land Trust but not an Agricultural Land Trust. Community land trusts, especially in urban settings like San Diego, are in direct competition with speculation, development pressure, and well-financed marketers real estate development. The need for community land trusts is obvious: the cost of living in San Diego County isastronomical and land in agriculture has dramatically increased.

Equitable-food oriented developments (EFODs) are a relatively new strategy that uses food and agriculture to create economic opportunities and healthy neighborhoods for historically marginalized communities. The key features of EFODs is that they are built out of relationships between enterprises. Projects like South Market are the primary examples of EFOD in San Diego County.

Employee stock ownership models are fairly common in food businesses throughout America but less so in Southern California and San Diego County. Employee ownership often reflects a logical extension from a company’s existing values and culture and thoughtful purpose planning.
### Table 1: Community Wealth Building Models

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Food Systems Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cooperative</strong></td>
<td>Autonomous association of people united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically controlled enterprise.</td>
<td>San Diego County Organic Beef Project, San Diego County Credit Union, California Menlo Enterprises (emerging)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Worker Cooperative</strong></td>
<td>Directly and wholly owned by the employees, who share in profits and who work on the Board of Directors; one of the fastest growing segments of cooperatively owned businesses.</td>
<td>National Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP) Development (EFOD) Trust, California Land Trust Fund, National Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP) Development (EFOD) Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Consumer Cooperative</strong></td>
<td>Owned by customers for their mutual benefit, when oriented toward value and service rather than profits; often take the form of retail co-ops owned and operated by their consumers, opportunity to supply own needs, gain bargaining power, achieve economies of scale to lower cost, and share earnings. (Includes credit co-ops and housing co-ops).</td>
<td>National ESOP, Farm Credit Union, Financial Prosperity Project, California Credit Union, Montana Community Credit Union (emerging)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Producer Cooperative</strong></td>
<td>Owned and operated by producers, producers work together and in deep and broad measure or in so far as are possible an marketing and production efficiency organized to process, market, and distribute the same products.</td>
<td>San Diego County Organic Beef Project, Organic Food Market, Americas Marine Coop, San Diego County Credit Union, California Credit Union, Montana Community Credit Union (emerging)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community Land Trust (CLT)</strong></td>
<td>Nonprofit organizations designed to ensure community stewardship of land; trust acquire land and maintain ownership of it permanently. CLTs are used to foster securing land-conservation easements, divide restriction, to secure ownership, and general use.</td>
<td>San Diego County Organic Beef Project, National Forest Service Credit Union, California Community Development Corporation, Montana Community Credit Union (emerging)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Food Systems Examples

**Agricultural Land Trust**
- Nonprofit organization that work with landowners to conserve land from development by purchasing or acquiring donations of property interest, establishing conservation easements, and ensuring ongoing protections and property land stewardship.
- San Diego County Organic Beef Project, California Menlo Enterprises (emerging), National Community Development Corporation (Emerging Community Land Trust Fund), National Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP) Development (EFOD) Trust

**Mixed Use Development Land Trust**
- Nonprofit organizations that acquire land and hold in trust for the community, in an effort to secure a permanent community center, and offering community-owned affordable housing.
- San Diego County Organic Beef Project, San Diego County Credit Union, California Land Trust Fund, National Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP) Development (EFOD) Trust, Thailand Community Land Trust Fund, California Land Trust Fund, Montana Community Credit Union (emerging)

**Equitable Food-Orchestrated Development (EFOD)**
- Development strategy that use food and agriculture to create economic opportunities, healthy neighborhoods, and explicitly seeks to build community byzantines, pride, and power by and with racial, culturally, marginalized communities.
- San Diego County Organic Beef Project, San Diego County Credit Union, California Land Trust Fund, Montana Community Credit Union (emerging), National Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP) Development (EFOD) Trust, Community Credit Union (emerging)

**Employee Stock Ownership Plans (ESOP)**
- Retirement plans that own at least part of a company on behalf of its employees, most common form of broad-based employee ownership in the U.S.
- San Diego County Organic Beef Project, California Community Development Corporation, Montana Community Credit Union (emerging), National Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP) Development (EFOD) Trust, Montana Community Credit Union (emerging)

**Employee Ownership Trust**
- A **equity** trust that holds the stock of a company for the benefit of employees; employees receive a profit share but do not receive any equity stake in the company.
- San Diego County Organic Beef Project, National Community Development Corporation (Emerging Community Land Trust Fund), National Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP) Development (EFOD) Trust
Today, San Diego County is home to 18 tribal communities—most of any county in America—that live on 4.3% of their ancestral homelands (1,350 acres or 1.6% square miles). This indigenous population now totals up to 1.6% or 19,404 people. All of the country experienced a variety of challenges, including suffering the highest degree of death from failing health and diabetes of any group. The migration inflows on indigenous communities in the face of new medical adversity is poorly understood in American society. For example, tribal governments do not collect the way other governments can and thus have consequently been the “most successful and reliable government revenue stream across Indian Country” since 1763. San Diego’s indigenous community is no different in this regard: They collect gas, sales, hotel, and infrastructure and accounted for 22% of the tribe’s income in the reservation and over 20,000 jobs of San Diego prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. It may be that this unexpected source, gaming operations, represents the largest example of community wealth building in San Diego County.

Across the country, indigenous communities are taking a community wealth building approach to strengthening their food systems and mitigating climate change. For example, the Native American Food Fund says “for the long, Native predators, predators, tribes, and regions have not had the infrastructure necessary to create a food web and thinking regional food system.” The role for this forum of food and agriculture experts is to a $34 billion to transformative Native food economics with a series of major infrastructural and educational investments across 10 regions.” With San Diego County, the Pala and Pauma Tribe supports significant land in citrus production and Pauma tribe preserves. Pacific Tribal Farms has integrated practices such as compost application, degree in installation, and a transition from new crops to new enterprises. San Diego County has one of the largest food producers in the country, which is an example of how local and small, diversified producers that are trying to capture more “food dollars” and improve access to healthy food (all of that produce that makes up the food web) are already working together. This food-based products from the 10 OC producers and the critical role it plays in the Pala Band and their commitment to sustainability. They currently distribute to more than 330 families. Southern California’s first tribal-powered brewery, “San Dieguito Brewing Company,” was recently powered by the Pala Band of Luiseño Indians, and they are finding it extremely successful.

Our survey of tribal nations during Food Vision 2020’s research phase identified a strong desire for supporting tribal farming and culinary initiatives that flow from sovereign people.

As we expand conversations and opportunities for community wealth building in San Diego’s food system we should keep in mind that, in rural as well as urban contexts, communities are often called to rely on local and regional food systems to meet our basic needs, and that the connections between health and food systems are critical. We see this exemplified in the communities we support, with often-invisible layers of vulnerability. It is our responsibility to learn from our community wealth building and the restoration and re-development of our community, using a systems approach and ensuring that examples like this are widely shared and celebrated. As we continue to advance these efforts, we must ensure that we are creating resilient, equitable, and vibrant communities that are full of hope and opportunity. We have a unique opportunity to create a system of food systems that meet our needs, while also supporting and sustaining our communities, both economically and culturally.

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Community Wealth Building in San Diego County’s Indigenous Communities

"How does one begin to understand what economies are, who matters in them, what our own place is? These are questions of who holds power, who lacks it, who has a right to ownership, and who remains perpetually dispossessed and powerless.”

—Stephanie Gutierrez, An Indigenous Approach to Community Wealth Building (Atlanta Translation)
Research Methodology

To develop Food Vision 2010 and this report, the San Diego Food System Alliance (SDFSA) interviewed approximately 100 key stakeholders, analyzed dozens of datasets and developed more than 100 population indicators (e.g., incidence of diabetes in income, wealth and access by race/ethnicity, gender, age, and geography), engaged with the existing Working Group, and received over 2,100 unique contributions from community survey. Our interviewees shared strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats within each category of the food system (e.g., food production, food processing and manufacturing) as well as issues specific to certain underserved communities (e.g., indigenous communities). In this general research we were not probing for detailed information about, e.g., employee ownership (SDFSA) or land tenure, but these topics and other related topics naturally came up during interviews.

For example, during interviews stakeholders were asked:

- The challenges of operating the one existing consumer cooperative grocery store in San Diego County and the challenges of developing a new cooperative grocery store in Imperial Beach.
- A legacy of displacement in southeast San Diego and one organization’s quest to develop an SDFSA
- The San Diego Food System model and efforts to encourage equitable, healthy, and economically viable restaurants
- The unique educational and training opportunities that place-based learning centers provide for communities (e.g., Chicanx/Latina/o Chicana/o programs)
- The regulated and population specific programs offered by San Diego Workforce Partnership, including a new initiative that is pooling funding for transitions to employee ownership (we estimate at least one of these businesses would be a food business)
- The challenges of developing an agricultural land trust in San Diego County
- The challenges of developing a 310-acre land project (e.g., Mission) focused on growing farmland, creating business, and building power for people of color in California
- The emergence of a farmworker aggregation and distribution hub
- The value of and need for a platform over learning opportunities
- The importance of understanding cultural norms when offering business advice and technical assistance
- The implications of COVID-19 on San Diego County, including the unprecedented impacts of food system businesses, workers, and SDFSA community

To flesh out our understanding of these issues and attendant community-wealth building challenges, gaps, and opportunities in our region’s food system, SDFSA conducted more than a dozen interviews specifically with California community wealth building practitioners and service providers. Half of the interviews were located in San Diego County, including managers of existing or emerging cooperatives, an expert from a financial institution, one (SDFSA) expert, and one cooperative expert.

Interviews Conducted

- Dan Moss, Project New Village (EFOD)
- Elise Swegles, Solidarity Farmland Corporation
- Gail Stovers, Continuum Planning (Cooperative)
- Mary Abell, Five County (CFSAs, SDFSA, Cooperative)
- Jennifer Briggs, Media Creation, Food Movement Network (Cooperative)
- Jack C. Palmer, Nonprofit Attorney (CTs)
- Jim Res, Oasis Health Foods
- Organ’s Food Market (Cooperation)
- Kim Broughton, Beyer Institute (Banks)
- Kim Prickett and Shovel Shell, San Diego Metropolitan Corporation (Cooperative)
- Michaela Kelly, Democracy Collaborative
- Land Institute, Cooperative (ITC)
- Continuum of ownership, Capital, Local, Broad-base
- Matthew Coop and San Benito, Vermont Employees’ Ownership Center
- Neil Thomson and Matthew Samuels, Sustainable Economies Law Center (CTIs, Cooperative)
- Bi-Lo Harvey, Sav-A-Can (CTIs, Cooperative)
- Steve Hobbs, Cooperative Fund (Financial Institution – Assisting SDFSA)
- Tyler MacDill, Formerly San Francisco Community Land Trust, client includes North County Land Trust (CTIs)

Interviews Conducted
Essential Elements of Ecosystems that Support Community Wealth Building

To complement the expert interviews, SDFSA conducted research on successful support ecosystems in other regions. No single location has all programs or policies in place that embody a fully supportive environment, and the essential elements of supportive ecosystems go beyond mere business support—they create lasting change through cultivating normative shifts in how a business or community envisions and collectively works towards a more inclusive, equitable, and resilient economy for all.

Community wealth building enterprises face the same challenges as other small businesses or community ventures (e.g., access to appropriate wraparound business services and patient capital). However, because community-wealth building models are still comparatively rare, a substantial uptick in education is often required. For example, financing can be especially challenging as traditional debt underwriting and repayment practices around risk assessment, collateral, guarantees, terms, and amortization do not coincide with start up and transitioning enterprises or values-driven development (e.g., lack of personal guarantees for cooperatives, transition, and capacity building expenses). Community land trusts transfer market rate land into a public good, which requires substantial upfront capital and widespread support to combat better resourced market-based actors. To catalyze and sustain community wealth building, stakeholders (government, philanthropy, financial institutions, nonprofits, and businesses) must work in concert to directly address its unique challenges.
Business Services

- Business services organizations (e.g., SBAs, BDCs, CPs), economic and workforce development agencies, and other access providers are educated and trained in how to recognize and facilitate connections specific to community wealth building business models.

- Professional development and training are provided by experienced practitioners and community wealth building development and incubation organizations.

- Membership and peer programs from experienced practitioners are available.

- Practitioners with expertise (e.g., accounting, legal, human resources) in non-traditional business practices that are accessible to a diversity of entrepreneurs and business owners, roles of operation, and stage of development (e.g., ramp-up, growth) are readily available.

- Accessible community wealth building business planning and supportive education for engaging skills development is available.

Education, Training, and Capacity Building

- Community-based organizations and leaders are integral to growing knowledge, building civic engagement and power, catalyzing meaningful and catalytic development building equity in areas that lack dedicated organizations. Defy and ongoing investment in the building of entrepreneurship or development projects throughout their life cycle, and it is especially integral for community and trust development when community organizing has been powerful in the face of market development or news events such as COVID.

- Research, education, and community business development efforts are available from institutions of higher education and continuing education (e.g., Aspen Institute, Aspen Institute for the Study of Opportunity Ownership and Profit Sharing, Vermont Law School Center for Agriculture and Food Systems). Higher education infrastructure can build credibility and serve as bridge builders between stakeholders, and their alumni can seize local opportunities for community wealth building.

Market Development and Infrastructure

- Another institution, government procurement, and community leadership (akin to bid preference for the City of New York’s Office of Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises programs) are actively strengthening the market viability and growth potential of community wealth building models. BI and procurement professionals are paired with technical assistance to ensure accessibility and align with existing policies.

- Value chain facilitation and infrastructure development initiatives are linked to develop local community wealth building enterprises with market(s), i.e., leveraging local supply chain.

"Organize a cross sector anchor initiative. Reconnecting purchasing of food is much harder than we think. There are questions around volume to meet demands—you need to build out supply.” —Marjorie Kelly, Executive Vice President, Democracy Collaborative

Policy

- Accessible business development, operations, and growth capital (interest or exempt from tax, local, BID, CDC, women-owned, minority-owned, and community wealth building enterprises and incubating organizations) are available.

- Dedicated funding to support research, conversion, education, technical assistance, and other professional services is available.

Although a single location has all programs or policy in place that embody a fully supportive environment for community wealth building, many cities and states may see review best practices.

1Community capital is the sum total of the financial capital that is available and can be mobilized within a community, including both wealth and liquid wealth. (Heday 2003). BDCs are differentiated by geography (city, county), but also have the same internal (structural) or external (regulatory) connection.
Table 2: Community Wealth Building in Practice Across the United States

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cooperator</th>
<th>Anchor Procurement</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minneapolis, MN</td>
<td>Evergreen Cooperative Corporation developed a corporate-to-corporate model to reduce transaction costs for local economic development and community wealth building for low-income communities. Evergreen currently has four cooperatives working with anchors in the Cleveland and Greater University Circle, solar energy, food production, business services. The cooperatives leverage anchor procurement needs and are catalyzed by community leaders to secure the needed capital.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rochester, NY</td>
<td>Diversified Organization Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madison, WI</td>
<td>Everygreen Cooperative Corporation is the nonprofit model company that coordinates the growth of its cooperative network and emerging supportive entities, such as the Food for Employees Anchor Network in cooperation with financing and technical assistance. Everygreen Land Trust, a community-led entity focused on supporting the development of additional cooperatives or as a cooperative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minneapolis, MN</td>
<td>Diversified Early Stage Funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anchorage, OH</td>
<td>Oakland, CA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cleveland, OH</td>
<td>Community Engagement</td>
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<td>Cleveland, OH</td>
<td>Authentic, well-funded community engagement at pre-develop mental stages to strategize on-site and replicable to existing strengths and assets</td>
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<td>Minneapolis, MN</td>
<td>Early and Intentional Capacity Building and Leadership Development</td>
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<td>Anchorage, OH</td>
<td>Training and educational opportunities to prepare stakeholders for transitioning from organizing and planning to implementation and sustainable operation/growth</td>
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<td>Network and Partnership Development</td>
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<td>Anchorage, OH</td>
<td>A diverse, locally-led network of mission-aligned partners with complementary skills and expertise, with Milwaukee as the backbone organization</td>
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<td>Financing and Technical Assistance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anchorage, OH</td>
<td>Law enforcement, public and private entities financing through traditional development stages and across the value chain (Lending Funds, Technical Assistance). This is consistent with business models that focus on sustainability.</td>
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<td>Anchorage, OH</td>
<td>Business Incubation</td>
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<td>Mandela Grocery Cooperative (a new independent), Mandela Produce Distribution, Ashland Market, and Zella’s Soulfood, Oak Harvest Kitchen</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anchorage, OH</td>
<td>Dedicated Business Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anchorage, OH</td>
<td>Since 2004, Mandela Partners has served as the central nonprofit organization for West Oakland’s food-centric community development initiative, providing community engagement, fundraising, strategic planning, and capacity building</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Equitable Food-Oriented Development

- **Mandela Partners**: Philanthropic and public funding for start-up and leadership development initiatives.
- **Community Engagement**: Authentic, well-funded community engagement at pre-development stages to strategize on-site and replicable to existing strengths and assets.
- **Early and Intentional Capacity Building and Leadership Development**: Training and educational opportunities to prepare stakeholders for transitioning from organizing and planning to implementation and sustainable operation/growth.
- **Network and Partnership Development**: A diverse, locally-led network of mission-aligned partners with complementary skills and expertise, with Milwaukee as the backbone organization.
- **Financing and Technical Assistance**: Law enforcement, public and private entities financing through traditional development stages and across the value chain (Lending Funds, Technical Assistance). This is consistent with business models that focus on sustainability.
- **Business Incubation**: Mandela Grocery Cooperative (a new independent), Mandela Produce Distribution, Ashland Market, and Zella’s Soulfood, Oak Harvest Kitchen.
- **Dedicated Business Organization**: Since 2004, Mandela Partners has served as the central nonprofit organization for West Oakland’s food-centric community development initiative, providing community engagement, fundraising, strategic planning, and capacity building.
Employee Stock Ownership Plans, Employee Ownership Trusts, Cooperatives

The State of Vermont

Culture Supports Community Wealth-Building

Food and farm businesses’ employee ownership has been successful in Vermont because it does not hurt, but instead aids, and disclosescan be achieved in a community that is environmentally responsive. Vermont continues to explore and implement because of the cultural value.

Network Development

Vermont Employees Ownership Centers (VEOCs) lend their marketing effort, leveraging peer examples and strong narrative case studies. Working partnerships and relational systems with financial institutions, peer companies, small business and providers have taken leadership and agencies.

Early Adopters and Champions

Vermont’s culture has larger support for building models. Vermont has high skills in value-driven companies, including the Arthur Dingle Co. and Gardens Supply, both an employee ownership model companies that, in their early adopters are interested in turning to implement employee ownership models.

Community of Practice

VEOC has received a state grant to develop the program to build the necessary level of trust for building the cases for employee ownership and cooperatives.

Wrapped around Services

Many small and voluntary Access to capital inclusive VEOC receiving loan fund and more for financial institutions, technical and various and ongoing education and facilitation of policy nutritionists.

Community Land Trusts

Madison Area Community Land Trust: Troy Gardens

Madison, WI

Other examples: Vermont Community Land Trust: Troy Gardens (continued)

Dedicated Partner Organizations

MACLT and financial have worked as development and leader through the evolution of Troy Gardens. MACLT has in-depth experience as an affordable housing CLT—why we are crucial to building financial support and financing (Rooted!). It is a strategic by virtue of the evolution and community development work with strong partnerships, philanthropy and community knowledge.

Education and Training Programs

Rooted partners with local nonprofits, schools, government agencies, and University of WI to offer urban farming entrepreneurship training and one-to-one educational programs for community members.
Understanding the San Diego County Context

More than 216,000 people are employed in San Diego’s food system as farmers, fishermen, grocery clerks, bakers, servers, chefs, delivery drivers, and much more. San Diego County has more than 21,000 food system businesses, including 5,000 farms, nurseries, or greenhouses; over 13,000 retail food businesses; and 1,000 food processors or manufacturers (mainly bakeries and breweries). San Diego County food system businesses make up 4% of all San Diego County businesses (this percentage does not include farms).

Despite the scale of San Diego’s food system, community wealth building models are relatively rare within the county. Our interviews with food systems stakeholders and community wealth building experts, survey results, and data analysis have highlighted key barriers to community wealth building in San Diego County. They have also shown us that San Diegans are increasingly aware of the fragility of our food system and the need to not revert back to business as usual, but to build a more and better resilient food system. Emerging food systems opportunities that elevate historically underserved communities are uniquely positioned drivers for this social and economic transformation. Community wealth building efforts in our food system are the seeds of opportunities that elevate historically underserved communities are uniquely positioned drivers for this social and economic transformation.

The following section features takeaways from challenges of local community wealth building practitioners and movement to redefine the structures and institutions limiting access to opportunities and shared prosperity.

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Local Examples of Community Wealth Building: Cooperatives

OCEAN BEACH PEOPLE’S ORGANIC MARKET (OCEAN BEACH)

There is one existing consumer-grocery coop in San Diego County, the Ocean Beach People’s Organic Market. O.B. People’s started in the 1970s as an outgrowth of the hippie movement in a non-conformist community and its commitment to San Diego’s reputation for being an anti-war town. In his words of O.B. People’s general manager, Jim Kase, “Co-ops areille, by and for their communities.” O.B. People’s point of difference is that it only sells certified organic produce and that makes their prices a little higher.

O.B. People’s has last members since 2014 (generally fluctuating between 9,000 to 12,000 active members), but have recently seen an uptick as they have begun modernizing the store. They are experiencing the same tension as other co-ops across the country as organic and healthy food options become more available at mainstream grocery stores. How do they maintain their identity as a co-op but still be relevant, modern, and accessible to people who want their food? The next generation of customers are young people who are familiar with and reliant on technology, but are also very cause-driven. Jim Kase’s observation is that “people want things faster,” so O.B. People are starting to think about food delivery and curbside service.

The big thing is to get people to picture not only a different future, but themselves in a different future. How are they going to operate? People aren’t used to going into their jobs and having a say, in government, in society at large. Getting people to see themselves in a different way is key.”

—Grant Ruroede, San Diego County-based cooperative

Understanding the San Diego County Context — 25
Understanding the San Diego County Context

SUNCASTLE MARKET CO-OP (IMPERIAL BEACH)

CONSUMER CO-OP

Imperial Beach is a community of 27,000 people (nearboarded as a neighborhood), southwest San Diego with limited grocery shopping options. Five years ago, a new grocery store opened, serving many Imperial Beach residents patronized by Trader Joe’s or Sainsbury, but instead got a food outlet store and a $1 store. Ultimately, the recognition that getting a full range of healthy groceries in town would be valuable was what inspired a resident to start a co-op in a Facebook group. "Why don’t we start a co-op?"

Opening a food co-op takes dedicated fundraising and community support (i.e., businesses and households) invested in the co-op by becoming owners. SunCastel will need 2,000 owners in order to open and make more than half of the revenue ($27). However, SunCastel has discovered that the success of farmers is not a harder competition project that SanCastel Southern California Shannon Flatt, outreach manager, shared that "we’ve found that it involves a lot of research, education and networking when opening a co-op, especially in disenfranchised communities. We’d like to see more support for creating equitable communities.”

According to Shannon, community members are responding to the idea of having local money in local supporting good local jobs, and improving access to sustainable food, but the culture is different in Imperial Beach compared to Ocean Beach. And they have an even younger growth due to the COVID-19 pandemic (i.e., a virtual effect because they are more of a community project that SunCastel has built a strong, committed group of community advocate and was able to step up to support small businesses, local farms and high-profile projects with a produce group and delivery program in the early months of the pandemic.

JIMBO’S NATURALS (IMPERIAL RANCH, CARLSBAD, CAMEL VALLEY, ESPONDIDO, NORHATON)

VALUES-BASED GROCERY STORE

Jimbo’s is neither a co-op nor a membership store, but does exemplify the type of stores that many people would like to see in their communities. Jimbo’s is very transparent about its commitment to organic, food products, and health eating. Even a values-based grocery store like Jimbo’s struggles with the possibility of opening stores in historically disadvantaged communities. "It’s a fine line between being profitable and providing to the widest audience we can,” according to Shahn Simon, Director of Administration at Jimbo’s. "This is a higher quality of food, for us to be successful, requires us to be affordable for the demographic. How do we support we’re profitable?"

Jimbo’s has utilized options across the country and has done a location downtown (El Paseo Mall) because there was no option of grocery shopping options at this time, but this means we’re facing the fundamental challenges of healthy food access in historically disadvantaged communities.

FOODSHED (SAN DIEGO COUNTY)

PRODUCER CO-OP

San Diego County has one emerging food producer co-op: Foodshed. Foodshed is made up of nine small, diversified producers who are capturing a market for “food dollars” and improve access to healthy food (several of these producers that make up Foodshed are already co-op owners). Today, less than 1% per year of the dollar is spent on healthy food back to producers (the rest goes to packaging, marketing, transportation, and retail). This idea for Foodshed is that 80% of each food dollar goes to the farmer ($0.80/dollar), 5% goes toward oligopolistic agricultural research and project implementation (e.g., dinah), and as a result, Foodshed has begun to work with suppliers to keep healthy food per person. The vision of Foodshed is to aggregate products first from IPD co-op producers and then prioritize distribution to the San Diego Food Bank and onward to wholesalers and retail culinary. They currently distribute to more than 120 family.

Foodshed has received support from a variety of consultants, grants, donations, and grants from private owners and local/state/federal governments that help to offset costs like planning, infrastructure, and farmer-to-farmer mentoring. The key challenges for Foodshed are to reach a critical amount to scale the local food supply and acquiring additional physical spaces to support growing staffing and infrastructure needs. As a social enterprise, Foodshed will also experience challenges with generating a profit as they seek to balance fair compensation for farmers with affordable access to healthy food for families in need.

For more information about the City of Baltimore’s 28th street food environment and the geographic diversity of the local food system, please visit the Baltimore Green Belt website (www.baltimoregreenbelt.org) for more information.
Agrarian Land Trusts

“...If we don’t start preserving ag land, there is no future to food production in the region.”

―Shane Holster, California State Senator, Conservation Fund

There are many potential pathways to preserving arable land in agriculture, including acquisition of fee simple or conservation easement, tax protection via estate netting, and via fees for acquisition. For example, California’s Willows Amistad Program empowers municipalities to designate agriculture preserves of at least 100 acres and enter into 10-year contracts with landowners. This benefit is that it is a state and local solution to reduce substantially the property taxes assessments. Over 450,000 acres, including over 10,000 acres with contracts, are in Willows Amistad.1 As seen in Figure 2, these preserves have been designated mostly as regulatory-tax relief that may not be in active creation. Moreover, federal designation has also been created, which is an important next step for this type of regulatory tax relief. However, for these easements to work, landowners must have historically received the smallest amount of easements

The Figure of San Diego’s patch of Conservation Easement (PACE) has also created 2,000 acres of land in agriculture (30+ acres) and 2 acres (30 acres) via a perpetual easement since 2013. As with employees everywhere, employees are often called upon during company acquisitions and the PACE program actively (positively) affects local agriculture. In this regard, the County of San Diego’s Climate Action Plan, the PACE program, and the dramatically reduced land tax and increased land value, has been a windfall for San Diego---for the value of growing food back into nature about the future of San Diego’s nutrient/water cycle, with the creation of the new Natural Agriculture Trust (NAT), which has conservatively observed about 1.3% of the state’s land area. Moreover, one innovative example in 2017-2018, Vito’s tribute, based on $15.183 million was government from property tax support.14 In the San Diego County, the area was designated as a basalt aquifer, and purchased for agricultural use via USDA (Natural Resources Conservation Service), individual farmers and businesses (30%), including over 3,000 farmers' foundation and (32%) and (42%) of which is the top strength efforts are usually.

A mixing piece of this puzzle in San Diego County is an agricultural land trust. Touring around the Orange County, the City of San Diego, and the Realists, there is the opportunity to create a smart, integrated and active easement program.11 A major change in the land’s agricultural preserve has been observed since 2010, with increase land tax and increased land value. For example, 10,000 acres in PACE, has been a windfall for San Diego, and the rate that the land tax and increased land value. There is also a windfall for San Diego, the real estate market is an integrated and active easement program. In conclusion, the USDA’s easement plan is a key of the area, in which land tax and increased land value. The real estate market is an integrated and active easement program. In conclusion, the USDA’s easements plan that are a key of the area, where land tax and increased land value. The real estate market is an integrated and active easement program.11

Figure 2: U.S. Market Concentration for Selected Food Industries

Data: Market Concentration of key crops and livestock (2006-2011) for major states. ¹¹ Data from National Agricultural Statistics Service. ¹² Data from USDA. ¹³ Data from the United States Department of Agriculture. ¹⁴ Data from USDA. ¹⁵ Data from the United States Department of Agriculture. ¹⁶ Data from USDA.
Understanding the San Diego County Context

Family Land Trust is a North Carolina-based land trust dedicated to preservation of black landowners and farmers. For families in California, the Trust promotes a 370-acre agricultural farm.

Interestingly, while San Diego County has the largest land area of all counties in California (17,885), it also has the most negatively disparate producer distributions. San Diego County has the 5th highest number of Hispanic producers (55,122), the 4th highest for the number of Asian American producers (464), and the highest number of black producers from more than one race (772). Total producers (198) Redlining notes that at least 3.3% of San Diego County’s population and 26.7% of its land in agriculture, the second highest percentage of any county in California. Building from these unique characteristics of agriculture in San Diego County is one of the opportunities for creating jobs and building resilience for the next generation of farmers.

Equitable Food-Oriented Development

Between 1935 and 1942, the Home Owners’ Loan Corporation and local banks worked to establish neighborhoods in cities across America. Areas that received the lowest grades, “D,” were color-coded and deemed “hazardous.” For example, notes for East San Diego included “There is no demonstration of any foreign element.” However, many Mexicans scattered throughout the area “Hirading” then was a mechanism for making it difficult or impossible for (HDC) lenders in certain areas to access mortgage financing to become homeowners. This consequence of redlining has echoed through the past 80 years and has visible impacts on wealth inequalities we see today, particularly in southeastern San Diego.

Historically Hispanic is found in virtually every region that measures demographics. For example, the Ossian AXA meter measures the average

systems of children born between 1978 and 1993 who grew up in each neighborhood in America. The results show dramatic racial and economic disparities. For example, children, especially Hispanic and Black children raised in southeastern San Diego by low-income parents are less likely to have low income as adults (Figure 3). Within San Diego County, Asian American and White Americans have higher median incomes than other races or ethnic categories. In fact, the median income for the most recent 5-year period (2013-2018) for Asian and White San Diego was also $93,000 lower than for Hispanic or Black Americans. 37% of San Diego residents CalFresh benefits disproportionate to the size of their county’s population. For example, Hispanic San Diego makes up 26% of the county’s population but 49% of CalFresh recipients. Black San Diego makes up 2% of the County’s population but 11% of CalFresh recipients. This list goes on.

Figure 3: The Legacy of Redlining Limits Opportunities to San Diegans

Neighborhoods redlined in 1938 have long-lasting challenges today.


LaDale Winling, Robert A. Kantor, and Nelson, "Race, Redlining, and Residential Segregation: A New Approach to Understanding the Consequences of Redlining," JANUARY 2018. The home ownership rates are: B220051: 115.4%, B220052: 123.8%, B220053: 29.7%, B220054: 28.8%, B220055: 27.0%, B220056: 25.1%, B220057: 19.2%, B220058: 14.6%, B220059: 10.6%, B220060: 2.4%, B220061: 0.8%

Figure 5: The Legacy of Redlining Limits Opportunities to San Diegans

"I want the convenience of getting my food just like everybody else."

—Dian, Managing Director, Project New Village

Understanding the San Diego County Context

PROJECT NEW VILLAGE

EQUITABLE FOOD-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT (EFOD)

In one historically Black neighborhood, the Mt. Hope Community Garden is one of the last Black community growing spaces. In the words of Dian Moss, "It's a spiritual thing. And it's a resilience effort—to create your own system. It's nice to be outside when you don't have that much connection to nature." Dian is the Managing Director of Project New Village, an effort to take urban agriculture to the next level: a historic plan making an effort to fight gentrification and improve healthy food access.

Project New Village is essentially an investment in infrastructure—a "Good Food District," as they call it—which will consist of a building with aquaplast, community space, a shared kitchen, health clinic, senior apartments, and a garden space. Project New Village had no aspirations of it being a place that they used to and consequently has a level of support. To date, they have purchased the land where the Good Food District will be built, invested in cold storage infrastructure, and are pursuing a middle-level plan.

The key challenge for Project New Village, as they develop the Good Food District, will be finding, building, and operationalizing the multi-million-dollar project. Building scalable, food-oriented development projects does not have the same return on investment as conventional development projects, so it will be a challenge to find mission-aligned funders and investors who understand the return on social capital and wealth building for BFDC communities in southeastern San Diego.

 Employee Stock Ownership Plan

MODERN TIMES (SAN DIEGO COUNTY)
EMPLOYEE-OWNED BREWERY

In 2017, Modern Times became the first brewery in California to become employee-owned (i.e., 30% of Modern Times is held in employee stock ownership plan). This is my single proudest achievement as founder CEO of Modern Times,” wrote majority owner Jacob Mellan. Mellan said that the transition to employee ownership filled all of the boxes for him: values alignment, employee retention, setting an example for other, social return on investment, tax benefits, and building an ownership culture that will succeed him when he’s ready to move on.

And Modern Times made this transition in a way that fit all of the boxes for service provider for the VEOC Employee Ownership Center (VEOC). VEOC played no role in Modern Times’ transition, of course, but the organization has substantial experience building a supportive ecosystem for employee ownership. From VEOC’s perspective, getting the ear of business advisors key to employee ownership to be pitched on as a transaction tool (Modern Times worked with several advisors, including one based in Southern California, that made the (ESOP) transaction possible). Additionally, peer examples—including becoming a peer example with the craft beer industry—have access to capital are vital. Going forward, it’s clear that Modern Times can serve as a foundational example for transforming more food system businesses to employee ownership.
Recommendations for Expanding Community Wealth Building in San Diego County’s Food System

Community wealth building models, including cooperatives, land trusts, EOFIs, and employee stock ownership plans, are key strategies for reimagining and reconfiguring our food system and local economy. Our Food Vision 2030 goals to Cultivate Justice, Fight Climate Change, and Build Resilience aim to increase health and wealth for BIPOC communities, build leadership and power to nurture community-led change, proactively address climate change, and create an adaptive local economy. The pathway to creating a more just, healthy, and sustainable food system requires a holistic approach with targeted strategies to democratically build individual and community wealth and assets, ensuring that all people have the opportunity to thrive.

Recommendations for Expanding Community Wealth Building in San Diego County’s Food System

1. Build the case for community wealth building
   - Support services to infuse community wealth building into business support services
   - Expand food system business support services
     - Incorporate community-wealth building models in wrap-around business planning, technical assistance, infrastructure development, financing, capacity, education, and research services to meet the needs of food entrepreneurs and businesses, especially those owned by and serving socially disadvantaged, Bipoc, sick, and vulnerable
     - Create opportunities for peer-to-peer learning across San Diego County’s food systems to build awareness of community-wealth building opportunities and establish a membership program matching emerging community wealth enterprises with experienced practitioners such as Mandela Grocery Cooperative or Ocean Beach People’s Organic Food Market

2. Mobilize network and coordinate actions (e.g., policies and programs) to build the case for community wealth building
   - Identify partners whose work is aligned with community wealth building strategies and assess prospective roles, including community organizing, leadership development, and capacity building groups
   - Build partnerships with value-driven business networks (e.g., racial equity and corporate social responsibility organizations such as L.E. County, Fair Trade San Diego, Black and Latino Social Justice Alliance, and Mission Impact)

3. Build a movement that uplifts a local, sustainable, and equitable food system
   - Mobilize networks and coalitions across (e.g., current development and programs) to create educational campaigns for food system businesses that elevate community-wealth building models (e.g., through webinars, resource lists, presentations, networking), with special attention paid to developing resources for socially disadvantaged and BIPOC communities, and veterans.
   - Sustain a new generation of community-wealth building practitioners and advocates by integrating community-wealth building education and training opportunities into educational program offerings, curricula, internships, and workforce development initiatives.

Generate supporting research
- Work with city and county decision-makers, researchers, and organizations (e.g., Project Equity) to assess market opportunities and measure capital leakage from food systems business
- Measure the potential of a shared asset by analyzing undervalued and vacant land within San Diego County, including public and private ownership, to encourage valuable food system development; urban agriculture or other community-driven development (e.g., localized organizations are exploring supportive and affordable housing on dormant properties)

Build the case for community wealth building
- Infuse community wealth building into business support services
- Expand food system business support services

Improve community food environments

- Mobilize network and coordinate actions (e.g., policies and programs) to support business development with a particular focus on community wealth building models (e.g., CRV, socially disadvantaged, and urban communities).
- Through policy, encourage innovation, establishment, and growth of healthy food options, discourage the over-concentration of fast food, liquor, and convenience stores in food deserts.
- Increase municipal and public sector agency support for agriculture and food access infrastructure (urban, rural, suburban) including retail and processing through streamlined policy, providing incentives, and technical assistance.

Preserve agricultural land and soils

- Develop an agricultural land trust in San Diego County.
- Scale up land conservation through existing programs (e.g., through easements, land conservation through existing programs).
- Improve community food environments.
- Mobilize network and coordinate actions (e.g., policies and programs) to support business development with a particular focus on community wealth building models (e.g., CRV, socially disadvantaged, and urban communities).
- Improve community food environments.

Transform community wealth building strategies into pillars of resilient local economies

- Generate county and municipal support for community wealth building.
- Leverage the SDFSA network, workforce and economic development opportunities.
- Transform community wealth building strategies into pillars of resilient local economies.
- Generate county and municipal support for community wealth building.
- Leverage the SDFSA network, workforce and economic development opportunities.

Reports and Resources Reviewed

- "The City of San Diego's Food Policy and Planning Assessment" (e.g., local implementation of AB 857 in public and 93% community-land trust programs).
- "Deepening the SDFSA Network, Workforce and Economic Development Opportunities in Community Wealth Building" (e.g., local implementation of AB 857 in public and 93% community-land trust programs).
- "Deepening the SDFSA Network, Workforce and Economic Development Opportunities in Community Wealth Building" (e.g., local implementation of AB 857 in public and 93% community-land trust programs).

RESOURCES

- California Center for Cooperative Development
- Community Wealth Building, Democracy Collaboratives
- Democracy at Work Institute
- New Economy Coalition
- Project Reclaiming Agriculture and Markets
- Sustainable Food and Farm Center
- Sustainable Food and Farm Center
This report is part of San Diego County Food Vision 2030—a bold, 10-year plan and movement to cultivate a healthy, sustainable, and just food system in San Diego County. Food Vision 2030 is an initiative of the San Diego Food System Alliance, developed with the support of many partners.

This report in particular was supported by the Beyster Foundation for Enterprise Development (BFED). We thank BFED for their vision and partnership.

sdfoodvision2030.org