

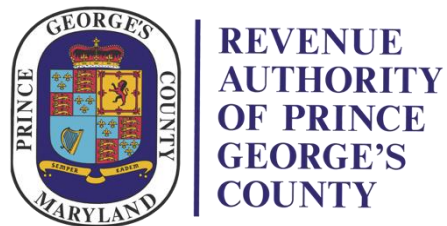
# Prince George's County Agriculture & Food Security Innovation Center Feasibility Study

## Stakeholder Engagement Workshop

Wednesday, March 18, 2026

**Revenue Authority of Prince George's County**

RFP No RA-AFSIC-10-2024



# STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT WORKSHOP

Prince George's County  
Agriculture and Food Security  
Innovation Center Feasibility Study

## Local & Minority Owned Agricultural Stakeholder Forum

Calling all black, minority owned growers, farmers, producers and buyers. We want to hear from you!

**March 18, 2026 | 4:00 - 6:00pm**

Prince George's Soil Conservation District  
5301 Marlboro Race Track Rd  
Upper Marlboro, MD 20772

**Register here**  
(includes virtual meeting link):

[https://form.jotform.com/  
260564706680158](https://form.jotform.com/260564706680158)



## Goals

- Increase project support by engaging a wider group of stakeholders, leaders, and residents
- Discuss ongoing impactful resources as well as challenges across the value chain of the regional food system.
- Begin identifying potential AFSIC partners
- Refine feasibility study goals by incorporating insights and feedback

# AGENDA

- 4 Introductions
- 6 Project Goals
- 7 Study Goals
- 10 Work Plan & Timeline
- 13 Initial Findings
- 17 Breakout Activity
- 22 Next Steps



# PROJECT & ADVISORY TEAM

County Project Team	Title
<b>Nicole Hall</b>	<i>Prince George's County Revenue Authority, Chief Real Estate Officer</i>
<b>Steve Darcey</b>	<i>Prince George's Soil Conservation District, District Manager / Executive Director</i>
<b>Kim Rush-Lynch</b>	<i>Prince George's Soil Conservation District, Program Manager</i>
<b>Chinwe Odife</b>	<i>Prince George's County Revenue Authority, Deputy Director</i>
<b>Judith Danso</b>	<i>Prince George's County Revenue Authority, Executive Director</i>

Advisory	Organization
<b>Kayla Agonoy</b>	<i>ECO City Farms</i>
<b>Josue Barrera</b>	<i>Glory Fields Farm</i>
<b>Chantal Brooks</b>	<i>804 Cattle Company</i>
<b>Michele Burton</b>	<i>Maryland-National Capital Park &amp; Planning Commission</i>
<b>Brittany Drakeford</b>	<i>Capital Market</i>
<b>Pride Ebile</b>	<i>University of Maryland - Extension</i>
<b>Kenny Hilliard</b>	<i>Kenny's Kale</i>
<b>Jasmine Livingstone</b>	<i>Deep Root Farm</i>
<b>Brad Miller</b>	<i>Miller Farms</i>
<b>Margaret Morgan-Hubbard</b>	<i>ECO City Farms</i>
<b>Martin Proulx</b>	<i>Maryland Department of Agriculture</i>
<b>Liz Robinson</b>	<i>Prince George's County Farm Bureau</i>
<b>Kathy Anderson</b>	<i>Ujamaa</i>
<b>Pharyn Smith</b>	<i>Prince George's County Agriculture Resources Advisory Committee</i>
<b>Mike Whitt</b>	<i>Whitt's Farm</i>
<b>Dan Gilotti</b>	<i>Greenbelt Coop</i>
<b>Truphena Choti</b>	<i>AfriThrive</i>
<b>Nicole Reese</b>	<i>People's Market DMV</i>
<b>LaWann Stribling</b>	<i>Stribble Treats</i>

NVA Team	Title	Role
<b>Avi Mallinger</b>	<i>Project Manager</i>	Project leader
<b>Andrea Carbine</b>	<i>Senior Director</i>	Team leader
<b>Becca Tobin</b>	<i>Research Analyst</i>	Research analysis lead

# NEW VENTURE ADVISORS



**New Venture Advisors** is a consulting firm that specializes in food system planning and infrastructure development.

Since 2009, NVA has helped more than 100 communities across North America identify strategies to develop food systems, food enterprises, and food policies that are good for farmers, food entrepreneurs, consumers, and the intermediaries that connect them.

# ATTENDEE POLL

## What is your role in the food system?



## What do you believe are the biggest issues in Prince George's County that a food hub can address?



# AFSIC FEASIBILITY STUDY GOALS

The goal of the AFSIC feasibility study is to **consider the design for a food hub model that meets the needs of the community, is operationally sound, and is financially feasible.**

Such a facility will have a mission to:

- **Promote economic growth** for the food and agriculture sectors
- Enhance **support for stakeholders across the food value chain** including growers, producers, processors, mission-driven organizations, and end consumers
- **Bridge gaps in food equity** and community health
- Have **alignment with Prince George's Fresh program**

# WHAT IS A FOOD HUB?

A **food hub** is a business or organization (*a for-profit or not-for-profit*) that supports the aggregation, sales, distribution, marketing, and/or logistics of local produce and products.

The purpose of a food hub is to support the development/growth of local agriculture by creating new opportunities for **local farmers and producers to sell their products.**

**Food hubs connect local/regional farms and small businesses to larger buyers** like grocery stores, restaurants, and institutions.

## Potential components of a Food Hub

- **Aggregation & storage of food** (produce, meat, or value-added products) from local growers & producers
- **Distribution** and logistics support to commercial vendors (grocery, institutions, & retail foodservice)
- **Long-term production & processing** for specific food businesses across the value chain
- Consumer retail footprint such as a **farmer's market or permanent storefront**
- **Shared & flexible kitchen space** to support early-stage value added or foodservice businesses
- **Community & office space** targeting food system organizations
- **Workforce development programs** & training for food and agriculture

# CASE STUDY: THE GOOD ACRE

Nonprofit food hub supporting small-mid sized and emerging farmers in the Minneapolis metro area.

**Location:** Falcon Heights, MN

**Size / Scope:** 4,700 sq ft warehouse

**Cost to Build:** \$2.77M (Opened in 2015)

**Build Funding Sources:** Private family foundation

**Budget:** \$2.6 million

## Services:

- Market access to schools, hospitals, other large institutions
- Training including business development, crop planting, sustainable farming education
- Infrastructure such as refrigeration, and storage space
- CSA program bringing local food to end consumers

## Impact:

- \$2.6 million in food purchases in 2024 & \$326,892 in wholesale revenue
- 140 farm partners
- Partnerships with hunger relief organizations to distribute culturally relevant foods to families in need



# WORK PLAN

## Partnership & Consensus Building

- Initiation - kickoff with Project Team, build project hub
- Develop advisory committee – establish roles, timeline, engagement requirements.
- Stakeholder engagement workshop to clarify and finalize project mission, vision, goals and objectives.
- Project 1-pager

## Market Analysis

- Develop research instruments and research plan
- Literature review
- Secondary research – demographic, food, nutrition, education, training, & ag market data to get an understanding of market need and potential for a food hub
- Interviews (up to 60)
- Survey targeting farmers, food businesses, community orgs, and end consumers
- Analysis and report

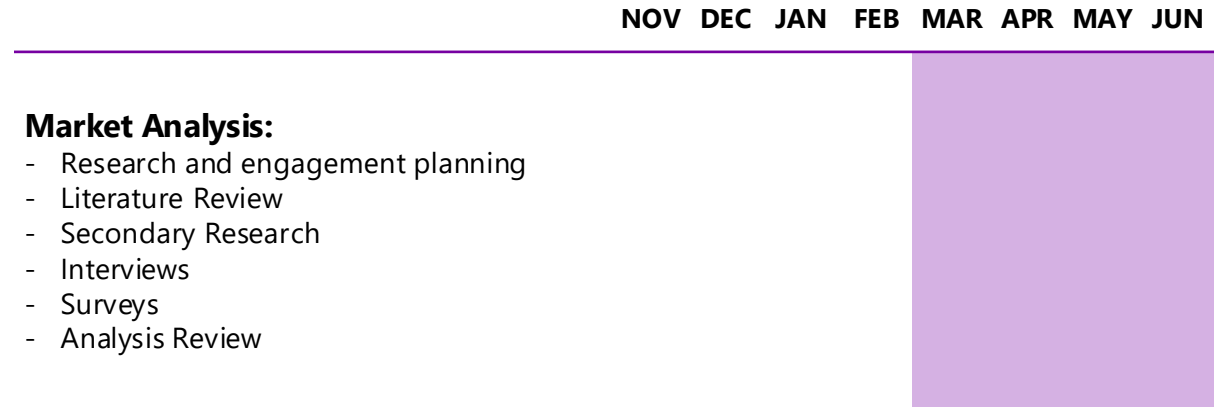
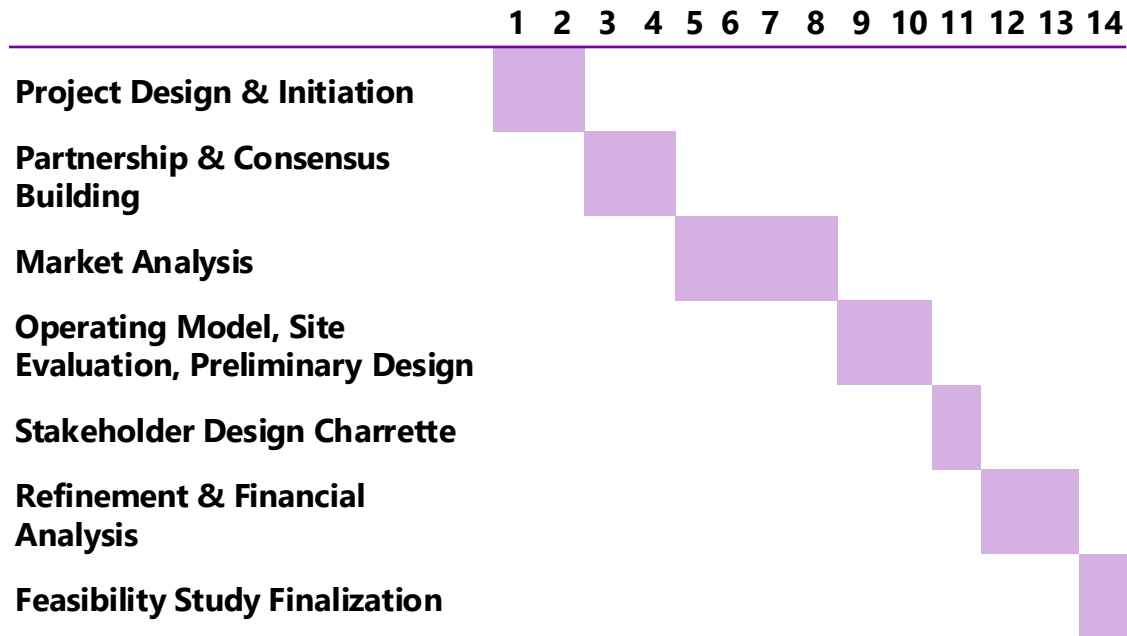
## Operating Model and Facility Evaluation

- Recommend a range of concept and operating models
- Stakeholder design charette
- Perform site visit and evaluate potential locations and facilities for future development
- Refine operating model

## Design, Financials, & Finalization

- Facility design
- Financial analysis
- Risk assessment
- Go/No-go decision
- Roadmap for next steps
- Funding development plan
- Final report and presentation

# TIMELINE



- The full feasibility study is projected to take approximately **14 months to complete**.
- To ensure that we can adapt and navigate this scope as a large project team – we have divided the complete project work plan and timeline into **two sections of scope**:
  - Part 1: Initiation & Market Analysis
  - Part 2: Operating Model, Design, & Final Report

# RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- **Evaluate existing programs and resources** supporting the local food economy and food access that may support or be in competition to a food hub.
- **Assess market need and interest** in the potential food hub components, including:
  - Aggregation
  - Food Processing and Manufacturing
  - Distribution
  - Food-As-Medicine
  - Retail Consumer Access
  - Business support
- **Identify resources to support the project** (i.e. funding, locations, existing programming).
- **Identify key partner organizations** and potential spoke partners.

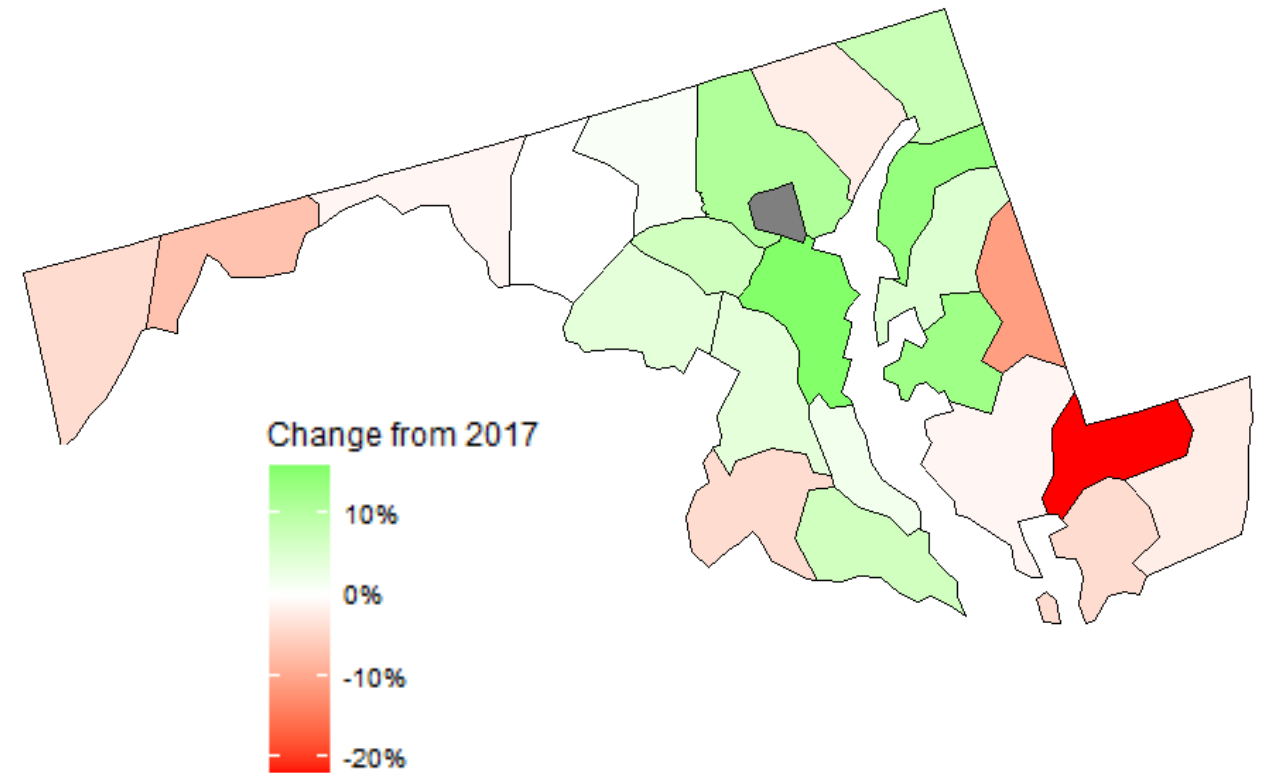
## Research and Engagement Actions

- Literature Review
- Secondary Research
- Interviews
- Surveys
- Analysis Review

# INITIAL FINDINGS

## The County's farmers are resilient in the face of an increasingly difficult and volatile ag landscape

- Nationwide, **from 2017 to 2022** the number of US farms **dropped by 7%** along with **20-million-acre decline of farmland**.
- The number of **farms in MD increased by 1%** and the number of **farms in the County increased by 4%**. However, **total farmland in PGC declined by 4%**.
- In Maryland, Agriculture generates **\$8B+** in economic activity, with **\$3B** in sales. **Poultry industry** accounts for roughly half of the econ activity, and livestock encompasses **60%+** of MD's farms. Livestock reliance gears farmers towards commodity/grain production, but MD is still a **grain deficit state** and must import for animal feed.
- **Most operators** must supplement farm income with other work.



USDA Ag Census, 2022

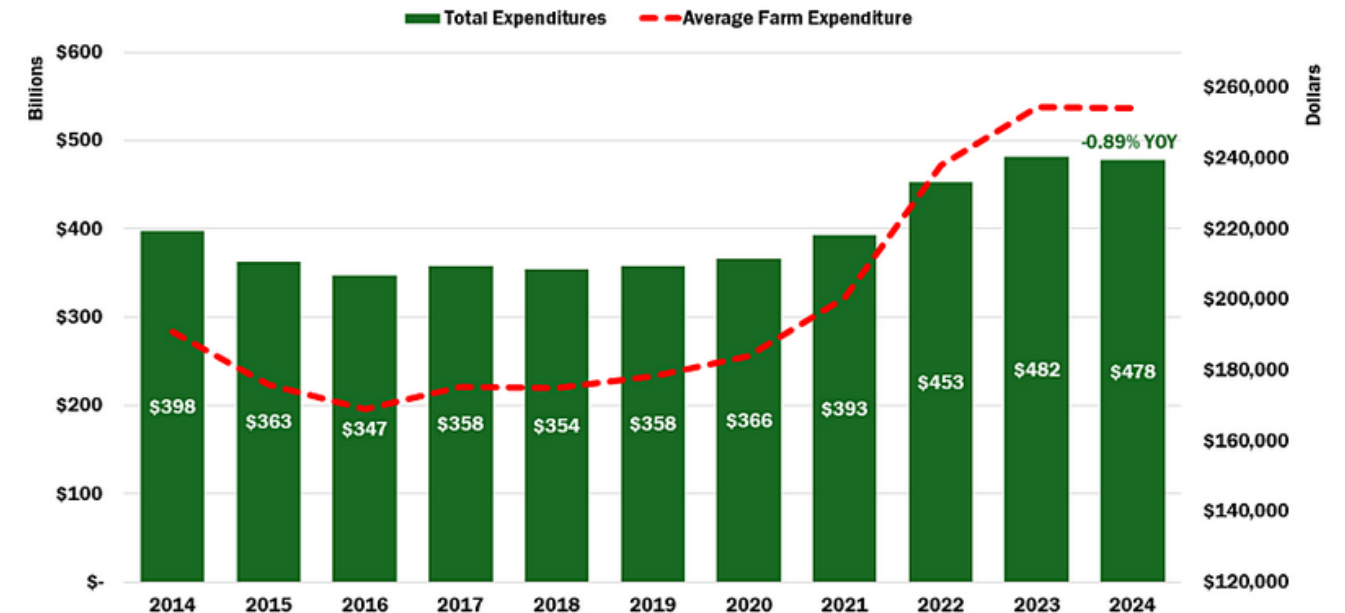
# INITIAL FINDINGS

## Farming is more expensive than ever

- Rising input (including seed, feed, fuel, and fertilizer), equipment, and labor costs hurt profit margins.
- MD has some of the most expensive farmland in the country, a barrier for new entrants and the expansion of existing ops.
- Interest rates remain high and farm funding sources such as federal grants are tenuous.
- Extreme weather and climate change challenge farmers with drought, flooding, extreme heat, saltwater intrusion, and disease pressures.
- Farmers also face regulatory and policy uncertainty, market volatility, and supply chain challenges.

### FARM PRODUCTION EXPENSES

Total Expenses and Average Expense by Farm | 2014-2024



 American Farm Bureau Federation

Source: USDA NASS

# INITIAL FINDINGS

## Food prices continue to rise, putting pressure on Prince George's County residents.

- Nationally, grocery prices **rose by 5.3%** in November 2025 compared to the previous year.
- In Maryland, grocery prices **rose by 7% - the third highest increase nationally.**

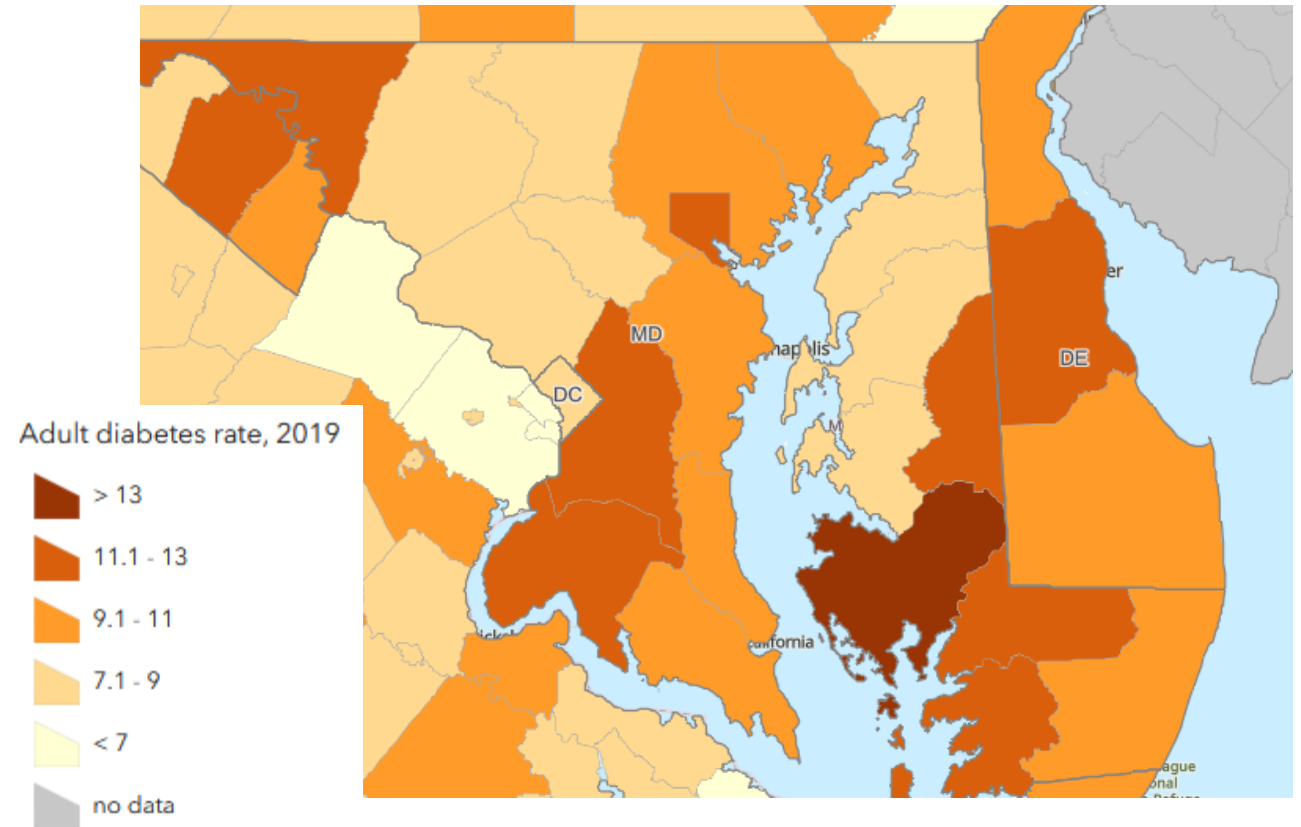
State	Year-over-Year Grocery Price Increase
Pennsylvania	8.2%
Vermont	7%
<b>Maryland</b>	<b>7%</b>
West Virginia	6.9%
New Jersey	6.8%
Massachusetts	6.6%
Connecticut	6.4%

*Journal of Consumer Research (Consumer Affairs)*

# INITIAL FINDINGS

## Prince George's County residents face challenges in accessing healthy foods, impacting community health.

- Prince George's County has elevated rates of obesity and diet-related chronic diseases such as diabetes.
- Previous work done by Prince George's County found that most people see the connection between food and health – **the problem is access.**
- High food prices, transportation limitations, available food quality, nutritional knowledge gaps, and other factors such as busy lives impact are often cited as key limitations for County residents to buy and prepare healthy foods.



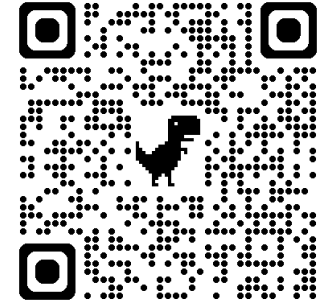
USDA Economic Research Service Food Atlas

# BREAKOUT ACTIVITY

## Outline food system issues based on 4 key audiences:

- Farmers, growers, ranchers, food producers
- Supply chain, distributors
- Retailers, foodservice providers
- End consumers

Use the QR code to complete the activity virtually:



**RESOURCES,  
ASSETS &  
OPPORTUNITIES**

**CHALLENGES**

**WHAT'S NEEDED**

# BREAKOUT ACTIVITY

## Farmers, growers, ranchers, food producers

### RESOURCES & OPPORTUNITIES

- Strong community connections – everybody knows someone
- Existing aggregators and high interest
- Non-profits supporting urban farming, training and sustainability
- Experience and knowledge within immigrant communities
- Existing Dairy Coop supporting small dairy farmers in the county
- Certified Naturally Grown designation
- Mid-Atlantic black farmers caucus
- Quality farmers

### CHALLENGES

- High costs: labor, high cost of living, equipment, infrastructure
- Land access, unequal access to opportunities for certain demographics
- Lack of opportunities and business knowledge for urban and micro-farmers to scale
- Aging farmers / need for succession planning
- Balancing off-farm job
- Access to grants/funding
- Climate & climate change
- Permitting issues
- Input costs increasing
- Instances of farmers markets bring shut down
- Lack of access to grants
- Small & urban farmers left out of supply chain

### WHAT'S NEEDED

- Infrastructure access, including cold storage, freezing/drying, packing, transportation, fencing, equipment and more
- Coordination and cooperation between farmers to lower costs and scale into new markets
- Business/grower support, training, back office and traceability technology
- Less restrictive permitting requirements
- Food processing and value-added production resources
- State, local financial support
- Farmland accessibility
- Succession planning
- Equipment training & Shared tool library
- Seeds
- Land stewardship model
- Permanent farmers market

# BREAKOUT ACTIVITY

## Supply chain, processing, & distribution

### RESOURCES & OPPORTUNITIES

- Education resources available in the area
- Urban Farm Incubator
- Market demand for culturally relevant produce
- Existing distributors – Keany, Sunbelt
- Blue Henry – commercial dehydration
- Good roadways make transportation easier

### CHALLENGES

- Cold chain from field to store/market to consumer
- Availability of all-season produce
- Availability of value-added foods and processing locations
- Large county (area)
- Distribution margins impact producer profits
- Transportation
- County-wide awareness
- Lack of confidence in product quality
- Lack of collaboration
- Getting on supplier lists

### WHAT'S NEEDED

- Centralized info and data
- Cold storage infrastructure to meet demand
- Support with transportation costs including van and truck rentals
- Facilities for processing and production of value-added products, incl. commercial kitchens
- Cooperative model or coordination among small farms
- Annual event to bring farmers and distributors together
- Trailers for equipment
- Marketing support to residents

# BREAKOUT ACTIVITY

## Retailers & foodservice providers

### RESOURCES & OPPORTUNITIES

- Existing food co-ops & farmers markets: People's Market DMV, Grassfed on the Hill, Greenbelt Co-Op, FreshFarm, Deep Roots
- Commercial kitchen for value-added producers and caterers
- Food Trucks
- Empty retail stalls at malls and strip malls
- Too many big business / chains
- Clean / non-GMO grocers

### CHALLENGES

- Retail-ready products, quality assurance
- Consistency and seasonality in products
- Access to institutional opportunities such as schools
- Lack of local meat processing facility
- Need consistent offerings from farmers
- Pricing challenges, expected discounts from retailers – small margins for farmers
- Farmers market permitting
- Small caterers need support
- Retail spaces are too costly
- Low quality produce & meat
- Too much non-food retail
- Retail spaces are too expensive

### WHAT'S NEEDED

- Links to local food purchasers
- Marketing and merchandising consistency
- Policy - Local food purchasing requirements
- Bulk buyers program/option
- Food education
- Incorporate local food into PGCPs food program
- Conference / meeting space
- Tax Incentives to buy local & compliance
- County-owned farmers market
- Commercial kitchen
- Stricter policies on restaurant cleanliness
- Resources for PG residents
- Expansion of cottage food laws
- More Amish stores

# BREAKOUT ACTIVITY

## End Consumers

### RESOURCES & OPPORTUNITIES

- Existing co-ops, food hubs, and farmers markets in the region: People's Market DMV, Grassfed on the Hill, Greenbelt Co-Op, FreshFarm, Deep Roots
- Non-profits and support organizations
- Educational resources such as PGC Community College Culinary Arts Center
- PGC Public Schools Agriculture & Natural Resources program
- UFI Community Kitchen cooking classes

### CHALLENGES

- Not enough retail grocery with local food near residents
- Access: limited budgets, busy schedules
- Lack of comprehensive and up-to-date information: how to find producers, prices, seasonal availability
- Poor quality industrial food
- Lack of nutrition education
- Shelf life for local products too short
- "Local" is not as local as it should be
- Don't know what to buy
- Organic produce high prices
- Quality of product
- Same product everywhere
- Carbon footprint of conventional produce
- Pesticides and chemicals in conventional food

### WHAT'S NEEDED

- Websites, ordering capability, customer service to connect consumers to local farmers
- Affordable prices for healthy foods
- Marketing to grow interest in local producers
- Healthy food education
- Pipelines to small international markets
- Transportation
- Access to culturally relevant produce
- Info on accessing local food
- Non-GMO foods
- More farmers markets

# NEXT STEPS

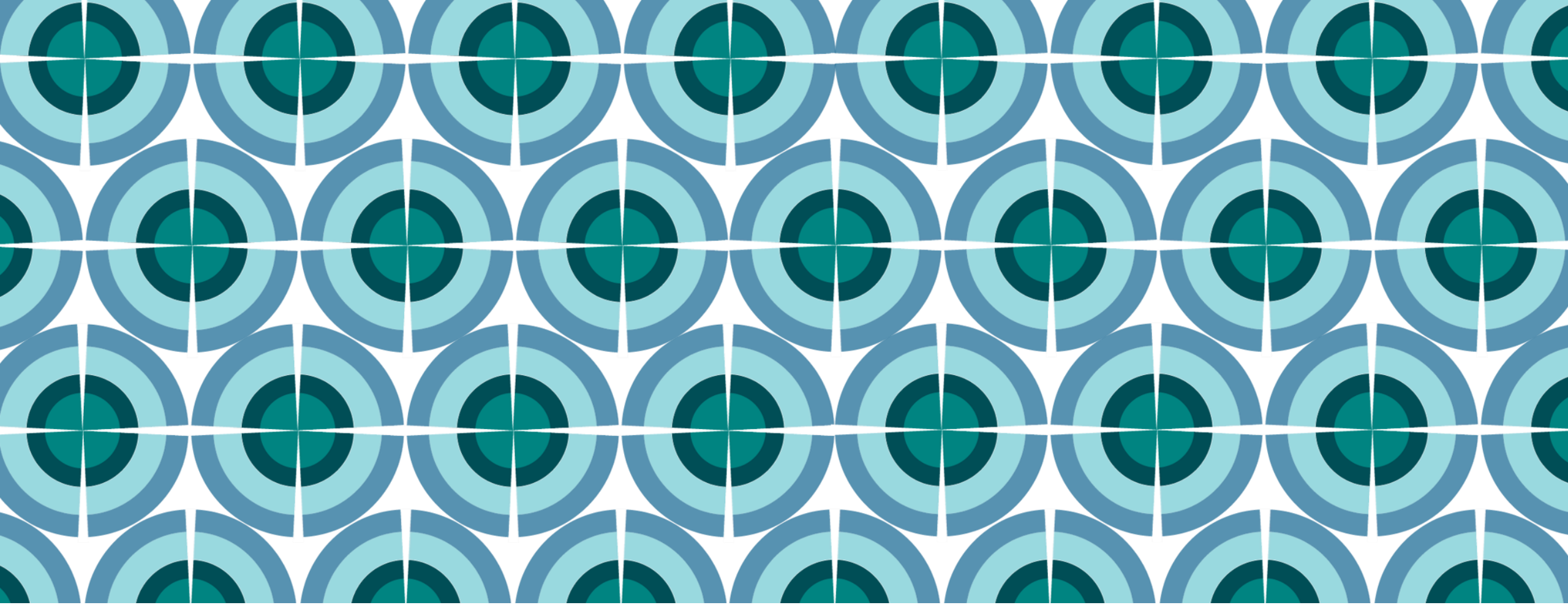
## **1. Complete secondary research & research analysis**

## **2. Interviews**

- Targeting 50+ stakeholders across the regional food system for interviews
- Timeline: March – April 2026
- Goals:
  - Production, procurement, sales, and distribution methods
  - Challenges & needs that a Food Hub could alleviate
  - Existing resources
  - Potential programming and partnerships
  - Infrastructure requirements
  - Location

## **3. Survey**

- Dynamic online survey via Qualtrics
- Timeline: Late March – Early May 2026
- Approximately 60 total questions
  - Most respondents will answer approx. 40 questions
- Five (5) target stakeholder groups
  - Farmers
  - Food makers / producers
  - Retail & foodservice businesses
  - Food system organizations, advocates, and leaders
  - End consumers



**NEW VENTURE ADVISORS LLC<sup>®</sup>**

*You make change happen. We help it flourish.<sup>®</sup>*

# CASE STUDY: COMMON MARKET

Flagship location launched in Philadelphia (Mid-Atlantic) in 2008 and has since been a successful nonprofit food distributor expanding into New Jersey, Texas, Georgia, & Illinois, with a focus on distributing local food to institutions & low-income communities.

**Organization Size / Budget:** \$30.7M budget, \$34M revenue

**Services:**

- Aggregation & distribution for wholesale & institutional markets (incl. 100+ healthcare sites, 80+ college campuses, & 350+ school dining facilities)
- Emphasizing institution over restaurant foodservice
- CSA 'Fresh Box' program for Food As Medicine / Food Access programs
- Loan services to support farmer resiliency

**Impact:**

- 45 million pounds of food distributed in 2024, nationally
- 146 partner farms

**Lessons Learned:**

- Scaling model allows organization to bring operational learnings to new markets
- Focus on local aggregation & distribution with institutions
- Proven track record and food safety approval eases institutional partnership development

