

# Engaging Immigrant Latino Families in the Local Food System

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# Local Food Systems



# Community Food Security

- **Community food security:**
  - a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet
  - sustainable food system
  - community self-reliance
  - social justice (Hamm & Bellows)

# Background

- Limited availability of healthy foods contribute to higher rates of overweight and obesity among Latino children and families.
- Food insecurity is double the national rate among Latinos (Herrera, Khanna, Davis, 2009)
- Latinos are underrepresented among those actively engaged in their local food systems (Allen, 2010)
- Currently, 38.2% of Latino children ages 2 to 19 are overweight or obese, compared with 31.7 percent of all children those ages (Ogden, Carroll et al, 2010)

# Our Aims

- Determine the most effective strategies to overcome existing language and cultural barriers that discourage or prevent Latino families' participation in local food system in our region
- Develop a plan to involve Latino families in the local food system and in food system planning

# Methods

- Formation of regional steering committee (n=7)
- Key informant interviews (n=15)
- Farmers' Market Tours (n= 200)
- Focus groups (n= 64)



# Steering Committee

- Benton County
  - Iglesia Emanuel
  - Strengthening Rural Families
- Linn County
  - OSU Extension- Nutrition
  - Centro de Bienvenida
- Polk County
  - Oregon Farmworker Housing Development Corporation
  - OCDC Independence





# Key Findings

1. Most participants in our study prefer fresh foods that are grown locally due to taste, quality and trust of source.
2. Gardens, Farmer's Markets, and Farm Stands, in theory, are culturally appropriate sources of food.
3. There is a high need for Spanish language resources on how to grow, prepare and purchase local food.
4. Connections to public agencies such as churches, schools and farmworker housing are important facilitators to accessing fresh, healthy food for participants.



# Next Steps:

- Reconnect with participants to discuss results and plan next steps
- Pilot Spanish Language Gardening Education Program: *Sembrando la Cena* (Seed to Supper)
- Research the role of community networks on accessing healthy foods among immigrant Latino families



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# Questions?

