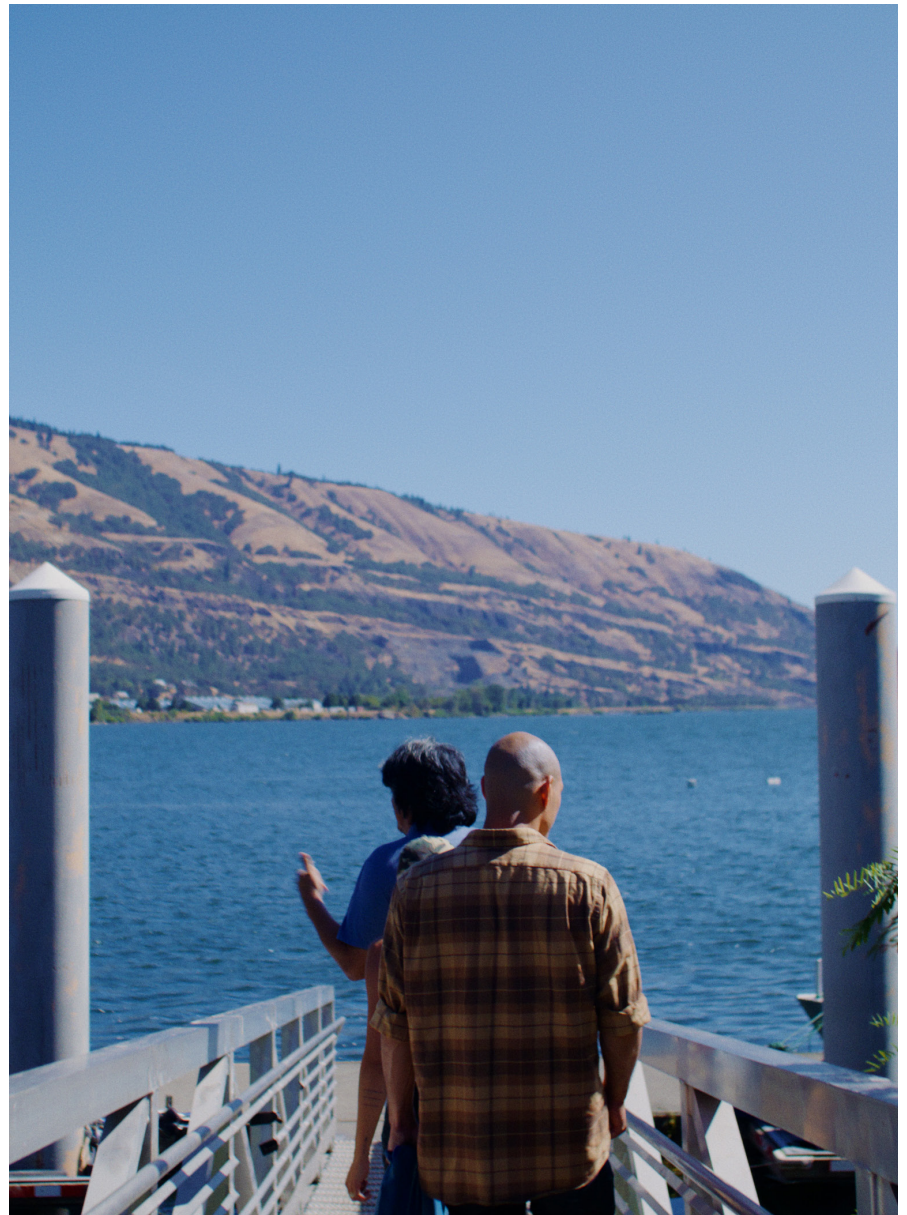




Equitable Food Economy Collaborative

BIPOC Economies in the Portland Metro Region Action Plan

Prepared July 2023



Presented By:



PROSPER
PORTLAND

Ecotrust

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Photo Credit:

View of the Willamette River, by Kari Rowe

Executive Summary

The Equitable Food Economy Collaborative is a community-centered planning project that leverages the partnerships of regional food system leaders to set priorities, connect resources and services, measure progress and strengthen collaborations to address gaps, align on common goals and co-develop interventions that will lead to a more equitable and resilient food economy in the Portland metro region.

We envision, producers and food entrepreneurs will experience fair access to markets, resources and capital; collaboration and coordination among local food producers and entrepreneurs will grow stronger; and barriers obstructing the movement of regional food products missing from the marketplace, particularly those from communities of color and historically underrepresented communities, will be removed.

31%

percent of the population is BIPOC in the Portland Metro Region.¹

22%

percent of all businesses are BIPOC-owned in the Portland Region.¹

4%

percentage of population who identify as Black in the Portland Region.²

1%

percent of all businesses in the Portland Metro Region are Black-owned.²

Less than 10

number of Native-owned brick and mortar business in the Portland Region, none of them food-based.³

Key Themes Explored

Land & Sovereignty

Examined data on land ownership and the importance of sovereignty in agriculture for culturally rooted, healthy foods in local communities.

Wisdom & Healing

Identified strategies to strengthen the economic wellbeing and health equity of socially disadvantaged communities and producers of color.

BIPOC-Led Economies

Reviewed initiatives that promote inclusive market opportunities for entrepreneurs and food businesses in the Portland metropolitan region.

Featured Recommendations

Reduce barriers to land access, land ownership, and land management opportunities for BIPOC farmers and entrepreneurs.

Access to Capital

Cultural Preservation and Representation

Community Engagement and Partnerships

Expand, fund, and support culturally specific business assistance for BIPOC businesses, producers and micro-enterprises.

Technical Assistance

Mentorship and Training

Support Networks and Associations

Create opportunities that increase access to capital for BIPOC entrepreneurs, culturally rooted organizations and businesses.

Policy and Advocacy

Data Collection and Analysis

Tailored Investment Programs

Introduction

The Equitable Food Economy Collaborative is a partnership between regional nonprofits, producers, Oregon State University, and the Oregon Department of Agriculture. Prosper Portland, the economic and urban development agency for the city of Portland, along with Ecotrust, a collaborative nonprofit that works with community and organizations toward an equitable, prosperous and climate-smart future, convened a steering committee made up of community-based organizations and food system stakeholders to provide direction and oversight on the development of recommendations for a path toward a more equitable regional food economy.

The steering committee, also referred to as the collaborative or the partners, worked together to identify shared goals that focus on improving access for agriculture to grow more healthy and culturally rooted foods for local communities, strengthening the economic wellbeing and health equity of socially disadvantaged communities, and creating inclusive market opportunities for agricultural and food businesses in the Portland metro region.

Centered throughout this planning process are the engagements with diverse communities and entrepreneurs in the agricultural and food economy,

specifically with Black, Indigenous and Latine, migrant and immigrant communities. Discoveries focused on barriers to entrepreneurship, community development, and living wage job creation for BIPOC businesses, including key drivers affecting the development of an equitable and resilient food economy.

The term BIPOC is used throughout this report to identify Black, Indigenous and all People of Color. It references the varying lived experiences of people of color (POC) and in particular, the impacts that racism and systemic inequalities have had on Black and Indigenous communities.

Our collaborative wants to acknowledge that through this process we did not engage in listening sessions with our region's Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities. We recognize the impact this may have and the breadth of knowledge and experience that is missing from these conversations. We look forward to building stronger relationships with our region's community of AAPI farmers, entrepreneurs, and food system leaders as we plan for the implementation of the recommendations featured in this report.

The findings and recommendations provided throughout create a guide for collaboration among food system stakeholders. They include programmatic solutions, partnership and capacity-building developments that offer a road map to build racial and social equity into our regional food economy.



Photo Credit:
Good Rain Farm,
by Kari Rowe

Overview

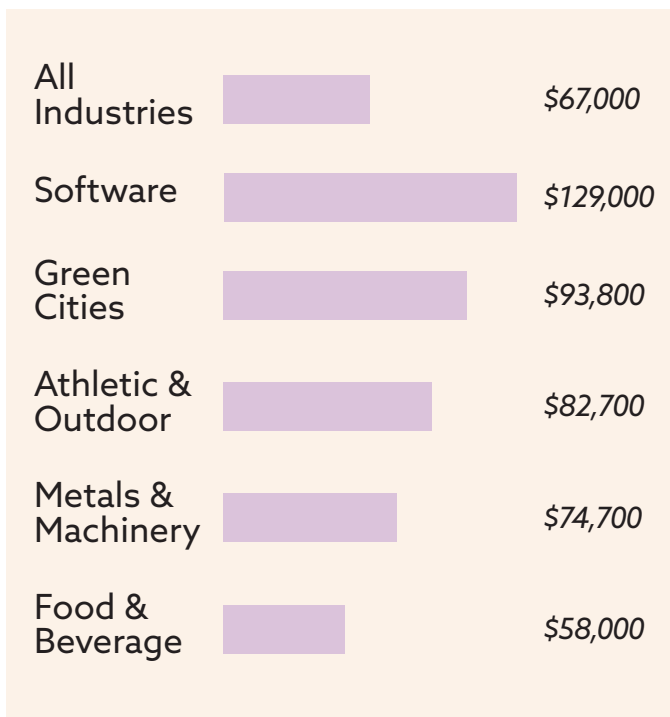
Agriculture in Oregon is a growing \$42 billion dollar industry; nearly 2,000 new farms were established in 2021. In Oregon, 16 million acres are dedicated to farming, which includes 6.8% of the state’s workforce; food processing and sales include an additional 13.5% of Oregon’s workers. Given the prominence of the agriculture and food sectors in Oregon, it’s no surprise that food processing is one of Oregon’s most profitable manufacturing industries.⁴

The Portland metro region⁵ contributes to the larger food economy with its many natural resources and opportunities for growth in the agriculture and manufacturing sectors. It is home to 9,632 farms of varying sizes and is a leader of small, diversified farm production in Oregon. Collectively, the region’s farms encompass 1,005,357 acres in farmland with a value of just over \$1 billion in annual total agricultural products sold.⁶ As an economic hub of the state, Portland provides resources and market access for farmers and jobs for rural community members. So how does this economic activity translate to wealth-creating opportunities for Black, Indigenous, and all People of Color (BIPOC) in the Portland metro region?

In the Portland region, 31% of the population is BIPOC, with a BIPOC business ownership rate of 22%.⁷ Black communities represent 4% of the population, yet only 1% of businesses are Black-owned.⁸ Portland currently has less than 10 Native-owned brick and mortar businesses, none of which are food-based.⁹

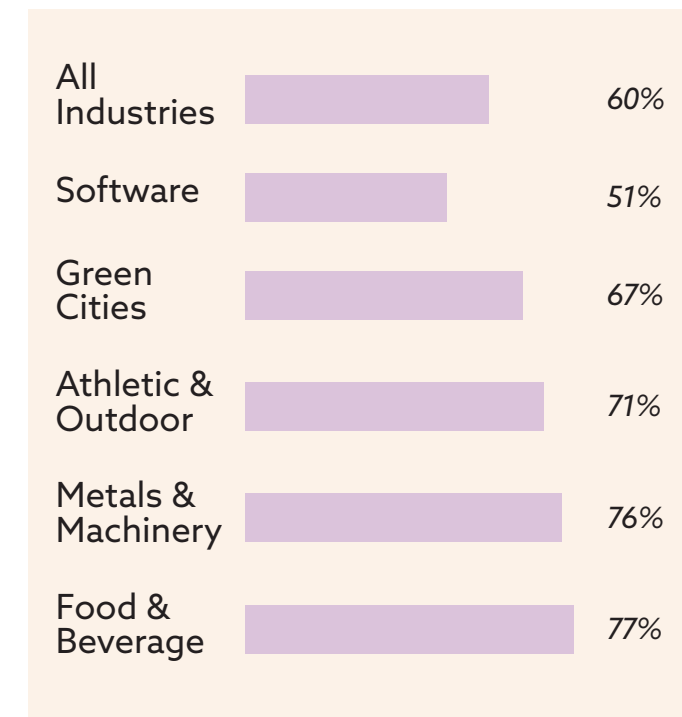
When we look at living wage per traded sector industry clusters, Figure 1, we can see that the Food and Beverage industry provides low- to middle-income wages compared to other industries. In

Fig. 1 | Wages by Priority Industry Cluster¹⁰



Multnomah County, data shows that only 40% of the total workforce has at least a four-year college degree. For the Food and Beverage cluster this percentage is 23%, meaning that 77% of the workforce does not have a four year degree, see Figure 2. This disparity likely results in lower wages and reduced career mobility in the cluster.¹¹ New resources and allocations are being created to address these disparities. In Oregon, the state legislature advanced innovative funding investments through the Economic Equity Investment Act, which centers on building economic stability and equity among disadvantaged and historically underserved communities. The program allocated \$15 million

Fig. 2 | Percentage of Workers Without a College Degree by Priority Industry Cluster¹²



“Investments in food equity contribute to improved health outcomes; employment opportunities, including job training and job placement; strengthening of community ties and cultural heritage; and a greater political voice for advocacy and policy change.”

— Harvesting Opportunity: The Power of Regional Food System Investments to Transform Communities: Chapter 4: Advancing Equity through Local and Regional Food Systems

to organizations which, in turn, implemented programs and provided resources to eligible beneficiaries to address long-standing economic inequities in key areas: ownership of land and property; entrepreneurship and business development; workforce and intergenerational wealth building. Although these response-centered funding sources are not firmly cemented, they create opportunities for the cross-pollination of pre-existing relationships and collaborations among networks of organizations. The goal of this comprehensive, community-led planning initiative is to enable the Portland metro region to align behind a common framework that will contribute to catalyzing the development of a resilient and equitable regional food economy. In the food economy we envision producers and food entrepreneurs will experience fair access to markets, resources and capital; organizations will be able to set priorities, connect resources and services, and measure progress toward shared outcomes; collaboration and coordination among local food producers and entrepreneurs will grow stronger; and barriers obstructing the movement of regional food products missing from the marketplace, particularly those from communities of color and historically underrepresented communities, will be removed.

Data & Findings

We conducted a scan of publicly and privately available data on the BIPOC food economy in Greater Portland, in order to understand more clearly the context in which our partnership is working. We collected data from USDA on the number of farmers (producers), farms (operations), and acres operated by BIPOC farmers in the four counties of Clackamas, Hood River, Multnomah, and Washington, all in Oregon. Our data scan included direct downloads from the QuickStats website of the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), as well as a custom tabulation prepared for us by Dave Losh, the Oregon State Statistician (Northwest Region) at NASS, and coordinated for us by Amy Gilroy, Trade Development Manager at Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA).

Our analyses are informed by the work of Horst and Marion (2019)¹³, who document the legacy of discrimination, dispossession, and exploitation of BIPOC people and communities in United States agriculture dating from the colonial

era. This legacy persists in extreme inequality of farmland ownership by race, both nationally and within the Portland region. This inequality has worsened throughout the 20th century, as agricultural industrialization led to concentration of landownership that disproportionately impacted BIPOC farmers. BIPOC farmers have suffered from ongoing discrimination in access to credit and technical assistance. They own and operate smaller farms on average, and are hence more likely to be foreclosed or otherwise pushed out of farming due to lack of access to credit, services, or other factors.

Contextual Data on Farmland Ownership and Operation

We sought to understand the distribution of farmland ownership and production by racial and ethnic identity groups in our four chosen Oregon counties. One difficulty we encountered was that USDA tracks racial and ethnic data separately. Racial categories comprised American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Black/African American, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and white.¹⁴ Ethnic categories comprised Hispanic or Not Hispanic; an individual of Hispanic identification could belong to any race. However, very few USDA data points identified which race or

racially Hispanic individuals identify with.

We were able to find one item for which this comprehensive data was available: the number of farm producers in the four counties we study. USDA defines a producer as a person who is involved in making decisions about the management of a farm.¹⁵ In this discussion we use the terms “producer” and “farmer” interchangeably.

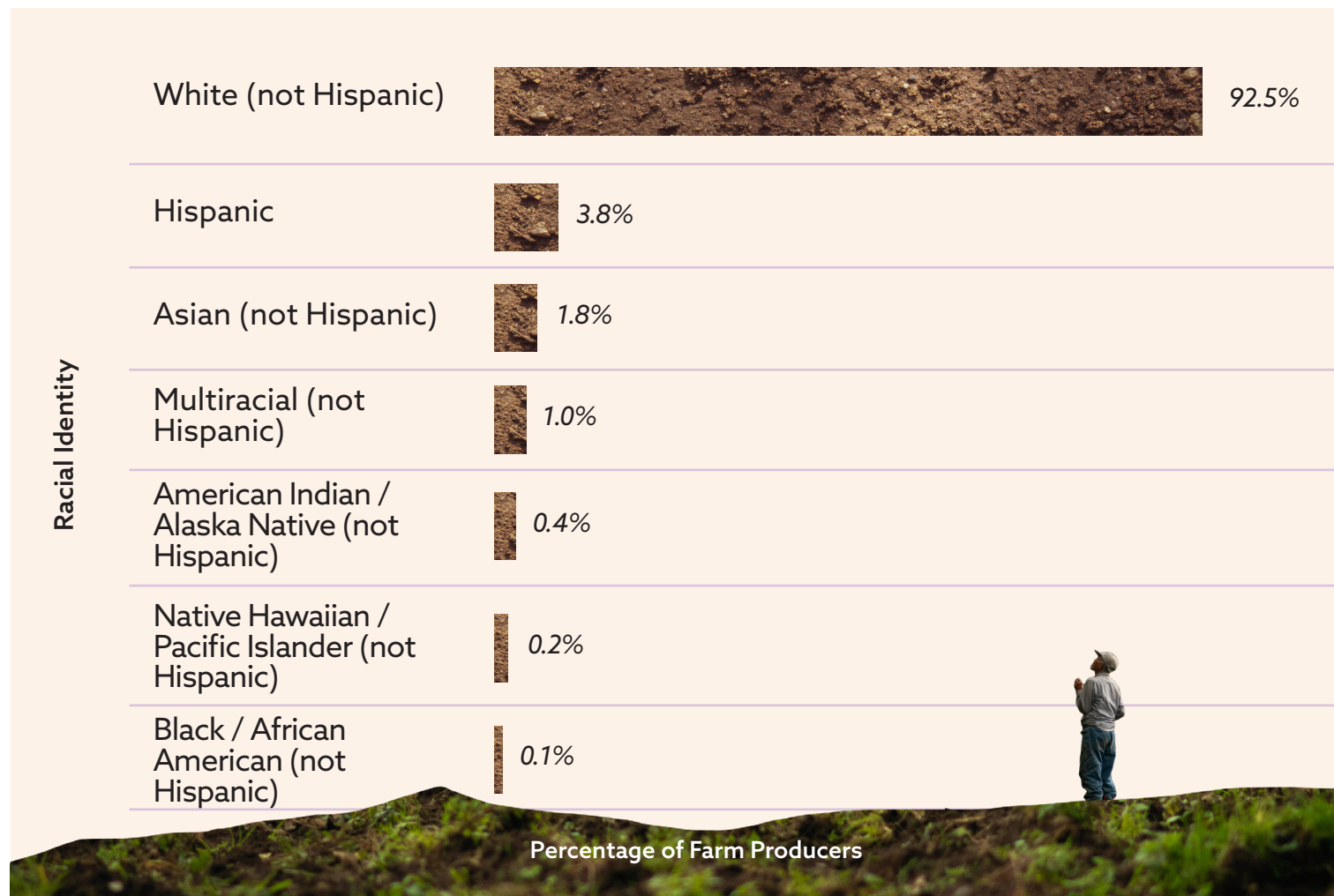
Figure 3 below shows the percentage of producers/farmers by race and ethnicity for the four counties we study. In this chart, Hispanic individuals of all racial identifications are counted separately from non-Hispanic individuals of each racial identification. Multi-racial, non-Hispanic individuals are also counted as a separate category. We find that non-Hispanic white individuals comprise 92.5% of all farm producers in the four counties we study; Hispanic individuals of all races comprise the next largest category at 3.8%, followed by Asian (1.8%), Multiracial (1.0%), and American Indian/Alaska Native (0.4%).¹⁶ Figure 3 below is a rare data item for which we have data on Black/African American farmers. For most farming-related data points, there is not enough data on Black /African American farmers in these four counties to be presented. We find in Figure 3 that Black/

African American farmers comprise 0.1% of all farm producers, despite comprising 3.8% of all residents of these counties (as of 2022).¹⁷ These disparities are the result of centuries of discrimination against Black farmers that have been documented in a series of lawsuits known as the Pigford cases, which began in 1990 (Aguilar and Jain 2018).¹⁸ The Pigford cases demonstrated that Black farmers have faced discrimination in access to USDA government programs in the form of

misinformation, higher rates of loan refusal, lower rates of benefits, and delays in receiving loans.

Relative to the population of these four counties, we find disparities in the representation of all racial and ethnic minorities in farming, which are in line with the disparities we see at the national level (Horst and Marion 2019). While all racial and ethnic minority groups are underrepresented in farming relative to their percentage of the

Fig. 3 | Percentage of Farm Producers by Race/Ethnicity, Clackamas, Multnomah, Washington Counties (2017)



population, Black farmers are the most underrepresented in these four Oregon counties, as measured by the ratio of the percentage of the population who are Black (3.8%), to the percentage of farmers in these counties who are Black (0.1%). In the case of Black farmers, that ratio is 38, meaning that the percentage of Black farmers in these counties is 1/38th the percentage of Black people in the general population of these counties. In the case of American Indian/Alaska Native farmers the ratio is 3.27; for Asian farmers it is 4.85, and for Hispanic/Latine farmers it is 3.64.

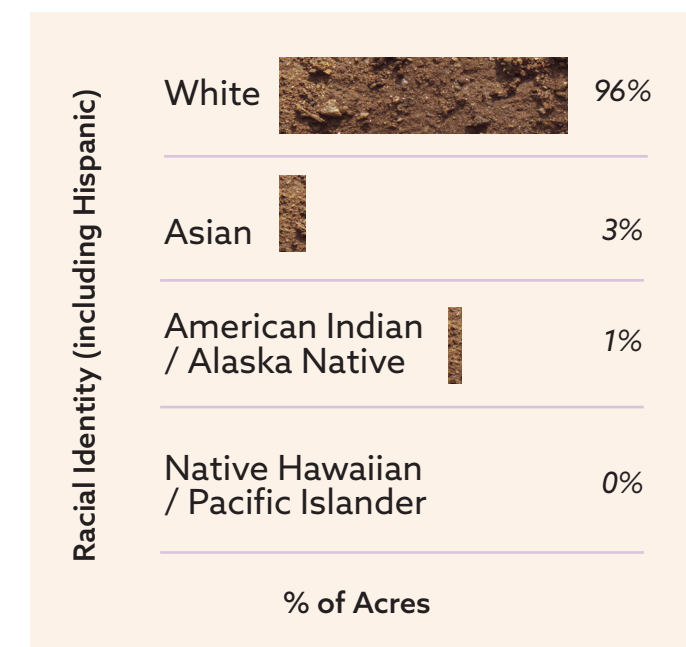
We also used USDA data from NASS to measure the percentage of farmland acres by the racial/ethnic identity of the producer/farmer, summarized in Figure 4 below. We found that, similarly to the total percentage of producers/farmers, 96% of farmland acres in the four counties we study are farmed by producers who identify as white. The next largest racial category is Asian (3% of acres), followed by American Indian/Alaska Native (1%).¹⁹ Hispanic landowners of all races own 4.7% of acres.²⁰

0.1%
percentage of farmers who are Black in Clackamas, Hood River, Multnomah, and Washington County

Data Spotlight: Native American-owned food businesses in Portland

We collected data on Native American-owned food businesses operating in the Greater Portland metropolitan area from the Oregon Native American Chamber (ONAC), a partner organization in the

Fig. 4 | Percentage of Farmland Acres by Racial Identity of Producer, Clackamas, Hood River, Multnomah, and Washington Counties (2017)



Equitable Food Economy Collaborative. ONAC provides technical assistance to businesses owned by Native Americans across the state of Oregon, including business planning, accounting and financial management, marketing and communications, access to capital, and other services. ONAC keeps a database of the characteristics of the businesses it serves; this database is the source of information for the charts that follow. ONAC's database contains information on 19 total food-based businesses served by ONAC in the Greater Portland area; the figures that follow are based on that relatively small group of businesses.

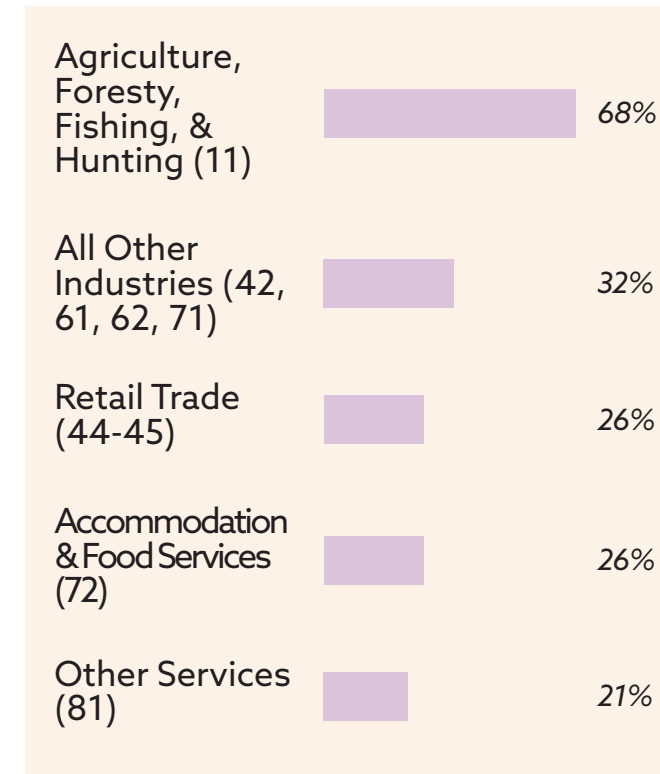
An important indicator to measure and track is the household income status of the owners of the Greater Portland-based food businesses that ONAC serves. Households earning less than 80% of area median family income (AMI) are considered to be low-income by the U.S. Treasury Department's Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) Fund.²¹ Using the CDFI Fund's definition, ONAC's data shows that 58% of Portland-based food businesses served by ONAC are owned by members of low-income households.

The food system comprises a large number of industries, from farming to retail and hospitality. Figure 3 below

shows the industry categories that the food-based businesses served by ONAC in the greater Portland area belong to. The industries were classified based on the North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS)'s 2-digit categories, the broadest categorization. Businesses could select more than one industry that they were part of; hence the proportions in the chart below sum to greater than one.

As Figure 5 shows, the most common industry for food-related businesses in greater Portland that received services from ONAC is Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting (NAICS 11); 68% of all businesses served fall into this category. Following NAICS 11 comes Retail Trade (NAICS 44-45) and Accommodation and Food Services (NAICS 72), each with 26% of businesses served. The catch-all category All Other Industries includes Wholesale Trade (NAICS 42), Educational Services (NAICS 61), Health Care and Social Assistance (NAICS 62); and Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation (NAICS 71).²² ONAC serves businesses at all stages of the business life cycle, based on a set of guiding principles and a typology of stages of development. We found that more than two-thirds (68%) of the Portland-based food businesses served by ONAC are

Fig. 5 | Industry (NAICS 2-Digit) Categories of PDX-Based Food Businesses Served by ONAC



early stage. This result demonstrates that the services needed by the Native-owned food businesses in Greater Portland are those that are most appropriate for early-stage firms, such as: setting goals, exploring structures, early-stage business planning, setting up accounting and management systems, and seeking funding or investment if needed or appropriate.

58%

of Portland-based Native-owned food businesses are owned by low-income households

68%

of all Native-owned food businesses served by ONAC in Portland are Early Stage

68%

of all Native-owned food businesses served by ONAC in Greater Portland are in the Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and/or Hunting sectors

Approach & Process

Representatives of the collaborative began meeting in January of 2020, and designed an engagement framework that would prioritize voices from Indigenous, Black, Latine, immigrant, and refugee communities.

The goals of the engagement process were to collectively engage in identifying barriers to wealth creation for BIPOC communities in the food and agricultural economies in the region, analyze opportunities that support community development and entrepreneurship and participate in discussions that brought new solutions for creating living wage jobs and economic opportunities.

In March of 2020, the COVID 19-pandemic altered the timeline of the project and the capacity within the collective. The pandemic further exacerbated the immediate disparities facing BIPOC economies in the region and across the United States. Access to healthcare, food, water and shelter were of critical concern across underserved communities.

Many of the recovery efforts showed early on that communities of color would have a tougher time recovering from the effects of the pandemic due to systemic inequities, including the effects of racism, capitalism, harmful policies

and business practices.

The engagement framework was revised to consider how the effects of the pandemic impacted the economics of BIPOC communities in the region, and focused on understanding and uncovering systemic barriers to entrepreneurship and economic resilience, co-creating solutions rooted in the lived experience of BIPOC communities, and building capacity and partnerships throughout the process.



Photo Credit:
The Collaborative's first meeting, by Kari Rowe

Engagements centered on geographies within the Portland metro region, and in the following counties: Multnomah, Clackamas, Washington and Hood River. Each experience centered around a unique set of economic conditions and environments that highlights the diverse BIPOC experiences in the local food economy. These opportunities fostered trust among the participants and increased familiarity and connections.

Listening Sessions

The analysis team (made up of Ecotrust

staff) conducted two listening sessions with partners of the collaborative in the spring of 2022 as well as a listening session with Latine entrepreneurs in the local food economy in the fall of 2022. All the listening sessions happened through Zoom, participants received an honorarium for their time, and all participants gave consent before any recordings and centered the project's shared agreements throughout the conversation.

The listening sessions identified gaps, challenges, and strategies for increasing equitable entrepreneurship and detailed

where existing efforts and policies are undercutting progress for BIPOC communities in the food and agriculture landscape.

All three listening sessions were transcribed and translated (Spanish to English, where relevant).The analysis team then coded each response using a tagging system. Responses that

indicated similar ideas or keywords were tagged similarly. The analysis team tabulated these tags and grouped like-tags to see if underlying themes emerged from this exercise.

The overarching themes of the listening sessions were then presented to the entire collaborative on June 2022. The analysis team shared the learnings from

The following engagements informed the recommendations represented in this project:

- ◆ Interviews with the Equitable Food Economy Collaborative
- ◆ Site visit to Tribal Fish Co., a Tribal owned and operated fish processing center and Stanley Rock Treaty Fishing Site along the Columbia River
- ◆ Focus Group with Latine Micro Enterprises and Food Entrepreneurs
- ◆ Tour of M+M Marketplace in Hillsboro, a culturally rooted commerce space for the Latine Community
- ◆ Community cookout at Wapato Island Farms on Sauvie Island, celebrating traditional Mayan foods and community conversations
- ◆ Educational tour at Headwater Farms in Gresham, East of Portland. A county operated farm hosting 11 small independent farmers and land stewards in a 5 year incubation program.
- ◆ Farm visit to Black Futures Farm in Woodstock, Inner SE Portland, Black owned and operated agricultural lands serving priority populations in the Metro region.

listening sessions 1 and 2. The analysis from the Latine listening session was presented to the partners in February 2023.

Emergent Themes

During the Latine listening sessions, conversations focused on the experiences of food-centered micro enterprises and small businesses in the Portland metro region. Many participants noted a deep reverence to food as part of culture and identity, and how much of that is being expressed through the food made and sold by their small businesses. Other notable barriers identified through the focus group included language barriers, navigating as an undocumented individual, technical assistance for starting a business and access to capital. The following topics also emerged:

- ◆ Supply-chain issues, e.g. product shortages
- ◆ High labor costs
- ◆ High ingredient/input costs
- ◆ Taxation/legal support
- ◆ Peer support/business communities
- ◆ Social media management
- ◆ Bookkeeping/business consulting

Listening sessions with the partners centered on their lived experiences and expertise as food system leaders in the region. The sessions revealed many takeaways relating to:

Shared agreements

- Respect for Unique Perspectives
- Reciprocity
- Creating Space to Learn/ Non-Judgment
- Patience with Pace
- Forward Thinking/Long-Term
- Open Mindedness, explore possibilities
- Solidarity - In It Together
- Focus on Equity - Being explicit about race/ injustice/resilience of POC communities
- Ancestral Knowledge
- Authentic Partnerships/ Relationships
- Strength-Based Approaches

Community spaces, ancestral knowledge, ritual and storytelling

- ◆ Tension between capitalism and personal values, scalability, climate change adaptation, business development, incubation, loans and access to capital
- ◆ Pro-Black, pro-Indigenous policies and advocacy for BIPOC entrepreneurs and producers.

The listening sessions informed the development of the following key themes and project outcomes and are explored throughout the community spotlight sections and further expanded upon within the recommendations of this report.

Land and Sovereignty: In order to improve access for agriculture, and grow healthy foods that are culturally rooted, barriers to land ownership and land access must be addressed.

Wisdom and Healing: Strengthening the economic wellbeing and health equity of disadvantaged communities requires funding that expands culturally rooted networks and supportive business practices.

BIPOC-Led Economies: To create inclusive market opportunities for agricultural and food businesses in the Portland metro region, access to capital and advocacy for equitable policies should be expanded.

Latine Listening Session Q&A: To create inclusive market opportunities for agricultural and food businesses in the Portland metro region, access to capital and advocacy for equitable policies should be expanded.

Land & Sovereignty

In order to improve access for agriculture, and grow healthy foods that are culturally rooted, barriers to land ownership and land access must be addressed.

Wisdom & Healing

Strengthening the economic wellbeing and health equity of disadvantaged communities requires funding that expands culturally rooted networks and supportive business practices.

BIPOC-Led Economies

To create inclusive market opportunities for agricultural and food businesses in the Portland metro region, access to capital and advocacy for equitable policies should be expanded.

Table 1. Details on Listening Sessions

	Attendees	Date
Listening Session #1	<p>Amber Faist, Program Director, Oregon Native American Chamber (ONAC)</p> <p>Duane Lane, Resource Navigator, Oregon Native American Chamber (ONAC)</p> <p>Jose Gomez, Representative and Business Advisor, Hacienda Community Development Corporation (Hacienda CDC)</p> <p>Buck Jones, Salmon Marketing Manager, Columbia River Intertribal Fisheries Commission (CRITFC)</p> <p>Lauren Gwin, Associate Director of the Center for Small Farms and Community Food Systems, Oregon State University (OSU)</p>	Spring 2022
Listening Session #2	<p>Michelle Week, Native Farmer, Good Rain Farms</p> <p>Eddie Hill, Senior Manager of Land Use & Farms, Black Food Sovereignty Coalition (BFSC)</p> <p>Jennifer Serna, Herbalist and Farmer, Wapato Island Farms</p> <p>Shantae Johnson, Farmer and Land Steward, Mudbone Grown</p> <p>Amy Gilroy, Trade Development Manager, Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA)</p>	Spring 2022
Latine Listening Session Q&A	<p>Amalia Sierra, Tierra del Sol - Portland</p> <p>Gloria Martel, Santo Domingo Taqueria - Cully</p> <p>Alejandra Kachonowski, Alecocina - Portland Mercado</p> <p>Hayde Martinez, El Mercadito - M+M Marketplace</p> <p>Jose Perez, Que Bola Cuban Kitchen - Portland Mercado</p> <p>Marisela Iniguez, Marsico's Culichi -M+M Marketplace</p> <p>Flor Leon, Fruteria La Flor - M+M Marketplace</p> <p>Fabiola Chipoco, Tita's Kitchen - Portland, Troutdale, Happy Valley</p> <p>Esbeidy Hernandez, El Paraiso 100% Natural</p>	Fall 2022

[Click Image to View Video](#)

Key Theme #1

Land and Sovereignty

BIPOC communities are at a disadvantage for attaining wealth through land ownership. Discriminatory and racist practices, laws, and policies have prohibited and diminished access and ownership opportunities. Current land lease models often offer limited timelines and prohibit the development of sustainable agriculture. By promoting cultural preservation, community partnerships and increased access to capital, food purveyors and farmers of color can leverage Indigenous knowledge and culturally rooted practices to cultivate and market the diversity of food cultures in the region, improve access for agriculture, and grow healthy foods that are culturally rooted and sovereign.

Photo Credit: Man holding salmon at Tribal Fish Co. LLC
Kari Rowe

Community Spotlight

Tribal Fisheries of the Columbia River + Indigenous Economies of the Pacific Northwest

Wy-kan-ush, or salmon, is one of the First Foods in Indian culture, along with berries, roots, game and water. Highly regarded as sacred, salmon is not only a source of nutrition, but also a symbol of abundance. It is at the center of economic activity for tribal communities near the Columbia River. As one of the primary origins for culture and economic trade in the Pacific Northwest, salmon's significance to the health and wealth of the Indigenous tribes is of critical importance.

Environmental Impacts

Salmon runs are declining due to the mistreatment of the river through the overdevelopment of dams, flooding, warming waters and overfishing. Fewer salmon are able to return to their native waters to spawn, resulting in a stark decrease in salmon population numbers. The Columbia River Basin was once home to tens of millions of salmon each year. Current records show that number is now significantly lower. The majority of fish caught today are released from

hatcheries. Tribes are doing everything in their power to make sure the salmon return to their traditional waters.

Tribal Fish Co. LLC

One of the only Tribal-operated fish processing centers along the Columbia River. It was developed to better resource local fishers in the area, with accessible infrastructure and support growth in new markets. The processing center offers access to packing ice and on-site machinery, and is close to the river. Funding is needed to support ongoing operations and centralized management for the processing center. Partial funding for the facility was provided by the United States Army Corps and ongoing maintenance costs are supported by the Columbia River InterTribal Fish Commission (CRITFC), an agency dedicated to preserving culture, fisheries, and the economic health of Tribal communities in the region.

Recommendations for Improving Access to Agriculture to Grow More Healthy and Culturally Rooted Foods for Local Communities

Reduce barriers to land ownership, access and management opportunities for BIPOC farmers and entrepreneurs by increasing funding opportunities for value-driven businesses and collaborations.

- ◆ **Access to Capital:** Facilitate access to affordable capital and investment opportunities for BIPOC entrepreneurs through grants, low-interest loans, loan/loss reserve funds/debt forgiveness and consider culturally specific challenges to gaining capital such as sovereignty and taxation, language barriers, documentation, collateral deficits.
- ◆ **Cultural Preservation and Representation:** Celebrate and promote diverse food cultures by encouraging the preservation and promotion of traditional and cultural culinary practices to help BIPOC entrepreneurs leverage their unique cultural heritage as a competitive advantage.
- ◆ **Community Engagement and Partnerships:** Engage local communities and establish partnerships with communities, foster collaboration to address food insecurity, food apartheid, and other community-specific challenges.



Hear from Buck Jones

Marketing Manager,
Columbia River Intertribal
Fisheries Commission
(CRITFC)

"Salmon are so culturally relevant to our people that we got to be good stewards to the land and in doing that we got to have good water and land access for when of those fish come back and return into the streams because they live an amazing life; they give up their body for us, they live in the ocean for three years, and then they can go back hundreds of miles to the places that they spawn."

Equitable Food Economies and a Sustainable Climate Future

Climate change and resource conservation issues disproportionately impact BIPOC communities. Access to critical agricultural resources such as water, healthy soils and sustainable energy sources, affect small producers and food entrepreneurs and their abilities to respond to increasingly rapid environmental changes such as extreme temperatures, flooding, and wildfires. Declining water protections and increased health risks associated with environmental pollutants contribute to the intergenerational wealth gap and economic disparities among farmers of color. Climate advocacy for environmental justice is a race equity issue that should center the knowledge and the experience of BIPOC communities.

Photo Credit: Malcom Hoover, Co-Director, Black Futures Farm
Robert Cuadra



Community Spotlight

Black Agriculture and Entrepreneurship Models in the Portland Metro Region.



Black Futures Farm (BFF) works to heal connections between Black people and the land by cultivating an affirming space for the Black community to gather in joy. BFF offers seasonal CSA programs, regenerative agriculture programming supported by the Portland Clean Energy Fund, and community-building events such as Black Sunday, where Black-identified folks gather, celebrate, learn, and grow together.

The farm is a program of the Black Food Sovereignty Coalition (BFSC), a Black-led nonprofit that facilitates Black

communities participating as owners and movement leaders within food systems, placemaking, and economic development. In addition to operating multiple farms across Oregon and Washington, BFSC also coordinates an annual conference called Back to the Root, which connects BIPOC growers to a shared history, resources, and community.

BFSC has successfully supported the development of a thriving ecosystem of Black-led organizations working to advance food and land justice in Oregon

and across the Pacific Northwest. This ecosystem includes Mudbone Grown, a Black-owned farm enterprise that promotes intergenerational and community-based farming practices, the Black Oregon Land Trust (BOLT), a team dedicated to protecting and supporting agricultural lands for Black communities, Feed'em Freedom Foundation, the Black Food Fund, and Come Thru Market. These organizations collaborate across a variety of efforts, including supporting access to capital, land, and markets for Black growers, value chain coordination, BIPOC network building, farmer training, and Black and Brown food systems leadership development.



Hear from Shantae Johnson

Owner, Mudbone Grown

“When I think about some of the immigrant and refugee farmers that are growing so much food and have no market to take it to—it’s heartbreaking. There are really amazing farmers and to grow all this food and not know where to put it at or how to tap into the markets, who do you go to? And so the way moving forward that I see around the BIPOC economy would be around organizing cooperatively from multiple farms to be able to scale up to institutions.”

Key Theme #2

Wisdom and Healing

BIPOC entrepreneurs, farmers and food system leaders benefit from a well-connected community. Engagement with elders and culturally specific networks is critical to the path of wellness and economic prosperity. During the pandemic, many community centers and gathering spaces were closed or inaccessible, leaving a large gap in the societal needs for connection and wayfinding. Strengthening the economic wellbeing and health equity of disadvantaged communities requires funding and investments that support culturally specific business practices, programs that enhance resiliency and networks dedicated to supporting entrepreneurs in the food and agriculture sector.

Photo Credit: Maria Francisco mixing papián rojo before serving. Robert Cuadra



Community Spotlight

Sustainable Community Farming Practices in Sauvie Island

Community-centered economies that honor traditions and practices can be found at Wapato Island Farms, where cultivating organic and traditional farming techniques, growing herbs, mushrooms and medicinal folk medicines that support community health and wellness are honored.

Jennifer Rose Serna stewards the 32 acres and is inspired by the traditional teachings and wisdom passed on to her from her grandmother. She nurtures not just the plants and medicines that grow on the land, but also a sense of community. Volunteers are often invited to participate in tending the land and gain access to a space away from the city, where connection to the plants can be healing and where time with others can restore a sense of belonging.

Individuals from the local Mayan community play a special role in this ecosystem which offers space for Indigenous practices to be shared

through storytelling and provides new learning opportunities for intergenerational audiences. There is a reciprocal approach to tending the land here and centering the experiences of vulnerable migrant communities in our society. The practice at Wapato Island Farms is about learning how to be in relationship with the land and fostering Indigenous practices in partnership with the community.



Recommendations for Strengthening the Economic Wellbeing and Health Equity of Socially Disadvantaged Communities

Expand, fund, and support culturally specific business assistance to improve business development practices and enhance skill and knowledge of entrepreneurs in the food industry.

- ◆ **Technical Assistance, Training and Mentorship:** Provide comprehensive business development programs to help BIPOC entrepreneurs navigate the challenges of starting and growing a food business. Invest in incubator farms, collective farm schools, supply chain management classes, food safety and farming practices.
- ◆ **Market Access:** Create avenues for BIPOC entrepreneurs to access mainstream markets, such as partnering with local grocery stores, restaurants, and farmers markets. Develop initiatives that prioritize sourcing from BIPOC-owned businesses and support their inclusion in supply chains.
- ◆ **Support Networks and Associations:** Foster networks and associations specifically dedicated to supporting BIPOC entrepreneurs in the food sector. These networks can provide peer support, facilitate networking opportunities, and build pathways from farm to consumer, river to grocery store and ranch to restaurant, such as BIPOC-centered chambers, nonprofits, coalitions, and advocacy groups.



Hear from Jennifer Serna

Owner, Wapato Island Farm

“Migrant workers have knowledge around growing plants that is so diverse because they’re moving around to such different ecologies again and again. That’s a whole other aspect of what I feel is really important, because so much of the food that’s grown all over the US is not by the actual farmers [but by] people that are coming here.”

Community Spotlight

Cultivating Native Plants and Ecological Stewardship in East County.



Developing opportunities for growth is central to the goals at Headwater, an incubator farm owned and operated by the East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District. The 60-acre farm supports a cohort of 11 individual farmers in a five year program that aims to prepare and help small farmers scale their productions and develop partnerships with markets. Capacity is limited, but the onsite campus has the equipment and growing space available

for farmers to support their operations in a low-cost environment.

Good Rain Farm (ʔast sq̓it) operates its CSA program from this center. Farmer Michelle Week is intentional about reclaiming Indigenous practices and foods while preserving a cultural heritage and ecologically diverse approach to tending and growing culturally rooted foods in the Pacific Northwest.

Down the road, Duane Lane tends to Native plants at his nursery, 1855 Plants. He has found new pathways for incorporating lesser-known varieties and works to revive residential landscaping approaches by centering water conservation techniques and sustainable practices for gardeners at any level.

Being near one another has some positive impacts. That proximity has built a connection around the importance of stewarding the land with respect. A collective community space like this creates an environment that can often help new entrepreneurs find information, support and opportunities for new found partnerships.



Hear from Michelle Week

Native Farmer, Good Rain Farms

“Many people, don’t have access to housing or land and that then impacts the ability to grow food and to practice and engage in culture and to keep those traditions, food dishes and food sovereignty alive and well.”

Key Theme #3

BIPOC-led Economies

BIPOC food and agriculture economies need access to capital and equitable policies that will support development for small startups and entrepreneurs. Businesses need essential information designed to enhance the skills and knowledge of entrepreneurs such as financial literacy, legal support and marketing. To advance equity and inclusion in the food economy, lending initiatives and tailored banking strategies can be prioritized to course-correct and address the systemic and racial barriers for entrepreneurs of color and increase the creation of inclusive markets for agricultural and food businesses in the Portland metro region.

Photo Credit: Man purchasing produce from M&M Market
Kari Rowe



Community Spotlight

A Community Centered Marketplace in Hillsboro, Oregon.

Founded by the Miranda family in 2000, the M+M Marketplace in Hillsboro is owned and operated by a Latino family that saw a gap in services for their community. They created a gathering place where culturally specific foods could be sold and where families could connect with younger generations. Jamie Miranda and Hayde Martinez are siblings who have worked together to develop a vibrant cultural marketplace that is inclusive of all Latine communities and heritages. More than 60 vendors are on the property representing countries from all over Latin America such as Peru, Guatemala, Ecuador, Mexico and El Salvador.

There are only a few culturally specific marketplaces in the area to support and foster growth for small Latine businesses. Key strengths of the marketplace are its built-in community of vendors and entrepreneurs, and events that promote connectivity and positive cultural representation among the Latino population. The marketplace offers a low barrier to entry for new or small

businesses and acts as an economic hub for the Latine community in Hillsboro.

Hillsboro is the fifth largest city in Oregon, the Latine/x/a/o population is the second largest in the area with 23.9% of the population identifying as Hispanic or Latino. In comparison, Portland's Hispanic/Latino Population makes up only 10% of the demographic diversity in the largest city in Oregon.

Below: Hayde Martinez and Jaime Miranda, Founders of M+M Market, by Kari Rowe



Recommendations for Creating Inclusive Market Opportunities for Agricultural and Food Businesses in the Portland Metro Region

Develop opportunities that increase access to capital for BIPOC entrepreneurs, by prioritizing lending initiatives and tailored banking practices to promote intergenerational wealth-building opportunities.

- ◆ **Tailored Investment Programs:** Create new investment programs that are designed for Indigenous, Black and Latine, and entrepreneurs of color and consider culturally specific challenges to gaining capital such as sovereignty and taxation, language barriers, documentation, collateral deficits.
- ◆ **Policy and Advocacy:** Advocate for policies that support equity and inclusion in the food economy, promote Indigenous and Black lending policies and advance immigrant rights, diversity in the industry and fair labor practices.
- ◆ **Data Collection and Analysis:** Collect data on representation and experiences of BIPOC entrepreneurs in the food economy that support funding and investment opportunities such as economic indicators, stories, experiences and challenges within the industry.



Hear from Jose Gomez

Business Advisor,
Hacienda CDC

"We have to continue researching and organizing social collectives that are important, we also have to promote a cultural, ancestral learning that we can take advantage of. We still have people that are not well recognized [for example] the undocumented, as long as the native groups cannot have free access to financing without so many formal barriers I think we will continue to talk about [systemic] issues in the same way."

Regional Assets and Partnership Opportunities

Ancestral Herbalism: A mentorship program, initiative of Wapato Island Farms.

Back to the Root: Regional conference for food system leaders in the Pacific Northwest, an initiative of Black Food Sovereignty Coalition.

Black Food Fund: An organization working to shift capital in ways that build wealth, self-determination, and resiliency for Black people within our regional food system.

Black Food Sovereignty Coalition (BFSC): A collaboration hub and advocacy platform for Black and Brown communities in agriculture and food systems.

Black Future Farms (BFF): A Black-led community-building and production farm in Portland, Oregon.

Black Oregon Land Trust (BOLT): A community land trust focused on providing agricultural land to Black farmers and land stewards.

Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (CRITFC): Tribal-led organization that provides guidance and advocacy for fish and land management practices along the Columbia River.

Come Thru Market: Incubator market centering Black & Indigenous makers, Founded by Shiny Flanary.

Ecotrust: Collaborative nonprofit, focused on creating equitable and sustainable futures.

Feed'em Freedom Foundation (FFF): Incubator farm supporting Black agriculturalists and building economic strength through food sovereignty.

Food and Beverage Manufacturing Cluster Capacity: Prosper Portland is creating new capacity within the Food and Beverage Manufacturing sector and will provide support for firms that create quality jobs in the industry. See the Advance Portland Report.

Good Rain Farms: A women-operated farm revitalizing culture and community in Portland, Oregon.

Hacienda CDC: A Latino Community Development Corporation, providing affordable housing and economic advancement.

Inclusive Business Resource Network (IBRN): Supportive network programming

for small businesses and entrepreneurs in Portland, supported by Prosper Portland.

Letitia Carson Project: In concert with Black Oregon Land Trust, Oregon Black Pioneers, Mudbone Grown, the Linn-Benton Chapter of the NAACP, and Oregon State University's Center for Small Farms & Community Food Systems, the project honors the legacy of one of the first Black settlers in Oregon.

M+M Marketplace: Cultural hub and multinational market in Hillsboro, Oregon.

Mercatus Directory: Online platform featuring entrepreneurs of color from the Portland metro area, sponsored by Prosper Portland.

Mudbone Grown: A Black-led, family-operated, community-centered farm in Corbett, Oregon.

Oregon Department of Agriculture: Protects Oregon's agricultural industries and natural environment.

Oregon Native American Chamber (ONAC): Advancing educational and economic opportunities for Native Americans in Oregon and SW Washington.

Oregon State University, Small Farms Program: Advancing sustainable agriculture, community food systems, and economic progress for Oregon's small-scale farmers and ranchers.

Oregon's Food & Makers Roadmap: Produced by the Oregon Department of Agriculture.

Portland Mercado: A public market that provides an incubator kitchen and business programming for small businesses, an initiative from Hacienda.

Prosper Portland: The city's the economic & urban development agency.

Salmon Marketing Program: Advancing the economic value of commercial treaty fisheries, a program of CRITFC.

Start Up Oregon: A 9 week program designed to support a cohort of small businesses at different stages of the entrepreneurship journey through Native-led and story-driven curriculum, an initiative of ONAC.

The Redd on Salmon Street: A working hub for the regional food economy, operated by Ecotrust.

Tribal FishCo LLC: Tribal-operated fish processing center in White Salmon, Washington, supported by CRITFC.

Wapato Island Farms: A woman-owned, 32-acre farm on Sauvie Island in Portland, Oregon.

Conclusion

The Equitable Food Economy Collaborative was a unique opportunity to bring together food system leaders in the region and address collectively some of the major challenges and barriers facing entrepreneurs of color in the agriculture and food ecosystem.

Several impactful projects led by members of this partnership are key models for future investment in the region, such as the Portland Mercado, a public market that provides culturally specific programming for Latine entrepreneurs and operates a shared commercial kitchen and low-cost space for new vendors; and the Redd on Salmon Street, an affordable community maker space that supports socially conscious food businesses and offers a platform for local gatherings and events. Both are significant examples of infrastructure projects which have been designed to address key food system gaps and community needs and have laid the groundwork for more equitable practices that support regional food products in the marketplace.

The economic experiences highlighted in this work are only a part of the

BIPOC food economy in the Portland metro region. Many more producers, entrepreneurs, organizations, businesses, advocates and projects are not featured or represented in this effort.

We need more visibility among local food producers and entrepreneurs, improved collaboration and relationship-building across regional food value chains, and new connections between producers and markets. We seek investments from those in the philanthropic community who have an interest in transforming our food systems into more sustainable and equitable environments and who would aim to collaborate with our BIPOC food system leaders in finding the right solutions for our diverse communities.

Our hope is that this report catalyzes interest to invest in continued efforts that further map new partnership opportunities in the region, support new structures that uplift and value the existing voices in the industry, and formulate new possibilities for investment among BIPOC food economies in the Pacific Northwest.



Photo Credit:
Bird's eye view of Black
Future Farms,
by Robert Cuadra

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And finally to the USDA for supporting this endeavor and to the BIPOC led organizations and partners in the Pacific Northwest food economy we hope you will find this report reflects the impact you would like to see in the future of our regional food ecosystem.

Photo Credit:
Landscape at Wapato
Island Farm,
by Robert Cuadra



Glossary

AAPI: Asian American and Pacific Islander: Asian American is a vast umbrella term that represents people with origins from any of the East, Southeast and Indian countries such as China, Japan, Philippine Islands, Korea, Pakistan etc. The term PI is specific to peoples with origins from the Pacific Islands including Hawaii, Samoa, Micronesia, and other Island nations not represented within the larger Asian American populations. Asian American and Pacific Islander are two separate cultural terminologies that are generally associated with one another but are individual racial categories in the U.S. Census.

African American: Americans with ancestral ties to Africa.

AI/AN: American Indian/ Alaska Native: American Indian is a broad terminology referring to people with origins in North, South and Central America and who also have a Tribal affiliation or community kinship to a Tribe. Each region has a preferred terminology to refer to their native populations such as nations, bands, tribes, pueblanos or Indigenos.

Alaska Native: A general term used to identify the Indigenous peoples of Alaska, current practice is to refer to individual tribes such as the Inuit and Yupik peoples of

the region and recognizing specialized tribal affiliations, clans and nations whenever possible. Some Tribal affiliations are federally recognized by the United States Government, and recognized members may be eligible for certain services, protections, and benefits. There are 574 federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native tribes according to the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). Therefore, the terminology AI/AN can be both a political identity as well as an ethnological one. The broad use of these terms affects how populations are measured and how funds and resources are allocated. Advocacy towards the use and reference of specified Tribal identifications, languages and non-politicized affiliations is an important shift in the larger movement towards racial and economic justice for Indigenous peoples.

BIPOC: A term to identify Black, Indigenous and all People of Color. It references the varying lived experiences of people of color (POC) and in particular, the impacts that racism and systemic inequalities have had on Black and Indigenous communities.

Black: An identity used to describe a race of people not associated with any particular country or nationality.

Hispanic: A term that refers to populations

that originate from Spain, or Latin American populations that are Spanish speaking.

Immigrant: A person living in a country without citizenship and has other forms of legal residence.

Indigenous: A term that refers to inhabitants of the Americas before the presence of European Settlers.

Latin American: People who originate from Latin America, including Haiti, Cuba and the Dominican Republic.

Latine: A gender neutral term used to describe people with Latin American heritage, including non Spanish speaking populations. It is a pronounceable term for Spanish speakers and the preferred terminology used in this report.

Latino American: Americans with Latin American or Spanish heritage.

Latino/a: A gender based terminology used to describe people with Latin American heritage, including non Spanish speaking populations.

Latinx: A gender neutral term used to describe people with Latin American heritage including non Spanish speaking populations.

Migrant: A person that moves from one

place to another either temporarily or permanently for any number of reasons.

Native Hawaiian: Polynesian peoples of the Hawaiian Islands who are considered Aboriginal, meaning they migrated to the Islands from Polynesia and did not originate on the islands.

Native: A description of a person originating from a particular place, can also be applied to plants and foods.

Refugee: A person that has experienced political or religious persecution, a natural disaster or other forced circumstance to leave their country of origin.

Tribal: An identity that refers to a community of peoples with direct ancestry in the Americas. The word Tribal infers the acknowledgment of sovereign populations each with their own identity, culture, foods, language and spiritual practice.

Undocumented: A person living in a country without any legal form of residency.

Endnotes

1. U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 Annual Business Survey (ABS). <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/abs.html>
2. Prosper Portland (2023): Data directions: Propel inclusive economic growth and innovation. Portland, OR: Prosper Portland. <https://prosperportland.us/data-directions-inclusive-economic-growth-and-innovation/>
3. Oregon Native American Chamber (ONAC), personal communication, 2023.
4. Sorte, B., Reimer, J., and Jones, G (2021). Oregon Agriculture, Food, and Fiber: An Economic Analysis. Oregon State University: College of Agricultural Sciences. https://agsci.oregonstate.edu/sites/agscid7/files/main/about/oragecon_report_2021.pdf
5. The Portland metro region is defined as the five counties of Columbia, Clackamas, Multnomah, Washington, and Yamhill.
6. USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), 2017 Census of Agriculture. <https://quickstats.nass.usda.gov/>
7. U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 Annual Business Survey (ABS). <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/abs.html>
8. Prosper Portland (2023): Data directions: Propel inclusive economic growth

and innovation. Portland, OR: Prosper Portland. <https://prosperportland.us/data-directions-inclusive-economic-growth-and-innovation/>

9. Oregon Native American Chamber (ONAC), personal communication, 2023.
10. Prosper Portland (2023): Data directions: Propel inclusive economic growth and innovation. Portland, OR: Prosper Portland. <https://prosperportland.us/data-directions-inclusive-economic-growth-and-innovation/>
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. Horst, M., and A. Marion (2019). Racial, ethnic, and gender inequities in farmland ownership and farming in the U.S. *Agriculture and Human Values* 36: 1-16.
14. For clarity, we use USDA's racial and ethnic categories in the text that follows, not our own. For instance, we use the USDA category name of Hispanic, while the authors of this report would prefer Latine or Latinx.
15. The complete definition is: "a person who is involved in making decisions for the farm operation. Decisions may include decisions about such things as planting, harvesting, livestock management, and marketing. The producer may be the owner, a member of the owner's household, a hired manager, a tenant, a renter, or a sharecropper." (Source: U.S. Census of

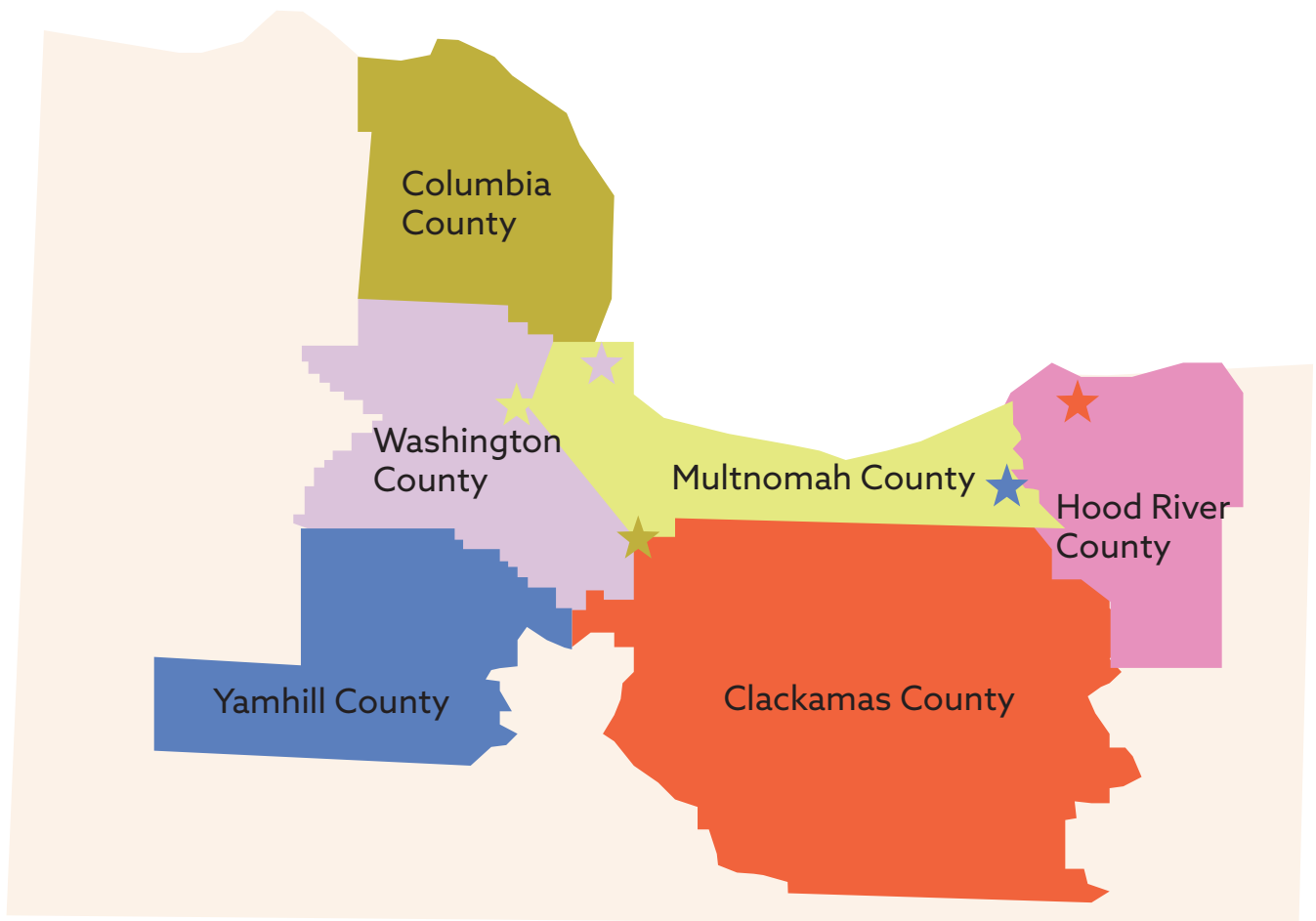
Agriculture 2017, Appendix B. General Explanation and Census of Agriculture Report Form).

16. From the same dataset, we also found that, racially speaking, 93.5% of Hispanic farm producers identify as white (data not shown). Therefore, the total number of producers in the four counties we are studying who identify as white is about 96%.
17. Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2022).
18. Aguilar, J., and S. Jain. Racial and gendered discrimination in agriculture. Portland, OR: ECONorthwest. PowerPoint Presentation. URL: <https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1rHRyM0xa6VPu2UHcY59EGkOdMplUjij1/edit#slide=id.p1>
19. There are insufficient data points on acres owned by Black / African American farmers to display the number of acres owned by this racial identity group.
20. We do not show the % acres owned by Hispanic landowners in Figure 2, since we cannot break out Hispanic ethnic identity from the four racial identity groups; therefore, including the figure for Hispanic landowners would make the proportions sum to greater than 100%.
21. U.S. Treasury Department, Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) Fund (2023). Low-Income Communities and Targeted Populations. [https://www.cdfifund.gov/sites/cdfi/files/documents/](https://www.cdfifund.gov/sites/cdfi/files/documents/nmtc-target-areas-qa.pdf)

[nmtc-target-areas-qa.pdf](#)

22. Though some of these broad industry categories are not food-specific, every business counted in Figure 2 is food-related in some way.

Map of Counties



Location of Site Visits

- ★ 1. Tribal Fish Co., LLC
- ★ 2. M+M Marketplace
- ★ 3. Wapato Island Farms
- ★ 4. Headwater Farms
- ★ 5. Black Futures Farm