



SECTION VI.

CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION

This Access to Local Food study makes clear that Indiana stands at an important moment in strengthening its local food system. Across the state, a shared vision emphasizes a food economy where Hoosiers have reliable access to fresh, locally grown foods and Indiana farms are positioned to thrive. This study reflects that collective commitment and provides the foundation for coordinated action.

This study confirms that Indiana has significant assets — productive farmland, an engaged consumer base and established programs — yet also faces the structural challenges that limit market access, processing capacity and supply chain resilience. At the same time, the opportunity is clear. Consumer demand for local food continues to rise, national examples demonstrate replicable models for success and economic analyses show strong return on investment when states build local supply chains that keep more value in local communities.

Through this process, stakeholders consistently emphasized a core set of priorities: strengthening regional processing and distribution, expanding market opportunities for farms, improving the affordability and accessibility of fresh foods for all Hoosiers, and providing clear, coordination across state agencies. The recommendations offered in this report respond directly to those priorities. They balance actions such as improving regulatory clarity, scaling up retail partnerships and enhancing program coordination with strategies to build infrastructure, diversify production and grow regional markets.

In closing, the executive order's goal was not merely to study the problem but to chart a clear path forward. This report fulfills that mandate. More importantly, it positions Indiana to move confidently into an implementation phase that can strengthen local agriculture, improve food access and generate economic benefits.

Indiana has an opportunity to build a food system that is thriving, locally grounded, economically vibrant and reflective of the values Hoosiers hold. The insights and recommendations developed through this effort create a strong foundation for that vision, offering a clear roadmap for strengthening the middle of the supply chain, expanding market access and ensuring that more Indiana-grown food reaches Indiana families, institutions and communities. With a shared understanding of both the barriers and the strengths ahead, the next essential step is turning strategy into action. Indiana's food system will only reach its full potential if the state commits to long-term, coordinated investment—treating this work not as a temporary initiative, but as a sustained priority that supports farms. By advancing these findings with intention and targeted support, we can create a thriving, robust, Indiana agriculture-first system that delivers lasting economic and quality-of-life benefits across every region of the state.

