

# **Proposed Common Metrics for the Washington State Department of Agriculture**

Report only (see appendices A-F separately)

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# Table of Contents

Table of Contents .....	1
1. Executive Summary .....	2
2. Glossary of Key Terms.....	5
3. Background .....	6
4. Approach.....	7
5. Outcome Map (Phase 1) .....	11
6. Proposed Common Metrics for Partnership and Networking (Phase 2) .....	18
7. Recommendations and Continued Engagement .....	26
Appendices.....	28

Appendix A: Program Staff Interview Guide

Appendix B: Proposed Common Metrics

Appendix C: Template for Tracking Data Availability Across Programs

Appendix D: Sample Report

Appendix E: Sample Metrics for all Impact Areas

Appendix F: Food Security Metrics

# 1. Executive Summary

## Purpose

The strength of Washington State’s food system relies on the network of farmers and other agricultural businesses who work together to support a vibrant agricultural economy and ensure that safe, nutritious, and culturally relevant food is effectively distributed to the people who want and need it. Having a set of common metrics enables the measurement of collective progress towards these goals.

In 2022-2023, University of Washington (UW) food systems researchers worked collaboratively with the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) with the goal of developing feasible, meaningful metrics to help programs and initiatives across WSDA track their progress and communicate the collective impact of their work. This work involved interviews with WSDA staff, reviews of relevant documentation, and iteration on the proposed metrics based on staff feedback.

This report describes collective impacts, goals, and outcomes shared by the diverse program areas throughout the agency. This report also proposes a set of common metrics that can be used to assess progress towards a subset of these collective impacts.

## Overview

The table below defines key terms used in this report and serves as a visual illustration of how they are connected.

Impact Areas	Goals	Outcomes	Metrics
<p><b>Impact areas</b> are broad areas where WSDA’s work can have impact.</p> <p>Through close review of documentation and interviews with program staff, we identified the following areas of collective impact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Partnership and networking</i></li> <li>- <i>Learning and communication</i></li> <li>- <i>Food system resiliency</i></li> <li>- <i>Farms and agricultural businesses</i></li> <li>- <i>Consumers</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Equity at all levels</i> is an overarching area of impact.</p>	<p><b>Goals</b> are overarching aspirations that can guide WSDA’s programmatic decisions.</p> <p>For each of the <u>impact areas</u>, the Outcome Map in Section 5 of this report describes several goals.</p>	<p><b>Outcomes</b> are the intended consequences of programmatic decisions. In some places within this report we refer to “desired outcomes” to emphasize that we’re referring to <i>intended</i> consequences.</p> <p>For each of the <u>impact areas</u>, the Outcome Map in Section 5 of this report describes several outcomes, including long-, medium-, and short-term outcomes.</p>	<p><b>Metrics</b> are measurable indicators of progress towards <u>desired outcomes</u>, and <b>common metrics</b> are designed to enable the measurement of progress among programs that may be diverse in their functions and operations.</p> <p>For the impact area of <i>partnership and networking</i>, Section 6 of this report proposes a set of nine common metrics that can indicate progress towards several of the desired outcomes in this area.</p>

We focused our development of common metrics on the impact area of *partnership and networking* because of this impact area’s relevance to the work of all programs and initiatives within WSDA, and for its ability to catalyze action and progress across the agency. The nine common metrics proposed for the area of *partnership and networking*, shown below, include metrics that indicate the distribution of both financial and non-financial resources throughout food systems in Washington State.

***Partnership & networking metrics that indicate the distribution of financial resources:***

1. Annual number of awarded or current contractors and grantees
2. Annual number of applicants to funding opportunities
  - a. Percentage of applicants who were awarded contracts
  - b. Year-over-year change in number of annual applicants
  - c. Year-over-year change in number of awarded contracts and grants
3. Annual dollars awarded to contractors and grantees
4. Annual contractor or grantee perceived success or outcome of WSDA funding

***Partnership & networking metrics that indicate the distribution of non-financial resources:***

5. Annual number of Q&A or technical assistance (TA) sessions held by WSDA
6. Annual number of attendees at Q&A sessions, or annual number of recipients of TA offered by WSDA
7. Annual number of work groups or committees in which WSDA staff participate
8. Annual number of work groups or committees convened, chaired, or facilitated by WSDA
9. Annual WSDA staff perceived impact of communication reach

## How to use this report

Readers who are approaching this report for the first time to familiarize themselves with the proposed metrics may want to start with the following components:

- **Section 3 (Background)** identifies the specific program areas within the agency that we worked with in developing the proposed common metrics.
- **Section 5 (Outcome Map)** provides a brief overview and then presents the full Outcome Map in **Table 1**. The Outcome Map shows the five areas of collective impact and then, for each one, delineates goals and outcomes shared by multiple programs across the agency.
- **Box 1 of Section 6 (Common Metrics)** shows the set of proposed common metrics developed for the impact area of *partnership and networking*.
- **Section 7 (Recommendations)** provides guidance for implementing a common metrics approach. We recommend that WSDA incorporate a common metrics approach into decision-making, reporting and evaluation processes, and future funding proposals.

Readers who are returning this report with the intention to implement the proposed common metrics approach may find the following parts of the report helpful for more in-depth technical guidance:

- **Section 4 (Approach)** provides more detail on how the outcome map and proposed metrics were developed, and **Appendix A (Program Staff Interview Guide)** provides the guide that was used to conduct staff interviews.
- **Section 6 (Common Metrics)** provides detailed guidance on tips for collecting and reporting on the proposed metrics.
- **Appendix B (Proposed Common Metrics)** shows the specific outcomes that correspond to the proposed metrics.
- **Appendix C (Template for Tracking Data Availability Across Programs)** can be used to take an inventory of which metrics may already be collected by programs within the agency, in order to assess potential gaps in data availability.
- **Appendix D (Sample Report)** provides a template for reporting on the proposed metrics in a way that illustrates progress towards outcomes and goals.
- **Appendix E (Sample Metrics for all Impact Areas)** summarizes metrics for additional impact areas beyond *partnership and networking*. These sample metrics have not undergone the full process of development as the metrics proposed for *partnership and networking*, but they may be helpful for implementing a common metrics approach across the agency.
- **Appendix F (Food Security Metrics)** provides an overview of metrics related to food security, with descriptions of ongoing data collection efforts that are directly or indirectly related to food security. This report primarily focuses on *process metrics* rather than *outcome metrics*, and food security is an outcome metric which is challenging to assess and requires multi-agency and multi-sectoral action to address.

The Outcome Map and proposed Common Metrics presented in this report are living documents; these are tools that WSDA program staff can adapt, update, refer to, and implement as program areas work together to collectively report on growth and progress within the across the agency. We encourage WSDA and its staff to view this report and its resources as a starting point for integrating a common metrics approach into the agency's work, and we welcome continued engagement to implement and build upon the resources presented here.

## 2. Glossary of Key Terms

*Many of these definitions below are cited from materials related to the HEAL Act and the PEAR Plan and Playbook; we recommend revisiting and updating definitions periodically to ensure alignment with terms used elsewhere in WSDA work, and at other state agencies.*

**Agricultural Businesses:** We use the term “agricultural businesses” refer to actors along the food value chain including but not limited to farmers, processors, distributors, and suppliers.

**Equity:** As defined in the WSDA Community Engagement Plan for HEAL Act Implementation,<sup>1</sup> equity is “the act of developing, strengthening, and supporting procedural and outcome fairness in systems, procedures, and resource distribution mechanisms to create equitable (not equal) opportunity for all people. Equity is distinct from equality which refers to everyone having the same treatment without accounting for differing needs or circumstances. Equity has a focus on eliminating barriers that have prevented the full participation of historically and currently oppressed groups.”

**Socially Disadvantaged Group:** As defined in the WSDA Meat Processing Grant Application (p. 2) and the USDA Socially Disadvantaged Groups Grant FAQs (p. 3),<sup>2,3</sup> “the USDA defines socially disadvantaged group as a group whose members have been subject to discrimination on the bases of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and, where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual’s income is derived from a public assistance program.”

**Underrepresented:** As defined in the Washington State PEAR Plan and Playbook,<sup>4</sup> “this term refers to populations, of employees, for example, that are disproportionately lower in number relative to their number in the national/state population.”

**Vulnerable Populations:** As defined in the WSDA Community Engagement Plan for HEAL Act Implementation,<sup>1</sup> “Population groups that are more likely to be at higher risk for poor health outcomes in response to environmental harms, due to: (i) Adverse socioeconomic factors, such as unemployment, high housing and transportation costs relative to income, limited access to nutritious food and adequate health care, linguistic isolation, and other factors that negatively affect health outcomes and increase vulnerability to the effects of environmental harms; and (ii) sensitivity factors, such as low birth weight and higher rates of hospitalization. ‘Vulnerable populations’ includes, but is not limited to racial or ethnic minorities, low-income populations, populations disproportionately impacted by environmental harms, and populations of workers experiencing environmental harms.”

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<sup>1</sup> WSDA Community Engagement Plan for HEAL Act Implementation, July 2022. Internal WSDA document.

<sup>2</sup> WSDA Local Meat Processing Capacity Small Projects Grant 2022.

<https://cms.agr.wa.gov/WSDAKentico/Documents/Forms/1158-MeatProcessorGrantApplication-Small.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> USDA Socially Disadvantaged Groups Grant FAQs, June 2021. [https://www.rd.usda.gov/sites/default/files/sdgg\\_faqs2021.pdf](https://www.rd.usda.gov/sites/default/files/sdgg_faqs2021.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Washington State PEAR Plan & Playbook 2022-2027.

<https://acb.wa.gov/sites/default/files/public/documents/Washington%20State%20PEAR%20Plan%20%26%20Playbook%20v1.0.pdf>

### 3. Background

This report proposes a set of common metrics that can be implemented by the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) to track progress and communicate the agency’s impact. In developing these metrics, we worked with staff from program areas that were part of the Focus on Food initiative as of 2023. This initiative was launched in 2019 to strengthen Washington State’s food system by supporting all aspects of growing, processing, and distributing food.<sup>5</sup> Programs within this initiative support improving access to high-quality, culturally relevant food; increasing the economic viability of Washington farmers and food businesses; and striving to equitably support underrepresented farmers/ranchers, women, minority, small business owners, and socially disadvantaged communities.<sup>6</sup> When this project was conducted, the Focus on Food Initiative included the following program areas:

- 1) **Food Assistance**, including:
  - a. Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP and EFAP-Tribal)
  - b. Farm to Food Pantry (F2FP)
  - c. Farm to Food Bank (FTFB)
  - d. Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)
  - e. The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)
  - f. Food Assistance Resiliency Grants
- 2) **Regional Markets**, including:
  - a. Small and Direct Marketing Farm Assistance
  - b. Farm to School
  - c. On-Farm Produce Safety (Bridging the GAPs project)
  - d. Meat and Poultry Assistance Program
  - e. Local Food System Connections and Infrastructure
  - f. WA Meat Up
- 3) **We Feed Washington (WFW)**
- 4) **Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP)**
- 5) **The Agricultural Competitiveness Study**
- 6) **HEAL (Healthy Environment for All) Act and PEAR plan (Pro-Equity Anti-Racism)**

In developing proposed common metrics for the agency we also considered the WSDA’s broader context, which is shaped by the Healthy Environment for All (HEAL) Act (SB 5141, passed by the Washington State Legislature in 2021) and the Washington State Pro-Equity and Anti-Racism (PEAR) Plan and Playbook (Executive Order 22-04, issued by Governor Jay Inslee in 2021). Together, the HEAL Act and PEAR Plan and Playbook require state agencies, including WSDA,<sup>7</sup> to dedicate resources towards incorporating environmental justice, equity, and anti-racism goals into agency strategies. The metrics proposed in this report seek to (1) capture the collective impact of the varied programming within the WSDA and (2) contribute to the overarching equity framework set for state agencies by the HEAL Act and PEAR Plan and Playbook.

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<sup>5</sup> WSDA “Focus on Food” Initiative. <https://agr.wa.gov/about-wsda/focus-on-food>

<sup>6</sup> WSDA “Focus on Food” Policy Agenda: 2023-2025 Decision Packages. <https://cms.agr.wa.gov/WSDAKentico/Documents/DO/2023-WSDA-Food-Policy-Agenda.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> The HEAL Act covers seven state agencies (others may choose to implement HEAL), while PEAR covers all state agencies.

## 4. Approach

This work included three phases, conducted between January 2023 and September 2023, as shown in Figure 1 below: (1) development of an **Outcome Map** to identify collective impact areas, goals, and desired outcomes across the agency, (2) development of a set of proposed **Common Metrics** for a subset of the shared outcomes, and (3) development of this **report**, which includes guidance for implementing these metrics through data collection and reporting efforts.

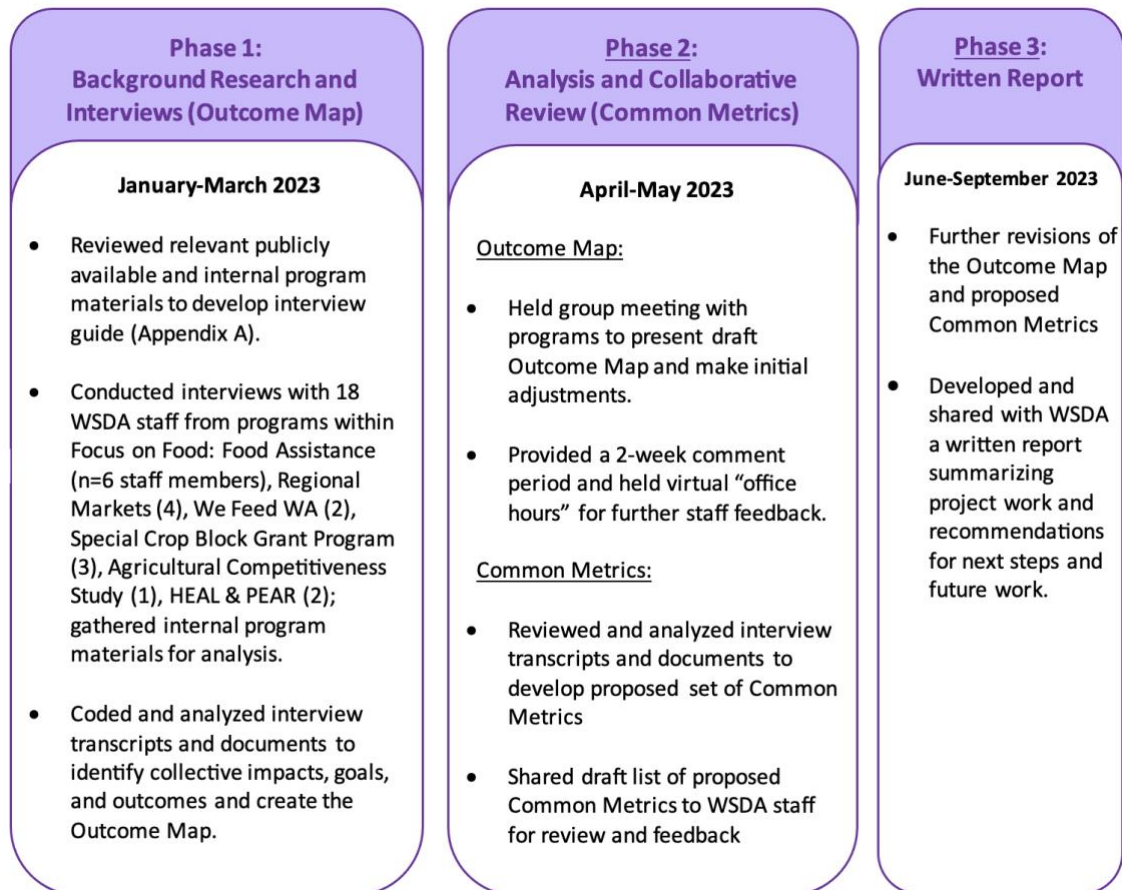


Figure 1. WSDA Common Metrics Project Development Process (January-September 2023).

## Phase 1 Approach: Developing the Outcome Map

As a precursor to developing a set of Common Metrics to capture the collective impact of a varied set of programs, we first needed to understand how these programs operated towards shared impacts, goals, and outcomes. In Phase 1, drawing from document review and interviews with WSDA staff, we developed the **Outcome Map** shown in Section 5, which describes goals and outcomes shared by multiple programs across the agency, grouped together by five areas of collective impact.

### Document Review and Interviews

We began our process by reviewing relevant publicly available materials about each program, as well as an initial set of internal documents and materials provided by WSDA staff. Relevant documents included program reports, Requests for Qualifications or Proposals, contractor/grantee progress reports and reporting templates, technical assistance tracking tables, budget narratives, or budgeting sheets. After this initial review of documents, we developed an interview guide, which is included in this report as **Appendix A**. We held group interviews with 18 staff members from the six programs noted in the *Background* section. This included six staff from the Food Assistance program area, four staff from the Regional Markets program area, two staff from the We Feed WA program, three staff from Specialty Crop Block Grant Program, one from Agricultural Competitiveness, and two staff implementing HEAL and PEAR. We transcribed all of the interviews to use in our analyses, and additionally worked with staff from each team to gather additional program documentation.

### Identifying Shared Areas of Impact

We reviewed interview transcripts and documentation to identify areas of impact, goals, and desired outcomes that were described by program staff or stated in documentation. All explicitly identified impacts, goals, and desired outcomes were compiled in a single document along with supporting quotes or excerpts, and we then identified top-level themes. Through this coding and summarizing process, we identified the following “**impact areas**,” or areas where WSDA’s programs can have collective impact:

- Partnership and networking
- Learning and communication
- Food system resiliency
- Agricultural businesses (including farmers, processors, and distributors)
- Consumers (including program clients)
- Equity at all levels

### Developing the Outcome Map

The Outcome Map shown in Section 5 describes impact areas, goals, and desired outcomes.

- We define **impact areas** as broad areas where WSDA’s work can have impact
- We define **goals** as overarching aspirations that may guide WSDA’s programmatic decisions.
- We define **desired outcomes** as the intended consequences of programmatic decisions. These outcomes include a mix of short-, medium-, and long-term outcomes, and some outcomes may be more relevant to certain programs than others.
- We define **metrics**—discussed further in the next section of the report—as measurable indicators of progress towards desired outcomes.

While developing the Outcome Map, we pulled out “equity at all levels” as an overarching framework across all impact areas, rather than as a separate impact area. Through our analysis it became clear that program staff viewed equity as critical to service delivery and partner engagement and setting equity as an overarching frame also enabled the alignment of the Outcome Map with the goals of the HEAL Act and PEAR Plan and Playbook.

We also added an additional layer to the table by categorizing desired outcomes by the **four domains of the food system**, as identified by the United Nations: environmental, economic, social, and health. These four domains of food systems need are interconnected and need to be addressed concurrently to achieve the goals of food systems transformation towards sustainability and human health.

### **Seeking Feedback on the Outcome Map**

After developing a preliminary draft of the Outcome Map, we provided three opportunities for WSDA program staff to provide feedback: (1) through a group meeting where a first draft was presented, (2) through a two-week comment period where staff were encouraged to provide further feedback on a second draft that incorporated feedback from the group meeting, and (3) through virtual office hours. The Outcome Map shown in Section 5 incorporates all received feedback. We intend for the Outcome Map to be a living document that WSDA can continue to adapt as needed.

## **Phase 2 Approach: Developing the Proposed Set of Common Metrics**

If **metrics** are measurable indicators of progress towards desired outcomes, **common metrics** are designed to enable the measurement of collective progress among programs that may be diverse in their functions and operations. In Phase 2, we developed the proposed set of common metrics shown in Section 6 and Appendix B that can be used to track progress towards a subset of the collective goals outlined in the Outcome Map.

### **Why Common Metrics?**

Common metrics consist of data or information that are the same, or comparable, across a group. When we think of metrics, we consider any information that is generated in any way or format. Metrics can be derived from quarterly or annual reporting or invoices; from information submitted via RFPs or RFQs, surveys, technical assistance requests, or Q&A attendance lists; or from information shared by contractors or their clients. In proposing common metrics for the agency’s work, we have sought to identify metrics that are relevant and feasible across all program areas within the initiative. The goal of a standard set of metrics is that when applied across a group, the metrics can illustrate collective impacts of investments even with varied programming strategies or variation in the topical content of each program.

### **Identifying a Subset of the Outcomes Map for which to Develop Common Metrics**

The Outcome Map developed in Phase 1 resulted in 17 desired outcomes spanning the areas of impact. For feasibility within this project's scope and timeline, rather than developing metrics for outcomes in all five areas of impact, in Phase 2 we developed metrics for outcomes in the impact area of *partnership and networking*. We prioritized this impact area for several reasons, the first being that partnership and network development is a key activity for all programs and initiatives across WSDA. For example, a 2019

EFAP Report stated that "Food Assistance's role... is to build on successful partnerships and pursue strategies and opportunities to support and connect our agricultural and hunger relief partners...our strategic goals are framed around this connectivity."<sup>8</sup> Second, partnership and network development are essential for achieving success in all other impact areas. By establishing metrics for partnership and networking, WSDA can track progress across multiple domains. Finally, metrics related to partnership and networking are measurable using internal data and information that WSDA programs already collect.

### **Developing the Proposed Set of Common Metrics**

To develop a proposed set of common metrics related to partnership and networking, we reviewed and analyzed information from two data sources: (1) relevant documentation from all program areas, and (2) interviews with WSDA staff from all program areas. In reviewing documentation, we identified types of information that programs were currently collecting or had collected in the past. In reviewing interview transcripts, we looked for explicitly stated outcomes where staff reported they were currently collecting, had the potential to collect, or expressed interest in collecting or being able to report on information. Based on the documents and interviews, we identified types of information that programs and initiatives either were already collecting, or that they *could* collect without substantially changing operations or increasing burdens on staff or partners. Thus, the proposed metrics consist of information that may currently be collected by some program areas, as well as information that may not currently be collected by any program areas.

### **Seeking Feedback on the Proposed Set of Common Metrics**

After developing a preliminary draft of the common metrics, we provided three opportunities for WSDA program staff to provide feedback: (1) through a group meeting where a first draft was presented, (2) through a two-week comment period where staff were encouraged to provide further feedback on a second draft that incorporated feedback from the group meeting, and (3) through virtual office hours. The common metrics proposed in Section 6 and Appendix B incorporate all received feedback. We intend for the proposed metrics to be a living document that WSDA can continue to adapt as needed.

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<sup>8</sup> WSDA Food Safety & Consumer Services Division, Food Assistance programs. Emergency Food Assistance Program Closeout Report: State Fiscal Year 2019. <https://cms.agr.wa.gov/WSDAKentico/Documents/Pubs/438-EFAP-AnnualReport-2019.pdf>

## 5. Outcome Map (Phase 1)

### Purpose of the Outcome Map

Metrics are indicators of progress towards outcomes, and metrics are not able to be developed in the absence of outcomes. For this reason, the Outcome Map was developed primarily as a preliminary step towards developing common metrics. However, the Outcome Map has value in and of itself for demonstrating how WSDA's diverse program areas are interconnected and operate towards shared purpose. Though different program areas and initiatives within WSDA have distinct operations and provide unique services to support the needs of Washington State's food systems, looking at collective impacts across programs reveals overarching ways WSDA can support positive change in the food system and ways that distinct operations can support each other.

### Overview of the Outcome Map

Through the process described in Section 4, we identified six areas of impact shared by multiple programs across WSDA:

- Partnership and networking
- Learning and communication
- Food system resiliency
- Agricultural businesses (including farmers, processors, and distributors)
- Consumers (including program clients)
- Equity at all levels

Of these impact areas, we pulled out "equity at all levels" as an overarching framework across all impact areas, rather than as a separate impact area. Work towards equity is an overarching goal and is critical to service delivery and partner engagement throughout the agency. Programs felt that it is important to capture to what degree their work is done equitably in order to plan for continuous improvements. The HEAL Act and PEAR Plan and Playbook provide an overarching framework for how programs across WSDA can conceptualize and operationalize measuring and advancing equity. All programs discussed the importance of compliance with HEAL and PEAR, and the desire for their programs to incorporate equity "at all levels." For this reason, "equity at all levels" appears at the top of the table as something that guides work across all impact areas.

### Connections between the impact areas

The collective impact areas noted above are interconnected and interdependent. A WSDA staff member noted that they imagined the impact areas as "layers of an onion," and **Figure 2** below illustrates the connections between the impact areas as layers of an onion.

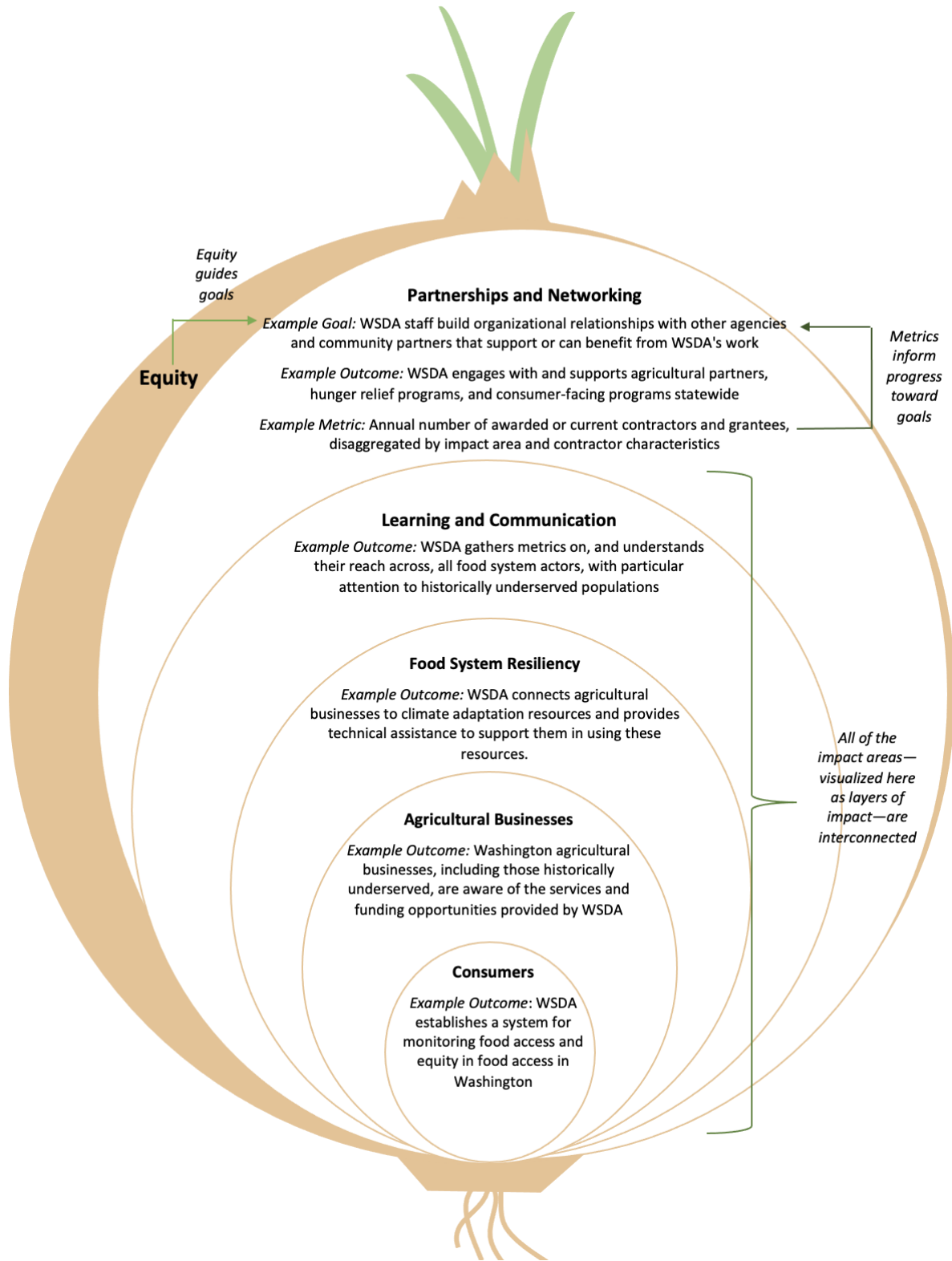






Figure 2. Connections between the impact areas

The outer layer of the onion, *equity at all levels*, guides programming through implementation of the HEAL Act and PEAR Plan and Playbook. Breaks in the equity “layer” leave other food system areas exposed. Equity guides the way WSDA approaches building and sustaining relationships, making *partnership and networking* the next layer. The expertise and knowledge provided by different food system stakeholders, and the way the WSDA communicates its goals and services to stakeholders, informs the WSDA’s impact on *learning and communication*. Subsequently, *food system resiliency* is dependent on how well WSDA and other agricultural partners learn, plan and adapt from past (e.g., the COVID-19 pandemic) and future (e.g., climate change) disruptions. These first four impact areas collectively influence the landscape in which *agricultural businesses* across Washington produce food and sustain livelihoods. Finally, the core layer is *consumers*, as WSDA seeks to “ensure that safe, nutritious food is effectively produced, distributed, and delivered to people who want and need it.”<sup>5</sup>

The onion diagram in **Figure 2** illustrates how challenges in one layer can affect all layers, and thus the entire food system. Each WSDA program has connections to all of these layers of impact. A common metrics approach can direct and inform WSDA programming in a way that centers interconnection and this approach can showcase how interconnection amplifies equitable and sustainable practices.

## How to interpret the Outcome Map





The Outcome Map in **Table 1** shows collective **impact areas** (left column), collective **goals** (middle column), and collective **desired outcomes** (right column) for the agency, as defined in Section 1. It is important to note that:

- The impact areas, goals, and outcomes shown in the table represent our summaries of common aspirations that reflect WSDA programming, based on documentation and staff interviews; these aspirations were not set by WSDA. Recognizing that different programs have different areas of programmatic reach, **some impact areas, goals, or outcomes were emphasized by, and or may be more relevant to, certain programs than others.**
- The desired outcomes (right column) include a mix of short-, medium-, and long-term outcomes. Work towards some of these outcomes is underway, and some of the outcomes are more aspirational. **It should not be expected that change in more than one of these particular outcome areas will be achieved over one grant period or fiscal year.** Nonetheless, it is valuable to collect and report on progress towards these collective outcomes over time.
- The outcomes are annotated with icons that correspond to the **four domains of food systems**<sup>9</sup>:  
 Economic  Social  Health  Environmental.







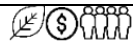

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<sup>9</sup> These four domains are based on the following definition from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations: “The FAO of the UN has formally defined sustainable diets as diets with low environmental impact, which contribute to food and nutrition security and to healthy life for present and future generations. Sustainable food systems produce nutrient-rich foods that are affordable, socially and culturally acceptable, and sparing of both human and natural resources.”


**Table 1: Outcome Map (Page 1 of 4)**

Equity at all levels		
WSDA considers equity in “operational plans and practice at all levels,” with the goal to advance equity in food distribution, service and support to agricultural businesses, and funding, in compliance with the HEAL and PEAR Acts.		
COLLECTIVE IMPACT AREA	COLLECTIVE GOALS	COLLECTIVE DESIRED OUTCOMES
<div style="text-align: center;">  <p><b>Partnership and Networking</b></p> </div> <p>Network and partnership development is a key activity for all programs. Whether through a technical assistance, technical advisor, or education role, a funder/contractor or grantor/grantee relationship, or a licensing or compliance role, all WSDA staff are building relationships and networks. WSDA staff are building these networks and partnerships both within WSDA departments and across program teams, as well as externally with governmental agencies and legislative bodies, non-governmental organizations, technical experts, farms and other agricultural businesses, and community members (including customers, clients, and consumers).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WSDA staff are a trusted and known source of technical assistance, knowledge, and support for all things food &amp; agriculture.</li> <li>• WSDA staff build organizational relationships with other agencies and community partners that support or can benefit from WSDA's work.</li> <li>• WSDA facilitates market connections.</li> <li>• WSDA administers equitable competitive and non-competitive grant programs, distributes funds, and serves as a funder.</li> </ul>	<p><b>(1) WSDA is a trusted and known source of technical assistance, knowledge, and support.</b> </p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ WSDA maintains supportive technical assistance, advising, granting, and networking relationships with statewide partners.</li> <li>→ Agriculture actors and stakeholders statewide are aware of what WSDA offers and seek support from WSDA.</li> <li>→ Agricultural businesses, programs, and institutions in Washington view WSDA as a partner in agricultural efforts statewide (including food system resiliency work, hunger relief, specialty crop production, direct-to-consumer distribution and purchasing, etc.)</li> <li>→ WSDA is viewed as a trusted and knowledgeable source of technical assistance and support, specifically among historically underserved farmers and agricultural businesses.</li> <li>→ WSDA is viewed as a trusted and knowledgeable source of technical assistance and support among other state departments of agriculture.</li> <li>→ WSDA provides technical assistance to programs regarding conducting and piloting environmental justice assessments and maintains systems for tracking and reporting this work.</li> <li>→ Agriculture actors and stakeholders statewide reach out to WSDA for support in making market connections.</li> </ul>
		<p><b>(2) WSDA engages with and supports agricultural partners, hunger relief programs, and consumer-facing programs statewide.</b> </p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ WSDA strives to ensure they are equitably engaging with diverse partners (including racially/ethnically and geographically).</li> <li>→ WSDA develops and maintains a system for tracking services and resources provided, specifically tracking reach to underserved farmers, marginalized communities, and vulnerable populations.</li> <li>→ WSDA has identified gaps in resources and infrastructure needed for community engagement.</li> <li>→ WSDA understands the key challenges to production, distribution, and food access as perceived by their partners and is responsive to these needs.</li> <li>→ WSDA is responsive to partners' needs and supports partners in learning and development.</li> <li>→ WSDA engages with all partners, including underrepresented farmers and ranchers, and organizations that represent historically underrepresented farmers and ranchers.</li> <li>→ Agricultural businesses, hunger relief organizations, and tribal nations feel connected to and supported by WSDA, and they view WSDA as a partner in agricultural work and hunger relief efforts.</li> <li>→ WSDA has established and maintains relationships with farmworkers to provide technical assistance and ensure connection to resources.</li> <li>→ WSDA staff participate on committees, as appropriate, and respond to stakeholder or partner requests for engagement or participation.</li> </ul>
		<p><b>(3) WSDA aims to equitably administer grant programs and distribute financial support to agricultural businesses statewide.</b> </p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ WSDA aims to equitably distribute funding, technical assistance, and educational resources.</li> <li>→ WSDA develops and maintains a system for tracking grant fund distribution, specifically tracking reach among underserved farmers, vulnerable populations, and highly impacted communities.</li> <li>→ WSDA applies an equity lens when engaging experts and outside stakeholders in policy, program, or grant decision making.</li> <li>→ WSDA actively engages networks in grantmaking by communicating open funding opportunities statewide and offering opportunities for advising or technical assistance in grant applications.</li> </ul>





**Table 1. Outcome Map (continued, page 2 of 4)**

Equity at all levels. WSDA considers equity in “operational plans and practice at all levels,” with the goal to advance equity in food distribution, service and support to agricultural businesses, and funding, in compliance with the HEAL and PEAR Acts.		
COLLECTIVE IMPACT AREA	COLLECTIVE GOALS	COLLECTIVE DESIRED OUTCOMES
<div style="text-align: center;">  <p><b>Learning and Communication</b></p> </div> <p>WSDA cultivates an organizational culture of learning, adaptability, and continuous improvement that supports all of the other impact areas.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WSDA funds and supports research in Washington that supports all food system actors (e.g., farmers, food processors and distributors, hunger relief organizations, farm to school) in creating optimized, resilient, equitable food systems.</li> <li>WSDA communicates the importance of regional farmers statewide and nationally.</li> <li>WSDA is responsive, adaptive, and learns from experiences and interactions with stakeholders.</li> <li>WSDA staff collaborate internally and reduce silos across the agency’s programs.</li> <li>WSDA is aware of interconnections between the work of program areas within the agency.</li> </ul>	<p><b>(1) WSDA is a leader in agricultural learning, development, and communication in Washington and nationally.</b> </p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ There is an environment of learning and discovery among Washington agricultural businesses; among organizations that support Washington farmers, distributors, and processors; and among hunger relief programs and direct-to-consumer programs.</li> <li>→ WSDA grantees conduct research that expands knowledge around crop diversity, food system resiliency, and consumer connections.</li> <li>→ WSDA communicates the importance of regional farmers statewide and nationally.</li> <li>→ WSDA advises and partners with other national State Departments of Agriculture.</li> <li>→ WSDA conducts environmental justice assessments for significant agency actions.</li> </ul> <p><b>(2) WSDA supports ongoing learning and is adaptative and responsive to information.</b> </p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ WSDA gathers metrics on, and understands their reach across, all food system actors, with particular attention to historically underserved populations.</li> <li>→ WSDA is responsive, adaptive, and learns from experiences and interactions with stakeholders.</li> </ul> <p><b>(3) WSDA staff collaborate internally and across departments and programs to share best practices in technical assistance, grant making, and measurement and evaluation.</b> </p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ WSDA maintains reporting metrics to individually and collectively evaluate the impacts of programs, grants or initiatives that consider the longer-term return on investment, especially for underserved populations.</li> <li>→ WSDA applies an equity lens to community engagement practices.</li> <li>→ WSDA strives for diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace.</li> <li>→ WSDA maintains a process to ensure equity in recruitment and hiring practices as well as in employee retention.</li> </ul>
<div style="text-align: center;">  <p><b>Food System Resiliency</b></p> </div> <p>Food system resiliency includes resilience to climate change and unexpected disruptions such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Climate adaptation is of central importance to the program areas working directly with agricultural businesses and concerned with their long-term viability. Climate adaptation is also essential to the ongoing production of safe, accessible food in Washington. Thus, ensuring a reliable, safe, affordable food supply (the central focus area of consumer-focused program areas) necessitates inclusion of climate adaptation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Climate adaptation is widely recognized as central to the viability and resiliency of agricultural businesses—including farmers processors, and distributors—and the overall Washington food system.</li> <li>Washington agricultural businesses and the hunger relief system have the infrastructure needed to be resilient to climate change and unexpected disruptions.</li> <li>WSDA utilizes the ‘opportunity’ provided by the COVID-19 pandemic to learn, explore, and experiment with service delivery.</li> </ul>	<p><b>(1) WSDA supports Washington agricultural businesses to make climate adaptations.</b> </p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ WSDA connects agricultural businesses to climate adaptation resources and provides technical assistance to support them in using these resources.</li> <li>→ WSDA distributes funding directly to agricultural businesses to support climate adaptive infrastructure improvements.</li> <li>→ WSDA maintains a system for ensuring resources for climate adaptations are equitably distributed to agricultural businesses.</li> <li>→ WSDA maintains a system for identifying gaps and directing funding towards opportunities that support environmental justice.</li> <li>→ WSDA supports research that monitors ongoing climate change impacts and other potential emergent impacts to agricultural businesses.</li> <li>→ Agricultural businesses are aware of the climate-related supports WSDA provides.</li> </ul> <p><b>(2) Washington agricultural businesses have implemented strategies and infrastructure to prepare for system disruptions due to climate change.</b> </p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Agricultural businesses have made necessary infrastructure investments and improvements to withstand the projected effects of climate change</li> <li>→ Agricultural businesses have access to climate change impact modelling and forecasting information, supported by WSDA.</li> <li>→ Agricultural businesses in Washington grow and produce diverse crops.</li> </ul> <p><b>(3) The Washington food system is resilient to unexpected disruptions.</b> </p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ WSDA maintains communications channels to support agricultural businesses, hunger relief programs, institutional purchasers, and consumers when unexpected disruptions to the food system occur.</li> <li>→ Consumers in Washington have ongoing, reliable, and equitable access to food and nutrition resources.</li> </ul>

**Table 1. Outcome Map (continued, page 3 of 4)**

Equity at all levels.		
WSDA considers equity in “operational plans and practice at all levels,” with the goal to advance equity in food distribution, service and support to agricultural businesses, and funding, in compliance with the HEAL and PEAR Acts.		
COLLECTIVE IMPACT AREA	COLLECTIVE GOALS	COLLECTIVE DESIRED OUTCOMES
<div style="text-align: center;">  <p><b>Agricultural Businesses</b> (Farms, processors, distributors, etc.)</p> </div> <p>WSDA programs are invested in advancing agricultural livelihoods and building an equitable food system in Washington for agricultural businesses to engage with and sell in to. Programs are invested in either directly supporting agricultural businesses through technical assistance and grant funding, or they interact with and support farmers by developing purchasing/selling opportunities for Washington-grown products. All programs are invested in and working towards creating a system that supports a ‘good livelihood’ for all farms and other agricultural businesses.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WSDA helps agricultural businesses build economically successful and sustainable operations and contributes to a thriving agricultural marketplace.</li> <li>WSDA supports Washington hunger relief programs to purchase from local farm businesses and supports local farm businesses to sell to hunger relief programs.</li> <li>WSDA supports small-scale Washington agricultural businesses—including farmers, processors, and distributors—to access the educational, technical, and financial resources they need.</li> </ul>	<p><b>(1) There is a vibrant, viable, and diverse agricultural marketplace in Washington .</b> 💰👤👤👤👤</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Agricultural businesses in Washington have access to relevant educational, technical, and financial resources needed to build economically successful and sustainable enterprises.</li> <li>→ Historically underserved farms and other agricultural businesses are supported to participate fully in Washington’s agricultural marketplace.</li> <li>→ Washington farmers are able to earn a livable wage.</li> <li>→ Washington agricultural businesses have multiple viable, profitable market options in which to sell their products.</li> </ul>
		<p><b>(2) WSDA is a trusted, utilized source of support for agricultural businesses in the state.</b> 💰👤👤👤</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ WSDA aims to equitably provide technical assistance, funding, and resource support to Washington farms and other agricultural businesses.</li> <li>→ Washington agricultural businesses, including those historically underserved, are aware of the services and funding opportunities provided by WSDA.</li> <li>→ Washington agricultural businesses, including those historically underserved, view WSDA as an accessible resource for support.</li> </ul>
		<p><b>(3) There are strong market relationships between nutrition programs, institutions, and agricultural businesses in Washington.</b> 💰👤👤👤👤❤️</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Washington nutrition programs (including hunger relief programs, and child nutrition programs) are aware of, and purchase, Washington-grown products from Washington farms and other agricultural businesses.</li> <li>→ Washington institutions (e.g., schools, hospitals) are aware of and purchase products from Washington farms and other agricultural businesses.</li> <li>→ Washington agricultural businesses sell products, including value-added products, to state and local hunger relief programs and institutions.</li> </ul>
		<p><b>(4) Washington agricultural businesses produce and have a viable marketplace for specialty crops and culturally relevant foods.</b> 💰👤👤👤</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Washington agricultural businesses have a market in which to sell specialty crops and culturally relevant foods.</li> <li>→ Washington nutrition programs have access to Washington-grown specialty crops and culturally relevant foods.</li> </ul>
		<p><b>(5) WSDA strives to equitably support Washington agricultural businesses.</b> 💰👤👤👤</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ WSDA develops and maintains an ongoing system for monitoring, ensuring, and evaluating equitable provision of technical and financial resources to agricultural businesses, with particular attention to those historically underserved.</li> <li>→ WSDA develops and maintains an ongoing system for considering the equity impact of its grant programs to agricultural businesses.</li> <li>→ WSDA aims to equitably provide educational and financial support to agricultural businesses (demographically, regionally, and by operation size).</li> </ul>

**Table 1. Outcome Map (continued, page 4 of 4)**

Equity at all levels.		
WSDA considers equity in “operational plans and practice at all levels,” with the goal to advance equity in food distribution, service and support to agricultural businesses, and funding, in compliance with the HEAL and PEAR Acts.		
COLLECTIVE IMPACT AREA	COLLECTIVE GOALS	COLLECTIVE DESIRED OUTCOMES
<div style="text-align: center;">  <p><b>Consumers</b> <i>(All consumers, including program clients)</i></p> </div> <p>All program areas are invested in getting food to consumers and clients either by directly distributing food, or by supporting the production of food that consumers can then purchase or access from hunger relief programs or institutions. All program areas are approaching their consumer-facing work with an equity lens and aim to equitably support the production and distribution of food to consumers, with care towards ensuring consumers can access the food that they desire and need with dignity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WSDA aims to reduce individual barriers to accessing food and develop equitable access to food through hunger relief programs and the general marketplace.</li> <li>• All hunger relief program clients and all product consumers are served with dignity.</li> <li>• Emergency feeding program clients feel good about the food they receive through state-supported programming.</li> <li>• WSDA aims to directly distribute as well as support the distribution (via intermediaries) of food, including culturally relevant food, to emergency feeding program clients and customers in the general marketplace.</li> <li>• WSDA aims to equitably reach organizations and clients statewide.</li> </ul>	<p><b>(1) Consumers in Washington have reliable, equitable access to food and nutrition resources.</b> </p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ Washington consumers are able to purchase and have access to Washington-grown products at stores and marketplaces.</li> <li>➔ Washington consumers purchase Washington-grown products at stores and marketplaces.</li> <li>➔ Washington-grown products are sold at a variety of direct-to-consumer outlets, stores, and marketplaces.</li> <li>➔ All Washingtonians are able to retrieve or receive high-quality food from hunger relief programs when needed.</li> <li>➔ Vulnerable populations and highly impacted communities<sup>1</sup> have access to nutritious, affordable, and culturally relevant food in Washington.</li> <li>➔ WSDA establishes a system for monitoring food access and equity in food access in Washington and shares this information publicly and with relevant partners.</li> </ul> <p><b>(2) Hunger relief programs in Washington are able to meet client dietary and cultural needs.</b> </p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ Hunger relief programs are able to receive, purchase, and distribute food that meets the cultural and dietary needs of program clients, including those of vulnerable populations and highly impacted communities.</li> <li>➔ Hunger relief programs are aware of and attentive to equity gaps in community access to program services.</li> <li>➔ Hunger relief program clients are able to retrieve or receive food without judgement or fear.</li> <li>➔ Hunger relief programs serve clients with dignity.</li> <li>➔ WSDA supports hunger relief programs to equitably serve clients with dignity.</li> </ul> <p><b>(3) WSDA develops and maintains a system that actively monitors for gaps in the provision of food and nutrition resources to consumers.</b> </p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ WSDA develops and maintains an ongoing system for monitoring and evaluating provision of technical and financial resources to hunger relief programs, including information to assess for equity gaps.</li> <li>➔ WSDA and hunger relief programs work in concert to assess and understand program reach on an ongoing basis.</li> <li>➔ Hunger relief program reporting metrics are aligned with WSDA data needs in order to assess program reach and equitable food distribution and sales.</li> <li>➔ Hunger relief programs serve and reach Washingtonians who need them, including those of vulnerable populations and highly impacted communities</li> </ul>

## 6. Proposed Common Metrics for Partnership and Networking (Phase 2)

### Purpose of the Common Metrics

The purpose of common metrics development is to identify comparable sources of data and information that can help illustrate WSDA's progress towards achieving the collective outcomes identified in the Outcome Map shown in Section 5. Once such metrics have been identified, programs can implement data collection and reporting to monitor collective progress. A common metrics approach can enable the WSDA to measure, evaluate, and share the story of the agency's impact on Washington State food systems.

### Overview of the proposed Common Metrics for partnership and networking

Using the approach described in Section 4, we have developed a set of nine **proposed common metrics** for the impact area of *partnership and networking*, shown in **Box 1** below. The metrics are grouped into two categories: (1) the distribution of **financial resources**, and (2) the distribution of **non-financial resources**, such as facilitation of knowledge sharing. Financial resources include grants and contracts, while non-financial resources include Q&A and technical assistance offerings; working groups, committees, or convenings; and external communication of WSDA work.

The proposed partnership and networking metrics are important in and of themselves, but they also reflect and inform the status and growth of all impact areas, as engaging partners and stakeholders is integral to all programs within the agency. Because WSDA is a funder and provider of support and services, WSDA's ability to accomplish its mission depends on *who* WSDA funds, supports, engages, convenes, and partners with. Partnership, networking, and community engagement metrics can reflect the agency's reach, work quality, and contributions to equity. Together, these metrics can enable WSDA to convey its collective, statewide impact in the area of *partnership and networking* and track progress towards meeting the short, mid, and long-term outcomes described in the Outcome Map in Section 5.

Box 1 provides a summary of the nine proposed metrics in the area of *partnership and networking*, and the subsequent sections provide detail on the rationale for these metrics and tips for collecting, reporting, or interpreting the metrics. It is important to note that:

- The proposed metrics are **process** metrics, rather than **impact** metrics.
- The proposed metrics focus on **external relationships** (i.e., with groups or individuals outside of WSDA), rather than **on internal collaboration** within the agency.
- The proposed metrics **include quantity** metrics (which primarily measure reach) and **quality metrics** (which measure subjective perceptions about quality and contributions to equity).

**Box 1. Summary of proposed common metrics in the area of partnership and networking**

**Metrics that indicate the distribution of financial resources throughout the WSDA network:**

**1. Annual number of awarded or current contractors and grantees**

*Total, by collective impact area, and by contractor/grantee characteristics*

**2. Annual number of applicants to funding opportunities**

*Total, by collective impact area, and by contractor/grantee characteristics*

**2a. Percentage of applicants who were awarded contracts**

*(percent awarded = number awarded/number applicants)*

*Total, by collective impact area, and by contractor/grantee characteristics*

**2b. Year-over-year change in number of annual applicants**

*(change = current year number of applicants – prior year number of applicants)*

*Total, by collective impact area, and by contractor/grantee characteristics*

**2c. Year-over-year change in number of awarded contracts and grants**

*(change = current year number awarded – prior year number awarded)*

*Total, by collective impact area, and by contractor/grantee characteristics*

**3. Annual dollars awarded to contractors and grantees**

*Total, by collective impact area, and by contractor/grantee characteristics*

**4. Annual contractor or grantee perceived success or outcome of WSDA funding\***

*Contractor/grantee qualitatively stated success or outcome of WSDA funding or WSDA support*

**Metrics that indicate the distribution of non-financial resources throughout WSDA network:**

**5. Annual number of Q&A or technical assistance sessions held by WSDA**

*Total, by collective impact area, by geographic region, and by audience or stakeholder type (e.g., agricultural businesses, community-based organizations, tribal organizations, private sector)*

**6. Annual # of attendees at Q&A sessions, or annual # of recipients of TA offered by WSDA**

*Total, by collective impact area, by geographic region, and by audience or stakeholder type (e.g., agricultural businesses, community-based organizations, tribal organization, private sector)*

**7. Annual number of work groups or committees in which WSDA staff participate**

*Total, by collective impact area, by work group characteristics (e.g., stakeholder type)*

**8. Annual number of work groups or committees convened, chaired, or facilitated by WSDA**

*Total, by collective impact area, by work group characteristics (e.g., stakeholder type)*

**9. Annual WSDA staff perceived impact of communication reach\***

*The extent to which WSDA staff feel they are reaching their intended audiences, by program and by collective impact area.*

\* Metrics which may require the collection of new information

## General tips for collecting data to implement the proposed metrics

**Most of the proposed metrics can be reported based on existing internal documentation** such as contractor or grantee databases, invoicing forms, or RFP/RFQ materials. The two proposed metrics that may require the collection of new information, either from contractors or from WSDA staff, are annotated with an asterisk (\*).

We minimized the need to collect new information from contractors, grantees, clients, or customers in order to facilitate the broad relevance and feasibility of the proposed metrics across the agency. As a result, **the proposed metrics focus on information WSDA can collect about its direct network** (such as grantees, contractors, and subcontractors), rather than information about the broader network of people served by WSDA's direct partners. For example, the proposed metrics would entail counting the number of hunger relief organizations receiving grants (in total or disaggregated by key characteristics), but not the number of clients served by hunger relief organizations. Though WSDA *can* collect or report information about the broader network of people served by its direct partners, the proposed *common* metrics focused on WSDA's direct network.

## General tips for reporting data on the proposed metrics: data disaggregation

For proposed quantity metrics (metrics 1-3 and 5-8 in Box 1), we recommend **reporting both total and disaggregated metrics**. The choice of which characteristics to disaggregate by may be guided by feasibility and relevance. The degree to which all program areas will be able to report disaggregated metrics will vary based on data availability and the standardization of the information gathered from contractors and grantees across programs. Though some types of disaggregated data may not currently be available, if they are considered a high priority they could be incorporated into future data collection efforts. We recommend considering a few broad types of disaggregation: by impact area (for all metrics), by contractor or grantee characteristics (for the financial resource metrics), and by stakeholder group (for the non-financial resource metrics).

**Tips for disaggregating metrics by impact area** (e.g., *partnership and networking, learning and communication, food system resilience, etc.*): Reporting metrics by these impact areas would be a new strategy for WSDA. However, all program areas are engaged in work across all of these impact areas (either directly or indirectly), and information from each program can be grouped into these impact areas. Grouping metrics into these impact areas would allow different program areas to combine data and demonstrate collective impact in different layers of the food system. WSDA may find that some grants or projects overlap within the impact areas.

**Tips for disaggregating metrics by contractor or grantee characteristics:** Presently, information collected by different programs about their contractors or grantees is not standard and varies both in which categories of information are gathered (e.g., if any race or ethnicity data are gathered) and the degree of detail gathered (e.g., to what extent race or ethnicity data disaggregate into multiple, specific racial or ethnic categories). In order to show collective impact, we recommend programs report on the following characteristics as they are able, and then, over time, programs across the agency initiative begin standardizing the information gathered from contractors and grantees to allow for easier reporting on collective impact.

Contractor or grantee characteristics that could be used for disaggregation include the following, with final decisions to depend on the relevance and availability of information:

- Contractor/grantee status as new or returning
- Applicant status as new or returning
- Geographic region
- County
- Organization’s status as BIPOC-led or BIPOC-serving
- Veteran status
- Women-owned status
- Other contractor or grantee characteristics that may be a priority for the agency (for example, *race and/or ethnicity of applicant or of business/organization owner*)

We identified this list of characteristics based on the number of programs currently gathering data on some of these characteristics, as well as interest from WSDA staff in being able to report metrics and impacts in these ways. We recommend that, in time, WSDA programs begin gathering information that allows them to disaggregate data to identify for equity gaps, which is a common desired outcome throughout all impact areas. For example, the University of Michigan published an extensive resource on measuring racial equity in the food system that includes additional metrics and notes on how data can be equitably collected to make positive impacts.<sup>10</sup>

**Tips for disaggregating metrics by stakeholder group:** Finally, we recommend identifying common stakeholder types or stakeholder categories that all program areas could report on—for example, tribal organizations, agricultural businesses, private sector, governmental agencies, contractors, or grantees. There are many ways these groups could be collapsed; we recommend identifying the categories that allow for meaningful detail, while still being common across all program areas.

## **General tips for reporting data on the proposed metrics: denominators**

When reporting proportions, we recommend providing as complete of a picture of the data as possible; **report both absolute counts and proportions, and carefully consider which denominators are available.** For example, let’s say we are reporting on the proportion of awarded contracts held by women-owned businesses. If the denominator is the number of current contracts held, perhaps only 5% of current contracts (5 out of 100 contracts) are held by women-owned businesses. But if the denominator is the number of women-owned businesses that submitted an application, perhaps 50% of women-owned applicants (5 out of 10 women-owned applicants) were funded. In this hypothetical example, reporting only one of these figures could provide an incomplete picture and could be misleading. Being thoughtful and concise about denominators is also important when identifying and communicating equity gaps.

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<sup>10</sup> Rodman-Alvarez, S. & Colosanti, K. (2019) *Measuring Racial Equity in the Food System: Established and Suggested Metrics*. East Lansing, MI. Michigan State University Center for Regional Food Systems. Retrieved from <https://www.canr.msu.edu/resources/measuring-racial-equity-in-the-food-system>

## Technical guidance on implementing partnership and networking metrics: distribution of financial resources

### (1) Annual number of awarded or current contractors and grantees

*Reported in total, by collective impact area, and by contractor/grantee characteristics.*

The data for this metric will be gathered via programs' contractor and grantee management systems. While programs' definitions of "contractor," "grantee," or "awardee" may vary, for this metric, programs would report any entity receiving any type of funding or support of monetary value (e.g., infrastructure support), be it a contractor, grantee, awardee, or other type of funded entity. The count of all types of contractors and grantees would then be combined, and treated as one, in order to look at collective reach across all programs. These data could be gathered and combined retroactively to look at change over time in the quantity of contractors and grantees across impact areas (and other characteristics, as available) to illustrate where funding has been going, in addition to its current status. Presently, we recommend reporting these numbers as duplicated counts, without disaggregating potential duplicate contractors/grantees across programs. However, as possible, we suggest tracking and reporting both duplicated and unduplicated counts. Unduplicated counts can provide a stronger estimate for collective WSDA reach, while duplicated counts can show relationship depth and overall statewide contracting support.

### (2) Annual number of applicants to funding opportunities

*Reported in total, by collective impact area, and by contractor/grantee characteristics.*

The data for this metric can also be gathered via programs' contractor and grantee (or RFP and RFQ) management systems. As in the count of awarded contracts and grants, despite varying definitions, programs will report all applicants to any funding opportunities or financial support opportunities as one group. This metric could also be examined retroactively. As above, we recommend reporting initially as duplicated counts, incorporating unduplicated counts as possible. When combined with the data reported in Metric #1 above, WSDA will additionally be able to calculate the following metrics:

#### **a. Percentage of applicants awarded contracts**

- Percent awarded = number awarded / number applicants.
- Reported by total number, number by collective impact area, and number by contractor/grantee characteristics.
- If reporting proportions, be careful about defining and choosing denominators.

#### **b. Year-over-year change in number of annual applicants**

- Change = current year number of applicants – prior year number of applicants
- Reported by total number, number by collective impact area, and number by contractor/grantee characteristics.

#### **c. Year-over-year change in number of awarded contracts and grants**

- Change = current year number awarded – prior year number awarded
- Reported by total number, number by collective impact area, and number by contractor/grantee characteristics.
- If reporting proportions, be careful about defining and choosing denominators.

### **(3) Annual dollars awarded to contractors and grantees**

*Reported in total, by collective impact area, and by contractor/grantee characteristics.*

The data for this metric will also be gathered via programs' contractor and grantee management systems. Despite varying definitions, programs will report all funding to any entity, including the dollar amount of any support given with a specific monetary value, e.g., farm business infrastructure, purchased delivery services. This metric could also be examined retroactively.

### **(4) Annual contractor or grantee perceived success or outcome of WSDA funding**

*Contractor/grantee qualitatively stated success or outcome of WSDA funding or WSDA support.*

Many programs currently gather anecdotal success stories from contractors and grantees. Programs currently gather this information in several varied ways, including success or funding impact statements in invoices or annual reporting, or photos of work taken and shared with program staff. The data for this metric could be gathered in a few ways, each with its own benefits:

**Option 1:** Program staff could review information currently available to them from contractors (grantees, awardees), and summarize in a few statements the success stories and impacts they have seen, and that have been reported to or shared with them. Program staff could compile these success stories, and across all program areas, produce a handful of written statements sharing out collective successes. This option is low burden to contractors/grantees but does not give all contractors and grantees the same opportunity to ensure their voice and their success is shared.

**Option 2:** Programs could incorporate a standard close-ended survey question regarding success or funding impact into annual reporting (or invoicing). The benefit of a survey question is that the data would be standard, and simple to collate and report. The drawbacks are increased reporting burden to contractors/grantees, and a loss of nuance and detail—both of which can be useful in telling the story of WSDA's collective work. A close-ended survey question could ask:

*What effect, if any, has this funding had in helping your program, organization, or businesses meet your yearly goals?*

- *Significant effect*
- *Moderate effect*
- *Minimal effect*
- *No effect*
- *Negative effect*

**Option 3:** Programs could incorporate a standard open-ended question survey regarding success or funding impact into annual reporting (or invoicing). As with the close-ended survey question, the benefit of an open-ended question is that it provides contractors and grantees with an equal opportunity to share their story. However, an open-ended question will require substantially more work from WSDA program staff to read, process, and share in a collective way. An open-ended survey question could ask:

*In one or two sentences, please describe any effects or impacts this funding has had for your business of organization.*

## Technical guidance on implementing partnership and networking metrics: distribution of non-financial resources

### **(5) Annual number of Q&A or technical assistance sessions held by WSDA.**

*Reported in total, by collective impact area, by geographic region, and by audience or stakeholder type (e.g., producer or farm business, community-based organization, tribal organization, private sector).*

The ways each program engages with stakeholders differs depending on programming strategies, funding source and funder requirements, and content and topic area. However, all program areas work in some way with partners outside of WSDA to share information. Programs do this via Question & Answer sessions regarding upcoming funding opportunities or ongoing contracts, technical assistance around grant implementation, convening experts to advise on grant selection, etc. We recommend combining all counts of these various outreach and engagement efforts into a high-level bucket of “Q&A and technical assistance,” so that these efforts can be collectively reported and tracked.

The data for this metric will come from programs’ own internal tracking of how and when they engage with others outside of the agency. Program staff would compile these counts, along with relevant or applicable characteristics (region, stakeholder type), and WSDA could then combine and report these counts across all programs.

### **(6) Annual number of attendees at Q&A sessions, or annual number of recipients of technical assistance offered by WSDA.**

*Reported in total, by collective impact area, by geographic region, and by audience or stakeholder type (e.g., producer or farm business, community-based organization, tribal organization, private sector).*

For each of the Q&A or technical assistance-type sessions counted under the first metric, this metric would capture the total number of attendees or recipients of each ‘knowledge sharing’ event. Capturing attendance will help WSDA capture and illustrate reach. These data will come from event sign-up or sign-in documentation, or technical assistance tracking spreadsheets maintained by WSDA staff.

### **(7) Annual number of work groups or committees in which WSDA staff participate.**

*Reported in total, by collective impact area, and by committee characteristics (e.g., stakeholder type).*

Nearly all WSDA staff discussed participating in working groups, committees, advisory boards, etc., in their engagement with stakeholders across the state. This metric is designed to capture this engagement and illustrate and track WSDA’s role and influence in agricultural and food system work statewide. These data will come from WSDA staff members tracking and reporting the number of groups they participate in. WSDA staff would report the total number of unique/unduplicated groups that they participate in on an annual basis, along with characteristics of each group (where, purpose, with whom). For the purpose of this metric, participation in working groups, committees, sub-committees, advisory boards, advisory groups, expert panels, etc., will all be counted together. This will allow WSDA to capture the full extent of program staff engagement. Note that it is possible and likely that the groups WSDA staff participate in

fall under more than one collective impact area. We recommend reporting the total number of groups by collective impact area, including each group in each collective impact area that it applies to; this will be a duplicated count of engagement, while the ‘total number’ overall will be unduplicated. If multiple WSDA staff participate in the same group, the group should be counted only once.

**(8) Annual number of work groups or committees convened, chaired or facilitated by WSDA.**

*Reported in total, by collective impact area, and by committee characteristics (e.g., stakeholder type).*

As in the number of groups WSDA staff ‘participate in,’ the data for this metric will also come from annual reports by program staff and will include an exhaustive list of groups. This metric will specify, however, the count of groups that WSDA staff convene, chair, or facilitate, rather than just participating in. We propose reporting on this metric by total number, collective impact area, and the characteristics of committee members (e.g., the number of groups facilitated by WSDA that include tribal organizations). If multiple WSDA staff jointly convene or facilitate a group, the group should only be counted once.

**(9) Annual WSDA staff perceived impact of communication reach.**

*Reported as the extent to which WSDA staff feel they are reaching their intended audiences, by program and by collective impact area.*

WSDA staff shared that programs may not be reaching the full audience that would benefit most from their programming. We recommend internally polling WSDA program staff on an annual basis to assess to what extent staff feel they are reaching their intended audiences. While this metric does not assess true reach, it provides WSDA with a cross-program understanding of where staff feel there may be opportunities for improvements in communication, outreach, and reach, and where staff view their current efforts are having the intended reach and impact. WSDA could then aggregate these responses to first look at them by program (e.g., Food Assistance, Regional Markets, SCBGP), and second by collective impact area. WSDA could collect this information via a survey poll to program staff – asking all staff within each program to respond. The survey poll questions could, for example, ask:

*To what extent do you feel that your program is reaching the audience you intend to reach?*

- *We have strong reach—we are reaching our intended audience.*
- *We have moderate reach—we are reaching most of our intended audience.*
- *We have minimal reach—we are not reaching many of our intended audience.*
- *We have not reached or are not reaching our intended audience.*

Capturing perceived reach will allow WSDA to be nimble and adjust programming efforts based on staff assessments of success and identify how WSDA program teams may be able to support on another across programs to share challenges and strategies for improving communication reach.

## 7. Recommendations and Continued Engagement

### How can WSDA begin to implement the proposed metrics?

The Outcome Map and proposed Common Metrics work presented in this report are living documents; these are tools that WSDA program staff can adapt, update, refer to, and implement as program areas work together to collectively report on the agency's growth and progress. *Not all metrics need to be implemented in order for WSDA to start collectively reporting on the agency's impact.* We recommend that WSDA teams review our proposed metrics and begin with those that feel most feasible (e.g., contractor counts, total dollars distributed).

In the appendices, we created examples of ways we envision the WSDA can potentially track, report and share work and progress on common metrics. Some items in the appendices are tools that WSDA can implement now, while others are samples of future work that could expand the common metrics framework. Key resources in the appendices include:

- **Appendix D** is a template for tracking metrics by program area. We anticipate that each program will fill in metrics they track in their respective boxes. Tracking across the table will help to provide a visual to compare *which* metrics programs currently track and, potentially, the *scale* of the relationship to that metric. Note that not all programs will be able to fill out the table entirely.
- **Appendix E** is a sample common metrics report for the Networking & Partnership impact area. This report provides a snapshot of how we envision WSDA could use these metrics to collectively (and annually) share work and progress. This sample can be updated to report on metrics for other impact areas, as well.
- **Appendix F** is a list of sample metrics from all other impact areas. We separated metrics that programs may already collect (as identified in documentation and/or heard in interviews) and potential metrics that could be collected, based off desired program outcomes and goals. Future work would expand and refine the metrics presented in this appendix.
- **Appendix G** provides an overview of direct and indirect food Insecurity metrics. These metrics, to an extent, can support WSDA's effort to track its goal of ensuring that all Washingtonians have access to safe and nutritious food.

## What comes next?

The following recommendations are intended to build on this project and help WSDA further support its portfolio of programs aimed at strengthening food security, increasing the economic viability of farming and food businesses, and improving equity through investments in support of underrepresented farmers/ranchers, women, minority, small business owners, and socially disadvantaged communities:

### **(1) Incorporate a common metrics approach into decision-making.**

A common metrics approach can support informed decision-making about state food system grant programming and investments based on clearly established indicators of need and priorities, and then assess the extent to which projects contribute to intended goals. WSDA can use this information to identify areas that continue to be underfunded and assess which outcomes are seeing the most and least positive change. This process could help WSDA consider where additional financial investment or technical support would be most worthwhile.

### **(2) Integrate a common metrics approach into reporting and evaluation processes.**

A common metrics framework can support efforts to assess and describe funded efforts collectively by making it easier to identify and articulate how WSDA programs and grantees fit within and contribute to state goals, data trends, and food system efforts at multiple scales. Use of common data points can make it easier for WSDA to aggregate its data and more effectively tell the story of how its portfolio and timeline of funding has impacted particular outcomes.

### **(3) Incorporate a common metrics approach into future funding proposals.**

For example, WSDA might decide to pilot the use of one or more new metrics or data sources to assess need pertaining to a particular outcome. WSDA might also include an outcomes map or a menu of potential outcomes and metrics in its future requests for proposals and proposal review processes. Grant applicants could be asked to specify which of the outcomes their proposed project would intend to influence and be required to measure selected outcomes in their project.

### **(4) Continue engagement with the UW food systems team on common metrics work.**

As the WSDA initiates and implements a common metrics approach, continued engagement with the UW team can provide important momentum and continued support. Engagement with the UW team could provide the following: content expertise related to topics such as food access, food security, and food systems; technical expertise in primary and secondary research and evaluation, including data collection and analysis; experience planning and conducting evaluations of programs and systems; and connection and familiarity with food system partners. In particular, the UW team could help support piloting some of the proposed common metrics with WSDA grantees, for example, doing formative work to explore how grantees could use, implement, and collect the metrics; and, helping to create guidance for grantees and language in RFPs or reporting templates. The UW team could also further develop robust metrics for additional impact areas beyond *partnership and networking*. Finally, the UW team could help WSDA to aggregate its data and more effectively tell the story of how its portfolio and timeline of funding has impacted particular outcomes, either for a portfolio of projects or standalone areas or projects.

## Appendices

Appendix A: Program Staff Interview Guide

Appendix B: Proposed Common Metrics

Appendix C: Template for Tracking Data Availability Across Programs

Appendix D: Sample Report

Appendix E: Sample Metrics for all Impact Areas

Appendix F: Food Security Metrics