



EAST DENVER
FOOD HUB

PROJECT BRIEF:

EAST DENVER FOOD HUB

2022 CAPSTONE PROJECT

INTRODUCTION

Title

Reclaiming our Food: Exploring the Role of Anchor Institutions and Nonprofit Organizations to Create Equitable Food Ecosystems

Partner

The East Denver Food Hub (EDFH)

Project Team Members

Brett Bidstrup, Sarah Ensor, Hannah LaChance, and Madeline Walker

Capstone Advisor

Dr. Damien Thompson

Other Key Collaborators

Thank you to Roberto Meza, Jackie Drummond, and Claiborne McDonald, our EDFH key points of contact for this project.

We are grateful for over 20 community members interviewed for this project.

Special thanks to Dr. Damien Thompson for guiding and supporting us through our Capstone process.



MENV Team at the East Denver Food Hub

PURPOSE

The purpose of this project is to promote equity, justice, and dignity within our food system through making strong partnerships and relationships for the East Denver Food Hub. Our team's research contributes to understanding the barriers and opportunities for advancing food equity and sovereignty within our food system. The deliverables will support the East Denver Food Hub's partnership development with anchor institutions and non-profit organizations to support farmers of color, encourage local procurement, shift purchasing power, and invest in a model of a more equitable food system. These partnerships will support EDFH's mission to address the problems of inequity, misconceptions of the food system, and barriers to participation in the food system.

For this project, we will complete four deliverables. The methods and outcomes for each are described on the following page.

METHODS

TASK 1: ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Secondary research through literature review in order to inform other deliverables. The Capstone Team conducted research on current food access practices in Colorado, the role of anchor institutions in the food system, and alternative economic models that EDFH can utilize.

TASK 2: PARTNERSHIP CULTIVATION

Partnership growth through a revenue analysis lens in order to develop partnership cultivation materials. The Capstone team used Task 1 research to create a tracking system that will further EDFH's partner building capacity.

TASK 3: CASE STUDY

Primary research through interviews with community leaders in the food system focusing on Jefferson County and beyond. This research informs the study on both institutional food procurement and access. Interviewees ranged from representatives at schools, hospitals, restaurants, food pantries, and nonprofits.

TASK 4: PODCAST

Media creation through a storytelling lens. The podcast, *Foodscape Stories*, amplifies voices in the local food system that are striving to make meaningful change. The Capstone team created questions, interviewed change makers, and set up the podcast to be continued in the future.

OUTCOMES

TASK 1: ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

This will be delivered in the form of a 30+ page document will be internal to EDFH. They will be able to use this document for future research endeavors related to institutional procurement and food access.

TASK 2: PARTNERSHIP CULTIVATION

This will be delivered in the form of an Institutional Pipeline template packet focused on relationship building, management, and onboarding for new and existing partners and customers.

TASK 3: CASE STUDY

This will be delivered in a folder with in two major components: (1) a slide deck on values-based procurement that will be used for future networking pitches, and (2) a report of summarized interviews and questionnaire responses. The report will inform EDFH's grant report this fall concerning Jefferson County's food system.

TASK 4: PODCAST

This will be delivered in the form of two 30-minute episodes of *Foodscape Stories*, one focusing on resilience in the food system and one focusing on emerging solutions within institutional procurement. This will be delivered in the form of an audio file on EDFH's website.

INTERESTING TAKEAWAYS

- Our case study interviews suggested that major barriers to local food procurement in the Front Range include budget, food safety, as well as infrastructure and labor for processing and storing food.
- Three corporations (Aramark, Sodexo, and Compass Group) control 77.5% of the industry, and together they purchase more than \$40 billion, generating billions in revenue.

Source: IBIS World. <https://www.ibisworld.com/united-states/market-research-reports/food-service-contractors-industry/>

In addition to these four deliverables, the team visited the East Denver Food Hub once a week over the summer semester to pack food boxes and see food hub operations on a day-to-day basis. We learned a lot about the food hub model through this experience and met many great people working to improve the food system in the process.