

# How Maryland Institutions Purchase Local Food

## What is a farm-to-institution profile?

Institutions such as hospitals, universities, K–12 schools, government facilities serve large number of people. A farm-to-institution profile is a snapshot that shows us what portion of an institution’s food budget goes toward the purchase of local products. As institutions begin to pay attention to purchasing local products, which boosts the local economy, it is important to understand how food-sourcing can act as a lever for change—for Maryland’s economy, environment, and public health.

## Local purchasing data within institutions

As institutions feel pressure from consumer demand to serve local foods, more and more are beginning to **set goals and benchmarks for their own local purchasing**. Unfortunately, without a system in place to record local and nonlocal purchases or without receiving specific purchasing data from their distributors, **tracking and reporting** on their goals may not be possible or easily calculated. This results in a lack of **accountability** by institutions with regard to how they reach their goals or plan to track future progress.

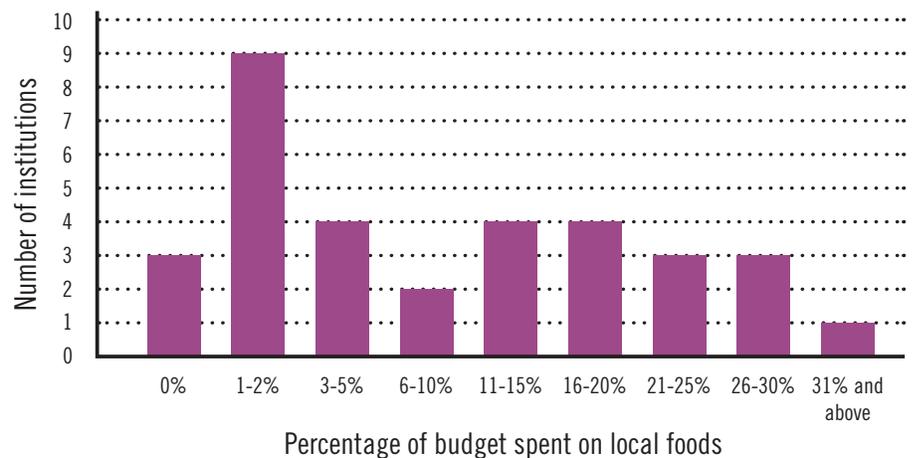
## Survey Data

*These data were collected through multiple secondary and primary data sources. Please see each individual brief for data sources.*

Maryland Institutions	Total # of Institutions	Persons served annually	Estimated Annual Food Budget based on survey data
K12 Public Schools	1,441 in 24 school districts	856,742	\$ 114,950,000
Hospitals	64	15,745*	\$ 94,933,333
Major Universities	25	174,092	\$ 78,333,333
Total	1,530	1,079,168	\$ 288,216,666

\*This number only includes patient capacity based on number of beds; however budget may include cafeteria + patient meals.

## How 34 Maryland institutions budget for local foods



# Farm to Institution Profiles

## {Institutions}

### Local sourcing requires communication by all parties.

In order to have complete and detailed data on local food procurement by institutions, each link in the food chain must contribute to tracking and reporting purchases. Often the food service director is held accountable for having and reporting data on the farm of origin of their products but if they purchase through a large distributor, the only information available to them is what they receive on order forms or invoices, which may not designate what was local. Some distributors have begun to offer products as “local” but their definition of what “local” means may not match that of their customers. Participation and communication by all players in the food system is essential.

By purchasing local food, institutions could put millions of dollars back into the local economy.

#### If all institutions in Maryland spent...

3% on local food	\$ 8,646,500
5% on local food	\$ 14,410,833
10% on local food	\$ 28,821,666
20% on local food	\$ 57,643,333
25% on local food	\$ 72,054,166

...would be put back into the local economy.

### Key Findings

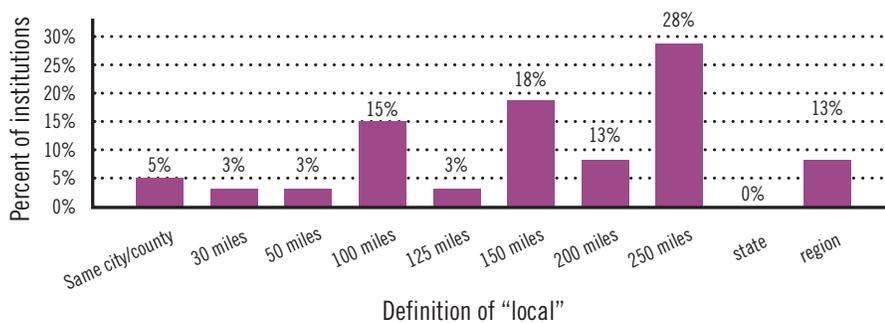
- There are 1,530 institutions (K-12 schools, universities, and hospitals) in Maryland serving meals to just over 1,000,000 adults and children annually.
- The estimated food budget for all institutions was approximately \$288,216,666
- 43% of institutions surveyed (n=44) purchased food directly from a farmer.

### Future research questions

- How can institutions, food service companies, and distributors be more transparent and accurate with local food purchases?
- How can distributors be brought into the farm-to-institution conversation? Should more research and time be spent on addressing the challenges/constraints they face in sourcing local items?
- Are institutions making realistic local food purchasing goals given the amount of food grown in a local or regional area?

VISIT: <http://mdfoodsystemmap.org/farm-to-institution/> TO READ MORE ABOUT METHODOLOGY AND SOURCES

### Varying definitions of local



N=39