

City of Tumwater

Community

Food Assessment

DRAFT
April 2025

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INTRODUCTION

The City of Tumwater is developing a Food System Plan that will address food insecurity at the local level by focusing on 1) how to provide healthy food for all members of the community, 2) reduce food waste, and 3) support local food production and processing. To develop a plan that identifies the most impactful actions for achieving these three overarching goals, it's first necessary to understand the current local environment. This Community Food Assessment provides that foundation by examining existing conditions, opportunities, and challenges within Tumwater's food system.

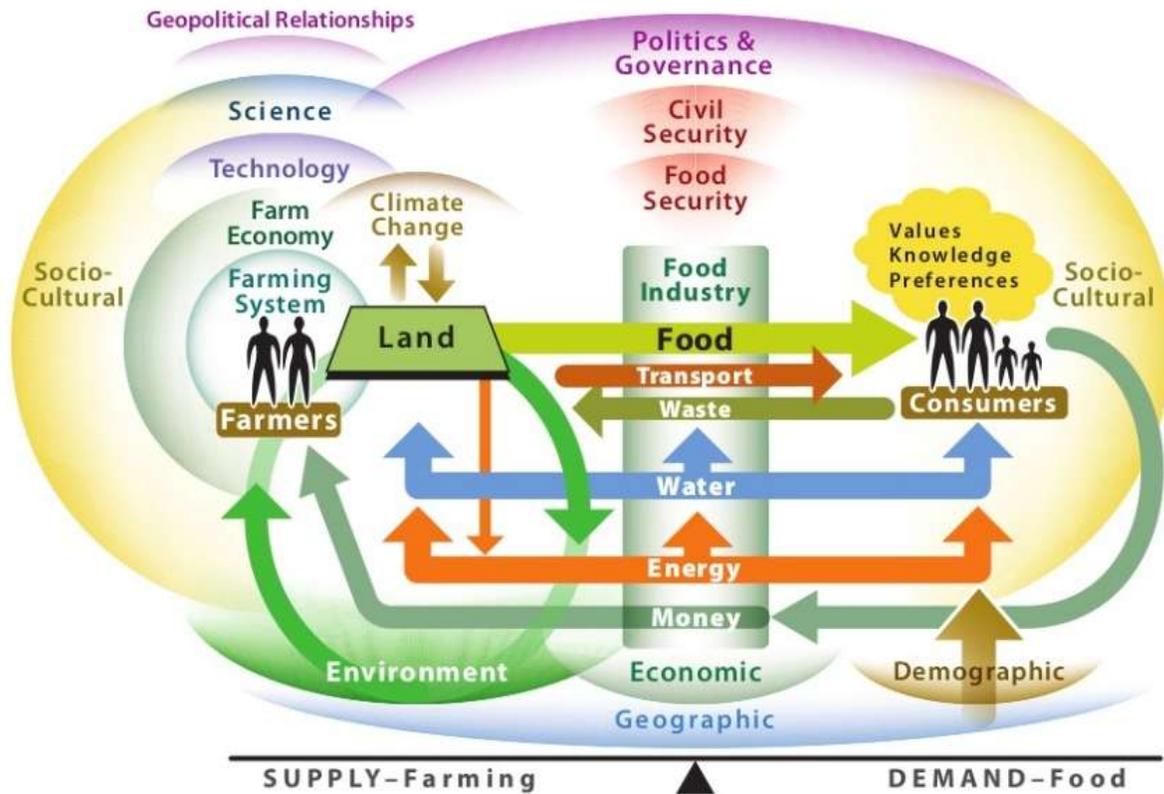
Methodology

This Assessment is informed by 53 Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) that were interviewed or surveyed. A complete list of the SMEs is in Appendix A. The survey and interview questions are in Appendix B. Interviews were conducted with guiding questions, allowing conversations to follow different directions depending on the interviewee's perspective. The survey was conducted online.

The Assessment is divided into seven sector summaries, which serve as a compilation of interviews, surveys, and other relevant data— Land Use & Conservation, Processors & Producers, Retail & Distribution, Waste Reduction & Recovery, Access & Security, Public Health & Nutrition, and Education & Workforce. Each sector summary includes Key Challenges, Key Developments, and Current Collaborations & Resources. The sector summaries will be shared with the SMEs to review for accuracy. Any updates will be reflected in the final Food System Plan.

Food System

The food system is an interconnected web of inputs, activities, and actors involved in producing, processing, distributing, consuming, and disposing of food. The graphic below, created by shiftN, illustrates the complexity and interrelationships within that system. Importantly, our modern food system does not adhere to jurisdictional boundaries, as food moves across cities, counties, states, and countries before it reaches



consumers.

In this context, the definition of “local” becomes both important and nuanced. The term can vary widely depending on the entity using it. For example, Tumwater School District’s Food Services Department uses a definition aligned with the United State Department of Agriculture, the major funder of school meals. In this instance “local” means food sourced from anywhere within Washington State. By contrast, farmers markets and food hubs often define “local” more narrowly, based on a handful of surrounding counties. These definitions can be visualized as concentric circles expanding outward, shaped by product availability and the proximity of farms, processors, and producers.

Recognizing the need for a strong and resilient food system, the City of Tumwater has incorporated discussion of the local food system into draft elements of its Comprehensive Plan update. The inclusion of a Climate Element—new as of December 2024—demonstrates a commitment to sustainability through greenhouse gas reduction and climate resilience strategies. These are essential for ensuring the long-term health and stability of both local and regional food systems. The draft Conservation Element will emphasize community collaboration to improve access to healthy, affordable, culturally appropriate, and sustainably produced food, ensuring that all community members can reliably access nutritious food.

Recent History of Regional Collaboration

A resilient food system requires regional collaboration. Shared planning, infrastructure, and partnerships help local governments and community organizations make a greater impact—especially for those most affected by food insecurity. Over the past 18 years, efforts across Thurston County have brought together diverse partners with goals to build a food system that is equitable, sustainable, stable, and resilient.

Community Food Summit (2011): In 2007, local nonprofits—including GRuB, Thurston County Food Bank, Sustainable South Sound, Left Foot Organics, and the Gleaners Coalition—joined with The Evergreen State College (TESC) and area farmers to launch the Hunger Free Thurston County Coalition and Food Bank Growers Network. These efforts culminated in the 2011 Community Food Summit, a two-day event that presented findings from a regional food assessment and launched working groups that laid the foundation for future collaboration. Out of this event grew the Thurston Thrives Food Action Team, the Thurston Asset Building Coalition (TABC) Food Hub, and the Sustainable Thurston Food System Council.

TABC Food Hub (2012): The Thurston Asset Building Coalition (TABC) formed a Food Hub to strengthen the local food economy, increase access to healthy food, and promote environmental stewardship. It connects multi-sector partners to support economic stability for low-income households.

Thurston Thrives Food Action Team (2013): Launched by Thurston County Public Health & Social Services, Thurston Thrives used a collective impact model to address public health. The Food Action Team focused on food, nutrition, equity, and health, and developed a Strategy Map presented to the County Board of Health in 2013.

Sustainable Thurston Food System Council (2011–2014): As part of the *Sustainable Thurston* planning process, the Thurston Regional Planning Council convened a Local Food Systems Panel to inform its regional sustainability plan. Their 2012 White Paper built on recommendations from the Community Food Summit and led to the creation of the *Sustainable Thurston Plan* (2014). The Thurston Food System Council emerged from this process as a grassroots body tasked with advancing the plan’s food goals, though it lacked dedicated funding or staffing.

South Sound Food System Network (SSFSN, 2016–present): To reduce duplication and align efforts, the TABC Food Hub, Thurston Thrives Food Action Team, and the Thurston Food System Council merged to form the South Sound Food System Network (SSFSN) in 2016. Early leadership included GRuB, Thurston EDC, WA Department of Health, and Senior Services for South Sound, with participation from over 30 organizations. SSFSN is currently staffed through TABC with state support, though funding is uncertain after June 2025. Recently, the Network has experienced lower participation and a narrower focus on food security rather than broader system goals.

SECTOR SUMMARIES

Land Use & Conservation

The City of Tumwater is situated on land traditionally stewarded by Indigenous peoples through active management of oak and camas prairies—among the most biodiverse and culturally significant ecosystems in the Pacific Northwest. These prairies, shaped by generations of human-ecological relationships, support a wide array of food and medicinal plants such as camas, bracken fern rhizomes, hazelnuts, berries, and acorns from Garry oak trees. Seasonal camas harvests are not only vital food-gathering events but also moments of cultural connection. Intentional fire has been used to maintain prairie landscapes and sustain habitats for grazing animals like deer and elk. Today, just 3% of these unique ecosystems remain.

Land use decisions directly influence the foundations of a healthy and resilient food system. In Tumwater, land is under increasing pressure from the competing needs of housing, commercial and industrial growth, and environmental conservation. These decisions affect the availability of space for local food production, equitable access to green space, and the preservation of vital ecological and cultural resources. The City’s Comprehensive Plan Land Use Element will reflect an effort to balance these priorities. It includes policies supporting nearby access to healthy food in residential areas and encourages flexible food infrastructure, such as food trucks and food truck courts.

The Climate Element will advance strategies for greenhouse gas reduction and climate resilience. These are essential components of a food system that is not only sustainable but also stable in the face of environmental and economic disruptions.

Key Developments

- Regenerative agriculture contributes to climate solutions by drawing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and sequestering it in the soil.
- From 2012 to 2022, Thurston County lost 27% of its farmland—shrinking from 76,638 acres to 55,943 acres—and 17% of its farms.
- Walkable urban environments and localized food supply chains enhance resilience by improving equitable access to fresh foods, reducing emissions, and supporting local economies.

Key Challenges

- High farmland costs in the region create barriers for new and beginning farmers.
- The Growth Management Act prioritizes dense development and does not always readily accommodate food production in urban zones.
- Tumwater must continually navigate tensions between housing, industrial, commercial, agricultural, and conservation land use needs.

Current Collaborations & Resources

- **Community Farm Land Trust** preserves farmland through community ownership models, long-term leases, and easements, ensuring long-term affordability and land access for farmers in the South Puget Sound.
- **Thurston Conservation District** supports landowners with technical assistance and conservation planning that promotes soil health, water quality, and wildlife habitat.
- **Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)** provides financial and technical support through programs like EQIP and CSP, helping local landowners implement conservation practices that build climate resilience and support sustainable agriculture.

Processors & Producers

The people and businesses who grow, raise, and process food in and around Tumwater—small-scale farmers, ranchers, food processors, urban farms, and community gardeners—are the foundation of the local food system. Their efforts contribute to food access, economic resilience, and environmental sustainability. Despite operating at different scales, many face similar challenges and opportunities as they work to feed the community.

Goal #5 of Tumwater’s 2019 Economic Development Plan highlights the importance of expanding the craft food and beverage sector, emphasizing not just brewing and distilling, but also the need to strengthen connections across the supply chain—from growers and processors to markets and manufacturers.

In 2010, the Tumwater City Council amended urban agriculture regulations (Ordinance O2010-029), making it easier for residents to raise and sell food within city limits. Chickens, rabbits, bees, and miniature livestock are allowed on most residential lots, with larger animals permitted on parcels over two acres.

Key Developments

- Tumwater is home to two major developments supporting craft food and beverage production: the **Craft District** on Capitol Boulevard and the **Warehouse District** on Old Highway 99. The Craft District, part of a state-funded Innovation Partnership Zone, includes Heritage Distilling, SPSCC’s Craft Brewing and Distilling Program, and retail outlets. The Warehouse District features local businesses like Matchless Brewing, Triceratops Brewing, Spud’s Produce Market, and 8 Arms Bakery.
- The **Southwest Washington Regional Agricultural Business & Innovation Park** in Tenino is beginning to open its first phase. Focused on value-added agriculture, the Ag Park supports food-related manufacturing, processing, storage, and packaging. Project partners include the Thurston Economic Development Council (EDC), City of Tenino, and Dragonwheel Investment Group with support from WSU Extension, Port of Olympia, NW Agricultural Business Center, and Thurston County.
- **Colvin Ranch** is establishing a USDA-certified meat processing facility at the Ag Park, addressing a longstanding bottleneck for local livestock producers. Once operational, the facility will serve regional ranchers with a planned capacity of up to 100 animals per week, enhancing the regional meat supply chain, improving local food access, and reducing the environmental impact associated with long-distance animal transport.
- The Tumwater School District operates a small farm at the City of Tumwater’s Isabella Bush Park through a program for high school students called **FRESH (Farm Rooted Education for Sustainability & Health)**. Since 2020, FRESH has produced over 13,000 pounds of food for students’ families and the Thurston County Food Bank. As of this writing, the program is scheduled to end in July 2025 due to the school district’s budget cuts.

Key Challenges

- High farmland costs limit access for new and beginning farmers.
- Access to water remains a significant barrier for urban farms and gardens.
- Tariffs may increase the cost or reduce availability of critical farming inputs.

- Agricultural employers report difficulty hiring and retaining workers.
- Small-scale farmers often lack access to subsidies, which are typically tied to acreage or production volume, and time-intensive application processes often outweigh the benefit.
- Many processors and producers lack access to affordable cold storage, which limits the ability to scale or diversify their operations.

Current Collaborations & Resources

- **Northwest Agriculture Business Center (NABC)** provides technical assistance to agricultural businesses, including farms and food businesses in Thurston County.
- **Native Grown & Gathered** offers marketing and technical support to Native American food producers and businesses.
- **Our Community Kitchen** and **LOC-OLY Grown**, two commercial kitchens on Olympia’s west side, support small-scale food entrepreneurs with prep stations, equipment, and cold/dry storage. Our Community Kitchen also offers group purchasing opportunities.
- Tumwater currently has one **community garden** with 20 plots, located at Tumwater United Methodist Church. The Parks and Recreation Department has funding to support the expansion of community gardens in the city.

Retail & Distribution

Retail and distribution are essential for strengthening Tumwater’s local food economy and improving access to fresh, locally produced food. The City’s focus on cultivating a strong craft food and beverage sector aligns with broader economic and land use goals. Tumwater’s 2019 Economic Development Plan includes fostering community-oriented retail—especially grocery-anchored centers (Goal #8)—and supporting the full craft food and beverage supply chain (Goal #5), from growers to markets.

Key Developments

- Food hubs connect small and mid-sized producers with institutional and retail buyers by aggregating, distributing, and marketing local products. These services help farms access stable markets—like schools, grocery stores, and food banks—while streamlining local sourcing for buyers. The region now has two food hubs: Southwest Washington Food Hub and South Sound Fresh.
- The Warehouse and Craft Districts provide retail and distribution space for local food and beverage producers.

Key Challenges

- Food costs have increased, and fresh local food is harder to access.
- The Tumwater Farmers Market is under-resourced, with limited operation and an outdated web presence.
- Federal programs like Farm to School face funding uncertainties.
- Cold storage capacity remains limited across the distribution network.
- Direct-to-consumer retailers—such as farmers markets, food hubs, and farms—face barriers to accepting EBT, including administrative burdens and technology costs.

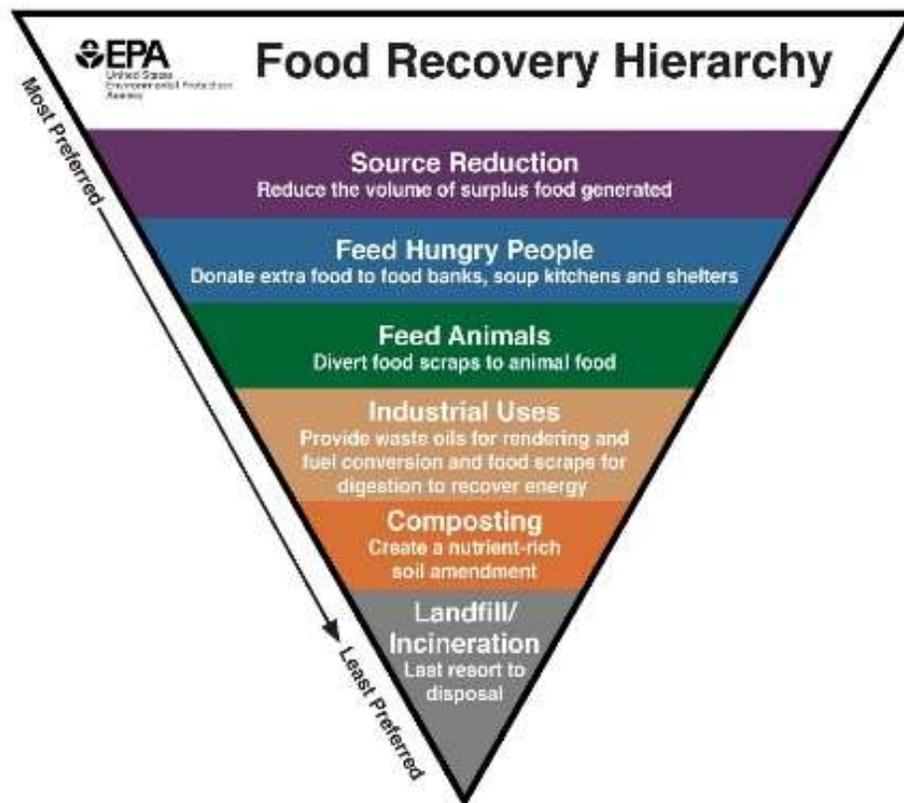
Current Collaborations & Resources

- **South Sound Fresh** serves Thurston and Mason Counties from its Olympia location. It works with over 50 producers and offers an online marketplace for consumers.
- The **Southwest Washington Food Hub**, a program of the Southwest Washington Growers Co-op, supports more than 30 producers in a six-county region.
- The **Community Farm Land Trust** publishes the ***Fresh from the Farm Guide***, a free, printed and electronic regional farm map and directory connecting consumers with farms, CSAs, markets, and food banks in a four-county region.
- The **Tumwater Farmers Market** operates June–September, 2nd and 4th Sundays, at Peter G Schmidt Elementary School (11AM–3PM).
- **Farm to School**, a federal program implemented by the Washington State Department of Agriculture and regional partners, supports local food sourcing and garden-based learning. Tumwater School District does not currently participate.

Waste Reduction & Recovery

Reducing food waste offers numerous benefits.

1. Lower Greenhouse Gas Emissions – Diverting food from landfills reduces methane production.
2. Resource Conservation – Preventing food waste conserves the water, energy, and labor used in production.
3. Economic Savings – Households and businesses reduce costs associated with food production, transport, and disposal.
4. Improved Food Security – Surplus food can be redirected to those in need.
5. Soil Health – Composting food waste reduces landfill reliance and enriches soil through nutrient recycling.



The food recovery hierarchy prioritizes waste reduction strategies with landfill as the last resort.

Tumwater’s Comprehensive Plan Lands for Public Purposes Element will support expanding composting services as part of its public services strategy.

Key Developments

- Washington’s Organics Management Law (2022) mandates phased-in organic waste separation for businesses as part of the state’s climate strategy:
 - 2024: Applies to businesses generating 8+ yards/week of food or yard waste
 - 2025: Threshold lowers to 4+ yards/week
 - 2026: Applies to businesses generating 96+ gallons/week

Key Challenges

- Enforcement of the Organics Management Law relies on self-reporting, with no immediate penalties for non-compliance.
- Leadership changes have slowed regional coordination on food waste diversion and rescue.
- Inadequate cold storage capacity limits food rescue operations.
- Edible food is often discarded due to cost or logistical barriers when supply chains fail.
- Packaging contamination prevents some food waste from being composted.
- Short meal periods in K–12 schools lead to uneaten food and higher waste.
- Food diversion in schools often depends on individual staff initiatives rather than system-wide practices.

Current Collaborations & Resources

- **LeMay Pacific Disposal** is Tumwater’s primary hauler, partnering with **Brady Trucking** and **Silver Springs Organics** for composting.
- The **Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC)** advises Thurston County’s five-year Solid Waste Management Plan, which includes Tumwater.
- The **Use Food Well Washington Plan**, created under state law (RCW 70A.205.715), outlines 30 recommendations to reduce food waste and its impacts.
- The **Washington Center for Sustainable Food Management**, launched in 2024, supports statewide food waste diversion and coordinates efforts under the Use Food Well plan.
- The **Thurston County Food Bank** rescues surplus food from retailers and restaurants and operates a gleaning program to harvest excess crops from local farms.

Access & Security

Food security means reliable, consistent access to enough nutritious, culturally appropriate food to lead healthy, active lives—without relying on emergency food or coping strategies like skipping meals or scavenging. *Food insecurity* arises when that access is limited due to insufficient resources, availability, or social barriers.

The latest Washington State Food Security Survey (WAFOOD) conducted August to October 2024 shows that food insecurity remains high among low-income households and those relying on food assistance. Groceries and housing were the most frequently cited financial hardships, with protein-rich and perishable foods (like meat, eggs, and fresh produce) being the hardest to afford. The expiration of pandemic-era support programs, combined with rising food costs, has worsened financial strain.

In 2023, 14% of Tumwater residents received **SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program)** benefits. SNAP, a federal program delivered through EBT cards, provides about \$187 per month per person in 2025—approximately \$6.16/day. Benefits are based on the assumption that households spend 30% of their net income on food, and the program fills the gap between that amount and the USDA’s low-cost Thrifty Food Plan. While the federal government covers benefit costs, states share administrative costs.

Washington State’s **Market Match** program offers additional incentives for SNAP, WIC, and Senior Nutrition participants when they buy fresh produce at participating markets and stores.

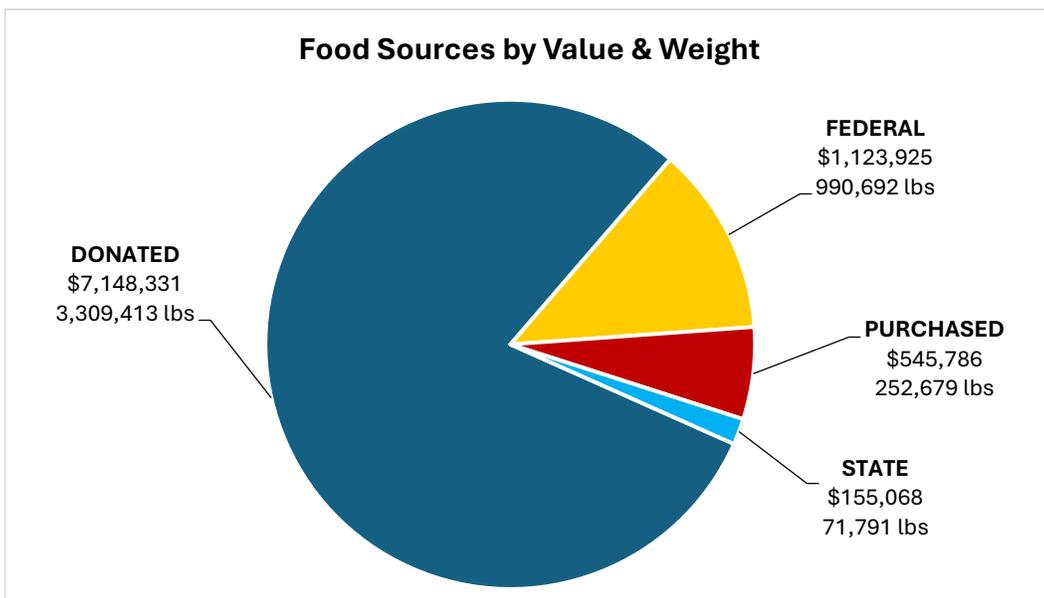
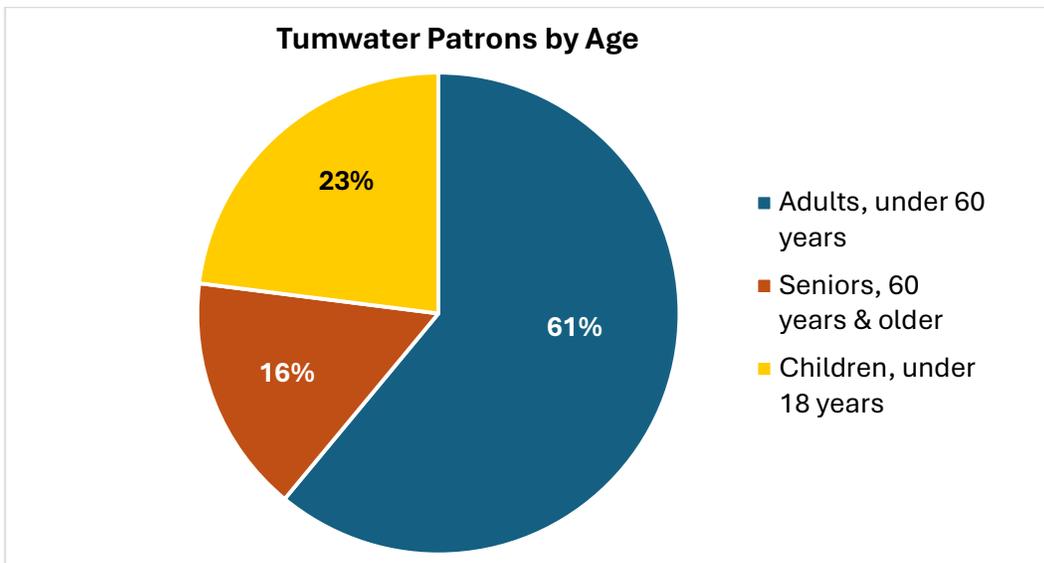
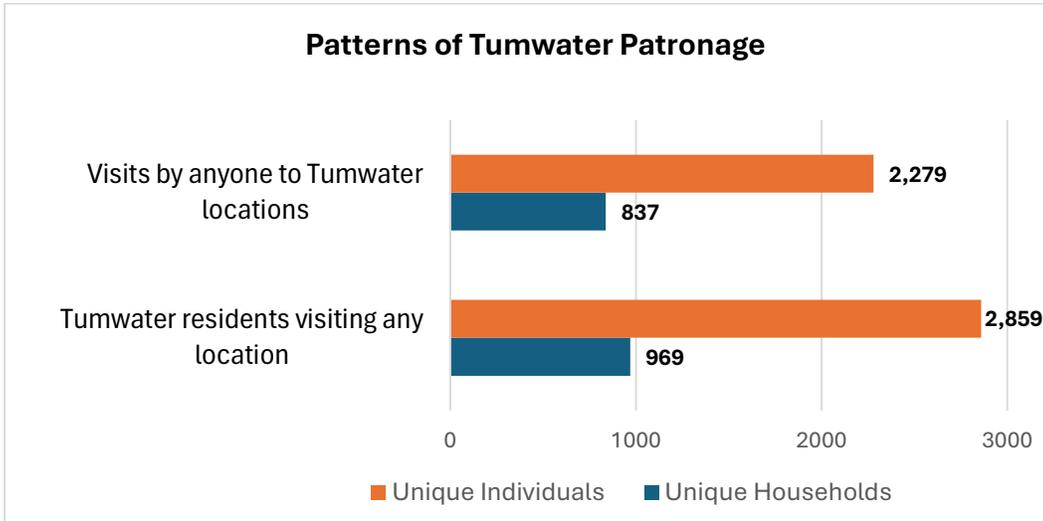
The **Thurston County Food Bank (TCFB)** does not have a walk-in location in Tumwater, but its main warehouse is located in Tumwater near the I-5/101 interchange. TCFB operates five satellite pantries in Tumwater. Some satellites use a shopping model where patrons choose their grocery items, and some use a drive-through model where patrons receive a pre-packaged assortment of groceries.

- South Puget Sound Community College (shopping model)
- Mt. View Church (drive-through)
- North Star Church of God (shopping)
- Tumwater United Methodist Church (drive-through)
- Tumwater Senior Center (shopping)

Clients receive 25–35 pounds of food per visit (including shelf-stable items, protein, dairy, deli, and produce). TCFB also offers mobile programs like USDA-funded senior boxes, home delivery, food rescue, local purchasing, and gleaning.

Tumwater’s Comprehensive Plan Housing Element will address the need for diverse, affordable housing—recognizing that high housing costs directly impact food security by limiting disposable income for food.

Thurston County Food Bank 2024 Data



Key Developments

- SNAP's benefit formula assumes 30% of net income goes toward food, but high housing and living costs often reduce actual food spending.
- TCFB's demand is growing faster than the local population.
- Mutual aid models, like Little Free Pantries, expanded during the pandemic and continue to operate.
- Shifting federal policy priorities have introduced uncertainty around future food security funding.

Key Challenges

- Rising food prices strain household budgets and food access.
- Awareness of available resources and programs is low.
- Culturally appropriate food options are limited.
- Donations from large food companies may include highly processed or near-expired items, which don't always meet nutritional or cultural needs.
- Regional food assistance efforts lack coordination.
- TCFB patrons in Tumwater report needing more staples like milk, eggs, and fresh produce.
- Limited hours, days, and locations of assistance programs can be barriers.
- Many small farms and markets face administrative and technical barriers to accepting EBT, limiting access for individuals who rely exclusively on SNAP benefits.

Current Collaborations & Resources

- The **Old Town Center** provides weekday lunches for seniors at no cost or suggested donation, now prepared by **Senior Services of South Sound**. Participation increased following a federal grant. The center also hosts a monthly TCFB food distribution serving 30–40 seniors, with demand rising post-pandemic.
- The **Tumwater Senior Council** offers summer meals for seniors at Brewery Park.
- **Senior Services for South Sound** operates the federally funded Senior Nutrition Program. The program serves 2,500 clients annually with hot and frozen meals, including 400 **Meals on Wheels** participants. Meals are tailored to health needs and prioritize local sourcing. The City of Tumwater is a program partner.
- The **Olympia Kiwanis Club** runs three gardens producing over 20,000 pounds of donated food annually for TCFB.
- **Garden-Raised Bounty (GRuB)** installs free backyard gardens for low-income households and offers continued support via workshops, a seed library, and peer learning.
- **Little Free Pantries**, modeled on book-sharing libraries via a community cupboard, offer self-serve access to food and personal care items in several Tumwater locations, including Mountain View Church, Western Plaza Mobile Home Park, and an expanded version on Hoadly Loop that incorporates a popup tent.
- **Centro Integral Educativo Latino de Olympia (CEILO)** hosts monthly food distributions in high demand—often running out of food within an hour—underscoring ongoing unmet community needs.

Public Health & Nutrition

Nutrition is a key component of preventive public health and contributes to healthier communities. Unfortunately, many people have limited knowledge about nutrition, cooking skills, seasonal eating, accessing or preparing fresh foods, and incentive and assistance programs. Lack of adequate food can affect physical and mental health. Children who grow up in homes without enough food are at an increased risk of illness and experiencing academic and psychosocial problems. Nutritional deficiencies and family stress both contribute to these outcomes.

The **Tumwater School District** serves approximately 3,800 lunches and 1,500 breakfasts each school day. During the summer months, it continues to provide meals, serving around 250 students daily at designated school sites. In the 2023–2024 school year, the district received \$177 per student in combined federal and state meal funding, with 97% of that funding coming from federal sources. For the 2025–2026 fiscal year, 33.24% of students are eligible for the **Free and Reduced-Price Lunch Program**—an increase of 3.5% from the previous year.

Key Developments

- The Tumwater School District has experienced a 30% rise in food costs over four years. Federal reimbursements have not kept pace, and the state’s contribution varies based on the share of students eligible for subsidized meals. The district must cover any shortfalls.
- In the past 15–20 years, school kitchens have been redesigned with smaller spaces and limited equipment, shifting meal service away from scratch cooking. Today, most Tumwater schools rely on reheating and serving pre-prepared meals due to infrastructure and staffing constraints.

Key Challenges

- The Tumwater School District lacks a central kitchen; each school handles its own food preparation and storage. Infrastructure limitations in individual school kitchens constrain their ability to incorporate fresh, locally sourced foods.
- Meal programs often struggle to integrate donated or rescued food while meeting nutrition standards.
- Rising food prices make it harder for people with low incomes to afford fresh, nutrient-dense, local foods.
- Language barriers limit access to nutritional information, food sources, and program details.
- Many processed foods contain increasingly high levels of sugar and sodium, which can negatively impact health and condition people’s taste preferences to crave more salt and sugar in their diets.

Current Collaborations & Resources

- **SNAP-Ed**, the educational arm of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), provides nutrition education and budgeting tools through partners like the Thurston County Food Bank and WSU Extension.
- **WIC (Women, Infants, and Children)** supports pregnant and postpartum parents and young children with nutrition education, healthy foods, breastfeeding support, and referrals. The program is managed by the Washington State Department of Health and receives federal funding.
- Community organizations like **GRuB** and the **Olympia Food Co-op** offer free and low-cost classes and workshops on nutrition, cooking, gardening, foraging, and preparing wild foods and medicines.

Education & Workforce

Education and workforce development are essential to building a resilient and inclusive local food system. The City of Tumwater’s 2019 Economic Development Plan prioritizes growing the craft food and beverage sector by developing a Center of Excellence in partnership with local education providers. This initiative supports producers, manufacturers, and markets while creating training and career pathways. The Plan also encourages recruiting educational institutions to strengthen the city’s economic base and community vitality. Together, these goals lay the groundwork for food system education that supports local business, community health, and economic opportunity.

Key Developments

- K–12 education can proactively support food security and food literacy. School gardens in Tumwater teach environmental stewardship, food origins, and seasonal eating. These programs help reduce food waste and foster appreciation for the local food economy.
- Teaching cooking and food preservation builds self-sufficiency and improves access to nutritious, affordable food.
- Workplace wellness programs, like that offered through the Southwest Washington Food Hub of which the City has participated, connect workplaces to fresh, locally grown foods and family farms to improve employee health and wellbeing and support the regional food system.

Key Challenges

- School gardens often lack stable funding and rely on volunteers, including non-staff community members.
- Youth lack exposure to local, seasonal foods in school cafeterias. The Tumwater School District’s lack of a central kitchen limits scratch cooking, food preparation flexibility, and the ability to process and store local ingredients—contributing to reliance on heat-and-serve meals and restricting nutrition quality. These challenges are compounded by a federal reimbursement rate that has not kept pace with rising food costs.
- Regional farm employers face persistent labor shortages caused by seasonal work, low wages, and a lack of qualified or interested applicants.

Current Collaborations & Resources

- **Pacific Mountain Region Agriculture Workforce Development Asset Inventory** is a living document maintained by WSU Thurston County Extension, detailing resources for agricultural workforce development—spanning training, capital, infrastructure, and education from K–12 to nonprofit providers.
- **QUEST (Quality Jobs, Equity, Strategy & Training)** is a regional partnership led by Thurston EDC, WSU Extension, GRuB, and others, focused on strengthening the agricultural workforce through business engagement, community outreach, and employment training.

- **South Puget Sound Community College (SPSCC)** is an award-winning, top community college which offers food, beverage arts, and hospitality programs in culinary arts, baking and pastry, and craft brewing/distilling.
- **New Market Skills Center**, located in Tumwater, provides high school technical training across 12 districts, including a Culinary Arts Program with an operating deli.
- **ASHHO Cultural Community Center**, located in Tumwater, hosts a paid, 12-week culinary and hospitality job training program.
- **FRESH (Farm Rooted Education for Sustainability & Health)** is a GRuB-inspired, hands-on program that operates a small farm at the City of Tumwater’s Isabella Bush Park for Tumwater High School students, especially those facing adversity. Students earn credit and gain job skills through farm and classroom work. Since 2020, FRESH has produced over 13,000 pounds of food for students’ families and the Thurston County Food Bank. As of this writing, the program is scheduled to end in July 2025 due to Tumwater School District budget cuts.
- **Enterprise for Equity, Thurston EDC**, and the **Thurston Chamber of Commerce** offer business development resources for aspiring and existing food system entrepreneurs.
- **Garden-Raised Bounty (GRuB)** is a non-profit with a small urban farm located on Olympia’s west side, serving all of Thurston County and beyond. They work at the intersection of food, education, and health systems. GRuB provides career pathways and agriculture and wild foods and medicines education for youth, veterans, educators, people with low incomes, and Black and Indigenous communities.

APPENDIX A: Subject Matter Experts

Aherlow Kasjaka	Thurston Asset Building Coalition
Alyssa Jones Wood	City of Tumwater, Water Resources & Sustainability
Amanda Musser	WSU Extension Thurston County SNAP-Ed
Amanda Romero	Thurston County Public Works
Anita de Boer	Tunawerth LLC
Annie Salafsky	WSU Extension Thurston County, Southwest Washington Growers Cooperative
Bob Gibson	Tumwater School District, Food Services
Carissa Miller	Withywindle Valley Farm
Cathy Visser	True for You Nutrition, LLC.
Chris Hyde	The Food Source Foundation
Christine Ciancetta	WA State Department of Health
Cristian Salazar	Centro Integral Educativo de Olympia (CIELO)
Daniel Amodeo-Chavez	United Way of Thurston County
Deborah Williams	Tumwater Community Garden
Diane Torres	Centro Integral Educativo de Olympia (CIELO)
Hope Springer	Thurston County Public Works
Jake Yancey	Tracking Y Ranch
Jaspar Quinton	Catholic Community Services
Jen Ownbey	8 Arms Bakery
Jennifer Colvin	Colvin Ranch
Jennifer Crain	Slow Food Greater Olympia
Judy Jones	Thurston County Food Bank
Katie Rains	Washington State Dept of Agriculture
Kim Gaffi	Consultant, co-founder GRuB
Kristen Maring	Tumwater High School, FRESH
Kyle Taylor Lucas	Tenants United at Western Plaza Mobile Home Park & Urban Indians Northwest
LeeAnn Perry	Little Free Pantry
Loretta Seppanen	Slow Food Greater Olympia and Community Farm Land Trust member
Mackenzie McCall	Farmer, South Sound Food System Network, formerly with Thurston County Food Bank
Maegan Cote	Mt. View Church
Maggie Brown	Thurston County Public Works
Margaret Garrett	Educational Service District 101
Marilyn Sitaker	WSU Thurston County Extension, Southwest Washington Food Hub
Megumi Sugihara	Everyone's Food Sovereignty Alliance
Meredith Arseneau	Educational Service District 113
Michaela Winkley	Thurston County Food Bank
Mitch Lewis	Summit Farms, Tumwater Farmers' Market
Morgan Hartline	Washington State Dept of Health
Nora White	Thurston Conservation District
Peter Epperson	Retired, formerly with regional public and nonprofit service organizations
Peter Guttchen	Formerly with Thurston County Public Works, WA Dept of Ecology
Rebekah Graham	Thurston County Food Bank
Robby Rutledge	Rutledge Family Farm

Senior Council	City of Tumwater, Old Town Center
Shawn Crimmins	City of Tumwater, Fire Department
Shelly Willis	Family Education & Support Services (FESS)
Stephanie Penland	Senior Services of South Sound
Theresa Kimball	Wild Fun Farm
Tina Sharp	Thurston Economic Development Council
Tina Wagner	Thurston Conservation District
TJ Johnson	Urban Futures Farm, Thurston Conservation District
Todd Anderson	City of Tumwater, Parks & Recreation
Treacy Kreger	Vern's Foods, Our Community Kitchen, South Sound Fresh

APPENDIX B: Survey & Interview Questions

Survey Instrument

These questions were set up as text boxes in an online survey tool. Any question could be skipped.

1. How would you describe your role in our local food system (for example: grower, distributor, processor, retailer, advocate, member of a community organization, chef, educator, waste manager, policymaker, etc.)? Please include your title and the name of your business or organization if applicable.
2. What do you think is the biggest challenge people face when trying to get local, nutritious food?
3. What unmet needs, challenges, or barriers do you see in your role or in your sector of the local food system?
4. What new issues or changes are happening in your part of the food system?
5. How do things like prices, demand, or outside markets affect your part of the food system?
6. In your view, how has climate change or climate change mitigation impacted the work you do in the food system?
7. How do you or your sector of the food system approach food-related waste?
8. How does food-related waste management impact your part of the food system?
9. What opportunities or ideas do you see for improving the way food is grown, shared, eaten or disposed of in our area?
10. Do you currently collaborate with other organizations or individuals in the local food system? If yes, please list and/or describe these collaborations.
11. Do you feel there are any current policies or practices in Tumwater that make it easier or harder to have a strong local food system? If so, please describe.
12. What new policies or practices could Tumwater implement to support a better local food system?
13. Have you seen any great ideas or successful programs in other places that you think could work here in Tumwater?
14. Is there anything else you'd like us to know about Tumwater's food system or your experiences/ideas?

Interviews Questions

These questions were used as a general framework to guide conversations.

1. When you think about our local food system, what comes to mind?
2. How would you describe your role in the local food system?
3. What is the biggest barrier to accessing local, nutritious food?
4. What are some emerging issues in your sector of the food system?
5. What unmet needs, challenges, or barriers do you see in your sector of the food system?
6. How is your sector impacted by external market forces?
7. How is your sector impacted by climate change?
8. How has your sector been affected by waste management practices?
9. What are the biggest upcoming or current opportunities for improving our local food system that you know about?
10. What policies or practices are currently in place in Tumwater that hinder a thriving local food system from your sector's perspective?
11. What policies or practices could we enact in Tumwater to support a thriving local food system from your sector's perspective?
12. Are there any best practices you've seen in other places you'd like to see replicated in Tumwater?
13. Is there anyone else you think I should speak to?