

Vital Access to Locally Grown Food Limited in Many Communities

(August 31, 2022)

Local parks and recreation helps bridge the gap

Only 40 percent of U.S. adults have “extremely easy” or “very easy” access to locally grown food like fruits, vegetables, and meats. This is the finding from the latest [National Recreation and Park Association](#) (NRPA) Park Pulse poll. One in seven adults say they are unsure of where to find locally grown food in their community, while another one in seven say this access is not easy.

Your local park and recreation agency is a part of the solution. Twenty-one percent of park and recreation agencies administer or manage farmers markets and 45 percent of agencies operate community gardens. Park and recreation agencies strive to improve access to these nutritious sources and are an excellent partner for farmers markets.

Key Findings:

- 73% of U.S. adults say it is easy for them and their families to find locally grown food, including 2 in 5 (40%) who find it extremely or very easy.
- However, not all feel they can easily get locally grown food, demonstrating the need to increase access and awareness in struggling communities. More than 1 in 4 (28%) U.S. adults say they are unsure of their access to locally grown food, or it is not easy for them and their families to find locally grown food.
- Black (71%) and Hispanic (65%) adults are less likely than their white counterparts (76%) to say it is easy for their families to find locally grown food.
- Lower income households (making less than \$35,000 (66%) also are less likely than the average U.S. adults (73%) to say it is easy for their families to find locally grown food.

“Local park and recreation agencies play a critical role in bringing locally grown food to their communities,” said Kevin Roth, NRPA vice president of research, evaluation and technology. “Park and recreation agencies are natural homes to farmers markets and other health and wellness activities, such as cooking classes, community gardens and more. Not only do these offerings provide fun activities in communities, but they are vital to ensuring access to basic nutrition and healthy food offerings as well.”

In 2021, NRPA published [Farmers Markets — Parks and Recreation Connecting Communities to Healthy Foods](#), which explores the role park and recreation agencies play in bringing farmers markets to their communities. This report explores markets’ product and services offerings —spanning from fresh produce and protein to entertainment and educational programming, as well as the organizations that agencies partner with to make their markets successful and the challenges they must overcome.

To view the interactive charts with the survey results, [click here](#).

To view the full-size infographic, [click here](#).

To view NRPA's Resources for Farmers Markets, [click here](#).

Each month, through a poll of 1,000 U.S. residents focused on park and recreation issues, NRPA Park Pulse helps tell the park and recreation story. To learn more about NRPA's Park Pulse and see results from previous polls, [click here](#).