

# **Agricultural Institute of Marin**

## **3-Year Strategic Plan**

**2021 – 2024**



**January 2021**

# Introduction

The Agricultural Institute of Marin is an educational 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization headquartered in San Rafael, California. AIM serves 350+ farmers, food purveyors, and artisans from 40 California counties who participate in AIM’s eight Certified Farmers Markets in the cities of Hayward, Newark, Oakland, San Rafael, and San Francisco. AIM also provides hands-on and virtual education programs to thousands of children and adults, operates a farm audit program, runs a mobile market for older adults and underserved communities, curates a multi-farm produce box program, and operates CalFresh/EBT and Market Match services to create a healthier, equitable food system across the San Francisco Bay Area.

In 2020, AIM’s Board of Directors and Executive Leadership developed a strategic plan to guide our business efforts in the coming three years. The planning process steps included:

1. holding a full-day Board retreat in March 2020;
2. forming a strategic planning committee; and
3. analyzing data and trends in California agriculture and food systems.

The strategic planning committee—composed of board members and executive leadership listed below—met weekly and used this information to identify goals and strategies. The strategic plan outlines four actionable goals and identifies a cross-cutting goal to provide broad direction for the organization. For each goal, outcome indicators are included for measuring results and learning from challenges.

## Strategic Plan Steering Committee

### *Board Members:*

Melissa Apuya  
Janet Brown  
Cam Crisman  
Christopher Dacumos  
Tamara Hicks  
Moiria Kuhn  
Gary Root

### *Executive Leadership:*

Andy Naja-Riese, Chief Executive Officer  
Tanya Wolf, Chief Financial and Operations Officer

AIM management is responsible for developing an annual operational plan with milestones, activities, evaluation methods, and budget for implementation of the strategies articulated in the Plan. AIM's Chief Executive Officer will present the operational plan to the Board of Directors for review annually. The Board of Directors is responsible for monitoring progress towards the Strategic Plan goals, and annually reviewing and updating the three-year goals and strategies, as needed, in consultation with staff.

The groundwork for the plan began prior to the COVID-19 global pandemic, and we will continue to refine the Plan depending on long-term impacts from COVID-19.

### **Setting the Context for Farmers Markets**

Farmers markets offer a value proposition of combining grocery shopping with a meaningful community building experience. They provide access to healthy and high-quality food in a social atmosphere, unlike the experience of home-delivered meals or shopping at a supermarket. Markets connect neighbors with each other, and producers with shoppers in a highly personal and interactive format. Despite these experiential benefits, farmers markets face an increasingly complex and competitive environment, especially in the San Francisco Bay Area where new innovations promise faster, easier, and more convenient ways of buying organic and local food. Eaters are spending more on prepared foods away from home<sup>1</sup>, and about 10% of U.S. shoppers report buying groceries online.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the changing food environment impacts how we position ourselves when working to protect the viability of small-to-mid-scale farming and food production and community food access.

Of the \$ 3 billion in direct marketing in the U.S., farmers markets and on-farm stores represent 67 percent of total sales.<sup>3</sup> While farmers markets have grown since 2007 in large part due to demands from shoppers, the growth of farmers markets has recently begun to plateau. As of August 2017, there were 8,687 markets in the country, double the number from 10 years ago but only a 0.2% growth from the previous year.<sup>4</sup> That growth in the number of markets has leveled off. Many parts of the country, particularly in the urban San Francisco Bay Area, are witnessing a saturation of farmers markets. We are also witnessing a growth of other local and regional marketing channels, including regional food hubs, farm-to-school programs, community supported agriculture, on-farm stores, online sales, and mobile markets. The diversification of marketing channels behooves AIM to evolve in a changing landscape.

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<sup>1</sup> USDA, Economic Research Expenditure Series, 1987-2017

<sup>2</sup> Business Insider Intelligence Estimates, 2017

<sup>3</sup> USDA NASS, 2015, Local Food Marketing Practices Survey

<sup>4</sup> USDA National Farmers Market Directory: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/local-food-directories/farmersmarkets>

### ***Socio-Cultural Demographics Farmers***

Meanwhile, there are fewer farmers who can participate at farmers markets. From 2012-2017, California lost 9 percent of its farms.<sup>5</sup> This decrease can be attributed to several factors including retirements, labor shortages, the high cost of land, bankruptcies, and the growing pressures of the climate crisis. In addition, the total acreage of farmland in California declined by 4 % between 2012 and 2017. However, the average farm size increased by 6 %, suggesting that while there are fewer farms, the existing ones have larger operations. Small-scale farmers are at a competitive disadvantage compared to a nationally subsidized food system that encourages large scale industrial farming. Lastly, California farmers are also aging. The average age of a California farmer is 59.2 years, up from 57.9 in 2012. More than one-third of California farmers are ages 65+.

We are also observing large scale disparities and inequities by race/ethnicity. In California, Latinx farmers comprised about 11.7 percent of farm owner-operators, well below their 38 percent representation in the California population.<sup>6</sup> Latinx farmers are more likely to be tenants than owners; own less land and smaller farms, and generate less wealth from farming than their white counterparts. Ninety-one percent of California farmers are white; whereas only 1% are Asian; less than 1 % are Black or African American; less than 1 percent are Pacific Islander; and 1 % are multi-race. There has never been a greater urgency to build access to farming and food production while building wealth and capital among Black, Indigenous Peoples, and People of Color (BIPOC) producers. Similarly, only 37% of California producers are women, and we observe even less representation in farming communities among BIPOC women producers.

### ***Planning for the Future***

The Covid-19 crisis has reaffirmed farmers markets as a mainstream and necessary element in our food system: farmers markets were deemed essential services alongside grocery stores in recognition as a critical source of nutrition for economically and socially diverse groups. Yet, when we look to the future, we must accept what began farmers markets in the 1970s is not what will keep them thriving for the next century. Forty-three years after the establishment of the California Certified Farmers Market Program, the entire food system has gone through dramatic revolutions, and many social, political, cultural, and environmental factors are driving changes in how food is grown and the public's priorities for food choices. Now is the time for AIM to shift the paradigm in its farmers markets within the context of a healthy, equitable food system. Through education, policy change, and community food access, we can address the interrelated issues of: diet-related disease, food insecurity, loss of viable farmland and small

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<sup>5</sup> USDA Census of Agriculture, 2017: <https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2017/index.php>

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*

family farms, structural racism, excess food, and carbon-emissions from a globalized food system. AIM is a leader in California and nationally in defining the future of farmers markets and our local and regional food system.

In this strategic plan, we identify a set of interrelated goals for the organization informed by nine guiding principles. Similarly, we have proposed a list of market standards that are aspirational for the producers and communities we serve.

## **Our Vision**

We envision a responsible food and farming system that is environmentally beneficial, economically viable, and socially just.

## **Our Mission**

AIM's mission is to educate, inspire, and connect communities, responsible farmers, and producers as part of a healthy, earth-friendly, equitable local and regional food system.

## **Strategic Plan Guiding Principles**

1. Strengthen local and regional food systems.
2. Enhance opportunities for small to mid-size producers.
3. Promote short supply chains: from the producer to shopper.
4. Encourage responsible production of agriculture, food, and artisan products with an emphasis on organic and regenerative practices.
5. Promote integrity and transparency in our markets.
6. Provide education on the farm, in the classroom, at the market, and online.
7. Support and influence policy by advocating for a healthier, equitable food system.
8. Address food-related racial and economic inequalities among producers, shoppers, and communities.
9. Promote access to healthy, nutrient-dense foods among all people
10. Commit to climate action.

# 3-Year Goals and Outcomes:

<p><b>Goal 1:</b> Create a regional alternative to the large-scale industrial agriculture complex by connecting producers directly with eaters and shoppers.</p>	<p><b>Goal 2:</b> Advocate for a healthier, equitable food and farming system to contribute to a healthier planet.</p>	<p><b>Goal 3:</b> Increase opportunities for producers--many of whom are disenfranchised--to access markets, funding, and technical resources to innovate and grow.</p>	<p><b>4.</b> Expand the regional impact and reach of AIM's education programs and access to address food-related health concerns by inclusively serving additional communities.</p>
<p align="center"><b>Cross-cutting goal: Address equity in our food system<sup>7</sup></b></p>			
<p><b>Outcome 1a:</b> Increase in responsible producers within the region</p> <p><b>Outcome 1b:</b> Increase in the proportion of residents who regularly shop their farmers market</p>	<p><b>Outcome 2:</b> Improve the environmental, social and economic impact of our food and farming system</p>	<p><b>Outcome 3:</b> Increase in market opportunities for socially disadvantaged producers</p>	<p><b>Outcome 4:</b> Increase in low-resource communities and communities of color in our programs</p>

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<sup>7</sup> The cross-cutting goal of addressing equity is described within our companion document: *AIM's Path to Racial Equity*

## **GOAL 1. Create a regional alternative to the large-scale industrial agriculture complex to connect producers directly with eaters and shoppers.**

Our globalized food system is led by major oligarchies that control the production of genetically modified seeds and 'Frankenfoods'. The global salmon farming industry is spreading pesticides and polluting our oceans while increasing mistrust and fraud in fish species labeling. Cheap mass-produced foods heavily subsidized by the U.S. government take a toll on our bodies and our planet. In 2020, we're collectively suffering from the climate crisis, global health pandemics, hunger, rising inequality, and diet-related disease.

In response, AIM's farmers markets create a platform with a short supply chain to connect producers with shoppers, thereby reducing the average number of road miles from field to table. AIM differentiates itself by focusing on markets with producers who use ecologically sound growing practices, animal grazing methods, and responsible food production. Our platform also enables the sale of non-food agricultural items, such as wools and fibers, along with small-batch artisan and craft products that incorporate sustainable materials.

By operating well-run farmers markets across Alameda, Marin, and San Francisco Counties that feature quality and transparency, AIM can draw in more local residents and visitors to our region to connect them with their food system. We must engage our communities in a more intentional and tailored way to increase farmers market sales and the number of shoppers, especially with different demographics that have not been traditional farmers market shoppers. By communicating stories of not just *where* our food is produced but also *how* it is produced, we can increase public awareness of the value of small-to-mid-scale organic and regenerative agriculture to personal, family and community health and stability within our food system.

We also seek to expand market opportunities, when cost-effective and the demand exists, while also retaining current markets and producers to ensure a healthy, evolving, and profitable local and regional food system. We intend to modernize the farmers market experience through technological innovations at markets and options for cashless payment systems to help us achieve our long-term goals of running high-quality markets.

To address the COVID-19 crisis, AIM also launched the *Bounty Box* produce boxes filled with a seasonal assortment of fruit, herbs, salad fixings, and other veggies for curbside pickup at three of our farmers market locations. The Bounty Box directly supports farmers while helping shoppers remain connected to their food system if they are unable to shop the farmers markets. With private and government funding, we have expanded Bounty Box operations to

serve food insecure households in Oakland, San Francisco, and San Rafael, all while compensating farmers for their products at market prices.

Ultimately, we will build our forthcoming **Center for Food & Agriculture**, a world-class climate-friendly, authentic farmers market and educational center as a model for other communities across the world to follow. Physically, the Center will be in Marin County, but it will serve and connect communities of eaters, shoppers, learners, and visitors with farmers, fishers, ranchers, foodmakers, and artisans across California. The Center for Food and Agriculture and the Zero Waste Market will be the connection point between those who need quality, nutrient-dense foods and those who make their livelihood providing it in a way that regenerates healthy soils, pastures, and seas. The Center will showcase the importance of foods grown organically, responsibly, and regeneratively – where agriculture can help “cool” the Earth.

***Suggested Strategies:***

- a. Utilize multi-media and technology to connect producers to communities, shoppers, and chefs
- b. Connect the local hospitality, retail, and service industries to local and responsibly-produced foods at farmers markets.
- c. Improve billing and records management with an electronic system for market payments, applications, and renewals
- d. Implement a customer relationship management approach for market participants to interact with AIM market management
- e. Assess the cost-benefit of expanding the footprint of existing markets and opening new markets within the region
- f. Increase the number and diversity of market shoppers at all of AIM’s markets through strategic marketing and outreach
- g. Develop and publish producer stories to highlight the unique value of individual farms, food businesses, and artisans at AIM’s markets
- h. Curate Bounty Boxes in response to demands and changing market conditions
- i. Finalize development and begin construction of the Center for Food & Agriculture, featuring a world-class authentic, welcoming, climate friendly farmers market and educational space for a healthier food culture

**Outcome 1a: Increase in responsible producers within the region**

***Indicators:***

**Of the local and regional farmers, agricultural operators, food purveyors, and artisans,**

- The number of market stalls at AIM’s markets occupied by producers



- The number of producers that reported an annual increase in farmers market revenue
- Average number of road miles from farm/facility to AIM's markets
- The percentage of producers' revenue derived from farmers markets
- The percentage of producers that renew their annual registration at AIM's markets

**Outcome 1b: Increase in the proportion of residents who regularly shop their farmers market**

**Indicators:**

**Of market shoppers and eaters,**

- Average market visitor counts by season
- ZIP code and geolocation of market shoppers
- Share of wallet: amount, expressed in dollars and percentages, that shoppers spend at the farmers market compared to other food retail channels
- Number and percentage of new and returning market shoppers
- Number of Bounty Boxes purchased through curbside pickup and donated to food insecure families

**GOAL 2. Advocate for a healthier, equitable food and farming system to contribute to a healthier planet.**

**Overview:** A healthy food system is one that provides financial viability for its producers, provides good quality food, is equitable, and reduces food and agriculture's carbon footprint. AIM's markets can provide a platform for a healthy food system by promoting producers who use best practices in organic farming and regenerative practices that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and sequester carbon emissions in healthy organic soils. Agriculture contributed to 9 percent of greenhouse gas emissions in 2017, and management of agricultural soils accounts for almost half of the emissions from the Agriculture economic sector.<sup>8</sup> Healthy soils are the foundation for good nutrition and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Creating a healthy food and farming system requires farmers and producers of food, fibers, and crafts to use responsible materials and production methods. Our markets provide a platform for producers to promote climate-smart agriculture and food production. As part of AIM's Farm Audit program--where we monitor growing and production practices to ensure farmers are growing what they sell--we will introduce a new layer to monitor and encourage practices that promote healthy soils and production methods. AIM's farmers markets must also employ

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<sup>8</sup> U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, *Inventory of U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sinks: 1990–2018*.

greener practices to promote composting of food scraps, better waste management practices to avoid products going to landfills, reduction in single use-plastics, and the continued use of community partnerships to recover surplus foods at the end of market days that can be redistributed to hungry families.

Through policy-advocacy, AIM can also promote federal, state, and local resources that keep markets operating, and enable producers to use practices that will heal the earth, nourish communities, and remain profitable. Indeed our markets have weathered wildfires, power outages, and the COVID-19 crisis, and we must position ourselves as a source of community resiliency during future disruptions. Additionally, one of the most meaningful changes at farmers markets is the expansion of EBT/Market Match benefits that support both CalFresh shoppers and farmers. Despite the growing demand for these programs, they are woefully underfunded. Driving additional shoppers and revenue for farmers at farmers markets through programs like EBT/Market Match support some of the most innovative and diverse farm operations. Advocacy is needed to ensure these programs remain functional and well-funded.

***Suggested Strategies:***

- a. Act as an advocacy voice at the legislative level for market participants and farmers markets both independently and as a member of the Alliance of California Farmers Markets and Farmers Market Coalition
- b. Advocate for policies and link to partner groups for funding to support small to mid-size farmers and food makers by accessing resources for healthy soils management, solar energy, and eco-friendly production and packaging.  
Partners include: CAFF, Kitchen Table Advisors, MALT, Resource Conservation Districts, CCOF, & CA Department of Food and Agriculture
- c. Partner with advocacy organizations through the California Food & Farming Network to amplify AIM's voice for racial and gender equity for producers, shoppers, and community members
- d. Advocate to protect and expand the value, reach, and impact of farmers market nutrition programs (CalFresh/EBT, WIC, Senior Farmers Market Nutrition)
- e. Conduct farm, ranch, and kitchen facility visits to ensure AIM standards are being met, help make environmental changes, and lessen negative environmental impact
- f. Communicate results of farm audits so shoppers can see the producer's practices and preserve their trust in AIM's markets
- g. Reduce waste and single-use plastics at all AIM's markets through education and operational changes

- h. Facilitate partnerships for surplus food redistribution from AIM's farmers markets and the Rollin' Root mobile market with Bay Area groups including ExtraFood.Org, SF Food Runners, RePlate, Daily Bowl, and Eden Urban Farm
- i. Increase local community resilience resulting from Pandemics and Disasters

**Outcome 2:** Improve the environmental, social, and economic impact of our food system

***Indicators:***

**Of the local and regional farmers and agricultural operators**

- The number of farmers certified organic/3-year transition period
- The number of farmers with healthy soils/regenerative practices
- The number of ranchers/dairy producers who are certified humane
- Total pounds of excess food donated by farmers
- Frequency of farm audits conducted and changes observed between visits
- Number of market days operated during disasters

**Of markets operated by AIM**

- Cubic yards of solid waste reduced at markets due to reusable packaging
- Cubic yards of market waste diverted from entering the recycling or waste stream
- Total number of handled plastic bags removed from market
- Total cubic yards of compost/food waste disposed at the market

**Policy/advocacy**

- The number of policy opportunities that AIM successfully contributes to, timeline, and description of the resulting impacts
- As applicable, identify grants secured by AIM resulting from advocacy

**GOAL 3. Increase opportunities for producers--many of whom are disenfranchised--to access markets, funding, and technical resources to innovate and grow.**

**Overview:** Farmers markets provide a low-risk, low-overhead platform for new and seasoned producers to sell their products to their public. However, the number of small-to-midsize producers using direct marketing practices is declining, attributed to several factors including

retirements, labor shortages, the high cost of land, and producers choosing other less-labor intensive sales strategies. To be successful in this environment, AIM can no longer be passive, taking a “build it and they will come” approach. We must invest in new services for our prospective and current producers, building their capacity to be economically viable businesses, and creators of new employment opportunities.

With grant funding from the USDA’s Farmers Market Promotion Program, AIM will build our producers’ capacity to strengthen their business success through skills-based workshops, peer-to-peer mentoring, webinars, and technical assistance services in consultation with like-minded organizations. A 2018 survey of 87 producers selling at AIM markets revealed that they would like us to provide them with training on a variety of business-related topics, such as Tech/eCommerce, social media and marketing, customer service and communication, sustainability, and billing and accounting systems. To help alleviate our producers’ labor shortages, we also plan to develop an on-line job board to connect producer employers with potential employees. These on-line tools can also feature housing and child care resources for job-seekers; lack of affordable housing and child care are often a barrier to working on farms.

As described in AIM’s [Path to Racial Equity](#), we also must ensure these opportunities reflect the principles of diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice by prioritizing market opportunities and business success for Black, Indigenous Peoples, and People of Color (BIPOC) producers along with other socially disadvantaged groups (women, immigrants, LGBTQ, and military veterans). We can build a future where BIPOC producers are no longer marginalized, considered unimportant, or underrepresented at farmers markets. We must ensure farmers markets and food programs provide a culturally relevant platform for BIPOC producers, and we must work to develop and open new opportunities whenever possible so BIPOC business owners can continue to build wealth and capital. Similarly, women farmers, especially BIPOC women, face discrimination in farming and have less access to land and the ability to control farming operations compared to their male counterparts.<sup>9</sup>

***Suggested Strategies:***

- a. Develop a system for tracking characteristics of producers who participate in AIM’s markets to ensure equitable access
- b. Structure producer outreach and recruitment of prospective market participants in a culturally relevant way; formalize partnerships with Kitchen Table Advisors, La Cocina, Black Cultural Zone Community Development Corporation, Kitchentown, and the

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/culture/2019/03/partner-content-empowering-female-farmers/>

Agriculture & Land-Based Training Association, among others, to provide an ongoing pipeline of market opportunities for new producers

- c. Raise funding to support new Black, Indigenous Peoples, and People of Color (BIPOC) producers and other socially disadvantaged producers to access markets by awarding racial equity market scholarships. As a part of a market incubator model, AIM will use privately raised funds to initially cover stall fees and provide mentorship to a selected, needs-based group of BIPOC producers to position them for success at AIM's markets.
- d. Offer technical assistance through webinars, workshops, and trainings on direct marketing and business development
- e. Develop a peer-to-peer mentoring program to connect new producers with seasoned producers
- f. Create a job board to help producers find qualified candidates for staff positions
- g. Increase the number of younger and racially diverse farmers and food producers to ensure the future of diversity and inclusion in AIM's farmers markets

**Outcome 3:** Increase in market opportunities for socially disadvantaged producers

***Indicators:***

- Number of employees at markets/jobs created
- Number of producers who report an increase in annual sales as a result of training and technical assistance
- Number of beginning or new producers within their first 10 years of operation at AIM's markets
- Number of women-owned businesses at AIM's markets
- Number of Black, Indigenous Peoples, and People of Color farmers/producers at AIM's markets
- Funds raised, expressed in dollars, to support market access for socially disadvantaged producers

**GOAL 4. Expand the regional impact and reach of AIM's education programs and access to address food-related health concerns by inclusively serving additional communities.**

**Overview:** A critical strategy for building a shopper base for farmers markets is expanding the reach of our Diggin' educational series in markets, farms, classrooms, and online. This is more than just environmental education. It's savvy marketing and community engagement. Through AIM's Diggin' in the Classroom, Diggin' at the Farmers Market, and Diggin' on the Farm, we provide agricultural education programs for K-12, college students, and older adults. This integrated set of programs include (a) an "Ag in the Classroom" introductory visit, including a lesson on California farms, California agricultural history, and a seasonal tasting experience; (b) a highly interactive age-appropriate farmers market tour, which includes an agricultural educator led tour, scavenger hunt, and a seasonal tasting experience; and (c) a "Meet your Farmer" farm tour where the students experience a real farm producing California grown food. Lessons focus on nutrition education, food gardening, seasonality, and sustainable living.

While we engage schools across the region as core collaborators in this endeavor, however, we can do more in lower-resource communities in Alameda and San Francisco Counties, which have historically been left out of such programs due to cost factors. We award scholarships to low-resource schools where more than half the students are eligible for free or reduced school meals. Additionally, In light of schools' recent transition towards digital literacy during Covid-19, we can also build a library of online educational videos and resources in multiple languages available on-demand.

Our social justice commitment leads us to especially work more closely with low-resource communities, to whom we offer SNAP incentives through our extensive market match program. Market Match also helps break the stigma that the farmers market is only for affluent communities. Despite the popularity of farmers markets, specific communities lack the ability to buy produce directly from farmers at these markets. Older adults are one of the communities that are affected by limited access to affordable, fresh, and locally grown produce. By operating the *Rollin' Root* mobile market, we can assure equitable access to farm-fresh produce and culturally-relevant nutrition education in food insecure populations all while compensating farmers. AIM's work is in collaboration with a wider Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) strategy. We currently partner with Marin County Health and Human Services, the Marin Food Policy Council, the SF-Marin Food Bank, the Interfaith Sustainable Food Collaborative, Sanzuma, and more to increase access and education for all residents, regardless of economic status or cultural background. Over the next three years, we will also develop authentic partnerships with groups like the Oakland Food Policy Council and the San Francisco Food Security Task Force to deepen our reach and impact across the Bay Area.

***Suggested Strategies:***

- a. Assess educational program needs based on geographic analysis and social factors and being inclusive of all communities (race, gender, age, income levels)
- b. Grow CalFresh (EBT/Market Match) to attract racially and economically diverse shoppers through education and outreach
- c. Expand service for the *Rollin' Root* mobile market from Marin County to new locations in San Francisco, while assessing need in Alameda County
- d. Find/solicit grant funding and long-term financial viability for these activities
- e. Participate and/or lead collaboratives of community partners working to address food-related health concerns, including the Marin Healthy Eating Active Living Collaborative, Marin Food Policy Council, Oakland Food Policy Council, and San Francisco Food Security Task Force
- f. Create program applications and marketing materials in multiple languages
- g. Conduct outreach to WIC clinics and other health-related organizations to promote farmers markets and the *Rollin' Root* as a health intervention
- h. Ensure programs and curricula are culturally relevant and provide equal access across communities
- i. Produce digital and virtual educational content to reach learners across the greater Bay Area and beyond

**Outcome 4:** Increase in racially and economically diverse participants in our programs

***Indicators:***

***Diggin' Education***

- Total number of schools/groups participating in Diggin' Education (face-to-face & virtual), and representation by race/ethnicity
- Percent of participants served by county: Alameda, Marin, San Francisco
- Pre-and-post changes in knowledge and behaviors (using participant surveys)
- Total value of Diggin' scholarships awarded to low-resource schools

***EBT/Market Match***

- Total value of SNAP/EBT distributed and redeemed
- Total value of Market Match distributed and redeemed for fruit and vegetables

***Rollin' Root***

- Total sales, by week, route, and location, and total participants served
- Total participants who rely on Rollin' Root for fresh produce

- Total participants with mobility or transportation barriers
- Total number of farms supported and purchased from by county/location

#### Other

- The number of community partnerships that AIM successfully contributes to and description of the resulting impacts

## Market Standards

Building upon the standards put forth by the Good Food Purchasing Program<sup>10</sup>, AIM seeks to reengineer the experience of farmers markets as part of our Strategic Plan. We begin by proposing our own set of standards that include a transparent model for the producers we will prioritize for markets as well as the benefits to the shoppers, eaters, and communities we serve. These standards are aspirational, and we encourage current and prospective market participants to strive for them, as appropriate, and based on their goals and resources.

***AIM will prioritize producers (Market Participants) according to the following six criteria (in no particular order)***

- Small and mid-sized agricultural operators and producers within the region.
- Responsible stewardship of natural systems and resources using regenerative practices, including
  - *building and maintaining healthy soil;*
  - *managing water wisely;*
  - *minimizing air, water, and climate pollution;*
  - *promoting biodiversity;*
- Healthy and humane care for animals
- Sustainable seafood that can maintain or increase production without jeopardizing the long-term structure and function of ecosystems impacted by industry practices.
- Safe and healthy working conditions and fair compensation for food chain workers and producers from production to consumption.

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<sup>10</sup> <https://goodfoodpurchasing.org/>



- Diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice by prioritizing market opportunities and business success for Black, Indigenous Peoples, and People of Color (BIPOC) producers along with other socially disadvantaged groups (women, immigrants, LGBTQ, and military veterans)

***AIM's markets will provide the following community benefits to shoppers and eaters:***

- Physical and emotional well-being by ensuring access to a nutritious diet and promoting culturally-relevant foods, fibers, and products in a safe environment
- Transparency and integrity in our food system
- Market design and layout of space that is universally accessible
- Operation and promotion of CalFresh (EBT<sup>11</sup>), Market Match, WIC<sup>12</sup>, and Senior Farmers Market Promotion Programs to ensure equitable food access
- Reduced waste going to landfill and encouraging farmers to donate excess produce to community partners
- Volunteer and career training opportunities at the farmers markets and on farms
- Educational programs and outreach to diverse learners across the Bay Area
- Community building and entertainment that is culturally relevant

## Glossary of terms

**Biodiversity:** the variety of living species on Earth, including plants, animals, bacteria, and fungi.

**Black, Indigenous Peoples, and People of Color (BIPOC):** The BIPOC acronym includes non-white people who often face specific forms of discrimination and oppression while acknowledging the unique history of oppression, systemic racism, and cultural erasure that Black and Indigenous peoples face. BIPOC includes Black people who have African or Caribbean ancestry; Indigenous Peoples who are native to the Americas who were here before the colonization by Europeans; and People of Color, which is an umbrella term for people who have Asian, Latin American, Middle Eastern, Indian, and Pacific Island heritage, among others.

**CalFresh:** The CalFresh Program, federally known as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), issues monthly electronic benefits that can be used to buy most foods at many markets and

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<sup>11</sup> Electronic Benefits Transfer

<sup>12</sup> Special Supplemental Program for Women, Infants, and Children

food stores. The CalFresh Program helps to improve the health and well-being of qualified households and individuals by providing them a means to meet their nutritional needs.

**Certified farmers markets:** Regulated by the California Department of Food & Agriculture, certified farmers markets (CFMs) exempt farmers from packing, sizing, and labeling requirements. CFMs provide high quality and fresh produce brought by producers and provide shoppers with the opportunity to meet the farmer and learn how their food supply is produced.

**Culturally relevant:** Reflects individual or group backgrounds, interests, and lived experiences in receiving a service.

**Community:** a group of people living in the same geographic place or having a particular characteristic in common.

**Community resilience:** a measure of the sustained ability of a community to utilize available resources to respond to, withstand, and recover from adverse situations.

**Digital literacy:** the ability to use information and communication technologies to find, evaluate, create, and communicate information, requiring both cognitive and technical skills.

**Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT):** an electronic system that allows a recipient to use their CalFresh at a retailer, such as a farmers market, to pay for products received.

**Excess Food:** surplus perishable food items that would otherwise be thrown away and could instead be recovered and redistributed to charitable feeding organizations.

**Food access:** requires that individuals have enough resources to obtain or produce food.

**Food Insecurity:** lack of consistent access to food for a healthy, active life.

**Healthy soils:** the continued capacity of soil to function as a vital living ecosystem that sustains plants, animals, and humans

**Local and regional food systems:** sometimes referred to as “community food systems”; collaborative networks that integrate sustainable food production, processing, distribution, consumption and waste management in order to enhance the environmental, economic and social health of a geographic area

**Local product:** is less than 400 miles from its origin, or within the State in which it is produced.

**Industrial agriculture:** the large-scale, intensive production of crops and animals, often involving chemical fertilizers on crops or the routine, harmful use of antibiotics in animals (as a way to compensate for filthy conditions, even when the animals are not sick). It may also involve crops that are genetically modified, heavy use of pesticides, and other practices that deplete the land, mistreat animals, and increase various forms of pollution.

**Market Match:** Market Match is California’s healthy food incentive program, which matches shoppers’ federal nutrition assistance benefits, like CalFresh, at farmers markets and other farm-direct sites.

**Small to midsize farms:** agricultural operators who are independently owned and operated and sell directly to consumers through farmers markets, CSAs, farm stands, and other sales channels. Business owners play a substantial role in the daily operations of the enterprise. Generally, these businesses cannot compete on price alone and must find other ways to distinguish themselves through flavor, timing, quality, variety, diversity, and other values.

**Organic farming:** a production system which avoids or largely excludes the use of synthetically compounded fertilizers, pesticides, growth regulators, and livestock feed additives. To the maximum extent feasible, organic farming systems rely upon crop rotations, crop residues, animal manures, legumes, green manures, off-farm organic wastes, mechanical cultivation, mineral-bearing rocks, and aspects of biological pest control to maintain soil productivity and tilth, to supply plant nutrients, and to control insects, weeds and other pests.

**Racial equity:** the fair treatment of people of all races.

**Regenerative agriculture:** describes farming and grazing practices that, among other benefits, reverse climate change by rebuilding soil organic matter and restoring degraded soil biodiversity – resulting in both carbon drawdown and improving the water cycle.

**Responsible producers:** people who grow, catch, and harvest food or create artisanal products using practices that are environmentally-beneficial; that create safe, healthy, and equity-conscious working conditions; and that demonstrate healthy and humane care for animals.

**Short supply chain:** involve as few intermediaries as possible to deliver products to consumers

**Socially disadvantaged producer:** a producer who has been subjected to racial or ethnic prejudices because of their identity as a member of a group without regard to their individual qualities.

**Structural racism:** the historical and contemporary policies, practices, and norms that create and maintain white supremacy.

**Vulnerable populations:** Groups at a higher risk for poor health as a result of the barriers they experience to social, economic, political and environmental resources, as well as limitations due to illness or disability.

**WIC:** The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) is a public health nutrition program under providing nutrition education and nutritious foods for income-eligible women who are pregnant or postpartum, infants, and children up to age 5.