REGIONAL FOOD SYSTEMS IN MICHIGAN: SHARED MEASUREMENT WEBINAR

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Rich Pirog

Amy Yaroch

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3:00 – 4:30 EST

About GSCN

The Center is a Omaha based independent non-profit research organization providing research, evaluation and partnership.

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Outline

- Project Overview and Update
- Interview Findings
  - Interviewee description
  - Measurement tools
  - "Wish List" of measurement tools
  - Potential Challenges and Benefits of Shared Measurement
  - Willingness to share data and capacity for data collection
  - Role of funders in shared measurement
- Polling questions – help inform the next stages
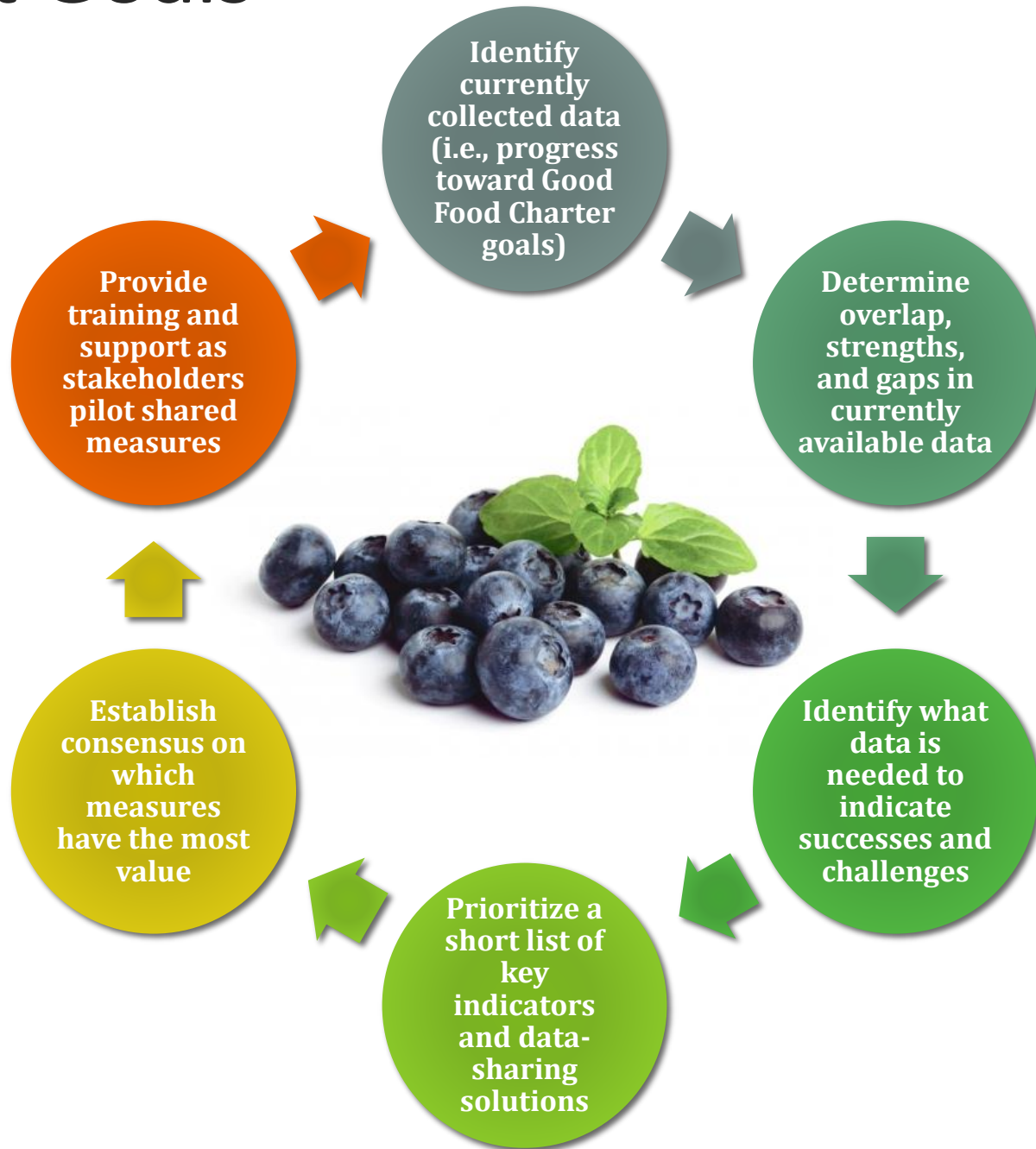- Considerations and next steps

Project Overview

◆ Collaborative project to build the case for collectively measuring statewide food systems change in Michigan

   ◆ Measure success and progress toward achieving Good Food Charter Goals
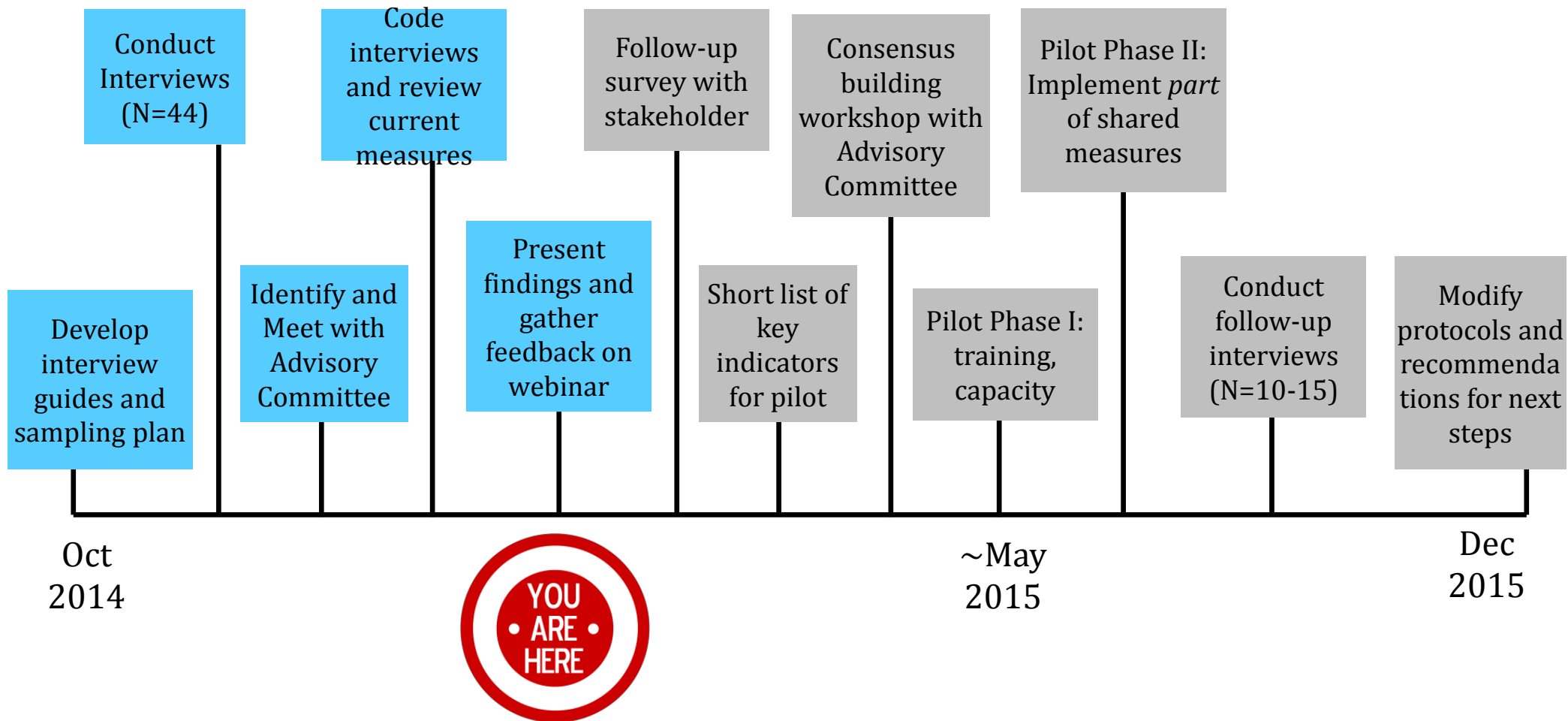
Good Food Charter Goals

① Institutions source 20% locally

② Farmers will supply 20% of food purchases, fair wages

③ Generate new agri-food businesses

④ 80% of Michigan residents will have access to healthy food

⑤ School nutrition standards
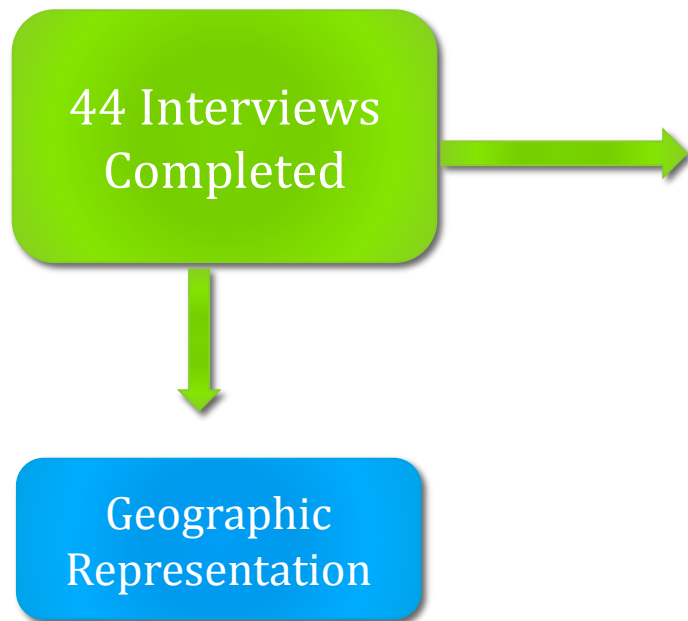
⑥ Food and agricultural education pre-K through 12th grade

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Project Goals

Identify currently collected data (i.e., progress toward Good Food Charter goals)

Determine overlap, strengths, and gaps in currently available data

Identify what data is needed to indicate successes and challenges

Prioritize a short list of key indicators and data-sharing solutions

Establish consensus on which measures have the most value

Provide training and support as stakeholders pilot shared measures

Timeline of Activities

Conduct Interviews (N=44)

Code interviews and review current measures

Follow-up survey with stakeholder

Consensus building workshop with Advisory Committee

Pilot Phase II: Implement *part* of shared measures

Develop interview guides and sampling plan

Identify and Meet with Advisory Committee

Present findings and gather feedback on webinar

Short list of key indicators for pilot

Pilot Phase I: training, capacity

Conduct follow-up interviews (N=10-15)

Modify protocols and recommendations for next steps

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Interviewee Description

44 Interviews Completed

Geographic Representation

Organization Type	Percentage of Interviewees
Improving Food Access/Addressing Hunger	36%
Supporting Farmers and Agrifood Business	23%
Higher Education/State or Local Agency	25%
Financial/Funder	11%
Consultant	5%

Interviewee Description
Charter Goals Addressed

Chart: Charter Goals Addressed (percentages)
- #1: Institutions — 50%
- #2: Farmers — 63%
- #3: Agri-food Business — 70%
- #4: Access — 88%
- #5: Nutrition Standards — 10%
- #6: Ag Education — 33%
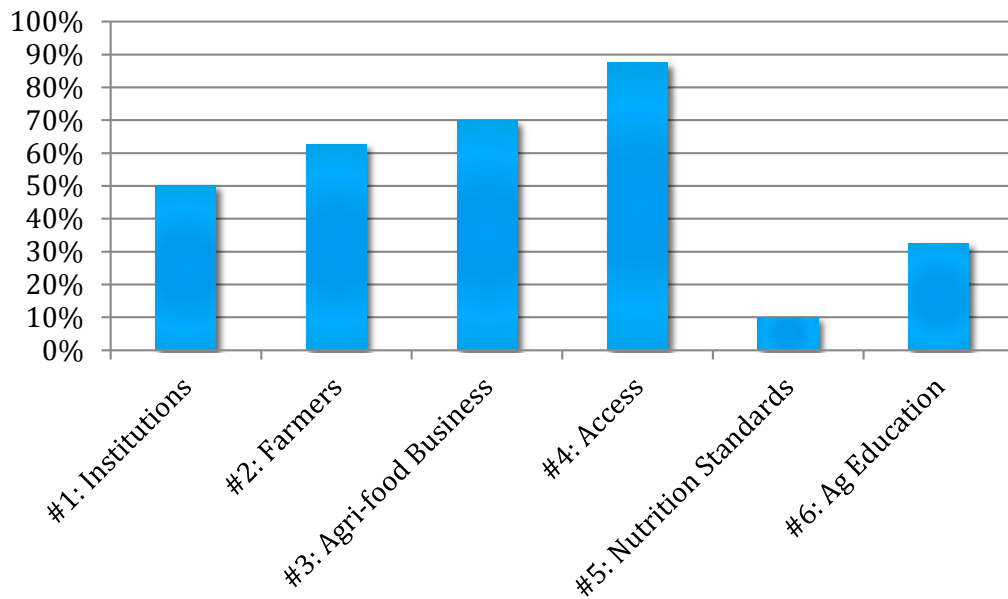
Many interviewees reported both targeting underserved populations (e.g., minority groups, low-income), as well as representing these groups themselves

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Non-Charter Goals Addressed

- Food safety (e.g., GAP certification)

- Barriers/issues around conventional agriculture vs. sustainable

- Holistic approach to healthy neighborhoods
  - Community development

- Food insecurity and hunger

- Dietary behaviors (e.g., fruit and vegetable consumption)

- Obesity prevention

- Environment, land use, green, etc.

- Business development and job creation (mostly food related)

- Racial and equity issues outside of food and food justice

Interview Findings

Broad Categories of Measurement

- Methodologies Used
  - Qualitative (focus groups, interviews)
  - Program surveys (satisfaction with program, knowledge gained)
  - Other surveys (perceptions of food access, dietary patterns)
  - Software and Tracking tools
  - Observational methods (policy and environmental)
  - Innovative methodologies
  - Surveillance systems
- Constructs of Interest
  - Access
  - Production
  - Sales
  - Institutional procurement
  - Farmers Markets (vendor and consumer)

Interview Findings
Measures Used - Qualitative

Target Audience	Key Topics
Consumers	• Resources in community to build from • Interest in workshops and trainings • Story telling about food history • Buying and food related behaviors • Food insecurity and food access issues (perceptions, barriers)
Restaurant Owners	• Use of local products • Barrier to procurement of local foods • Advertising of local
Institutions	• Describe clients • Procurement practices

• Don't reinvent the wheel
• Glean from existing qualitative information
• Develop survey instruments to best assess charter goals

Interview Findings
Measures Used - Quantitative

- Ag census data – need for capturing smaller sized farms
- Farmers Market Surveys
  - Market Coordinators/Vendors
    - SNAP, Double-Up Bucks use
  - Consumers
    - Perceptions of food access and shopping behaviors
- Basic surveys to assess programming outcome
  - Change in behaviors, knowledge, satisfaction, etc.
    - Can be Pre- and Post-, or just Post
- Community-wide surveys
  - Interest in local foods, support for institutional purchasing, food insecurity
    - Door-to-door, phone (consider electronic)

Interview Findings
Measures Used - Software

- Software for sales/inventory/customer management
  - Local Orbit
  - Edible
  - Neon
  - Managerial systems, key performance indicators
  - Microsoft Access
  - Center IC data base to track businesses and assistance provided

- Discuss pros and cons of each, ways to aggregate data?
- Aligning variables across databases

Interview Findings

Measures Used - Simple Counts (vs. Content)

- Number of new agri-food businesses launched
  - Success measured through sales, length of time in business, etc.
- Farmers Markets, Food Hubs
  - Volume of Sales (EBT, debit card tracking; report from vendors)
- Urban Agriculture/Community Gardening
  - Square footage in use, pounds of production
  - Harvest logs
  - Tracking produce from harvest to place, time, distance
- Programming
  - Number of participants
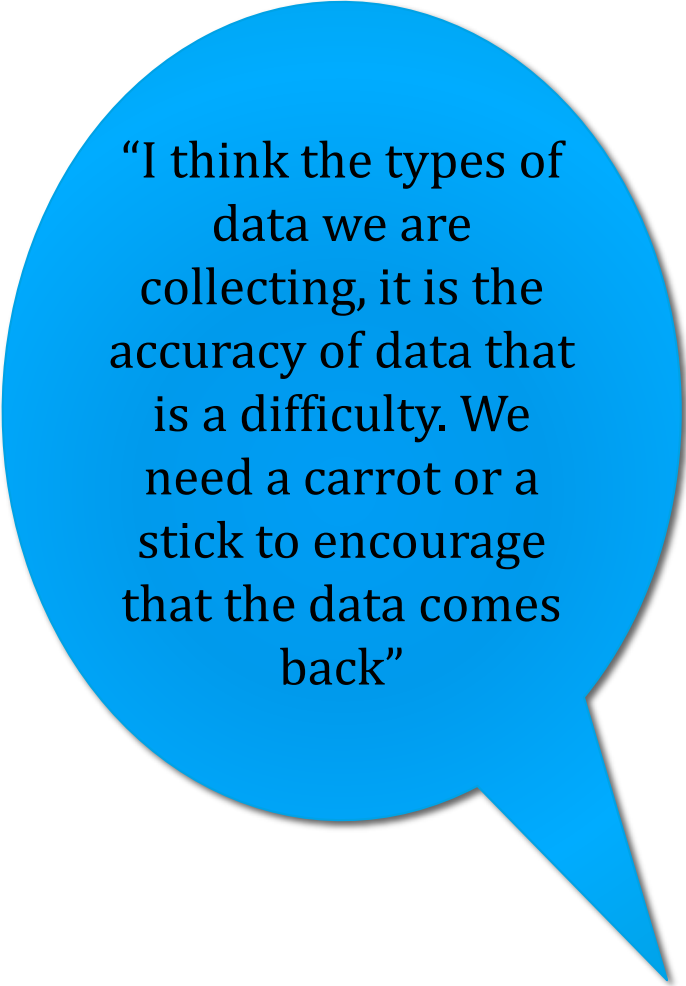   - Consider sociodemographics?
- Technical Assistance tracking

Interview Findings
"Wish List" for Shared Measures Need....

- Overall economic impact of "good food" for Michigan
  - # jobs created, $ value of jobs created
- Institutional purchasing baseline (i.e., goal 1)
- Capturing smaller sized farms and expanded list of variables
  - Production, sales, sales venue (e.g., farmers markets)
- Capturing agri-food businesses not participating in the formal economy
  - e.g., selling in non-traditional venues, "fugitive" or "ghost" economy
- Better understand consumer shopping behaviors
  - What people are buying from various venues, value of local
- Common measurement tools for what is being counted as "good food"
  - How do we define "good food"/healthy?

Interview Findings
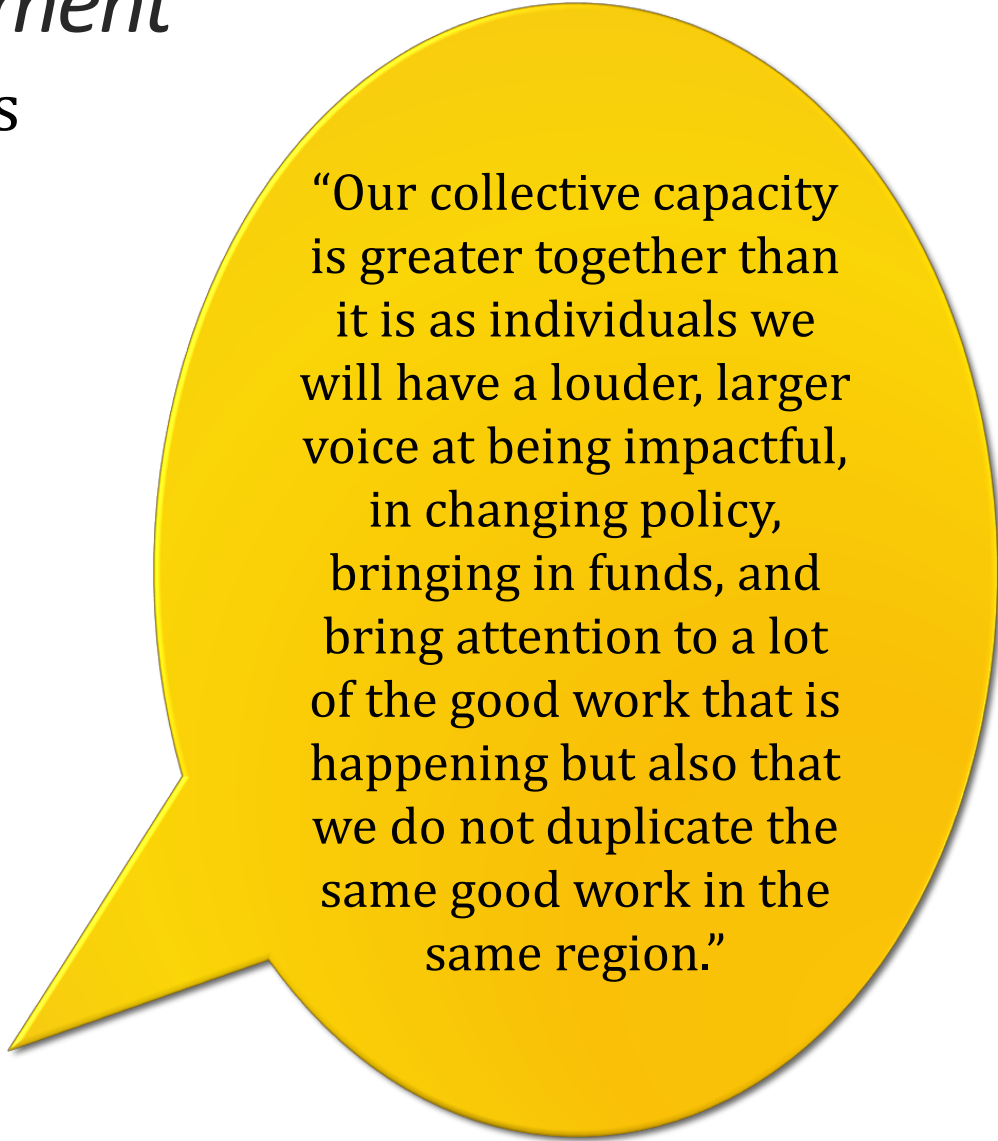## *Potential Challenges with Shared Measurement*

"I think the types of data we are collecting, it is the accuracy of data that is a difficulty. We need a carrot or a stick to encourage that the data comes back"

- Coordination and developing consistency across multiple groups and sectors
  - Need different groups at the table
  - Consider developing definitions (i.e., what foods are included)
- Difficulty in meeting multiple demands for reporting when groups are grant funded
  - Aligning measures with funders
- Might force people into a certain framework that doesn't fit their context

Interview Findings
Benefits of Shared Measurement

- Bolster credibility of food systems work locally and nationally
  - Funding
  - Policy Change
  - Tell the "good food" story

- Learn from each other and work more closely together

- Demonstrate impact and inform programming

- Strengthen each organization's capacity to collect and produce data

"Our collective capacity is greater together than it is as individuals we will have a louder, larger voice at being impactful, in changing policy, bringing in funds, and bring attention to a lot of the good work that is happening but also that we do not duplicate the same good work in the same region."

Interview Findings
Willingness to Share and Capacity

Overall willingness to share results (mostly aggregate)
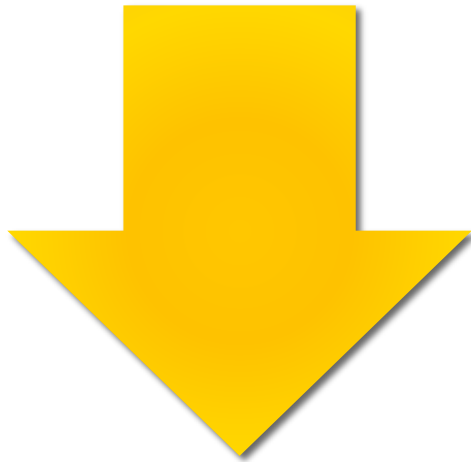
Capacity to collect data varies (resources, expertise, etc.)

Results from Funder Interviews

"By God, gentlemen, I believe we've found it—the Fountain of Funding!"

Interview Findings
Role of Funders in Shared Measurement

- Very few measurement tools mentioned
  - Standardized/systematic measures not typically required
  - Funders describe challenge with obtaining robust measures, but <u>need</u> is there

- Grant reporting described as basic, not necessarily systematic
  - Results are typically not compiled and/or extracted across grantees

Role of Funders in Shared Measurement
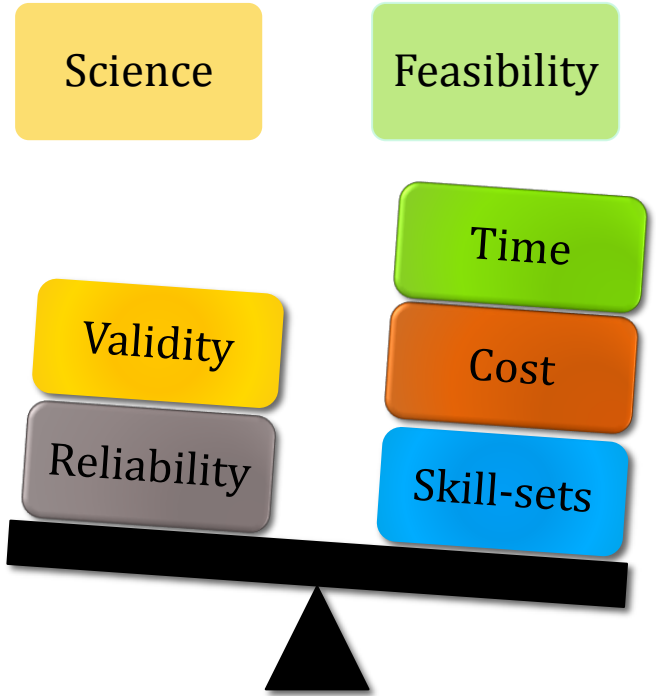*Recommendations*

- Gain traction if funders and state agencies are at the table
  - Funding as incentive to report data
- Funders seeking more return on investment
  - Importance of setting up and tracking indicators moving ahead
- Funders have the power necessary to anchor/organize activities
  - Want a place at the table if/when it makes sense
- Less focus on measurement tools, more about aligning activities and investments
  - Co-funding and working with other foundations to meet Charter Goals even if strategies/activities differ

Considerations and Next Steps
Incorporate Different Types of Measures

COMPOSTING RECYCLING & WASTE MANAGEMENT

Distributing

Retailing

Growing Food

INPUTS

Food System

Eating

Processing

Preparing

From across the food system

Science

Feasibility

Time

Validity

Cost

Reliability

Skill-sets

Balance science and feasibility

Considerations and Next Steps

- Leverage existing resources
  - Cooperative Extension
  - Software for sales/inventory/customer management
  - Consider systems already collecting good data (e.g., secondary data)
- Importance of dissemination
  - Maximize use of existing data, communicate widely
- Not reinvent the wheel
  - Ex: Cities of similar size and structure share best practices
    - Cross-pollination of ideas
    - Use local food meetings/summit as starting point
- Relationship building/having right people at the table is key

Polling Questions
Help Inform Ideas to Guide Pilot

① Do you live in Michigan?

② Which Good Food Charter Goal does your work most address?

③ Which area would you select as the top priority to measure in a shared measurement pilot?

④ If you had the opportunity to receive training in one of the following, what would it be?

Questions and Discussion

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Next Steps

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Code interviews and review current measures

Follow-up survey with stakeholder

Consensus building workshop with Advisory Committee

Pilot Phase II: Implement *part* of shared measures

Develop interview guides and sampling plan

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