



# THE CHANGING FACES IN ARIZONA'S FOOD SYSTEM

Are There Lingering Issues of Structural  
Racism,  
Gender Disparity & Discrimination against  
Immigrants that Need to be Addressed for  
Arizona's Farmers, Ranchers, Herders, Farm  
Workers, and Food Service Workers?

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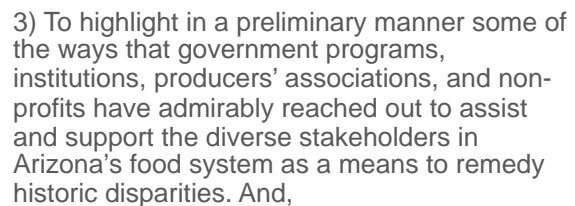
Center for Regional  
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We wish to briefly introduce you to issues relating to the changing cultural and racial diversity in Arizona's food system, in the hope that the many unique voices, faces, skill sets, and knowledge bases important to our food security can be more fully appreciated. Our emphasis is on the many human players in our agricultural and food supply chains, and how they can be more fully valued, protected and empowered. However, other kinds of diversity have long been recognized as being of positive value in the management of agriculture and range lands, lending stability and resilience to food-producing systems. Most entrepreneurs in the food sector can also recognize the value of a diversified portfolio of products and investments in a healthy business. It is not surprising, then, that many Arizona citizens and society at large also value the many benefits of cultural, gender, and racial diversity in our public institutions and in civil society (in this paper, we define civil society as "the aggregate of non-governmental organizations and institutions that manifest interests and will of citizens").

We recognize historic as well as current efforts in the Grand Canyon state to foster such diversity as it affects the health and prosperity of the many peoples dependent upon our food systems. But we also must look carefully to determine whether Arizona possibly lags behind other states in providing technical and public health services, financial resources, education, and legal support to the diverse constituencies involved in our state's food systems. This is an ethical obligation, and often a legal mandate for our federal and state governments, as expressed through the Constitution, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Inter-American Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the ILO Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention Section 169, and many other court decisions or legislative measures which, to date, have been implemented with varying degrees of success.

1) To describe the changing ethnic, racial, and gender profiles of our state's food system, from primary farm and ranch operators, to seasonal and migrant farm workers, to food service workers in food processing, distribution, and provision to public institutions, private restaurants, and consumers.

2) To outline the issues of structural racism, gender disparity, and discrimination against immigrants and Native Americans that are already being addressed at the national level, in order to give us means to assess whether there are unresolved food justice issues that linger in our own state.



4) To suggest additional means to provide greater representation, equity, and access to justice for those who have been previously marginalized in our state's food system, such as indigenous or immigrant farm workers.

Even where we identify potential problems which may persist in our state, our intent is not to critique nor to disparage or indict individuals, organizations, or institutions in any way. Instead, we simply wish to flag concerns that have already been publically raised by governmental agencies and independent studies, or by individuals in the food systems themselves. While we have made attempts to assess the accuracy of some controversial concerns already raised in governmental reports and social science literature, we ourselves do not wish to serve as the judges in these controversies. We wish only to “daylight” issues which have already been aired in conflict resolution initiatives, governmental hearings, or in a few cases, in court litigation.

Ultimately, our goal is to promote a healthy and diverse food community in Arizona through proactive, voluntary responses toward solving these lingering problems. The health and well-being of all participants in our food system matter. More proactive, collaborative approaches may reduce any remaining rancor, or need for litigation between various parties, in ways that enhance agricultural productivity and food security. We welcome further debate and expression of insights regarding the complexities of these issues from any party interested in respectful dialogue.

# CHANGING FACES: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF ARIZONA FOOD SYSTEMS

The demography of Arizona farmers, ranchers, herders, and farm workers are perhaps more diverse today than ever before in the four millennia-long history of food production in the region. The intentional production of corn, squashes, beans, and other annual crops has been practiced for at least 4,100 years in the landscapes that are now part of Arizona. Prehistorically, families from at least 14 indigenous cultures successfully farmed with river or spring irrigation, or with harvested rainwater.

By 1700, the Catholic missionaries, farmers, and ranchers introduced additional crops, livestock, and technologies to Arizona that most indigenous and Spanish immigrant farmers gradually accepted. By the time of statehood, at least 16 indigenous farming cultures, as well Mexican, Basque, Chinese, and Anglo (European, especially Mormon) farming and ranching communities were well-established in Arizona.

**“The National Center for Farm Worker Health estimates that there are 127,676 migratory and seasonal agricultural workers and their dependents in the state of Arizona.”**



Today, Arizona's farmers, farm workers, and harvesters or gleaners also include immigrants from many other countries: Afghanistan, Bhutan, Burma, Burundi, Central African Republic, Cuba, the Democratic Republic of Congo, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Honduras, India, Iran, Iraq, Japan, Liberia, Republic of Congo, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, South Sudan, the Sudan, Syria, Togo, and Uzbekistan. Our food system is far more culturally diverse than most Arizonans recognize.

Keep in mind that for every Arizona farm or ranch operator, there are roughly three additional contracted migrants and wage-earning seasonal farm workers in Arizona. In addition, there are nearly five food service workers for every farm operator in Arizona's food system, including 70,680 restaurant workers, many of whom depend upon tips as much as wages for their living. According to Jayaraman (2015), the minimum wage in Arizona for restaurant workers recently increased to \$8.05 per hour (up from \$7.90), with a tipped minimum wage of \$4.90 per hour.

The National Center for Farm Worker Health estimates that there are 127,676 migratory and seasonal agricultural workers and their dependents in the state of Arizona (NCFH 2012). As the USDA's William Kandel (2008) has explained,

“The racial and ethnic makeup of the hired farm labor force [throughout the U.S.] has changed significantly in recent decades, the most consequential transformation being the increasing proportion of Hispanic farm workers. According to 2006 CPS data, 43% of all hired farm workers are Hispanic: for hired crop and hired livestock workers, the figures are 56% and 26% Hispanic, respectively... Almost all noncitizen farm workers are Hispanic.”

In addition, there have been major shifts in the recorded demography of the primary operators managing Arizona's farms and ranches since the

new millennium began. In 2002, there were only 2,244 farms and ranches managed by “minorities” in Arizona (including Black, Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic, or Latino, American Indian, Asian, and multi-racial) compared to 11,110 “white” farmers and ranchers. In other words, 83% of the farms and ranches in the state were then primarily managed by white operators.

By the 2012 census, new mandates to more comprehensively survey ethnic farmers were mandated as a result of the *Keepseagle v. Vilsack* case described later in this document. This more detailed census in the state raised the total number of farms from 15,637 in 2007, to 20,005 in 2012. From 2007 to 2012, the number of Arizona’s farms operated by Asian-Americans increased by 47%; Black farmers decreased by 38%; and inter-racial farmers increased by 53%. Changes were not that dramatic for Hispanics or Latinos, who operated 5.1% of the state’s farms and ranches, despite this population comprising 30% of the state’s entire population by 2012 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014).

But most surprising to many observers was that whites were no longer the majority of primary farm and ranch operators in Arizona. They managed only 44.7% of the farms and ranches in the state. Native American farmers, herders, and ranchers now comprise 54.3% of Arizona’s primary operators of food-producing land. As Steve Manheimer (2014) of the Arizona Farm Bureau summarized the situation,

“The 2012 Census of Agriculture continued USDA focus on trying to include new farms that historically have been undercounted or have been very difficult to count, including minority-operated farms, young farmers new to agriculture, small producers of specialty commodities and organic operations. These



States. The total number of American Indian farms in Arizona rose [sic] to more than 11,000, which means an American Indian operator runs more than half of all farms in the state. These farms cover almost 21 million acres of land, which is nearly 80% of all land in farms for Arizona.”

What’s more, the correction of the historic under-representation of American Indian farmers, herders, and ranchers by the 2012 census put Arizona among the top three states in terms of its percentage of women engaged in agriculture as the primary operators. The National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition’s 2012 Agricultural Census Drilldown explained these trends in the following manner:

“While women farm in every state across the country, women farm in the highest numbers in the Northeast, West Coast and parts of the Southwest, with California, Arizona, and Texas having the highest numbers of women farmers.

**“The total number of American Indian farms in Arizona rose to more than 11,000, which means an American Indian operator runs more than half of all farms in the state. These farms cover almost 21 million acres of land, which is nearly 80% of all land in farms for Arizona.”**

Texas and Arizona saw the biggest growths in women farmers with an addition of 3,441 female farmers in Texas and 1,815 in Arizona over the past 5 years.”

Clearly, the demographic trends in Arizona agriculture suggest that those who were historically called “minority” farmers (particularly Native Americans) are the “new majority,” both in terms of the number of primary operators and the acreage that they manage for food production. Unfortunately, it appears that their access to technical and financial resources to advance their contributions to the state’s and the nation’s food security has not necessarily kept up with their increasing dominance in the state’s agricultural community.

There are many historic and economic reasons why ethnic and women farmers’ access to resources has been limited, but one of the recognized causes for this is what social scientists refer to as “structural racism.” Let us explore this factor at the national level before addressing its potential implications for the future of Arizona agriculture and food security.



# National Context:

## Historic Precedents, Trends, and Definitions

Although some may see the very act of raising the issues of possible racism, gender disparity, and ethnic discrimination in the Arizona food system to be inherently volatile or inflammatory, such issues have in fact been regularly and respectfully addressed by both Republicans and Democrats in Congresses and courts for over 50 years.

As Feder and Cowan (2013) reported on request from the U.S. Congress through the Congressional Research Service, “The U.S. Department of Agriculture has long been accused of unlawfully discriminating against minority and female farmers in the management of its various programs...” and is widely considered to be one of the last of the federal agencies to racially integrate and to include women and minorities in leadership roles. As early as 1965, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights found discrimination by the USDA in both program delivery and in the treatment of minority employees.

Despite laudable and concerted efforts by at least two Secretaries of Agriculture to shore up procedures and establish a more inclusive culture in the department, as late as October, 2008, the General Accounting Office conceded that there remained “significant deficiencies” in the assurance of civil rights through USDA offices. The GAO recommended new accountability measures to address persistent failures, prevent backlogs of pending civil rights complaints, and to ensure consistency in how complaints were resolved (GAO 2008).

One of the most dramatic changes in USDA protocols was the mandate to obtain a comprehensive census of the existing Native American farming population noted above. Prior to 2007, the number of farms on some reservations was counted as just one per Native Nation. This false counting occurred on reservations where lands had not been divided among family allottees, but kept in common trust by the entire tribal community.

Such lands—despite improvements made on them by native farmers at considerable cost—were historically not considered eligible as “collateral” for loans to individual Native American farm operators. Only in the 2012 census was this chronic under-counting of American Indian farmers, herders, and ranchers fully prohibited, as native speakers were hired and trained to do the agricultural census in each American Indian community. Simply being part of the official USDA

agricultural census count allowed them to become eligible for certain kinds of loans and technical assistance.

Other federal agency policy recommendations, congressional actions, and court decisions have direct relevance to the USDA’s involvement with passing funds through to state, county, tribal, or local governments. For instance, the 2002 Farm Bill established a USDA Office for the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights. At the same time, that Farm Bill’s P.L. 107-711 Section 10708b requires that the compositions of committees and advisory boards using or dispersing federal monies be “representative of the agricultural producers in the area covered...” This is in part because prior to 1994, 94% of county loan committees dispersing USDA funds included no women or minorities (USDA 1997).

**“The U.S. Department of Agriculture has long been accused of unlawfully discriminating against minority and female farmers in the management of its various programs.”**

The 2008 Farm Bill included a non-binding “Sense of Congress” statement recommending that all discrimination claims brought by socially-disadvantaged farmers and ranchers including women as well Native, Hispanic, or African-Americans should be resolved in an expeditious and just manner. A Council for Native American Farming and Ranching has also been established by the USDA, which currently includes one Navajo farmer-rancher from New Mexico among its fifteen appointed members, but no representatives from tribal communities within Arizona itself.

There have been several federal court cases settled that legally establish that there have indeed been racial, cultural, and gender discrimination in access to and deployment of agricultural programs in the U.S. These include *Pigford v. Glickman*, providing \$1 billion on behalf of African-American farmers; *Keepseagle v. Vilsack*, providing \$760 million on behalf of Native American farmers; *Love v. Vilsack* on behalf of female farmers, and *Garcia v. Vilsack* on behalf of Hispanic farmers, which together provided as much as \$1.33 billion to Hispanics and women.



These court rulings have without a doubt documented ample evidence of structural racism across the entire food supply chain in the U.S. (Guel and Pirog 2015). Structural racism is defined as “the normalization and legitimization of an array of dynamics—historical, cultural, institutional, and interpersonal—that routinely advantage whites while producing cumulative and chronic outcomes for peoples of color” (Lawrence and Keller 2004).

**“The most precise data available on farm worker legal status suggests that half of all hired crop farm workers lack legal authorization to work in the United States.”**

The Love v. Vilsack case also asserted constitutional and statutory claims against the USDA for gender discrimination in its administration of farm loan programs (Arent Fox 2013). While an administrative claims program has now been established by the USDA Office for Civil Rights, plaintiff Rosemary Love has argued that the application process is complex, confusing, and places more burden of proof on women farmers to obtain relief than that which the USDA has requested of African-American and Native American farmers who also suffered from discrimination.

Finally, there is much controversy surrounding the issue of whether both documented and undocumented immigrant farm workers are being discriminated against and having their human rights violated by both federal and state agencies. The National Agricultural Workers Survey (Mehta et al 200) projected that as

many as eight out of every ten farm workers laboring in the U.S. are foreign born, but that percentage may have declined some since the Economic Recession and the rancor over immigration during the last eight years. As the USDA’s William Kandel (2008) has explained, “the most precise data available on farm worker legal status suggests that half of all hired crop farm workers lack legal authorization to work in the United States.”

In Arizona as in many other states, these undocumented farm workers lack full protection of their basic human rights, such as obtaining a driver’s license or enrolling in institutions of higher education. The National Farm Worker’s Ministry has asserted that “anti-immigrant laws at the state level, such as the notorious SB 1070 in Arizona and recent HB 56 in Alabama, are further marginalizing an already disenfranchised population.”

When the Support Our Law Enforcement and Safe Neighborhoods Act (introduced as Arizona Senate Bill 1070) was signed into law by Governor Jan Brewer in 2010, a Republican-dominated U.S. Supreme Court struck down three of its provisions as violations of the Supremacy Clause of the United States Constitution. In addressing the case Arizona v. United States, the court upheld the provision requiring immigration status checks during routine pull-overs by law enforcement officers. Nevertheless, SB 1070 has continued to be condemned as a violation of human rights by political and religious leaders in the U.S. and Mexico, as in an August 2010 U.S. Department of State report to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.



# Current Efforts by the State Government and Civil Society to Accommodate and Support Diversity

It is fair to say that Arizona institutions are in the process of coming to fuller terms with the shifted demography of Arizona agriculture and food systems. The following briefings highlight in a preliminary manner some of the strengths and possible weaknesses of three state organizations. While not exhaustive or analytical in the treatment of these three entities, these descriptions offer thumbnail sketches that allude to how Native Americans, immigrants, and women are offered service through various programs in the state.

## 1. Arizona Department of Agriculture

The Arizona Department of Agriculture, formerly known as the Arizona Agriculture and Horticulture Commission, currently has an eight million dollar budget and two hundred employees. In a recent interview with Mark Killian, Director of the Arizona Department of Agriculture, by Lee Allen (2016), Killian commented on the fact that Arizona now has the highest number of American Indian farmers of any state in the U.S., who manage 80% of all farm and ranch lands in Arizona:

“We will investigate adding a Native American member to our Advisory Council, but that may take a statutory change. In the meantime, we are going to establish a Native American Advisory Council to the Director. The goal is to have a quarterly meeting with representatives from all tribes. As sovereign nations, the department doesn’t have an authority concerning Native American lands. Currently we reach out and provide assistance to the tribes when invited...It’s important to note that much of the agricultural activity on tribal land is done by lease to non-Native Americans.”

Director Killian is certainly correct that non-Native Americans lease significant acreages on six of the twenty-one reservations in Arizona, particularly ones irrigated by Colorado, Salt, and Gila River waters. However, his brief statement does not necessarily capture the dominance of Native American primary operators of farms and ranches on at least a dozen reservations in Arizona, as the USDA itself has documented. There are more Native American primary



operators of farms and ranches on reservations within the state and in the state as a whole than there are Anglo primary operators. There are also some very successful Native American farmers (e.g. Frank Martin of Crooked Sky Farms) who grow crops off reservation.

Other state agencies, including Cooperative Extension, have signed intergovernmental agreements to provide a full suite of services to Arizona residents on reservations in conjunction with tribal agricultural agencies and the two land grant institutions on Native Nation lands (including Diné College). Killian’s caution that statutory constraints conceivably limit the number of commissioners or board members is valid, is valid, although we see no reason that a Native American farmer or rancher can be excluded from being considered for one of ADA’s existing board positions the next time it becomes vacated. Nevertheless, Killian’s intents to establish Native American Advisory Council and to investigate the possible addition of the first Native American member to the statewide Advisory Council are laudable. The U.S. Secretary of Agriculture

has already taken similar actions in forming a Council of Native American Farming and Ranching.

In addition, we applaud the Department's Agricultural Consultation and Training (ACT) Pesticide Safety staff, which regularly provides training workshops in Spanish as well as English to tribal, Mexican, and Mexican-American agricultural workers and pesticide handlers. Of the 868 workers taking pesticide safety training courses in Fiscal Year 2015, 48% were in workshop offered in Spanish and one pesticide applicator exam was offered in Gallup, New Mexico to provide easier access to Navajo agricultural workers (ADA 2016). It also provided Spanish language professional training in Air Quality Compliance for agricultural workers through the Regulated Agricultural Best Management Practices (RABMP) program done through a cooperative agreement with ADEQ.

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Most notably, with regard to food relief for disadvantaged populations, the Arizona Department of Agriculture played a pivotal role in the statewide gleaning effort in that resulted in over 22.6 million pounds of produce collected and distributed to food banks and other organizations serving those in need during Fiscal Year 2015. Some of these very positive efforts undoubtedly benefited immigrant farm workers, gleaners and consumers.

Among the ADA's two hundred employees, there is significant representation of women professionals in key educational, scientific, managerial and administrative roles. Historically, it is fair to say that Hispanic-, Asian- African- and Native American farmers and other agricultural professionals have been underrepresented in many states' agricultural departments, both on boards and staffs. That is to say that Arizona is not alone among states in having an agricultural department or commission that in past decades, disproportionately drew their advisors from

agricultural scientists, farmers, ranchers, nurserymen, and agribusiness bankers more than

from farm workers, food service workers, community garden, and farmers market managers, or nutrition educators and rural public health workers. Like the USDA itself, some state departments of agriculture have perhaps lagged somewhat behind other governmental programs in addressing representativeness among ethnicities, races, and genders within their borders. Broader representation may need to be considered in the near future if the department is to keep in step with the changing faces of Arizona agriculture.

## 2. University of Arizona College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALS)

The University of Arizona CALS programs, particularly through Cooperative Extension have played a vital educational and technical role in advancing food production by Arizona's diverse communities for many decades. Since 1988, when Howard Jones became the Director of Indian Programs and provided guidance to the Intertribal Agriculture Council and the Southwest Indian Agricultural Association, there has been a suite of services offered to Native American farmers, ranchers, and gardeners.

CALS Cooperative Extension now has seven agricultural offices that primarily serve Indian reservation residents, in addition to the services provided by county offices to the other seventeen tribes represented in the state. Nine different offices within the state, including the seven tribally-oriented CALS Cooperative Extension offices noted above, participate in the "Indian Country Extension Network. From 2006 to 2008, the National Institute of Food and Agriculture also provided a special grant to the University of Arizona to assist the San Carlos Apache communities, because their residents had long suffered "limited access to the resources of the 1862 land grant university system." Its goal was to identify needs of San Carlos Apache clients and to better deliver accessible programs from the land grant university system established in 1862. Until recently, Dr. Joseph G. Hiller (Lakota) served as Assistant Dean for American Indian Programs, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALS).

Today, agricultural economist Dr. Trent Teegerstrom is in this liaison role with tribes for CALS. He provides capable leadership for CALS programs, projects, and activities dealing with Arizona's Indian tribes, nations, communities, and tribal colleges, including Cooperative Extension, academic programs, and research efforts. He administers the budgeted research programs in CALS and is the principal investigator for the Federally





Recognized Tribal Extension Program (FRTEP). However, tribal programs still need to jump through some hoops for their budgetary approvals that state cooperative extension programs are not required to do. This disparity needs to be addressed.

There are a number of other Native American agricultural professionals at the various CALS Cooperative Extension offices. While Cooperative Extension programs directly reach at least one out of every ten residents in the state, in 2009, the Arizona State Legislature dramatically cut the Cooperative Extension budget, adversely affecting farmers, tribal herders, urban gardeners, and 4-H programs for children of all races and ethnicities. While some of its former budget has been reinstated or made up from other sources, Extension is still both directly and indirectly affected by an additional \$109 million cut from the budgets of the three state universities recently approved (2015) by the current governor and state legislature. Despite these difficult challenges, CALS Cooperative Extension has demonstrated effective outreach to a wide variety of rural and urban populations, including natives and immigrants, and is widely appreciated throughout the state.

### 3. The Arizona Farm Bureau

The Arizona Farm Bureau claims 24,000 dues-paying members, 17,000 of which are non-agricultural members, who use its insurance or other state programs. This means that that Farm Bureau's agricultural members in the state number roughly two-thirds of the number of Native American primary farm operators in state, but there are often several members of the same family counted in Farm Bureau statistics. It may be worth determining whether the majority of

Native American farmers have become Farm Bureau members, and if not, why, and what could be done to encourage their participation.

The Farm Bureau's Arizona offices are staffed with two men and nine women, including the coordinator of its very active and laudable Women's Leadership programs. Its Board of Directors, or leadership team, is made up of 31 volunteer leaders from all thirteen active county Farm Bureaus, and seven of these leaders are women. However, only two of the thirty-one members of its leadership team are Native American (Chemehuevi and Mohave). Hispanic-, Native-, African-, or Asian-Americans are hardly represented among its state leaders. A notable exception was the long tenure of Farm Bureau service, and leadership involvement by the late Hualapai rancher Phillip Bravo of Peach Springs. Bravo was president of Mohave County Livestock Association for six years or so, and served as county Farm Bureau president as well. He was also part of a Native American research team that looked at the problem of why the Farm Bill isn't helping the different reservations.

Perhaps the most lasting contribution that the Arizona Farm Bureau makes to the state other than its direct role in promoting food production is through its far-sighted programs to guide youth into careers as farmers and ranchers. It deserves credit for the value of its Young Farmers and Ranchers initiative, its Education Farming Company that helps to teach agriculture in Arizona's classrooms, and the many scholarships it offers students from diverse backgrounds in rural communities.

The Arizona Farm Bureau is affiliated with the American Farm Bureau Federation, one of the most powerful lobbying groups in the country, which positions itself as "the voice of American agriculture." By 2011, the American Farm Bureau Federation had declared its opposition to a mandatory E-Verify program for farm workers. In 2014, the Federation had joined the ranks of supporters rallying behind immigration reform to ensure that farmers in the U.S. could legally access enough workers to harvest crops and maintain livestock in order to keep food prices across the country from rising too dramatically (Paden 2014).

Of special relevance to Arizona is the Federation's 46-page report that documents how more farm workers are desperately needed in the American West, particularly in states such as Arizona and Utah, where many ranchers and farmers must rely on immigrant workers to help bring food from field, orchard and pasture to American tables (Paden 2014). Some estimates suggest that Arizona has suffered a 10-15% shortfall in the availability of farm workers since the national debate about immigration heated up in 2010.



# Next Steps in Advancing Food Justice for Diverse Populations



We have already highlighted successful ongoing efforts by just three organizations in government and civil society to engage formerly underserved constituencies and communities, and to begin to diversify their leadership teams. Nevertheless, the responsibility for achieving a more diverse food system must become a priority for every sector involved in food supply chains in Arizona. From farmer and farm worker to chef, cafeteria manager, and consumer, no one ultimately benefits from being part of food system which is out of touch with the changing demography and talents around them.

We will need more than quick fixes to civil rights and social justice issues, because they have their roots in both intentional as well as unintentional social and economic behaviors. It will take a compassionate, concerted, and protracted efforts to shift away from some entrenched ways of doing business, to more inclusive ones. However, we see hopeful signs that governmental institutions and civil society have been willing to take initial steps to redress gender disparities and structural racism as well as to protect the human rights of immigrants, especially refugees.

Nevertheless, much remains to be done. Since 2008, Arizona has been consistently ranked among the worst states in the nation for poverty, childhood food security, and household food insecurity. By the time the Mortgage Crisis and Economic Recession hit the state, 329,000 Arizona households were already struggling with hunger—an eight percent increase from five previous years. Arizona then suffered the largest jump in poverty states of any state in the nation (Nabhan and Fitzsimmons 2010). Since that time, its recovery from the recession has also been among the slowest in the nation. Farm labor shortages and

rising water prices due to drought and over-allocation have not helped our rural economies to recover as quickly as in other states.

Resolving such issues might positively affect most if not all Arizonans, but especially those in the remote rural areas of Indian reservations, and recent immigrants who have landed in one of the state's many of the state's so-called "food deserts" (Tong, Buechler and Bao 2016) or "food dead zones" (Nabhan and Watters 2011). The challenges that natives and immigrants, elders and youth can only be met by advancing food justice through integrated efforts by our many government programs, business alliances, non-profits and faith communities; no one can do it alone. At the same time, all of us stand to benefit from a more inclusive, just and prosperous, less wasteful food system.

For proposed solutions to work for those most marginalized in their access to resources today, all ethnicities, races and genders need a place at the table. They also need seats in the chambers where political and economic decisions are made which effect their health, their prosperity and their dignity. We need a comprehensive food and farming ethic that not only brings us diverse healthy food, but ensures diverse, healthy communities in our state and in our nation (Gray 2014; Jayaraman 2014). We wish to

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encourage all institutions in our state to more deeply reflect on how they can better respond to the changing faces in Arizona's food system, and then to act on their reflections and ethical responsibilities. As these institutions further reach out to historically underserved populations, the size of the constituencies they serve as well as their political support will likely broaden and thrive.



# Recommendations to Consider:

We offer these preliminary recommendations then, to stimulate positive change.

“Listening sessions” where agencies and state-wide organizations hear members of Native American communities, and immigrant, African- and Hispanic-American communities to better assess and ultimately respond more broadly to the needs of these constituencies. Among the topics that these listening sessions may wish to entertain are the following:

1. Means by which state and federal agriculture, food safety, public health and nutrition agencies working in Arizona can recruit members for their advisory or governing boards from diverse races and cultures, as well as offering greater gender equity.
2. Means by which non-profits and other statewide agricultural organizations which currently under-represent Native American as well as immigrant farmers and farmworkers in their power structure can actively recruit members and potential leaders from these cultures
3. Means by which the Intertribal Agriculture Council, the Southwest Indian Agricultural Association, the Traditional Native American Farmers Association

and the Native American Culinary Association can be brought into regular dialogue and cross-training of professionals with the Arizona Department of Agriculture and the University of Arizona’s College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

4. Means by which the United Farm Workers Foundation, the International Rescue Committee, the Iskashitaa Refugee Network, and the Food Chain Workers Alliance can guide just policies and practices which can further benefit immigrants in our food system.
5. Means by which farmers and others can verify that grant and technical assistance programs managed by the state government using federal funds comply with all federal civil rights legal mandates.
6. Means by which youth programs can be better aimed at recruiting more young Arizonans to careers in farming and ranching.
7. Means by which Arizonans can begin to address and resolve the issues surrounding the aging population of our state’s farmers and ranchers, and the difficulties of intergenerational transfer of food-producing lands.

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