

# POTENTIAL SERVICES

## PROCESSING

Processing enables produce to be delivered to institutions in a usable form (i.e. cubed butternut squash or sliced carrots). In our region, there is also a possibility to integrate pulse crops (e.g. lentils, peas, chickpeas) or meat processing for institutional use.



Ribbon cutter peels butternut squash in first step of processing.  
(Photo credit: Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Center)

## AGGREGATION, MARKETING, AND DISTRIBUTION

Producers consistently report that marketing is one of their biggest challenges. Producers have enough to do without also managing their online presence and reaching out to potential institutional buyers. The food hub could purchase from producers, secure institutional contracts, and fulfill them with a central supply.



Sliced carrots being prepared for freezing at a food hub in Massachusetts. (Photo credit: The Recorder, Greenville, MA)

## WHO IS YELLOWSTONE VALLEY CITIZENS COUNCIL?

Yellowstone Valley Citizens Council (YVCC) is the local Billings chapter of Northern Plains Resource Council. YVCC is a grassroots community organization founded in 1979 to advocate for a healthy, inviting, and sustainable community in Yellowstone County. For over two decades, we have worked to make local food the first choice in Billings.

### Join YVCC Today!

JOIN ONLINE at [www.northernplains.org](http://www.northernplains.org)



## YELLOWSTONE VALLEY CITIZENS COUNCIL

→ est 1979 ←

Cori Hart, Food Hub Organizer  
406-248-1154 ext. 108  
[cori@northernplains.org](mailto:cori@northernplains.org)

# Yellowstone Valley FOOD HUB

## BOLSTERING MONTANA'S ECONOMY BY REBUILDING OUR REGIONAL FOOD INFRASTRUCTURE



In the 1950s Montana farmers, ranchers, and food businesses supplied over 70% of the food consumed in Montana. By 2007 that number was down to less than 10%. **Even though we are an agricultural state, money leaves the state every day when we feed our families.**

Our goal is to rebuild our regional food infrastructure in order to:

- Expand Montana producers' local markets;
- Keep more of our food dollars in-state;
- Create new jobs in the community;
- Increase the amount of fresh, local food being served in our institutions.

# POTENTIAL SERVICES

## FOOD BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

One of the primary services of existing food hubs, such as Mission Mountain in Ronan, is food enterprise development, including: recipe testing, nutrition facts, and label design.

## STORAGE

Storage is the second biggest challenge for producers getting product to institutional markets. Large amounts of cold and dry storage will enable ranchers, for instance, to store a whole head of beef for a restaurant.

## ADDRESSING FOOD ACCESS

Yellowstone County has a large percentage of families in poverty who are food insecure. A food hub can serve as a facility for training and job creation in the food industry.



# WHAT IS A FOOD HUB?



*Photo credit: Australian Food Hub Network*

In order to get good food where most people shop and eat (grocery stores, institutions, restaurants), food must be collected from many different producers. Quality and packing standards must be met, and then food is stored and distributed to points of sale. While there is a corporate system already in place to accomplish this (e.g. Sysco), there is a need for an alternative system that offers more economic opportunities for regional farms and ranches.

**Food hubs are an emerging model for healthy, local food collection and distribution.** A regional food hub is a business or organization that actively manages the collection, processing, marketing, and distribution of food products from local and regional producers to strengthen their ability to satisfy wholesale, retail, and institutional demand.

## WHAT SERVICES SHOULD A YELLOWSTONE COUNTY FOOD HUB OFFER?

To answer this question, YVCC is conducting a community assessment of the following stakeholders within a two-hour radius:

- Producers
- Community partners
- Consumers (general public)
- Institutions (schools, hospitals, nursing homes, restaurants, grocery stores)

To share your ideas, contact Cori Hart, our Food Hub Organizer. (see back panel for info.)