

MyOak Public Market

“How might we **cultivate** a more connected and responsive **food system network** to ensure **food access** during times of **crisis**?”

Team

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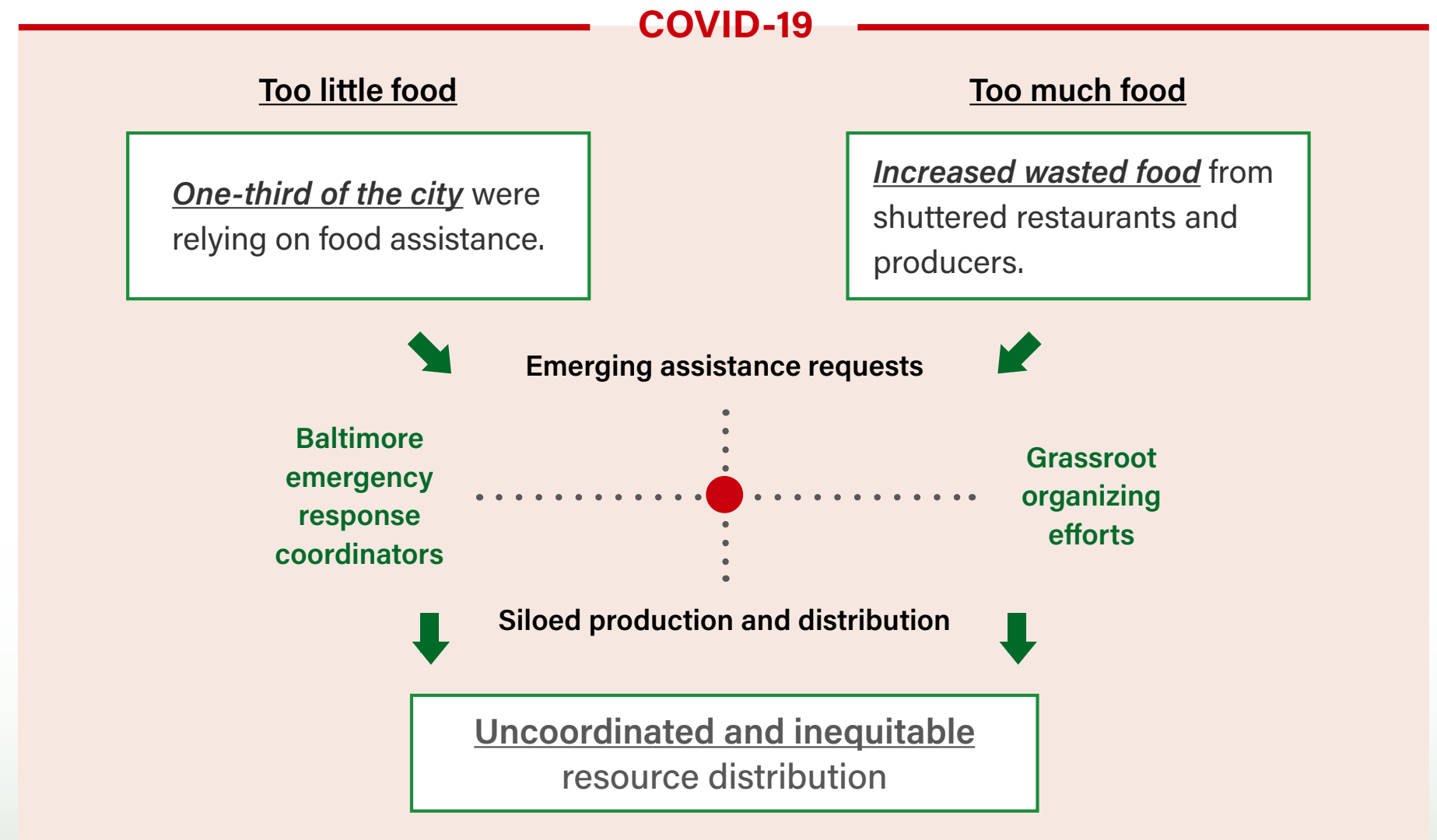
Problem

Problem Definition

From the loss of income to supply chain disruption, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the functionally inequitable and environmentally-destructive food system in this country.

Within the first month of the pandemic, Baltimore emergency response coordinators reported that almost **one-third of the city** was relying on food assistance—a significant increase from pre-COVID-19 times. The sheer volume of emerging assistance requests and the gap between hyper-local food needs and increased wasted food have resulted in uncoordinated and inequitable resource distribution.

Across the country, these challenges have resulted in over **43 million individuals and families** relying on nutrition assistance programs. Supporting this market not only has the potential to address immediate hunger relief but also provide the necessary reciprocal support to the local food producers for long-term food system resilience.



Problem

Current Situation



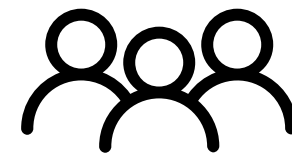
Food Assistance

\$28 million



To keep up with growing demands for food from an ever-increasing number of Marylanders seeking assistance, Maryland Food Bank has set a goal to raise **\$28 million** over the next 12 months.

Source: Maryland Food Bank



SNAP

43 million people



The use of SNAP, the nation's largest food and nutrition assistance program, has shot up in the fallout from the pandemic. Nationally, the number of SNAP recipients has grown to more than 43 million people, an increase of **6 million** since March.

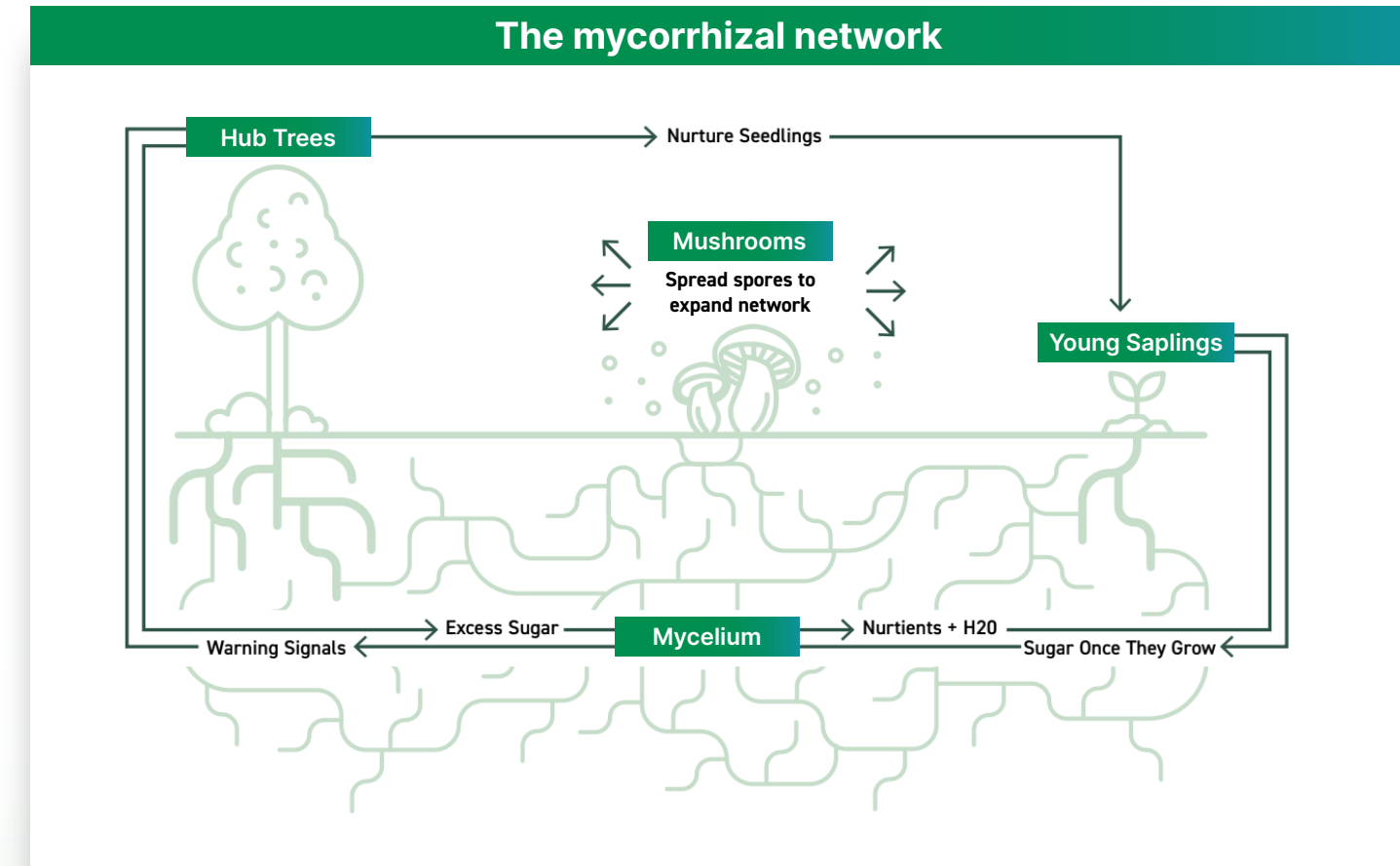
Source: In These Times

Solution

Learning from Nature

Looking to nature's unifying patterns, it was evident that **reciprocity** was the common thread of the biological strategies we discovered. Found in our own backyard of the Chesapeake forest, we were especially inspired by the local symbiotic relationship between native white oak tree and ectomycorrhizal fungi.

We translated this natural inspiration to design a symbiotic and interconnected food distribution infrastructure, like that between trees and the mycorrhizal network.



Solution

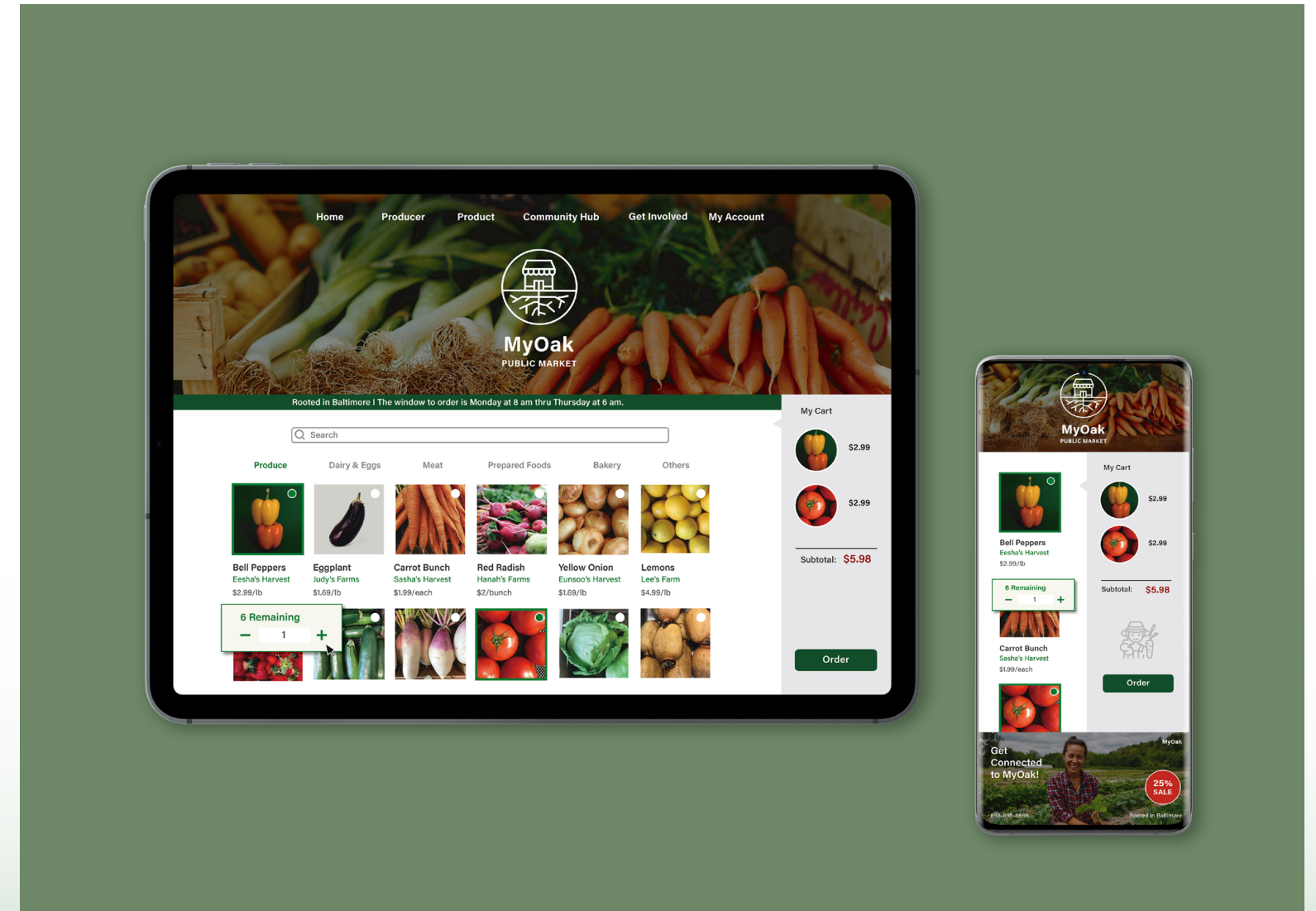
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MyOak
PUBLIC MARKET

Rooted in Baltimore

MyOak Public Market exists primarily as a reciprocal online platform to increase food access to vulnerable populations and the economic potential of local food producers.

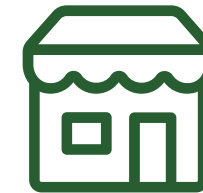
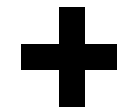


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Customers



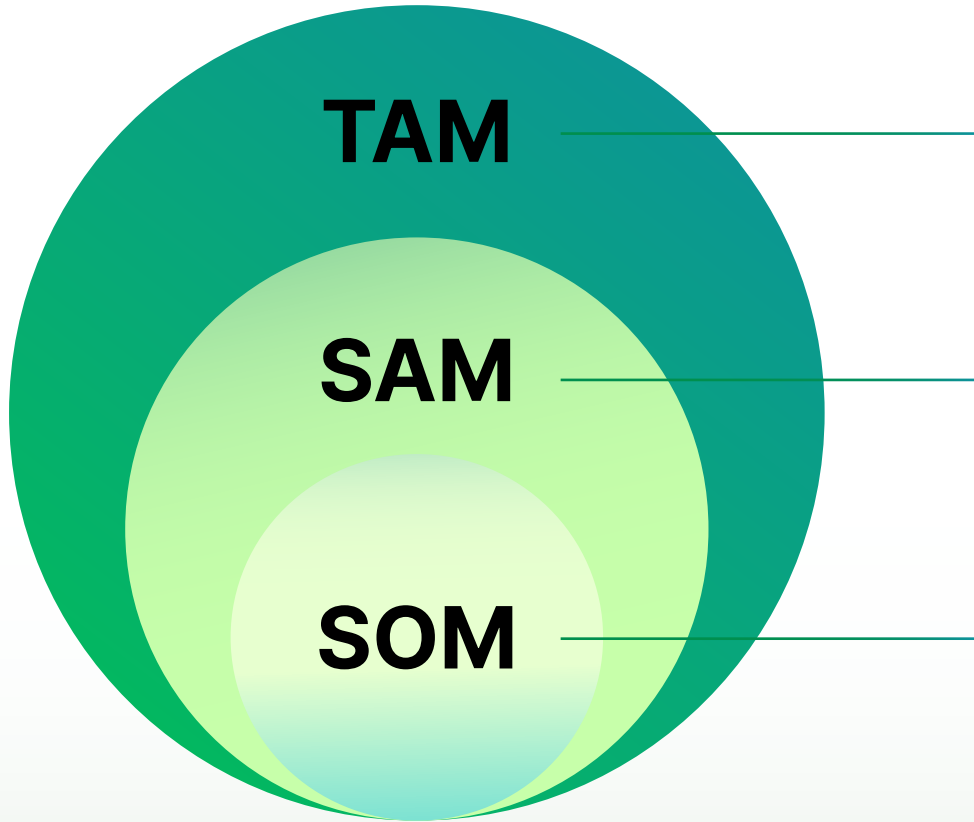
**SNAP Benefits
Recipients**



Vendors

We retain a **10% commission** on product sales + offer **vendor memberships**

Estimating Market Size



Total money spent by SNAP users	\$70 billion	+	Total farmers markets shoppers in US	\$1.5 billion	=	\$71.5 billion
SNAP users shopping at farmers markets in US					=	\$22.4 million
SNAP users shopping at farmers markets in MD	\$334,000	+	SNAP users shopping at farmers markets in FL	\$673,000	=	\$1,007,000

Competitors & Strategies

SNAP Recipients Grocery Markets



Walmart



ShopRite



Amazon

Source: USDA Online Purchasing Pilot 2020

Advantages of MyOak Public Market compared to current SNAP options

- ✓ Prioritising farmers, small scale vendors and customers equally
- ✓ The small scale vendors can access this platform with ease
- ✓ Selling Locally grown food directly
(Partnering with local farmers + no middle man)
- ✓ Actively collaborating with the community hubs to strengthen community wealth and economic stability
- ✓ Reducing delivery fees and food waste from shuttered restaurants and producers
- ✓ More customized, personalized on selection of produce
- ✓ Building a sustainable food system network within the community

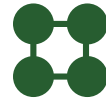
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Social Impact



Goal

MyOak Public Market's goal to increase the number and strength of connections between producers and consumers is achieved through a community-led, **technologically-driven distribution system** to deliver locally produced food.



Expected Impact

- Providing a healthy, local food to food insecurity community as well as increasing revenue for the local vendors
- Find ways to utilize the SNAP benefits into the system
- Find ways to engage food insecurity populations with the online platform



Success

- Usability & satisfaction tests
- Develop sustainable revenue
- Test logistics by running a pilot

Measuring Impact with HEART Metrics

	Goal	Signal	Metrics
Happiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customers/vendors enjoy the service and easily navigate it 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A satisfaction rating from survey User feedback from the workshop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Satisfaction Comments from the participants
Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customers/vendors easily find the service and learn about it 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage more with the service More people acknowledge about the service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of website visits Location of people visiting the website
Adoption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customers/vendors find the service easy to use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sign up as a customer/vendor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Numbers of users Registration rate
Retention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have repeat customers use the market Vendors continue using the service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay active in the service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repeat customers Length of time vendors use the service
Task Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service people facing food insecurity Reduce food surplus for vendors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food insecure customers find the service more convenient and time-saving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of sales Number of Deliveries Number of new food items added on to the market

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MyOak Team Dynamics



Hanah Murphy
Regional Director



Eesha Patne
Director of Strategic
Partnerships



Eunsoo Kim
Design Director



Sasha Avrutina
Director of Operations



Judy Chen
Regional Director

An interdisciplinary team of friends and former student peers united together by the pursuit of advancing equity and environmentalism. Eesha Patne (*Product Designer, India*), Eunsoo Kim (*Graphic Designer, South Korea*), Hanah Murphy (*Food System Designer, USA*), Judy Chen (*Landscape Architect, Taiwan*), and Sasha Avrutina (*Graphic Designer, USA*) have completed their M.A. in Social Design at the Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA). During their time in the program, they participated in the Biomimicry Global Design Challenge. By merging their human-centered practice with biomimicry principles, they could form their own unique design practice based on “**Life-Centered Design.**”

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Next Steps

01. Focus group workshops

Conduct focus group workshops in the coming few months to bring the stakeholders to the table and understand how this system would work for them.

02. Strengthening the network

Connect vendors, restaurants, farms, community hubs, etc.

03. Solidifying Business Model

Build a sustainable revenue model and develop a long term business plan.

04. Expanding customers

Expand MyOak customers to food secure market and develop programs to connect with cities, institutions, and other hopeful market communities. Implement MyOak market in multiple locations across the United States to expand customers geographically.

Please **connect** with us!

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