



# Local Food Economy Manager

## Job Description

Local Food Economy Managers manage and connect with different contacts and projects across a region to continue working towards sustainable food production line practices. Food Economy Managers utilize interpersonal skills to operate as middlemen within the local food system to synthesize solutions that incorporate as many perspectives as possible.

## Salary

Entry — \$31,580  
Middle — \$54,240  
Top — \$92,410

## Core Tasks

- Develop networks with professionals involved in the local food system
- Coordinate multiple projects with different groups of people
- Learn and be familiar with the local region's food production line
- Create sustainable solutions to improve the food system
- Facilitate connections within the local region's food production line

## Workplace / Environment

- **Work hours**  
**40-50 hours/week**  
(Hours may vary based on the employer)
- **Environment**  
**Frequent travel** to various **cities** and **locations**, interacting with a diverse cast of professionals. Some time spent in the office
- **Travel**  
Travel within the area covered by the **local food system**, which may vary depending on the region

## Education / Prerequisites

### Education Level

Bachelor's degree is preferred in sustainability-related fields including Resource Management and Food Science

### Licensing

Varies by regional jurisdictions

### Pre-Job Preparation

Recommended 3-5 years of experience in food or resource management. Experience is prioritized over degrees since there isn't a specific degree for this occupation.

## Experience

### Soft Skills

- Relationship Building and Navigating
- Multitasking
- Strong Interpersonal Skills

### Technical Skills

- Finance/Economics knowledge
- Expertise of the local environment
- Computer skills - (Microsoft Word, Excel sheet, Outlook, etc.)



## Career Path: Michael Lufkin

### About Me

Local Food Economy Manager for King County

Bachelor of Political Economy from Michigan State University

### Education Experiences

"Out of high school, I went to Michigan State University and majored in **political economy**. After Michigan State, I went to **law school** at Loyola University Chicago. I got really interested in environmental issues while there."



### Employment Shifts



"After law school, I worked in both the public sector for the **attorney general's office**, and then also in the private sector, always working on **natural resources and conservation-related issues**. Then I had an opportunity to go and do some work in international development. I went and took a job with an **international nonprofit** called Landesa."

### Interest Abroad

"That job took me to **sub-Saharan Africa**, where I worked in Kenya and Ghana and a little bit of Ethiopia. I was working a lot with **smallholder farmers** and trying to help farmers secure their land rights. That's really what really got me interested and excited—the intersection between **agriculture** and **natural resource protection**, because I saw that up close in Africa. I also saw a lot of the same challenges that farmers here in this country face, particularly small farmers—access to markets, access to land. You know, infrastructure challenges."

## Consolidating Knowledge

"As much as I enjoyed working overseas, it makes you realize all the work that needs to be done in your **own community**. While I loved that job of working internationally and doing that work, the travel was also kind of unsustainable."

"I saw this opportunity with King County to lead our **local food initiative** here. It was really exciting because it was kind of this intersection of all these parts of my career. It involves working with the farm and food sector and trying to do that in an environmentally-sustainable way. You also have to think about **land use policy** and practices."

## About My Job

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"We help make connections to improve the local food system"

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### Pros

- "The pros are that I get to work with so many **different stakeholders** across the food system, so every day can be something completely different."
- "What I love about it is the **diversity of issues** and the **diversity of people**."
- "There's an excitement that comes with knowing that this is really **important and beneficial** to our community."

### Fieldwork

- "Most of my work—about **80%**—is in the field."
- "I've gotten to know my county inside and out **geographically** and in terms of the **diversity** of people as well. I've met many different people, from conservative dairy farmers to POC in the city of Seattle who are trying to grow food for their families and communities."

### Cons

- "You have to be able to handle a lot of **different projects** and be able to track things that are oftentimes very different."
- "I like the diversity of the issues. The hardest part is that they're so **complex**. You hardly have time to become an expert—you just have to figure out how to know enough to move things forward."

### Office Work

- "I spend **20%** of my time at the desk"
- "You have to spend a lot of time coming back and working hard at your desk to try to **put the projects together** and figure out where **funding** can come from."

## Skills

- "Having people skills and knowing how to **navigate and work with people** is important. Maybe that goes without saying, but it's fundamental to success in this job."
- "You have to be able to navigate relationships and try to find **solutions** that work for maybe not everybody, but the **majority**."

## Education/Experience

- "Work towards a degree that takes a comprehensive look at our food system and the **sustainability** of local food systems."
- "I wish I were better educated on **economics** and **finances**."

# The Future of **Local Food Management**

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"There will be a rise in demand for this position"

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"Local food management is not a common career currently. However, it is likely that in the future, we will begin to see more **local governments in progressive cities** creating similar jobs. **Nonprofits** and **businesses** will continue to work to **improve local food systems** and it's important that there are people in local government who can connect people together."

"We help make those kinds of **connections** to improve the local food system. This position is crucial to navigating the connections between different groups within our local food systems. As food systems continue to grow alongside growing populations, there will also be a rise in demand for this position."