

THE WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA APPALACHIAN FOODSHED PROJECT

Community Food Security Assessment

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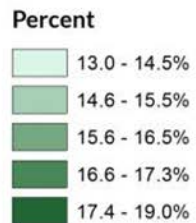
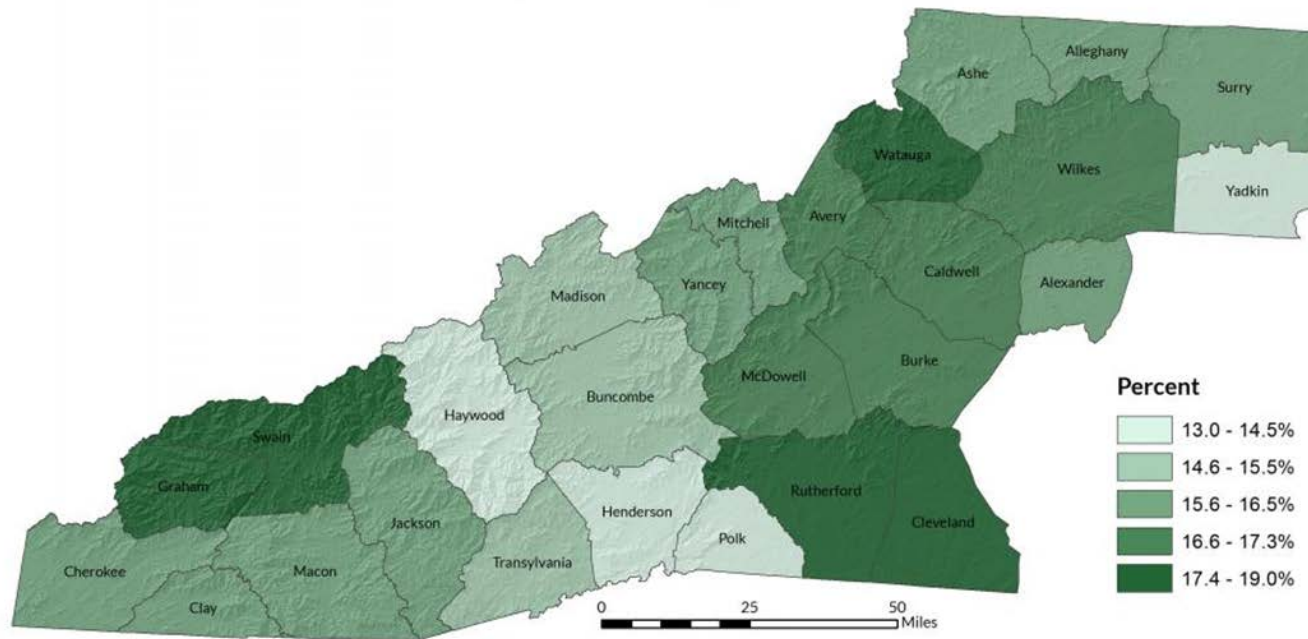
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Introduction

Food Insecurity Rate Among All Individuals, 2012



Appalachian Foodshed Project

Working collaboratively in the region to improve healthy food access, expand food security & enhance food economies, especially in communities that have been underserved and are economically vulnerable.

- Multidisciplinary researchers, staff, students & community stakeholders in three states
- Each state developed its own Community Food Security Assessment



“Increase availability and accessibility of safe, local, nutritious and culturally appropriate foods for all people in WNC.”

- **Emphasis: Increase bridging and bonding of food system networks**
- **Task: Develop Community Food Security Assessment (CFSA)**



Community Food Security Assessment

- Establish scope of the problem *within* community context
- Identify barriers, assets and opportunities
- Clarify key questions & next steps for communities to consider so *they* can work toward change



Whole Measures



Quantitative

- **Food Security**
- **Income and Poverty**
- **Health**
- **Agriculture and Food systems**
- **27 WNC counties**

Qualitative Data

- **24 Practitioner Interviews**
- **5 focus groups with resource-limited community members**
- **Buncombe, Mitchell & Yancey County**

Quantitative Indicators

NEMAC WNC Vitality Index: wncvitalityindex.org/human

Western North Carolina Vitality Index

About Browse Data Glossary GIS Viewer

SEARCH

Food Security
Food insecurity is popularly believed to be a problem of large cities, but the many rural communities and few major metropolitan centers of Western North Carolina—including areas isolated from much of the rest of the southeast due to the prevalence of mountainous terrain—make food insecurity a rural issue in most of the region.

Haywood Buncombe



Overview



Download



Natural Environment

From the pristine streams and rivers to the towering Blue Ridge Mountains, this analysis of Western North Carolina's natural resources reports on the vitality of our topography, geology, and biological resources, and



Human Environment

With generations of experience honed down to an efficient craft, local music, art, heritage, and spiritual values are important elements that reflect all Western North Carolinians. This study observes the

- **Systemic Poverty**
- **Cultural Barriers**
- **Knowledge Gaps**
- **Insufficiency of subsidized food options**
- **Healthy food affordability**
- **Organizational capacity**
- **Transportation**



Knowledge Gaps

So first of all being able to change mindsets because you want to get more bang for your buck. So you're not getting the healthiest foods . . . The cheaper stuff, it's affordable, so being able to train and educate folks on what's healthy, how to eat healthy, how to even spend your money, to get better bang for your buck for healthier stuff.

However . . .

Knowledge Gaps

Knowledge gaps were not a common barrier among resource-limited community members. They emphasized other barriers:

“It’s [being] tired. I work two jobs . . . I enjoy cooking meals, and I am far from lazy. I am never home . . . I don’t have time to do home cooking.”

“Healthy food, like fresh vegetables, is really expensive. And the fresh probably has more nutrients in it and stuff than if you get canned. Fresh ones are just so expensive.”

Knowledge Gaps

Key Questions:

How much of a priority should food-based education be in our communities?

Is more education about healthy foods what community members want and need?

Cultural Barriers

“I think it comes down to cultural barriers . . . In fact, sometimes people will relay experiences they had where they were made to feel unwelcomed . . . It’s a huge step forward that [farmers] markets are able to accept EBT, but now we need to tackle the more subtle issues.”

Well, one of the things that I experienced at one of the Farmers' Markets . . . I think I was the only black person there, me and my friend. Because I was using my EBT, I had some interactions where I was just like . . . maybe [people] don't understand that they are being aggressive . . . based off the color of your skin. I think it's a very real issue for me . . . It's not the EBT, I don't think. It's me and the EBT.

Cultural Barriers

Key Question:

How do we create food environments that are welcoming and culturally appropriate for *everyone* in our communities?

Cultural Barriers

“What I have observed is that there’s been more focus on farmers having livable wages vs. getting that food to the families . . . Farmers should be getting paid what doctors get paid, they most definitely should, but when you shift all your focus onto just that, and you’re not even thinking about . . . how can we get the food to those people in the greater community that need it?”

Key question:

How do we reconcile the different goals and needs of the local food system and the emergency food system?

“Well we've noticed need, we've noticed a growth each year, and mostly it's a continuing need. And then we've seen families who are continuously coming up short at the end of the month and needing our assistance . . .You get close to the end of the month and the next thing you know, you don't have any money, you don't have any groceries.”

“Sometimes it seems to just be stopping the crisis not addressing all the issues.”

Yet, emergency food system serves “vital” need:

“If it wasn’t for the local food boxes that I go through every month-- They give me all my canned foods, like, my corn and my greens, and my peas and stuff. It’s important, too. Those programs pull me through. I honestly do not think I could do without those programs.”

Key Questions:

How do we create and support food security models that emphasize independence when people are relying on emergency assistance regularly?

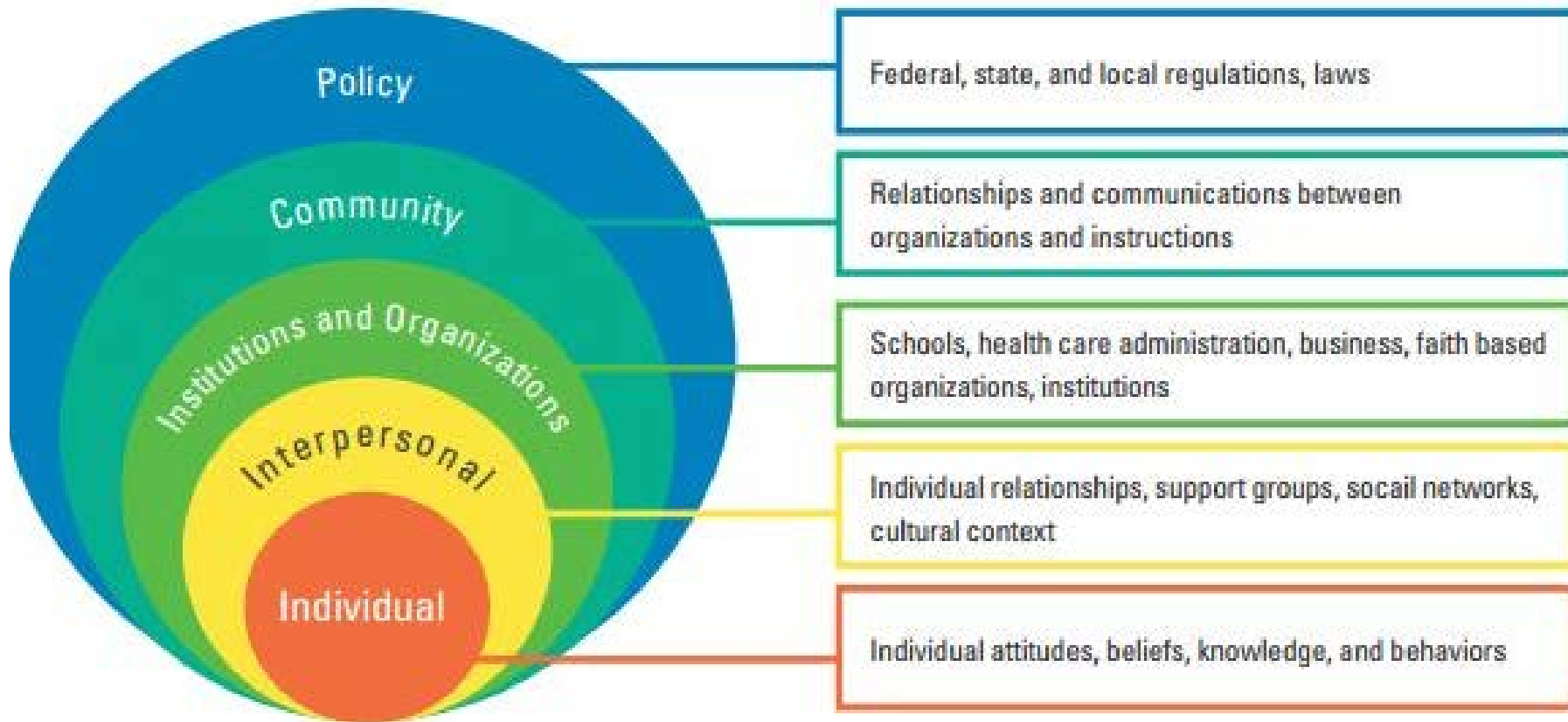
In working toward a more resilient food system based on self-reliance, what is the role of the emergency food system?

Opportunities to Improve Food Security



Opportunities for Improving Food Security

Social-Ecological Model



Opportunities for Improving Food Security

- How can we address food access and food insecurity *beyond* education?
- What specific programs and policies can the community pursue to spur economic and community development?



Organizational Collaboration

- **What is needed to bolster the collaborative potential of organizations & stakeholders, and how can we *sustain* those networks moving forward?**
- **How do we approach power dynamics among organizations who share an interest in addressing food security?**

Thank You

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Presentation Overview

- **Background & Purpose**
- **Process: Community Food Security Assessment**
- **Findings: Barriers & Opportunities**