

THE WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY FOOD SECURITY ASSESSMENT: Barriers and Opportunities

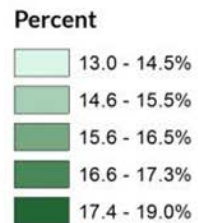
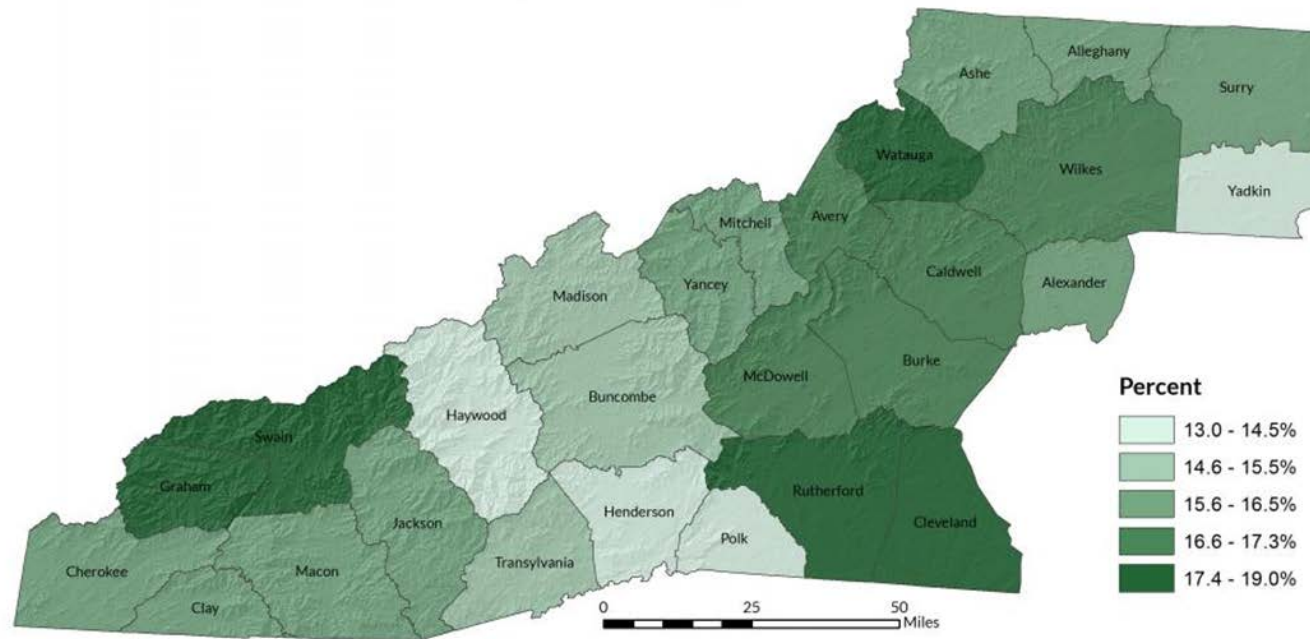
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**AFP Webinar
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Introduction

Food Insecurity Rate Among All Individuals, 2012



0 25 50 Miles

Community Food Security

“A situation in which all community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes community self-reliance and social justice.”

	Antihunger	Community Food Security
Model	Treatment	Prevention
Scale	Individual; household	Community
Time frame	Shorter term	Longer term
Conduit	Emergency Food; federal aid	Marketplace; self-production; local food
Agriculture relationship	Commodities; low food prices	Local agriculture, fair prices for farmers
Policy	Sustain food resources	Community planning and economic dev.

Hamm and Bellows. 2003. “Community Food Security and Nutrition Educators.” *J Nutr Educ Behav.* 35: 37-43.

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, 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



Community Food Security Assessment

Quantitative

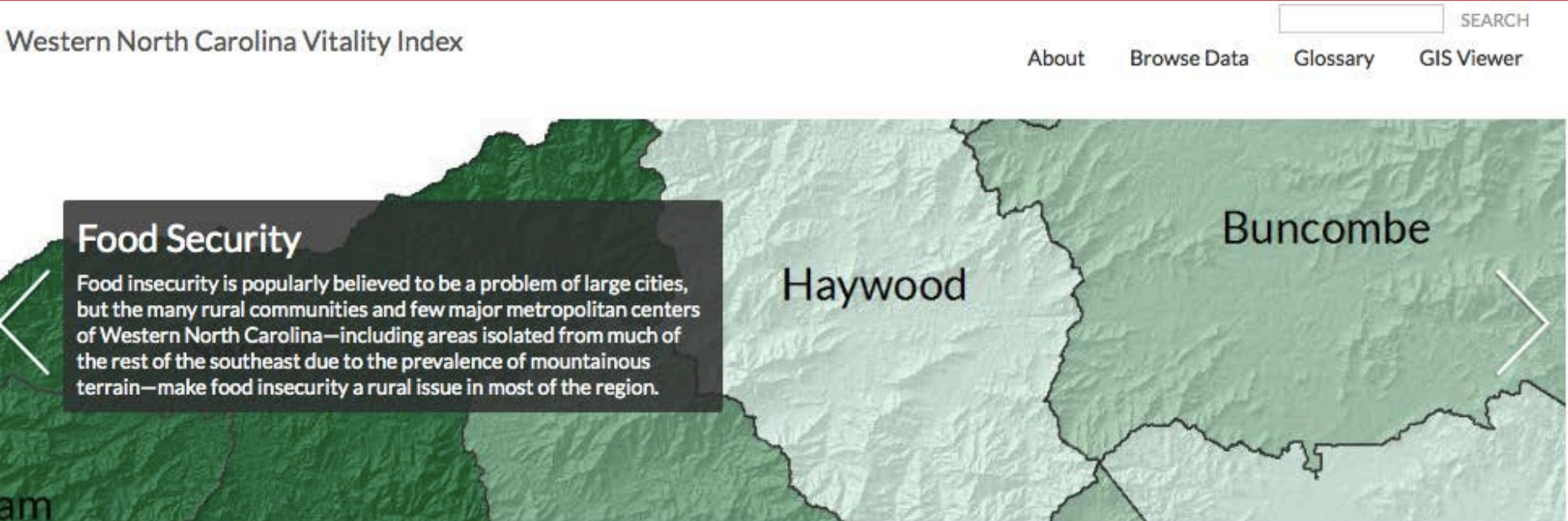
- **Food Security**
- **Income and Poverty**
- **Health**
- **Agriculture and Food systems**
- **27 WNC counties**

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



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

Barriers to Healthy Food Access & Food Security

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



Systemic Poverty & Emergency Food Systems

“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.”

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?

Healthy Food Affordability

It's complicated. On one hand . . .

“No. Flat no, it's not affordable. I mean, healthy food is hardly affordable to people that have income.”

“I've been up to that farmers market . . . But it's so high. It is outrageous because nobody that's on a fixed income or in housing can go up there and shop. If you did you might get a bunch of whatever, just a bunch.”

Healthy Food Affordability

. . . On the other hand:

“I think it’s more a matter of perception than reality. I think the reality is it can fit within most people’s budgets.”

Non-market channels are key:

“The community gardens are definitely a place where healthy foods are affordable because it’s a trade on time. So there’s not actually an exchange of money.”

Healthy Food Affordability

Key Question:

How can communities expand opportunities for and improve access to healthy food options through both market and non-market channels?

Insufficiency of Subsidized Food Programs and Assistance

“We feel like we need to be distributing protein each time that we have distribution and there are times we don’t have it. So there needs to be vegetables, there needs to be protein, we’d like there to be some fruit but generally we don’t have fruit. We don’t have milk, eggs, or cheese because we don’t have refrigeration to keep those things.”

Insufficiency of Subsidized Food Programs and Assistance

Key Questions:

Are there resources in the community to enable food providers to more consistently offer healthy foods, particularly fresh food items?

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.

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?

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.”

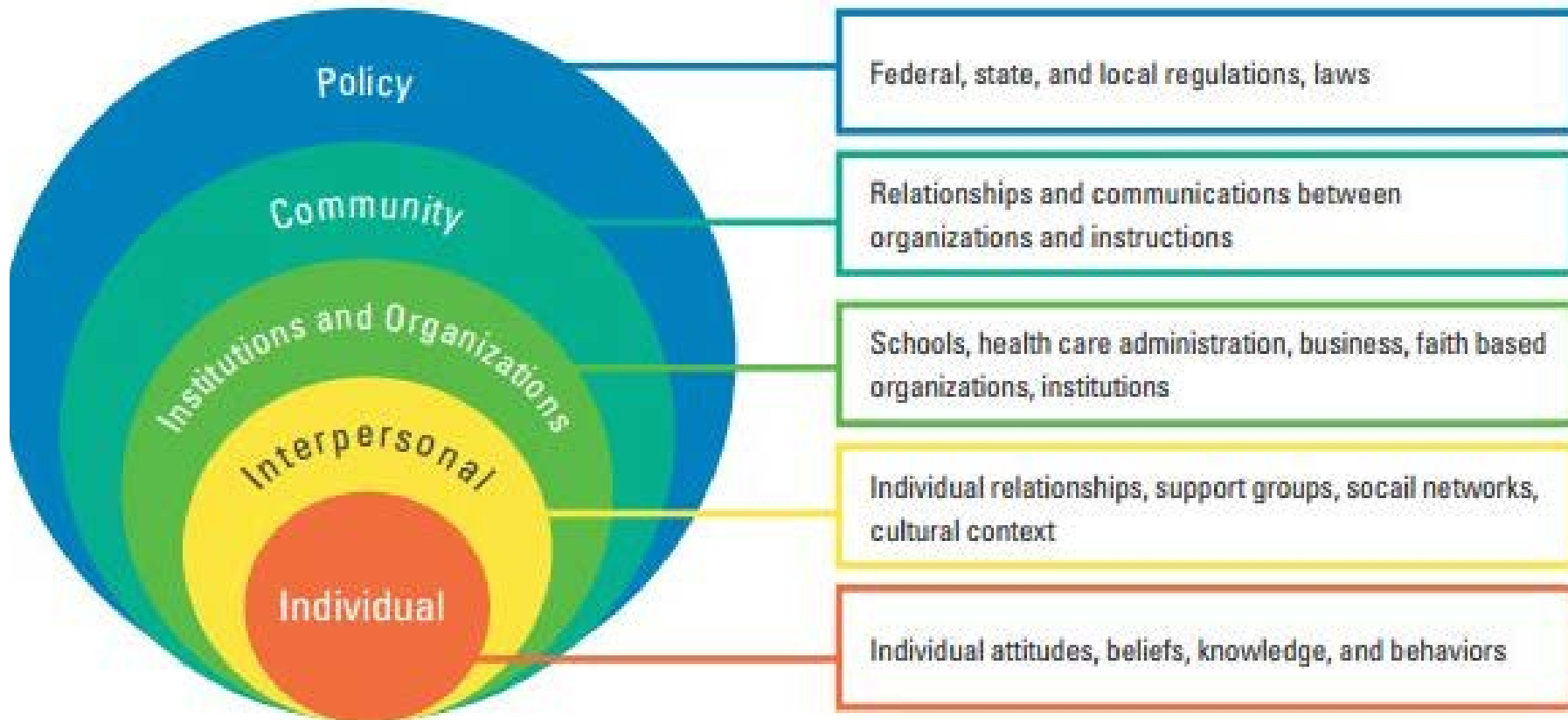
“Healthy food, like fresh vegetables, is really expensive. And the fresh probably has more nutrients in it and stuff than if you get canned. Fresh ones are just so expensive.”

Opportunities to Improve Food Security



Opportunities for Improving Food Security

Social-Ecological Model



Individual and Interpersonal: Education

- *“How to shop for, prepare, grow healthy food”*
- **Examples: Expanded Food & Nutrition Education Program, Bountiful Cities, farm to school**
- **Challenges: Capacity, enrollment, cultural appropriateness**

Institutions and Organizations: Projects & Programs

- *“Getting healthy food to where people are”*
- **Examples: Mobile markets, backpack programs, food pantries, EBT at farmers markets, community gardens**
- **Challenges: Capacity, cultural appropriateness, supply, transportation**

Community: Collaboration and development

- *“Collective impact”*
- *“Community and economic development”*
- **Examples: Community service navigators, Toe River Food Security Network, Buncombe County Community Garden Network**
- **Challenges: Capacity, power dynamics, specificity**

Policy: Regulations and structural change

- *“Not sure”*
- **Examples: Asheville Buncombe Food Policy Council, YES!, NC Sustainable Local Food Advisory Council**
- **Challenges: Capacity, funding, engagement, immensity**

Conclusion: Recommendations

1. Diverse collaborative networks
2. Policy engagement
3. Race and class awareness
4. Continued education
5. “Healthy food to where people are”
6. EBT and local food



Thank You

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AFP WNC Community Food Security Assessment:

http://appalachianfoodshedproject.org/documents/AFP_WNC%20CFSA_Final.pdf



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Whole Measures



Some perspective

- Not an “either/or” but a “both/and”
- How can we support long term vision and meet short term need of healthy food access for all?

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