



# State of Food Access in Guilford County



**NC** COOPERATIVE  
EXTENSION

# Table of Contents

<b>Table of Contents</b> .....	<b>ii</b>
<b>Tables</b> .....	<b>vi</b>
<b>Figures</b> .....	<b>vi</b>
<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	<b>1</b>
Key Findings.....	1
Summary of Recommendations .....	2
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Guilford County Sociodemographic Context</b> .....	<b>5</b>
Population Dynamics .....	7
Economic Characteristics .....	8
Income.....	10
Educational Attainment .....	12
Affordability .....	13
Digital Inclusivity .....	13
Community Health & Healthcare Resources .....	15
Medical Care .....	16
Mental Health and Substance Abuse .....	16
<b>Review of Methods of Food Security Measurement</b> .....	<b>18</b>
Definitions & Frameworks .....	18
Previous Research on Food Insecurity in North Carolina .....	19
Previous Research on Food Insecurity in Guilford County .....	20
Socioeconomic & Environmental Determinants .....	21
Impacts of Food Insecurity .....	21
Policy & Community Interventions.....	21
Methodological Approaches to Assessing Food Insecurity .....	22
Assessing Food Deserts through Geospatial Analysis .....	22
Assessing Food Security through Survey Measurement .....	23
Assessing Food Systems .....	26
Policy and Governance Frameworks .....	26

Consumer Motivations and Behavior .....	27
Sustainability, Localization, and Scaling .....	27
Measurement and Survey Approaches in Food Systems .....	28
<b>Implications of Methodological Considerations .....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b><i>Food Production, Affordability, &amp; Assistance .....</i></b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Household Food Costs in Guilford County.....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Farms, Gardens, and Food Manufacturing.....</b>	<b>33</b>
Local Farms .....	33
Community Gardens .....	35
Food Manufacturing .....	36
Food Retail .....	38
Primary Food Sources .....	40
<b><i>Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Utilization .....</i></b>	<b>41</b>
SNAP Assistance by Race & Ethnicity .....	43
SNAP Assistance for Children Under 18 .....	44
Experiences with SNAP in Guilford County.....	46
SNAP Retail Locations .....	47
<b><i>Secondary Food Security &amp; Food Access Data .....</i></b>	<b>49</b>
<b>United Way NC 211 Food-Related Calls.....</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Community Health Survey Findings for Guilford County .....</b>	<b>50</b>
Neighborhood and Built Environment .....	50
Rise in Fast-Food Restaurants in Guilford County.....	51
Food Insecurity: Worrying About Running Out of Food .....	51
Cutting Meal Sizes or Skipping Meals.....	51
Fruit and Vegetable Consumption .....	51
Challenges Residents Face in Accessing Food Services.....	52
<b>USDA Limited Supermarket Access (Food Deserts).....</b>	<b>52</b>
<b><i>Public &amp; Stakeholder Input .....</i></b>	<b>54</b>
<b>A Visual Exploration of Food Justice in Guilford County.....</b>	<b>55</b>
Process Employed in the Framing the Future Study.....	56
Food Justice Lens.....	56
Theme: Accessibility .....	58
Theme: Food and Housing .....	58
Theme: Nutrition Education and Practical Solutions .....	58
Theme: Food Waste and Mutual Aid.....	59
Theme: Public Assistance and SNAP .....	59
Theme: Community Solutions to Food Insecurity .....	60
Participant Recommendations.....	60
Photographs & Narratives .....	62

<b>Community Needs and Preferences - Focus Groups &amp; Interview Input.....</b>	<b>77</b>
Methods of Data Collection & Analysis .....	77
Focus Group & Listening Sessions Findings .....	78
Key Themes .....	79
Summary of Key Findings from Focus Groups & Interviews.....	87
<b>Resident Perspectives &amp; Food Access Trends – Food Systems Survey.....</b>	<b>89</b>
Methods of Analysis .....	90
Response Rate & Statistical Reliability.....	91
Location of Respondents .....	92
Race & Ethnicity .....	93
Sex/Gender Characteristics.....	94
Educational Attainment.....	95
Age Distribution .....	96
Household Characteristics .....	97
Household Income.....	98
Monthly Food Costs .....	99
Food Rationing by Income, Age, & Race/Ethnicity.....	101
Respondent Self-Definition of Food Insecure .....	106
Access to Nutritious Foods .....	110
Primary Sources of Food.....	113
Food Assistance Programs.....	119
Local Food System .....	123
Recommendations for Improving Food Access & Security.....	130
Support Needed in the Next Year .....	134
<b>Report Summary &amp; Conclusions .....</b>	<b>135</b>
<b>Sociodemographic Profile .....</b>	<b>135</b>
<b>Literature Review on Food Security Measurement .....</b>	<b>136</b>
<b>Food Production, Affordability, And Assistance .....</b>	<b>137</b>
<b>Food Security &amp; Food Access .....</b>	<b>139</b>
<b>Public Input.....</b>	<b>140</b>
Photovoice .....	140
Interview and Focus Group Findings .....	141
Survey Findings.....	142
Recommendations Derived from Community Input.....	142
<b>Recommendations &amp; Implementation Plan .....</b>	<b>145</b>
<b>Strategy 1: Improve Access to Healthy and Affordable Food.....</b>	<b>145</b>
Action 1.1: Expand and Improve Food Assistance Programs.....	145
Action 1.2: Establish Mobile Grocery and Fresh Produce Markets.....	145
Action 1.3: Advocate for Policy Changes to Improve Food Assistance Accessibility.....	146
<b>Strategy 2: Strengthen Local Food Systems .....</b>	<b>146</b>

Action 2.1: Increase Support for Community Gardens and Urban Farms..... 146

Action 2.2: Partner with Local Black and Immigrant Farmers ..... 147

Action 2.3: Establish a Regional Food Hub for Local Farmers and Small Food Producers ..... 147

**Strategy 3: Address Transportation and Geographic Barriers to Food Access ..... 148**

    Action 3.1: Expand Transportation Options for Grocery Access ..... 148

    Action 3.2: Expand Home-Delivered Food Services ..... 148

    Action 3.3: Develop a Public-Private Partnership for Permanent Grocery Store Investments in Food  
    Deserts..... 148

**Strategy 4: Reduce Food Waste and Strengthen Food Recovery Networks ..... 149**

    Action 4.1: Implement a Countywide Food Rescue Program ..... 149

    Action 4.2: Expand Community Fridge Programs ..... 149

    Action 4.3: Create a Countywide Food Waste-to-Energy and Composting Program ..... 150

**Strategy 5: Promote Nutrition Education and Healthy Eating Habits ..... 150**

    Action 5.1: Expand Nutrition Education in Schools and Community Centers..... 150

    Action 5.2: Provide Incentives for Healthy Food Purchases ..... 151

    Action 5.3: Integrate Nutrition and Food Systems Education into Public School Curricula..... 151

**References ..... 152**

**Appendix A - Data Sources..... 161**

**Federal Sources..... 161**

**State of North Carolina Data Sources ..... 162**

**Guilford County Government & Municipal Data ..... 163**

**School District Data..... 163**

**Nonprofits, Food Banks, and Local Networks ..... 163**

**Farmers Markets..... 165**

**Additional Data & Mapping Resources ..... 165**

**Appendix B - Survey Instrument ..... 166**

**Appendix C – Open-Ended Survey Feedback..... 182**

**If you could make one change to improve food access or security in your community, what  
    would it be and why?..... 182**

**What are the best ways we can support your food needs or concerns in the next year? .... 204**

## Tables

Table 1 - Summary Table Population Dynamics (ACS 2024 Est) .....	6
Table 2 - Employment by Industry (ACS 2019-2023, 5-year estimates) .....	9
Table 3 –Income Distributions.....	12
Table 4 –Educational Attainment .....	13
Table 5 - Household Food Expenditures (Consumer Expenditure Estimates 2022).....	31
Table 6 – Farm Characteristics Guilford County (US Department of Agriculture 2022) .....	34
Table 7 - Food Manufacturing (NAICS 311).....	37
Table 8 - Retail Food Businesses (2022).....	38
Table 9 - Food Retail Employees and Payroll (2022).....	39
Table 10 – Characteristics of Households Receiving Public Assistance (ACS 2022) .....	44
Table 11 – Characteristics of Households Receiving Public Assistance (ACS 2022) .....	45
Table 12 - SNAP Retail Locations in Guilford County (USDA 2023) .....	48
Table 13 – Focus Groups/Listen Sessions Attendees and Themes .....	78
Table 14 – Race and Ethnicity of Respondents .....	93
Table 15 - Summary Table Food Rationing by Race/Ethnicity, Sex, & Age.....	102
Table 16 - Financial Reasons for Rationing.....	103
Table 17 - Household Food Insecurity .....	105
Table 18 – Food Restrictions .....	106
Table 19 - Summary Table Food Access by Race/Ethnicity, Sex, & Age .....	110
Table 20 - Barriers to Accessing Healthy & Nutritious Food.....	112
Table 21 - Primary Source of Foods .....	113
Table 22 - Most Important Factors in Acquiring Food.....	114
Table 23 - Reasons Not to Use Food Assistance.....	122
Table 24 - Changes to Local Food System.....	129

## Figures

Figure 1 - Population Density Guilford County (ACS 2022) .....	5
Figure 2 – African American Population by Block Group (ACS 2024 Est) .....	7
Figure 3– Non-Hispanic White Population by Block Group (ACS 2024 Est).....	8
Figure 4 - Annual Income by Household (ACS 2019-2023) .....	10
Figure 5 - Household Median Income by Block Group (ACS 2024).....	11
Figure 6 - Percent of Households with No Computer (ACS 2024) .....	15
Figure 7 - Physical health not good last two weeks (CDC Places 2023).....	17
Figure 8 –Household Food Expenditures by Census Tract (Consumer Expenditure 2022)..	32
Figure 9 - Distribution of Community Gardens by Zip Code.....	35
Figure 10 – SNAP Utilization 2010-2024 Guilford County .....	41
Figure 11 - SNAP Participation by Block Group (ACS 2022) .....	42
Figure 12 - SNAP Retail Locations (USDA 2023).....	48
Figure 13 - Limited Access Designations (PolicyMap 2022).....	53
Figure 14 – Recruitment Flier - A Photovoice Exploration of Food Justice.....	57

Figure 15 - Outreach Materials from Food Systems Survey .....	89
Figure 16 - Location of Respondents by Zip Codes .....	92
Figure 17 - Sex/Gender of Respondents.....	94
Figure 18 - Educational Attainment .....	95
Figure 19 - Age Distribution of Respondents .....	96
Figure 20 - Number of People in Household.....	97
Figure 21 - Monthly Reported Income .....	98
Figure 22 - Monthly Food Expenditures.....	99
Figure 23 - Monthly Income, Food Costs, and Ratio of Food to Income .....	100
Figure 24 -Enough Food and The Kinds Preferred .....	104
Figure 25 - Food Insecurity Based on Self-Defined Criteria .....	109
Figure 26 - Frequency of Acquiring Food .....	115
Figure 27 - Distance Travelled to Primary Food Source .....	116
Figure 28 - Primary Transportation to Food Source.....	116
Figure 29 - Affordability of Healthy & Nutritious Food .....	117
Figure 30 – Variety of Foods .....	118
Figure 31 – Quality of Foods .....	118
Figure 32 - Most Common Food Pantry Items .....	120
Figure 33 - Satisfaction with Local Food Assistance Programs.....	121
Figure 34 – Adequacy of Local Food Production .....	124
Figure 35- Support for Local Food Production.....	125
Figure 36 – Support for Sustainable Food Practices .....	126
Figure 37 - Awareness of Local Food System .....	127
Figure 38 – Food System Priorities.....	130

## Executive Summary

Food security and accessibility are fundamental to the health, economic stability, and overall well-being of communities. The Guilford County Food Study provides a comprehensive analysis of food access, affordability, and security across the county. This report examines the key factors influencing food security, including socioeconomic conditions, demographic trends, public assistance programs, and food production and distribution networks.

### Key Findings

The report identifies several critical findings related to food insecurity in Guilford County:

- **Persistent Food Insecurity:** Despite the county's agricultural resources, approximately 13.7% of residents experience food insecurity, with significant racial and geographic disparities. Households in low-income and historically marginalized communities face higher barriers to accessing nutritious food.
- **Rising Food Costs and Limited Affordability:** Many families spend over 11% of their income on food, with disparities in food costs between urban and rural areas. Increasing grocery prices have exacerbated financial strain, leading to food rationing.
- **Access Barriers:** Food deserts remain a challenge, with limited supermarket access and transportation barriers preventing residents from obtaining healthy food. The rise of fast-food establishments in food-insecure neighborhoods contributes to poor nutrition.
- **Public Assistance Utilization and Gaps:** While SNAP benefits support thousands of households, 35% of food-insecure residents are ineligible for assistance, highlighting a gap in food aid coverage.
- **Community-Led Solutions Show Promise:** Local initiatives, such as community gardens and urban farms, provide fresh produce to underserved communities. However, scaling these efforts requires policy support and investment in food infrastructure.

The Photovoice project, focus groups, and survey data captured community perspectives, providing a deeper understanding of lived experiences with food insecurity. Some key themes include:

- **Photovoice:** Residents documented food insecurity through photos and narratives, highlighting:
  - The emotional and physical toll of uncertain access to healthy food.

- The impact of long travel distances to grocery stores, particularly for elderly and disabled residents.
- The sense of community in shared food resources, such as mutual aid networks and food pantries.
- Focus Groups & Listening Sessions: Community members expressed concerns about:
  - Rising food prices and the difficulty of affording fresh produce.
  - Limited culturally appropriate food options for immigrant and minority communities.
  - The stigma associated with using food assistance programs, which discourages some eligible individuals from seeking help.
  - The role of schools and community centers in providing essential food support.
- Survey Data: Key quantitative findings include:
  - 40% of respondents reported skipping meals or reducing portion sizes due to financial constraints.
  - More than 60% of households in food-insecure areas lack access to a full-service grocery store within one mile.
  - 85% of respondents supported expanding urban farming and community garden initiatives as a solution to food insecurity.

## Summary of Recommendations

The report proposes a set of strategic actions to improve food security in Guilford County:

1. Expand and Improve Food Assistance Programs – Increase SNAP accessibility and develop mobile grocery and fresh produce markets.
2. Strengthen Local Food Systems – Support urban farming, community gardens, and local Black and immigrant farmers while establishing a regional food hub.
3. Address Geographic and Transportation Barriers – Expand public transit options for grocery shopping and invest in permanent grocery store developments in food deserts.
4. Reduce Food Waste and Strengthen Food Recovery Efforts – Implement a countywide food rescue program and expand community fridge initiatives.

5. Promote Nutrition Education and Healthy Eating Habits – Introduce more nutrition education in schools and provide incentives for healthy food purchases.

This report serves as a roadmap for policymakers, nonprofit organizations, and community stakeholders working to enhance food access and equity in Guilford County. By implementing these recommendations, local leaders can ensure that all residents—regardless of income or geography—have reliable access to sufficient, nutritious, and affordable food.

## Introduction

Food security and accessibility are essential components of community well-being, impacting health, economic stability, and overall quality of life. Guilford County, situated in the Piedmont region of North Carolina, is home to a diverse population of over 550,000 residents, with significant variations in income, employment, and food access. This report examines the key factors influencing food security, including socioeconomic conditions, demographic trends, public assistance programs, and food production and distribution networks.

The county's food landscape is shaped by multiple factors, including demographic trends, economic conditions, and policy interventions. While Guilford County benefits from a strong agricultural base and a dynamic food retail environment, disparities in food security persist. Low-income households, communities of color, and rural residents often face greater challenges in accessing nutritious and affordable food. The presence of food deserts, limited supermarket access, and reliance on public assistance programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) highlight ongoing gaps in food equity.

This report aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the current state of food security in Guilford County. The study is structured into multiple sections, each offering a detailed exploration of different aspects of the county's food system. The report begins with an overview of Guilford County's sociodemographic context, highlighting income distribution, educational attainment, and employment trends that influence food access.

The next sections discuss the measurement of food insecurity, methodologies used in past research, and geospatial analyses that assess food deserts and food accessibility. The food production, affordability, and assistance section evaluates food sources, household expenditures, the role of community gardens and local farms, and public assistance programs like SNAP.

The public and stakeholder input section integrates community voices through surveys, focus groups, and interviews, providing qualitative insights into food-related challenges.

By synthesizing data from federal, state, and local sources, this report serves as a valuable resource for policymakers, nonprofit organizations, and community stakeholders working to enhance food accessibility and security within the region.

Finally, the report presents recommendations and an implementation plan, outlining strategies to enhance food security and food system sustainability.

## Guilford County Sociodemographic Context

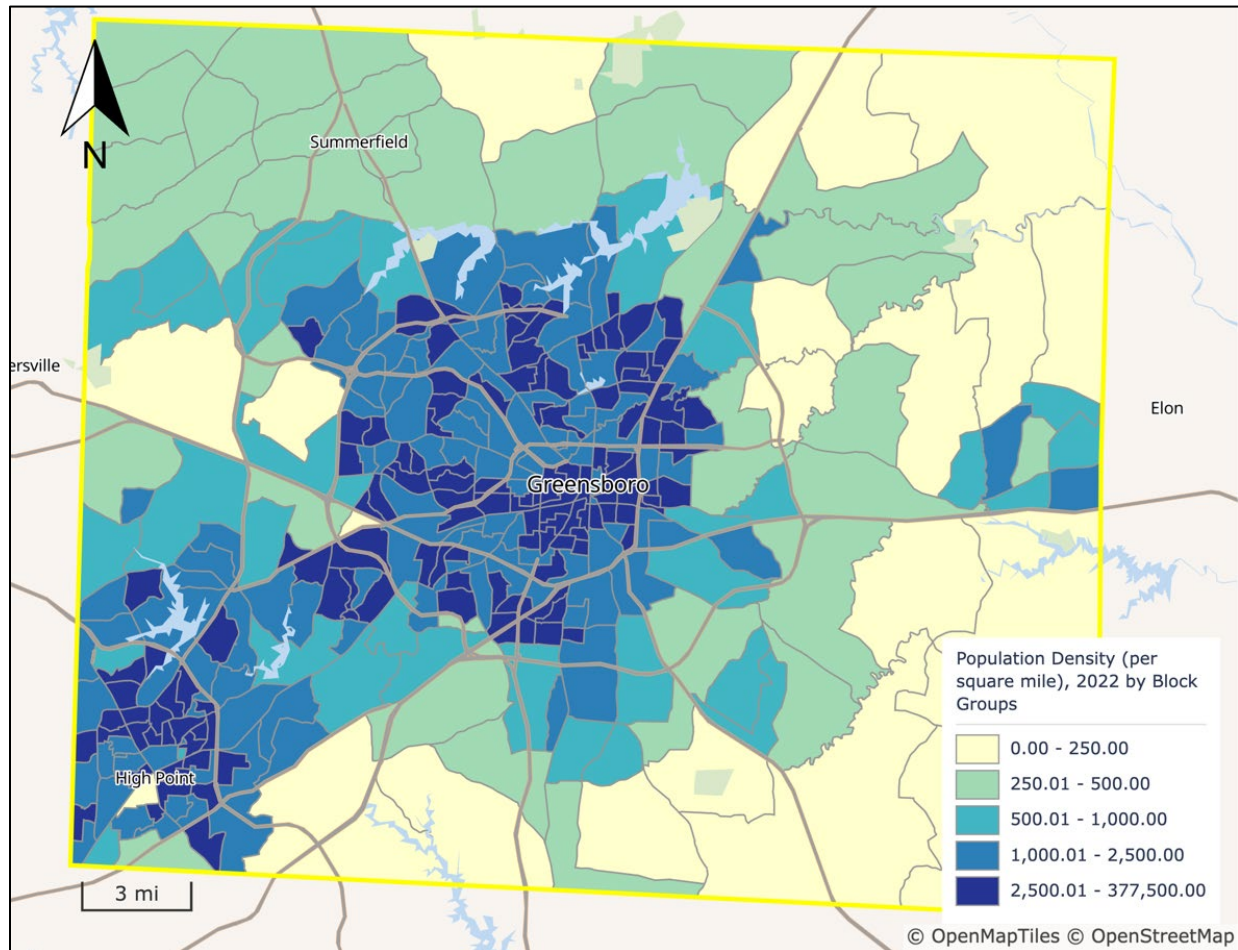


Figure 1 - Population Density Guilford County (ACS 2022)

Guilford County is a sprawling urban and peri-urban county in the heart of the Piedmont which includes the Greensboro-High Point MSA. It covers an area of 658 square miles and a population of over 553,275 (ACS 2024 Estimate). The County is home to two major municipalities, Greensboro and High Point, with separate courts, jails and county human services departments in each city as well as incorporated towns of Gibsonville, Jamestown, Oak Ridge, Pleasant Garden, Sedalia, Stokesdale, Summerfield, and Whitsett. Overall, Guilford County presents a blend of urban and suburban characteristics, with a growing and diverse population, a range of educational attainment, and varied economic conditions.

The map above illustrates population density in Guilford County segmented by block groups for the year 2022. Areas in darker blue represent higher population densities, with values

ranging as high as 15,000 people per square mile.<sup>1</sup> The central region of Greensboro shows the highest density, while lighter green and yellow areas in the outskirts, such as Summerfield and Pleasant Garden, indicate lower population densities, typically below 500 people per square mile. High Point, located southwest of Greensboro, also exhibits moderate population density, concentrated around its urban center.

Table 1 - Summary Table Population Dynamics (ACS 2024 Est)

	High Point		Greensboro		Guilford County		North Carolina	
<b>POPULATION &amp; SEX</b>								
<b>Total Population</b>	114,740		298,713		549,157		10,625,013	
<b>Male</b>	56,581	49.31%	138,049	46.21%	261,700	47.65%	5,214,800	49.08%
<b>Female</b>	58,159	50.69%	160,663	53.79%	287,159	52.29%	5,403,977	50.86%
<b>AGE</b>								
<b>Under 5 years</b>	7,351	6.41%	17,544	5.87%	30,630	5.58%	598,882	5.64%
<b>5 to 9 years</b>	6,790	5.92%	19,064	6.38%	32,510	5.92%	625,127	5.88%
<b>10 to 14 years</b>	6,738	5.87%	19,657	6.58%	34,717	6.32%	681,457	6.41%
<b>15 to 17 years</b>	3,845	3.35%	11,332	3.79%	22,181	4.04%	423,236	3.98%
<b>18 and 19 years</b>	5,826	5.08%	14,730	4.93%	25,063	4.56%	326,688	3.07%
<b>20 to 24 years</b>	8,270	7.21%	27,736	9.29%	43,240	7.87%	765,640	7.21%
<b>25 to 34 years</b>	13,759	11.99%	47,191	15.80%	71,796	13.07%	1,385,648	13.04%
<b>35 to 44 years</b>	14,886	12.97%	36,274	12.14%	65,490	11.93%	1,304,056	12.27%
<b>45 to 54 years</b>	12,751	11.11%	34,504	11.55%	65,543	11.94%	1,301,793	12.25%
<b>55 to 64 years</b>	15,501	13.51%	31,119	10.42%	66,415	12.09%	1,335,165	12.57%
<b>65 to 74 years</b>	12,099	10.54%	23,463	7.85%	51,065	9.30%	1,062,440	10.00%
<b>75 to 84 years</b>	5,135	4.48%	10,454	3.50%	24,128	4.39%	508,472	4.79%
<b>85 years and over</b>	1,766	1.54%	5,622	1.88%	11,232	2.05%	198,306	1.87%
<b>RACE &amp; ETHNICITY</b>								
<b>White alone</b>	54,063	47.12%	112,628	37.70%	264,506	48.17%	6,598,356	62.10%
<b>Black /African American alone</b>	37,654	32.82%	135,032	45.20%	188,085	34.25%	2,224,040	20.93%
<b>American Indian/ Alaska Native alone</b>	423	0.37%	901	0.30%	2,289	0.42%	117,767	1.11%
<b>Asian alone</b>	8,795	7.67%	17,764	5.95%	31,801	5.79%	377,038	3.55%
<b>Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander alone</b>	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	103	0.02%	9,388	0.09%
<b>Some other race alone</b>	3,854	3.36%	11,456	3.84%	22,123	4.03%	506,762	4.77%
<b>Two or more races</b>	9,948	8.67%	20,929	7.01%	39,614	7.21%	779,101	7.33%
<b>Not Hispanic or Latino</b>	102,396	89.24%	270,516	90.56%	496,867	90.48%	9,439,285	88.84%
<b>Hispanic or Latino</b>	12,343	10.76%	28,196	9.44%	52,037	9.48%	1,180,565	11.11%

<sup>1</sup> Areas with population densities exceeding 10,000 per square mile include Census Block groups containing UNC Greensboro, NC A&T, High Point University, Guilford College, and high-density public housing communities or apartment complexes.

## Population Dynamics

The county's demographic composition is diverse. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the racial makeup was 48.2% White, 34.3% Black or African American, 5.8% Asian, and 9.5% Hispanic or Latino (ACS 2024 Estimate). The median age was 37.2 years old with 15.7% of the population 65 years or older and 21.9% being children under 18. Guilford County has experienced steady population growth in recent years. It is the third most populated county in NC and has experienced a population growth of 30.4% since 2000. The county is expected to maintain a population growth of just under 1% annually.

The two maps that follow (below and next page) illustrate the racial distribution of Black or African American and White populations in Guilford County by block groups. The first map shows that areas with the highest percentage of Black or African American residents (75.01% to 100%) are concentrated in central Greensboro and parts of High Point. Conversely, the second map reveals that the highest concentrations of White residents (75.01% to 100%) dominate the suburban and rural outskirts of Greensboro and High Point, particularly in northern, eastern, and western Guilford County. This distribution suggests a pattern of racial residential segregation, with urban centers in east and southeast Greensboro having higher proportions of Black residents and outlying areas being predominantly White.

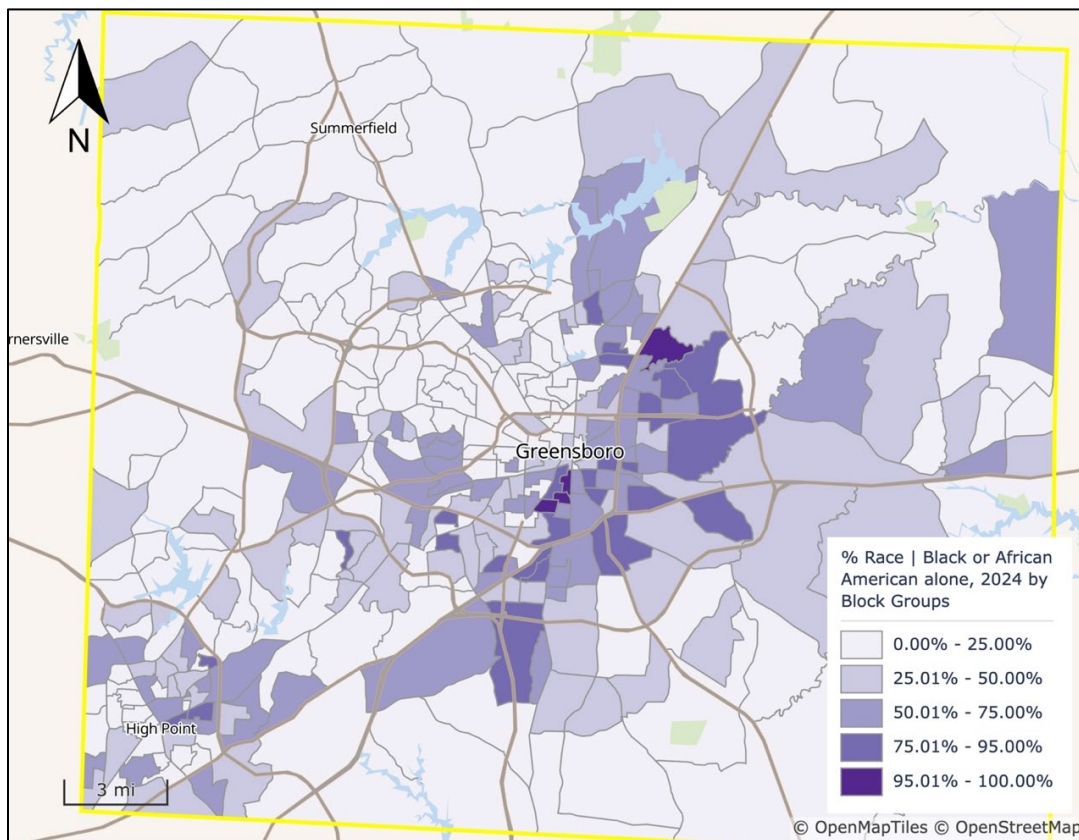


Figure 2 – African American Population by Block Group (ACS 2024 Est)

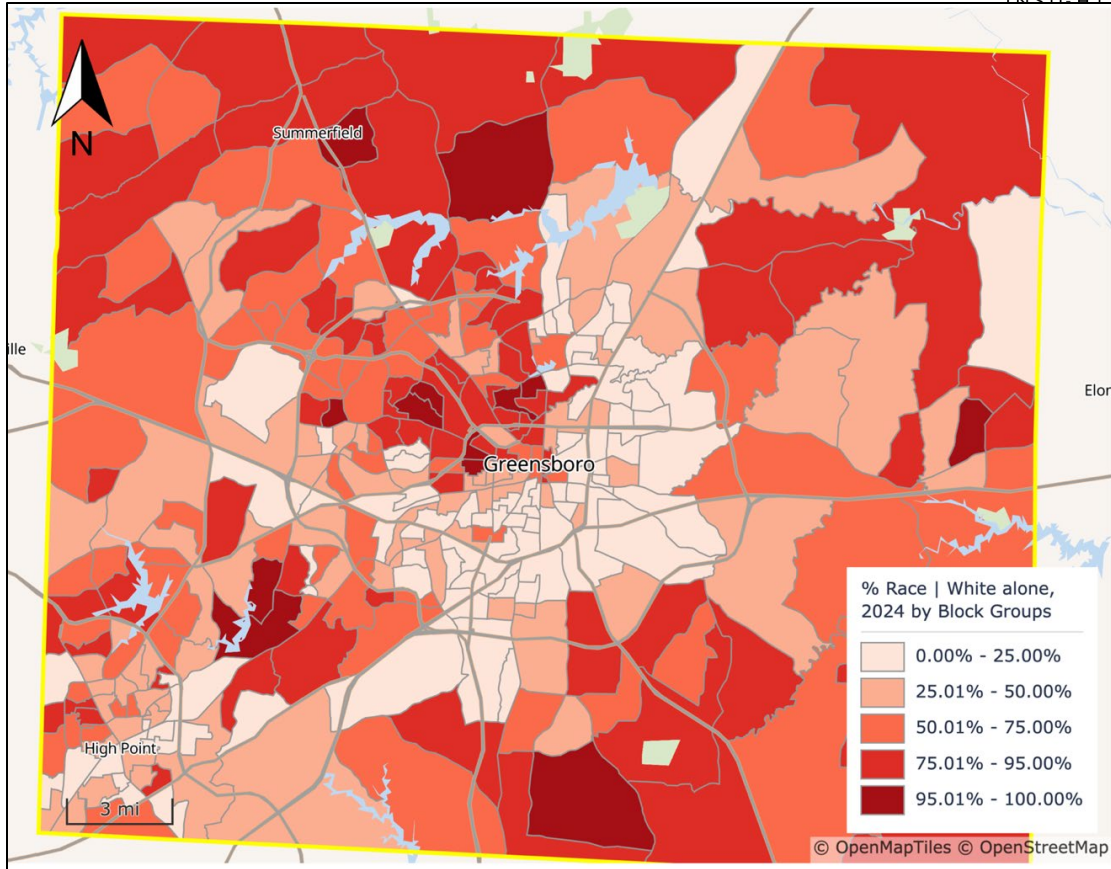


Figure 3– Non-Hispanic White Population by Block Group (ACS 2024 Est)

## Economic Characteristics

The County is a very accessible, intersected by 8 interstate highways, 6 US highways and 7 major NC highways. It is home to a major airport (Piedmont Triad International) and has a railroad depot located in downtown Greensboro with daily passenger traffic up and down the eastern corridor and in state transportation to Raleigh and Charlotte. Major educational institutions include the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, North Carolina A & T State University, Guilford Technical Community College, and High Point University. The public schools are rated above average. The combination of transportation access and educational resources makes the county attractive to businesses across various industries, including logistics, manufacturing, technology, and education. The county is likely to see continued investment in both infrastructure and business development, making it a competitive player in the region. Guilford County's GDP was approximately \$41 billion in 2022, ranking it fourth among North Carolina's 100 counties. This represents about 5.7% of the state's total GDP of \$716 billion.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> <https://stacker.com/north-carolina/guilford-county-nc/how-guilford-county-north-carolinas-gdp-has-changed-2018>

The unemployment rate was 3.8% in Guilford County (Bureau of Labor Statistics, Oct 2024). The unemployment rate represents the number of unemployed people as a percent of people in the labor force. The labor force and employment figures have remained relatively steady in the past year with slight seasonal fluctuations.

The employment data below highlights the distribution of workforce across industries in a region compared to North Carolina as a whole. The leading sectors include Health Care and Social Assistance (14.8%), Manufacturing (12.9%), Retail Trade (11.5%), and Educational Services (9.94%), all of which employ a significant share of the workforce. Notably, Health Care and Social Assistance and Manufacturing sectors employ a higher percentage of the workforce locally compared to the state average (13.75% and 11.73%, respectively). Conversely, sectors such as Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (5.56%) and Construction (5.07%) have a lower share of local employment compared to state averages (7.87% and 7.49%, respectively). Accommodation and Food Services (7.57%) slightly surpasses the state average (6.88%). Overall, the data indicates strong reliance on manufacturing, healthcare, retail, and education industries.

Table 2 - Employment by Industry (ACS 2019-2023, 5-year estimates)

<b>Industry</b>	<b>People Employed</b>	<b>Percent (Guilford)</b>	<b>Percent (NC)</b>
<b>Accommodation and Food Services</b>	20,129	7.57%	6.88%
<b>Administrative and Support and Waste Management</b>	11,891	4.47%	4.33%
<b>Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting</b>	1,045	0.39%	0.94%
<b>Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation</b>	4,154	1.56%	1.73%
<b>Educational Service</b>	26,440	9.94%	8.78%
<b>Finance, Insurance, Real Estate and Rental and Leasing</b>	18,484	6.95%	7.04%
<b>Health Care and Social Assistance</b>	39,365	14.80%	13.75%
<b>Information</b>	3,854	1.45%	1.63%
<b>Manufacturing</b>	34,300	12.90%	11.73%
<b>Management of Companies and Enterprises</b>	454	0.17%	0.10%
<b>Other Services</b>	12,393	4.66%	4.80%
<b>Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services</b>	14,798	5.56%	7.87%
<b>Public Administration Employment</b>	7,933	2.98%	4.09%
<b>Retail Trade</b>	30,590	11.50%	11.22%
<b>Construction</b>	13,487	5.07%	7.49%
<b>Transportation and Warehousing, and Utilities Industries</b>	18,451	6.94%	5.30%
<b>Wholesale Trade</b>	8,188	3.08%	2.21%
<b>All Other Industries Employment</b>	26	0.01%	0.12%

## Income

According to the American Community Survey estimates, the median household income in Guilford County was \$63,972. Significant variation is seen across the community with the median income in Greensboro at \$54,346 and High Point at \$57,617. In the period of 2019-2023 (ACS, 5-year estimates), More than 87,000 households (40.2% of households) in Guilford County had an annual income of less than \$50,000 or 80% Area Median Income. Living at or below 80% of Area Median Income (AMI) has several implications for households, primarily relating to affordability, access to resources, and eligibility for various assistance programs. Households at or below 80% AMI are often classified as "low income" and may qualify for several federal, state, and local assistance programs, particularly in the areas of housing, nutrition, education, and healthcare. Moreover, approximately 15% of the county's residents live below the poverty line, a rate higher than both the state and national averages. Countywide, nearly one-in-six (15.22%) or 79,108 individuals were in poverty, while 21% of Children in poverty (ACS 2019-2023 5-year estimate). Poverty rates are higher in Greensboro overall at 17.55% compared to 12.42% in High Point.

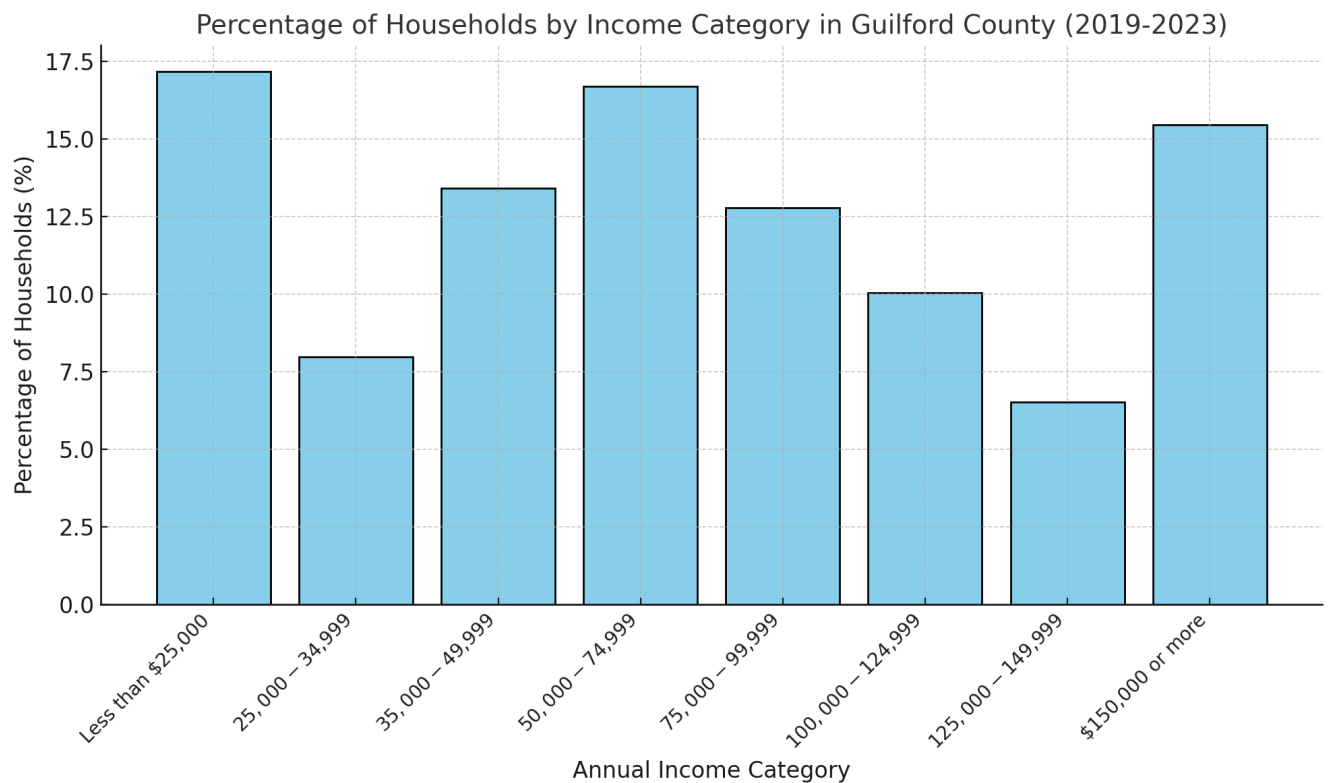


Figure 4 - Annual Income by Household (ACS 2019-2023)

The following map illustrates the median household income distribution across Guilford County by block groups. Areas with the lowest median household incomes, ranging from \$2,499 to \$25,000, are primarily concentrated in central Greensboro and parts of High Point. These regions are shown in the lightest shades of green and yellow. Conversely, the highest income areas, with median incomes exceeding \$150,000, are depicted in dark blue and are located in northern and northwestern parts of the county, including areas around Summerfield. The suburbs and rural outskirts show a mix of moderate-income levels, ranging from \$50,000 to \$100,000. This spatial income disparity highlights significant economic inequality within Guilford County, with wealthier households generally located farther from urban centers.

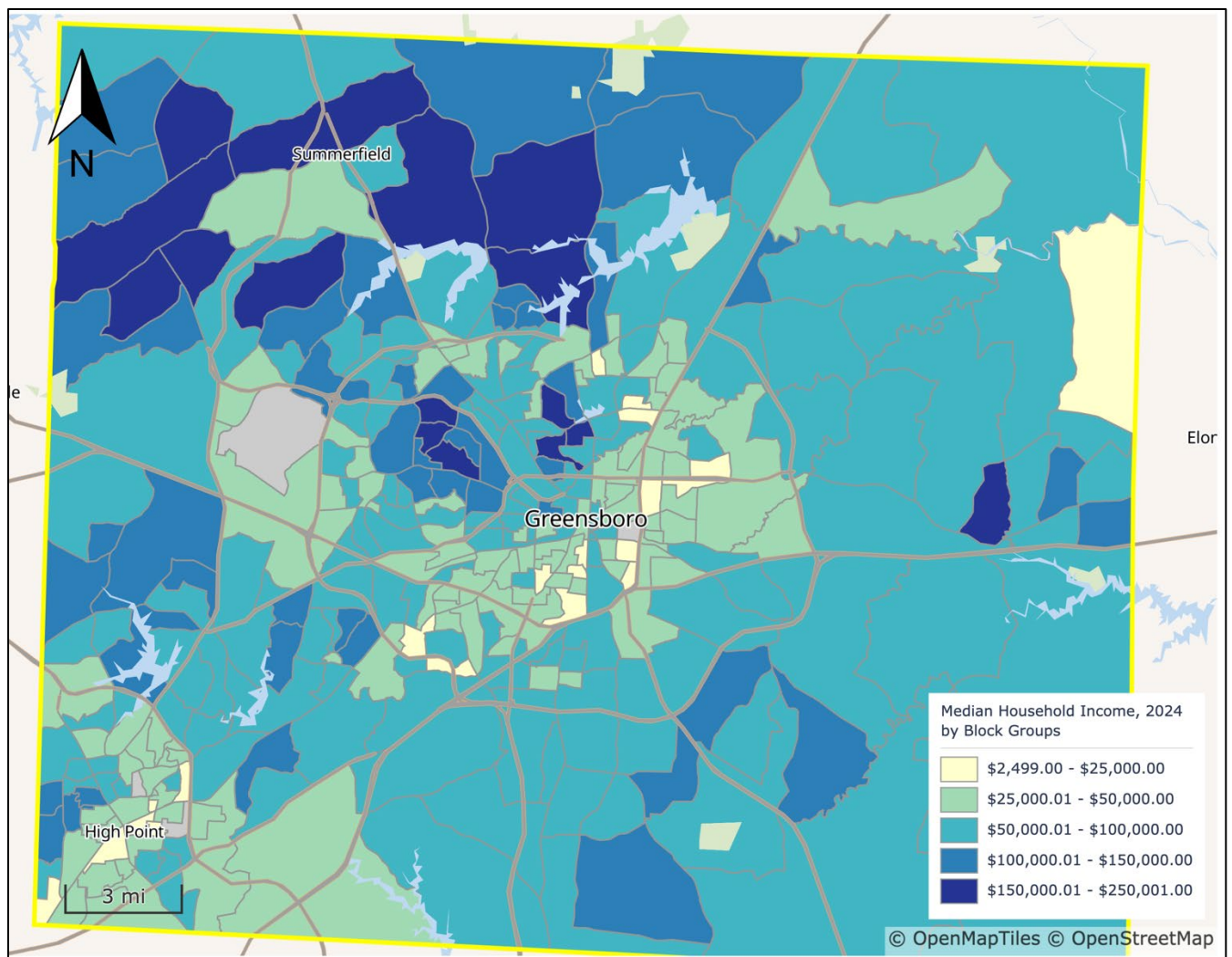


Figure 5 - Household Median Income by Block Group (ACS 2024)

## Educational Attainment

Educational attainment in Guilford County is relatively high with 88.78% of adults completing at least high school or a GED and 37.76% of adults have a higher education degree (bachelor’s, master’s, professional, or doctorate; ACS 2024). The graduation rate for Guilford County Schools (GCS) in 2023-2024 was 92.2% (National Center for Education Statistics). In 2022, 60% of high school graduates enrolled in a postsecondary institution within 12 months, which is slightly lower than peer counties.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, 59% of students who enroll in postsecondary education earn a degree or certificate within six years. The significant portion of the population without at least an associate’s degree (52%) may face socioeconomic challenges, including lower income levels and higher poverty rates, which are evident in Guilford County's child poverty rate

Table 3 –Income Distributions

INCOME	High Point		Greensboro		Guilford County		North Carolina	
Median HH Income	\$57,617		\$54,346		\$63,972		\$65,954	
Per Capita Income	\$33,133		\$34,077		\$37,104		\$37,481	
Households	44,904		121,036		215,411		4,150,501	
Less than \$10,000	2,218	4.94%	7,937	6.56%	12,282	5.70%	201,940	4.87%
\$10,000 to \$19,999	2,436	5.42%	9,961	8.23%	16,960	7.87%	329,100	7.93%
\$20,000 to \$29,999	3,557	7.92%	10,308	8.52%	17,198	7.98%	341,465	8.23%
\$30,000 to \$39,999	5,277	11.75%	10,965	9.06%	19,767	9.18%	345,277	8.32%
\$40,000 to \$49,999	3,879	8.64%	12,907	10.66%	20,427	9.48%	339,373	8.18%
\$50,000 to \$59,999	3,236	7.21%	9,119	7.53%	14,454	6.71%	299,676	7.22%
\$60,000 to \$74,999	4,109	9.15%	11,118	9.19%	18,781	8.72%	383,013	9.23%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	6,494	14.46%	15,232	12.58%	26,884	12.48%	513,337	12.37%
\$100,000 to \$124,999	4,915	10.95%	11,578	9.57%	21,201	9.84%	392,571	9.46%
\$125,000 to \$149,999	2,410	5.37%	7,083	5.85%	13,413	6.23%	280,736	6.76%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	3,154	7.02%	6,423	5.31%	14,692	6.82%	310,165	7.47%
\$200,000 or more	3,212	7.15%	8,398	6.94%	17,475	8.11%	374,192	9.02%

<sup>3</sup> See [https://dashboard.myfuturenc.org/wp-content/uploads/county-profiles/Guilford\\_County.pdf](https://dashboard.myfuturenc.org/wp-content/uploads/county-profiles/Guilford_County.pdf)

Table 4 – Educational Attainment

	High Point		Greensboro		Guilford County		North Carolina	
<b>EDUCATION</b>								
<b>Pop 25 years and over</b>	75,912		188,642		364,544		7,318,938	
<b>Less than high school</b>	9,663	12.73%	17,818	9.45%	40,901	11.22%	863,315	11.80%
<b>High school/GED</b>	17,674	23.28%	38,302	20.30%	77,312	21.21%	1,708,599	23.34%
<b>Some college</b>	13,976	18.41%	35,954	19.06%	71,526	19.62%	1,443,519	19.72%
<b>Associate's degree</b>	6,743	8.88%	17,770	9.42%	34,315	9.41%	737,004	10.07%
<b>Bachelor's degree</b>	18,179	23.95%	47,764	25.32%	84,901	23.29%	1,545,367	21.11%
<b>Master's degree</b>	6,856	9.03%	22,294	11.82%	37,911	10.40%	681,558	9.31%
<b>Professional degree</b>	1,753	2.31%	4,614	2.45%	7,740	2.12%	159,902	2.18%
<b>Doctorate degree</b>	1,048	1.38%	4,105	2.18%	7,097	1.95%	119,466	1.63%

## Affordability

The county's housing market comprises 236,460 housing units (ACS 2024 est). The homeownership rate is 60% (ACS 2019-2023). Median gross rent is estimated at \$1,063.98 (ACS 2024) with rents slightly higher in Greensboro than in High Point and median estimated values are \$215,700 (ACS 2024). According to Zillow, the average Guilford County, NC home value is \$264,784, up 2.4% over the past year and 54% in the last five year. Zillow rental data shows average rents at \$1,550 in Greensboro and \$1,475 (February 2025). Despite relatively modest median home values compared to the national average, one-in-five (19.24%) homeowners and nearly half (47.15%) of renters are currently cost burdened, spending more than 30% of income on housing-related costs (ACS 2019-2023). This suggests housing affordability is a critical issue, particularly for renters, who face higher rates of cost burden. Rising property values and rents, combined with stagnant or insufficient income growth, could exacerbate economic inequality, strain low- and moderate-income households, and create barriers to housing stability. According to the NC Housing Coalition, 708 families faced a foreclosure, and 16,342 families faced an eviction in 2023.

## Digital Inclusivity

According to the recently published *Piedmont Triad Regional Digital Inclusion Plan* (a study by Innovative Research Insights and UNC Greensboro Center for Housing and Community Studies), digital access in Guilford County is unevenly distributed, with 7.1% of households lacking a computer and 8.3% relying solely on smartphones for internet access. These numbers indicate a significant portion of the population does not have a reliable, full-function device for digital engagement. The racial and age disparities in access are stark, with 6.2% of Black residents and 14.1% of senior citizens living in households without a computer.

Broadband service availability in Guilford County is relatively high compared to other counties in North Carolina, with 99.5% of residents having access to basic broadband (25/3 Mbps) and 99.3% having access to high-speed broadband (100/20 Mbps). Additionally, 68.4% of the county has access to fiber-optic service, significantly exceeding the state average of 48.2%. Despite these high availability rates, infrastructure gaps remain in rural and low-income areas, particularly in pockets outside Greensboro and High Point, where fiber-optic service has not been deployed. 5G coverage is widespread, though some areas still rely on older 4G networks.

Affordability remains a primary barrier to broadband adoption. 22% of households in Guilford County report paying over \$125 per month for internet service, which may be prohibitive for low-income residents. This issue is compounded by discrepancies between reported broadband availability and actual service quality—40% of survey respondents reported receiving speeds below 25/3 Mbps, with 28% experiencing speeds below 10/1 Mbps, despite the county's high availability rankings. This suggests that while broadband infrastructure exists, service reliability and affordability pose challenges to full digital inclusion.

Digital literacy plays a crucial role in ensuring equitable internet use. The NC Cooperative Extension - Guilford County Center offers digital literacy training, which helps residents improve their ability to navigate online resources, apply for jobs, and conduct essential digital tasks. Survey results indicate that Guilford County residents generally report higher digital literacy than the state average, with notable confidence in using email, online banking, and video conferencing tools. However, challenges persist in protecting online privacy, applying for government services, and conducting job searches, highlighting the need for expanded digital literacy programs.

Despite significant advancements in broadband availability and digital literacy initiatives, economic and geographic disparities continue to limit equitable digital access. Households in low-income neighborhoods, senior populations, and Black communities face higher barriers to broadband adoption and device access. The county has taken steps to address these challenges through initiatives such as the Greensboro Smart Connected City project and the Technology and Data Institute's Pervasive Digital Access Project. The county has also received \$4 million in broadband grants, benefiting 523 households and 16 businesses.

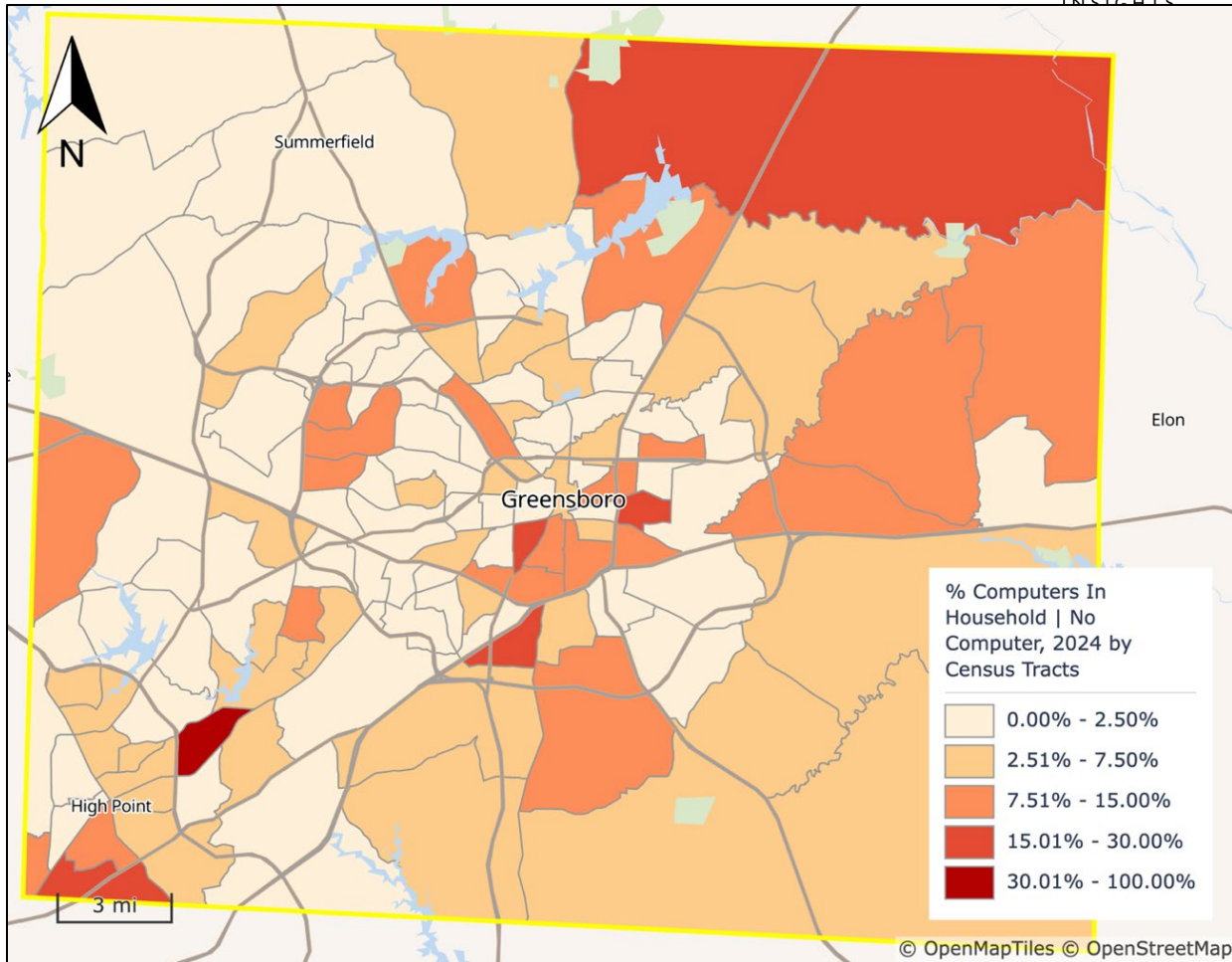


Figure 6 - Percent of Households with No Computer (ACS 2024)

## Community Health & Healthcare Resources

About 91% of residents in Guilford County have health insurance either through employer/private insurance (68%) or through Medicaid and Medicare (ACS 2019-2024). The area is served by two major hospital systems, Cone Health and High Point Regional (Atrium Health), with a total of four hospitals (HRSA 2020). Other health-care assets include 12 mental health facilities and 24 drug and alcohol treatment facilities (SAMHSA 2016) as well as 21 nursing facilities (HRSA 2020) and 5 Community Health Centers (FQHC) and Look-alikes (HRSA 2019). The County has an active Public Health Department that partners with community groups and individuals on a variety of health-related projects. It routinely creates a community input process on health issues and health action planning.<sup>4</sup> Some of the other community health resources for low-income and vulnerable populations are listed below.

<sup>4</sup> See 2023 Health Needs Assessment at <https://www.guilfordcountync.gov/our-county/health-and-human-services/health-department/health-statistics/2023-community-health-assessment>

## Medical Care

- Guilford Community Care Network: Provides primary and specialty care access for eligible uninsured residents at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level.
- Cone Health Community Health & Wellness Center: Offers primary care services for adults with or without health insurance.
- Guilford County Health Department: Provides a wide range of adult and child health services for uninsured/underinsured low-income residents.
- Mustard Seed Community Health: Offers primary care services for residents who cannot afford medical insurance.
- Triad Adult & Pediatric Medicine (TAPM): Provides adult and pediatric health services, behavioral health care, and a program for formerly incarcerated individuals.

## Mental Health and Substance Abuse

- Family Service of the Piedmont: Offers mental health and substance abuse services for adults, children, and adolescents.
- 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline and Peer Warmline: Provides crisis support.
- Guilford Residential Treatment Facility: Offers residential treatment services.
- GCSTOP: Provides substance abuse treatment and support.

While resource rich, there are yet 5 Census Tracts in Greensboro's eastside (out of 119 total Census Tracts in the county) that have been designated by HRSA as Medically Underserved Areas for having too few primary care providers, high infant mortality, high poverty, and/or a high elderly population by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA 2024).

One significant concern is the county's high incidence of chronic diseases. The prevalence of high blood pressure (34.4%) and high cholesterol (30.3%) is consistent with state and national trends (CDC BRFSS 2017), though diabetes rates in the county (11.3%) are slightly lower than the North Carolina average (12.5%) but close to the national rate (11.4%) (CDC BRFSS 2018). Nearly a quarter of residents (23.6%) self-report poor physical health and a fifth (20.4%) report poor mental health in the past 30 days (CDC BRFSS, 2013). Depression is reported among 20.8% of adults, surpassing both state (19.8%) and national (18.3%) figures, signaling potential mental health challenges in the community (CDC BRFSS 2018).

Cancer incidence in Guilford County stands at 480.5 cases per 100,000 people, exceeding both the North Carolina (475.5) and U.S. (444.4) averages, with particular concerns regarding lung, breast, and colorectal cancers (CDC 2017-2021). Additionally, the county's HIV prevalence is notably higher than the state average, at 553.9 cases per 100,000 people compared to 370.5 in North Carolina (CDC 2019). The incidence of sexually transmitted diseases, including chlamydia and gonorrhea, has remained persistent over time.

In terms of mortality, cancer and coronary heart disease remain leading causes of death, while the county also experiences substantial rates of injury-related deaths, including homicides and motor vehicle accidents (CDC 2017-202). Infant mortality remains a concern, with rates fluctuating over the past decade.

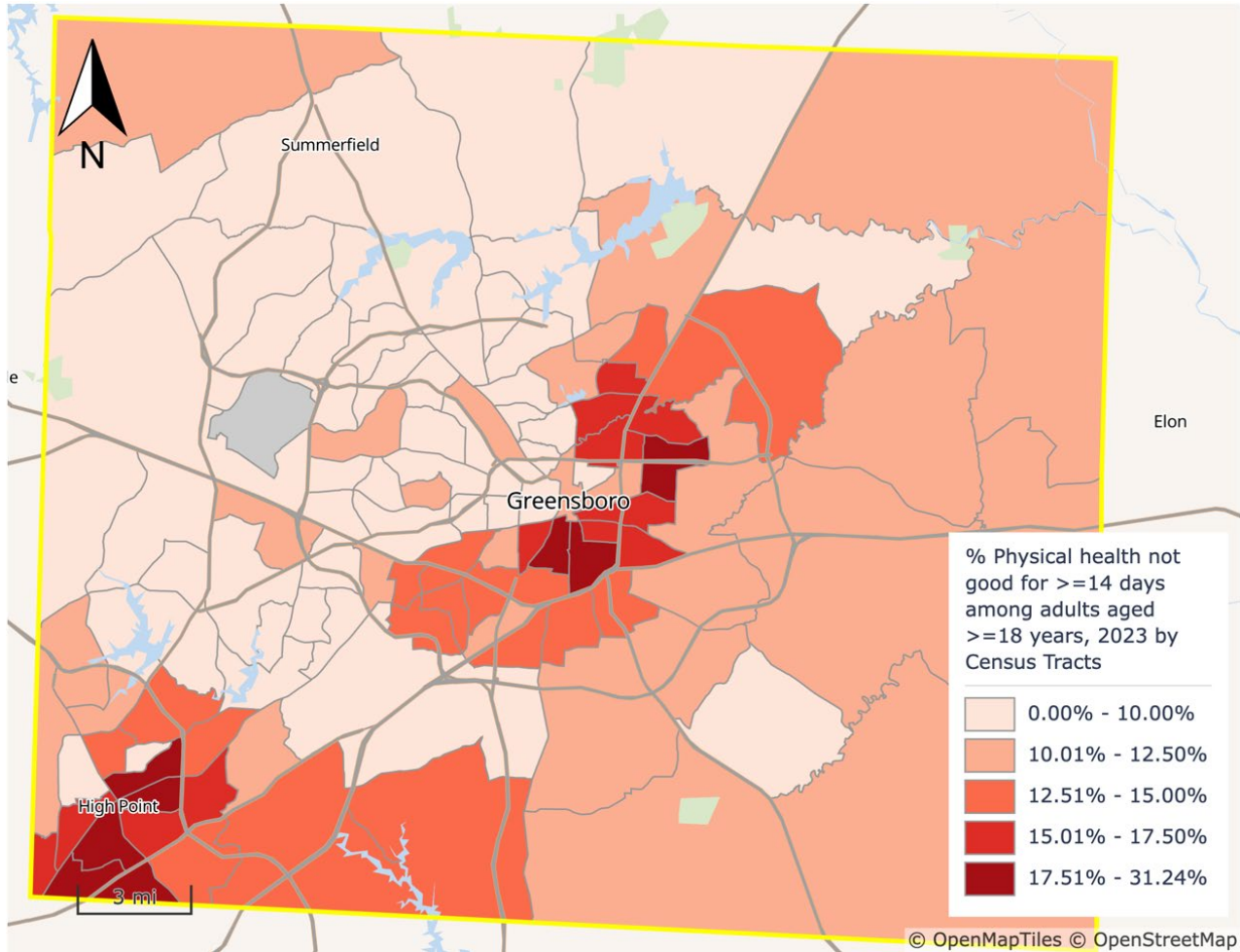


Figure 7 - Physical health not good last two weeks (CDC Places 2023)

## Review of Methods of Food Security Measurement

Food security is a multidimensional concept that encompasses the availability, access, utilization, and stability of food resources. Food hardship and insecurity are foundational issues tied to access, affordability, and availability of nutritious food. It is critical for ensuring health, well-being, and dignity in human life. Food access and food security are critical issues influencing public health, economic stability, and social equity globally. Food security encompasses reliable access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food necessary for an active and healthy life, while food access refers to the availability and affordability of food in a specific context (Keenan et al., 2001; Barrett, 2010).

Addressing food insecurity requires a multi-pronged approach involving accurate measurement tools, targeted policies, and community-based interventions. The integration of socioeconomic data with innovative methodologies can guide effective strategies to reduce food insecurity and promote health equity. Continued efforts in North Carolina, particularly Guilford County, offer valuable insights into mitigating food hardship at local and state levels.

### Definitions & Frameworks

The concept of food security and insecurity has been approached and defined through various frameworks that emphasize access, availability, utilization, and stability of food.

Food security, as defined at the 1996 World Food Summit, is achieved when "all people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life" (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 1996; Barrett, 2010). This definition emphasizes universality ("all people"), the multifaceted nature of access (physical, social, economic), and the importance of both adequacy and preferences. This definition underpins many measurement efforts but has been critiqued for its broadness and lack of operational specificity (Sumsion et al., 2023). An updated definition proposed in 2012 included the importance of sanitation, health services, and care as integral to maintaining a healthy and active life, but this revision was not universally endorsed (Gibson, 2012).

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) outlines a framework for food security that includes four dimensions: availability, access, stability, and biological utilization. Availability refers to the physical presence of food through domestic production and imports, which depend on robust infrastructure, storage, and distribution systems (Gibson, 2012). Access encompasses both economic and physical means of acquiring food, whether through purchasing, growing, or social welfare systems. Stability recognizes the risks posed by sudden shocks, such as droughts or economic instability, which threaten consistent

access to food. Biological utilization, a critical but often underexplored dimension, involves the body's ability to absorb nutrients effectively, which depends on factors such as health, sanitation, and nutritional knowledge (FAO, 2001; Gibson, 2012).

In the United States, food security definitions vary by agency. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) frames food insecurity as uncertain or limited access to adequate food, often influenced by socioeconomic factors. Similarly, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) emphasizes physical and economic access to sufficient food to meet dietary needs for a healthy and productive life (USAID, 1992). These conditions disproportionately affect marginalized groups, such as low-income families and racial minorities, and have been exacerbated during crises like the COVID-19 pandemic (Reimold et al., 2021).

Rural and urban contexts further refine the understanding of food insecurity. For instance, rural food insecurity in North Carolina is often linked to "food deserts," areas where residents lack proximity to fresh and healthy food sources, compounded by transportation and economic barriers (Mulrooney et al., 2022). Conversely, urban food insecurity is influenced by neighborhood disparities in food retail distribution, the prevalence of unhealthy food outlets, and the lack of transportation to access healthy food alternatives.

The multidimensionality of food insecurity is also highlighted in studies focusing on vulnerable populations. For instance, food insecurity among African American mothers is influenced by psychosocial stressors, household composition, and intergenerational support, indicating the interplay between social determinants and individual circumstances (Laraia et al., 2009). Food security among children emphasizes individual-level experiences and nutritional impacts. Tools like the Child Food Security Survey Module measure children's direct experiences of food insecurity, which include its psychological and physical consequences (Connell et al., 2004).

## Previous Research on Food Insecurity in North Carolina

North Carolina currently ranks 16th in the U.S. for food insecurity, with approximately 10.9% of its population, including one in six children, experiencing food insecurity (NCDHHS, 2023). Previous research has shown North Carolina consistently ranking among states with higher rates of food insecurity, with approximately 13.8% of households experiencing food insecurity in the early 2000's (Laraia et al., 2009). At that time, research by Berner and O'Brien (2004) documented shifts in food assistance patterns in North Carolina, with increasing reliance on emergency food providers (EFPs) despite declining food stamp (SNAP/EBT) participation. This trend raised concerns about the sustainability and equity of food security systems dependent on nonprofit organizations. The USDA's food desert designations identify low-income areas lacking proximity to grocery stores, which

exacerbate food hardship. Between 2010 and 2019, the number of food deserts in North Carolina increased from 349 to 353, affecting over 1.6 million residents (Casey, 2022).

Rural areas exhibit higher food insecurity levels compared to urban areas, influenced by limited access to supermarkets and healthy food options. This is exacerbated by the closure of small food retailers and the concentration of larger stores in suburban areas, often inaccessible to individuals relying on non-vehicular transportation (Mulrooney et al., 2022). Nearly 47% of farmworker households in North Carolina experience food insecurity, with coping strategies including reducing food variety and skipping meals. Households with children accessed programs like WIC, while others relied on food pantries or hunted for food (Quandt et al., 2004)

## Previous Research on Food Insecurity in Guilford County

Within the state, Guilford County has been identified as facing high levels of food insecurity and limited access to healthy food options. According to data from Feeding America (2022) 74,080 residents, or 13.7% of the population, experiencing food insecurity. Of those affected, an estimated 65% were below the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) threshold of 200% of the federal poverty level, indicating substantial need for public assistance. However, 35% of the food-insecure population fell above the SNAP eligibility threshold, limiting their access to federal aid despite ongoing challenges. The average cost of a meal in Guilford County was \$4.18, contributing to an annual food budget shortfall of \$58,157,000. This data underscores the critical need for both expanded public programs and community-based initiatives to address the persistent economic and nutritional gaps faced by residents.<sup>5</sup>

Research studies such as the Lifetime Eating and Physical Activity Practices (LEAP) Report underscore that residents in Guilford County often encounter barriers to accessing fresh and affordable food, including transportation challenges and the affordability of nutritious options (LeGreco et al., 2020). The LEAP initiative documented significant disparities in access to food resources, emphasizing the need for systemic solutions that address both individual and community-level determinants of food insecurity, such as social determinants of health and economic disparities. Systemic barriers such as inadequate public transportation and racial inequities mirror the broader trends highlighted in the study (Mukunzi, 2023). Low-income neighborhoods within Greensboro and High Point are disproportionately affected, despite the proximity of agricultural resources in the state.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://map.feedingamerica.org/county/2022/overall/north-carolina/county/guilford>

## Socioeconomic & Environmental Determinants

The determinants of food insecurity are multifaceted, encompassing socioeconomic, environmental, and policy dimensions. The *Self-Sufficiency Standard* for Guilford County highlights the growing gap between household incomes and the rising costs of essentials such as food, housing, and healthcare (Pearce, 2020). Geographic disparities in food access are evident, with underserved areas disproportionately affecting people of color and low-income households (Almalki, 2023). Socioeconomic studies in Guilford County emphasize disparities in fresh vegetable spending, with lower consumption in food desert areas despite farm proximity (Miao et al. 2020). Agent-based modeling suggests demand-side factors drive these disparities.

## Impacts of Food Insecurity

Food insecurity has significant implications for public health. Studies indicate strong correlations between food insecurity and adverse health outcomes, including obesity, hypertension, and diabetes (Almalki, 2023).

Studies such as those by Gonzalez-Nahm et al. (2022) revealed associations between maternal food security and dietary intake during pregnancy. Findings highlighted disparities in vegetable consumption and increased reliance on processed meats among food-insecure groups. Such nutritional deficiencies underscore the broader health implications of food insecurity, particularly among vulnerable populations. Guilford County's food environment—characterized by the unequal distribution of healthy and unhealthy food outlets—further perpetuates these disparities (LeGreco et al., 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated food insecurity, as explored by Reimold et al. (2021). Financial constraints and health risks while accessing food were primary barriers. Many households in the state turned to charitable food systems or relied on federal assistance programs like SNAP to mitigate food hardships, demonstrating the critical role of public policy and community interventions in addressing food insecurity during crises (Reimold et al., 2021).

## Policy & Community Interventions

To address food insecurity, North Carolina has implemented initiatives such as the NCDHHS State Action Plan for Nutrition Security, aiming to reduce the food insecurity rate to 10.0% by 2024 (NCDHHS, 2023). Strategies include increasing enrollment in nutrition assistance programs like WIC and SNAP, enhancing healthcare-nutrition linkages, and promoting breastfeeding.

Community-based initiatives, such as the LEAP program in Guilford County, focus on engaging stakeholders to identify barriers to healthy eating and develop sustainable

solutions (LeGreco et al., 2020). Community gardening projects have shown promise in mitigating food insecurity and improving dietary behaviors among vulnerable populations. For instance, Guilford County programs leveraging participatory approaches have noted increased vegetable consumption and strengthened family relationships as by-products of these interventions (Carney et al., 2012). These findings suggest that while food insecurity remains a pressing issue in the area, targeted, community-led efforts can provide measurable benefits, emphasizing the need for sustained investment in local food systems and collaborative initiatives.

Yet, policies are needed to address systemic inequities, such as lack of access to transportation in rural areas, which exacerbates food insecurity despite nearby agricultural production (Mukunzi, 2023). Mukunzi's advocates for state and local policies that address the following:

- Integrating socioeconomic data into food aid allocation models to ensure equitable distribution.
- Strengthening rural food networks through investments in transportation and storage infrastructure.
- Encouraging community-based solutions, such as local food hubs, to improve access in both urban and rural settings.
- Aligning food aid policies with other social safety net programs, such as housing and healthcare, to address the root causes of food insecurity.

## Methodological Approaches to Assessing Food Insecurity

Effective food security measurement informs policy and program development. Reliable indicators help identify vulnerable populations, guide resource allocation, and monitor progress toward incremental goals to address hunger, nutrition, population health, and wellbeing. Various methodologies have been used to examine food hardship, food deserts, and experiences of hunger or food insecurity. These methodologies include survey-based tools and participatory approaches that focus on different dimensions of food insecurity, such as access, availability, and the psychological and behavioral experiences of food scarcity. Innovative methods, including GIS-based analyses and logistic regression models, have been utilized to predict food hardship and identify high-risk areas.

### Assessing Food Deserts through Geospatial Analysis

Spatial analyses add depth to understanding food deserts by integrating socioeconomic data such as income, vehicle access, and educational attainment. USDA food desert classifications are commonly used, defining areas based on income and proximity to grocery stores (less than 1 mile in urban areas, 10 miles in rural). The binary nature of USDA

classifications, updated only every 3–5 years, limits their granularity. To address this, researchers developed logistic regression models incorporating 18 census tract variables to predict food deserts and calculate a food hardship index (Casey, 2022).

The food hardship index predicts whether a given census tract will be classified as a food desert, while also generating a food hardship index. This index scores census tracts on a continuum from 0 to 1, indicating the severity of food access challenges. The model enables the identification of areas at risk of becoming food deserts, offering a more flexible and forward-looking tool compared to the USDA's binary designations. The application of the model has highlighted persistent inequities in food access. For instance, it revealed that while food deserts constitute 16% of North Carolina census tracts, a disproportionate share of residents in these areas are people of color (47%) compared to non-food desert areas (28%) (Casey, 2022).

Geospatial tools like GIS are instrumental in mapping food deserts and assessing access to fresh and nutritious foods. Mulrooney and Wooten (2021) emphasized the role of accurate geospatial data in analyzing food environments. Positional and attribute accuracy were identified as critical for quality control, while outdated data posed significant challenges. Rural areas in North Carolina, for instance, exhibited higher levels of food insecurity compared to urban regions, influenced by limited access to supermarkets and reliance on non-vehicular transportation (Mulrooney et al., 2022).

GIS mapping in Guilford County has revealed spatial patterns linking food deserts to chronic health conditions, demonstrating the utility of spatial analyses in public health planning (Almalki, 2023). Analysis of 177,000 residential parcels in Guilford County revealed disparities in drive times to grocery stores and supermarkets, with rural areas being particularly underserved. This inequity aligns with state-level trends indicating higher food insecurity rates among minority and low-income populations (Mulrooney et al., 2021)

## Assessing Food Security through Survey Measurement

Multiple instruments have been developed to measure food security at the individual or household level, including the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES), the U.S. Household Food Security Survey Module (US HFSSM), the Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement Questionnaire (CPS-FSS) and the Household Food Insecurity Access Scale (HFIAS).

### *FAO Food Insecurity Experience Scale*

The Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) is a global standard for measuring food insecurity, developed by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) as part of the "Voices of the Hungry" project. Comparing food security measures globally requires consistent metrics. The FIES' calibration against a global reference scale facilitates international

comparisons, addressing a critical need in United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) monitoring. It uses eight standardized, dichotomous questions to assess the severity of food insecurity at both the household and individual levels. This method, validated by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), leverages the Rasch model<sup>6</sup> for statistical reliability, ensuring comparability across countries and populations (Cafiero et al., 2018).

The FIES provides prevalence estimates for moderate and severe food insecurity and is incorporated into Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) monitoring, specifically for Indicator 2.1.2 on the prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity (FAO, 2015). The FIES is adaptable for varying reference periods (30 days or 12 months). The FIES' strength lies in its scalability, cross-cultural adaptability, and alignment with international standards (FIES Basics, FIES Module, FIES Implementation). However, its implementation requires careful translation and cultural adaptation to ensure validity. The tool's reliance on self-reported data introduces potential biases, but statistical techniques mitigate these issues.

#### *US Household Food Security Survey Module*

The Household Food Security Survey Module (HFSSM), developed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), is another critical tool. This 18-item survey assesses a continuum of food security to very low food security through behavioral and experiential questions at the household level (USDA Economic Research Service, 2022). The HFSSM has several key features. Structurally, the module is organized in stages, beginning with initial screening questions followed by more detailed inquiries for households that indicate potential food insecurity (USDA Economic Research Service, 2012). The module includes questions about experiences such as worrying about food running out, reducing meal sizes, or skipping meals altogether. It is available in multiple versions, including the full 18-item module, a 10-item adult scale, and a 6-item short form for situations requiring brevity (Nutrition Incentive Hub, n.d.; PMC, n.d.). It is widely used in population-based surveys, offering insights into the social and economic determinants of food insecurity (Center for Evidence-Based Child Welfare, n.d.; USDA Economic Research Service, 2012).

The HFSSM has been validated for both adult and child populations and allows for subgroup analyses. Its three-stage design includes screeners to reduce respondent burden while maintaining reliability. Specialized adaptations of the HFSSM include the Self-Administered Food Security Survey for children aged 12 and older. This module employs simpler language and focuses on experiences relevant to adolescents, validated for internal reliability. This tool facilitates direct assessment of children's experiences with food insecurity and its

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<sup>6</sup> Rasch models are a psychometric tool that provides a mathematical framework for analyzing categorical data, such as responses to questions on assessments or questionnaires. The model shows the probability of an individual giving a correct response to a test item based on the interaction between the person's ability and the item's difficulty. See <https://www.statisticshowto.com/rasch-model/>

impacts on their physical and mental health. Validation is ongoing to ensure applicability across regions (Connell et al., 2004).

Scoring of responses categorizes households into four levels of food security: high food security, marginal food security, low food security, and very low food security (Nutrition Incentive Hub, n.d.; USDA Economic Research Service, 2012). The survey can be completed in approximately four minutes and is suitable for self-administration or administration by an interviewer (Center for Evidence-Based Child Welfare, n.d.). Its applications are broad, being utilized in national surveys, research studies, and program evaluations to measure food security and its impact on different populations (Brown County Food Security Report, 2022). While the HFSSM, used extensively in the U.S., captures household-level data but has been criticized for its lack of specificity regarding individual experiences (Connell et al., 2004; Holland et al., 2011).

#### *Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement Questionnaire*

The Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement Questionnaire (CPS-FSS) gathers detailed household-level data on food purchasing and consumption patterns. This includes expenditure tracking and sources of food acquisition, which aid in understanding resource constraints and adaptive strategies of households facing food insecurity. The USDA's Food Security Measures employ the Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement (CPS-FSS) using a Rasch measurement model to classify households based on food insecurity severity. Enhancements such as incorporating frequency-of-occurrence information and probabilistic classification were assessed to reduce bias and improve measurement accuracy. However, these adjustments showed minimal gains in precision and highlighted challenges in communicating complex statistical models to policymakers and the public (Nord, 2012).

#### *Household Food Insecurity Access Scale*

The Household Food Insecurity Access Scale (HFIAS) is a diagnostic tool developed to measure food insecurity through subjective assessments of household food access. It consists of nine questions aimed at understanding the frequency and severity of food insecurity over the past four weeks (Coates et al., 2007). The questions address issues such as concerns about food availability, the necessity of reducing food variety or portion sizes, and the experience of hunger or going without food entirely due to a lack of resources. Responses are categorized as "yes" or "no," with follow-up frequency measures (rarely, sometimes, often) for affirmative answers. Responses are used to calculate a numerical score ranging from 0 to 27, reflecting the severity of food insecurity. Alternatively, households can be classified into one of four categories: food secure, mildly food insecure, moderately food insecure, or severely food insecure. The utility of the HFIAS lies in its global

applicability, particularly in resource-constrained settings, as it captures nuanced experiences of food insecurity beyond economic dimensions.

In the context of homeless populations, as demonstrated in a study comparing the HFIAS with the U.S. Food Security Survey Module (US FSSM), the HFIAS was more sensitive in detecting varying degrees of food insecurity, including mild and moderate levels (Holland et al., 2011). It also better accounted for non-monetary barriers to food access, which are common in marginalized populations reliant on shelters or food programs. Despite taking slightly longer to administer, the HFIAS was preferred by participants for its relevance and comprehensiveness, reinforcing its suitability for assessing food insecurity in diverse and vulnerable groups.

The HFIAS is intentionally designed to be straightforward, user-friendly, and adaptable to diverse cultural contexts, making it an effective tool for assessing household food insecurity across varied populations. Its applications include estimating the prevalence of food insecurity, tracking changes over time, and evaluating the effectiveness of food security program. By focusing specifically on the access dimension of food insecurity, the HFIAS provides critical insights for organizations and policymakers aiming to enhance food security at the household level.

## Assessing Food Systems

The assessment of food systems spans diverse approaches, emphasizing policy frameworks, consumer behaviors, sustainability practices, and system scalability.

### Policy and Governance Frameworks

Policy mechanisms play a crucial role in shaping local food systems by addressing production, distribution, and sustainability goals. Feenstra (1997) highlights the role of community-driven initiatives in establishing localized, sustainable food economies that prioritize ecological practices and social equity. Similarly, Crivits and Paredis (2013) propose a practice-based framework to understand food systems as evolving structures influenced by individual and collective routines, indicating the need for governance that bridges the gap between niche sustainability practices and mainstream systems. Other studies, such as the work of Luna-Reyes et al. (2024), reveal the importance of municipal policies in promoting food accessibility and sustainability within localized contexts.

Policy-driven food system assessments often emphasize the role of local governance in promoting sustainable and equitable systems. Examples include efforts to embed food-related initiatives within broader municipal or regional strategic plans, such as the International City/County Management Association's survey on food policies in local

governments. These assessments examine land use, local food infrastructure, and accessibility to healthy foods.

## Consumer Motivations and Behavior

Consumer attitudes toward local food systems are influenced by a mix of egoistic and altruistic motivations. Birch et al. (2018) emphasize the interplay of personal health, food safety (egoistic), and environmental consciousness, as well as ethical identity (altruistic), in driving local food purchases. Rainbolt et al. (2012) apply the Theory of Planned Behavior to identify determinants like social norms and perceived behavioral control that shape consumer preferences for local, organic, and fair-trade food. Consumer preferences for local food systems often balance altruistic motivations (e.g., environmental concerns) and egoistic motivations (e.g., health benefits). Wu et al. (2021) underscore the critical role of consumer trust in navigating complex food systems, focusing on the importance of traceability, certifications, and transparent labeling to reassure consumers about food quality and safety. This trust is integral in bridging the information gap between producers and consumers in globalized food systems. Studies such as the Consumer Food Insights Survey examine shifts in purchasing behaviors, particularly during disruptions like COVID-19. These assessments underline the economic and social implications of consumer choices, including their impact on local businesses and supply chains.

## Sustainability, Localization, and Scaling

Sustainability underpins many assessments of food systems. Sustainability remains central to food system discourse, with localized models posited as more environmentally and economically sustainable. The concept of "foodsheds," as discussed by Feenstra (1997), provides a geographic and socio-cultural lens to evaluate how local food systems can meet environmental and community health priorities. Feagan (2007) also explores "foodsheds" as a socio-geographic framework that aligns agricultural practices with community needs. The scalability of local food systems, explored by Mount (2011), suggests that while smaller-scale initiatives connect producers and consumers meaningfully, challenges arise when expanding these systems to mid-sized farms without compromising their sustainability ethos. Mount highlights the potential for mid-sized farms to enhance accessibility and provide value, but notes the regulatory and logistical hurdles involved in scaling up. The transition from small-scale local food systems to broader, scalable models introduces tensions in maintaining their identity and sustainability. The NC State Extension highlights that local systems may not always reduce environmental impacts due to factors like transportation inefficiencies and production scale.

## Measurement and Survey Approaches in Food Systems

Food system assessments rely heavily on survey methodologies to gather quantitative and qualitative data. Instruments like the USDA's Local Food Marketing Practices Survey focus on direct-to-consumer sales and community-supported agriculture (CSA) participation, offering detailed insights into local market dynamics. Similarly, Knox County's survey incorporated diverse demographic indicators and targeted outreach to underserved populations, ensuring inclusivity in data collection.

Effective surveys address community-specific indicators such as food access, nutrition security, and socio-economic factors. For instance, the UP Food Exchange Policy Committee (2020) Survey evaluated residents' food sources, barriers to access, and local food aspirations. Indicators of food insecurity, such as trade-offs between food and other essential expenses, further deepen understanding.

Community-focused approaches involve engaging residents in identifying barriers, strengths, and aspirations for their local food systems. Initiatives like the Butte Community Food Systems Survey use participatory methods to gather feedback on food access, cultural relevance, and sustainability priorities. This aligns with frameworks that aim to empower communities through food sovereignty and localized decision-making.

Combining qualitative insights (e.g., focus groups and open-ended survey questions) with structured quantitative tools enhances the robustness of food system evaluations. For example, the First Foods & Food Systems Working Group CTUIR Food Systems Survey integrates participant narratives about cultural food practices with numerical data on awareness and accessibility. Similarly, participatory mapping and open-ended survey questions help contextualize quantitative findings within the lived experiences of respondents.

## Implications of Methodological Considerations

Food insecurity remains a pressing issue with profound implications for public health, economic stability, and social equity. The multidimensional nature of food insecurity, encompassing factors such as access, availability, and biological utilization, underscores the need for holistic approaches to addressing this challenge. In North Carolina, and specifically Guilford County, persistent disparities in food access reflect broader socioeconomic inequities. Community-based programs and state-level initiatives have shown promise in mitigating these challenges, but long-term solutions require systemic changes.

In assessing food systems, measurement tools, ranging from geospatial analyses to standardized survey instruments, play an essential role in identifying at-risk populations and informing effective policies. These methodologies provide the data needed to guide

interventions and track progress toward food security goals. Participatory methods further provide comprehensive insights into barriers and opportunities, empowering communities and guiding policy.

However, bridging the gap between policy and practice requires sustained investment in local food systems, infrastructure, and collaborative community efforts. Policy frameworks must balance ecological and social imperatives, consumer preferences highlight the need for transparency and ethical alignment, and scalability efforts must navigate logistical and structural barriers. These themes converge on the shared goal of creating resilient, equitable, and sustainable food systems tailored to community-specific needs.

By integrating innovative measurement methods with targeted interventions, policymakers and stakeholders can address the root causes of food insecurity, ensuring equitable access to nutritious food and fostering healthier, more resilient communities.

## Food Production, Affordability, & Assistance

Access to nutritious, affordable food is a critical determinant of individual and community well-being. This section provides an analysis of secondary data sources related to food production, food costs, food security, and food assistance in Guilford County. Understanding these factors is essential for assessing the availability, affordability, and accessibility of food resources across the region.

The data presented in this section offers insights into household food expenditures, agricultural trends, food manufacturing, food retail, and food assistance programs. Household food costs highlight disparities in spending patterns, illustrating how economic and geographic factors influence access to nutritious food. Trends in local agriculture and food manufacturing provide a snapshot of the county's food production landscape, demonstrating both the strengths and challenges of the local food economy. Additionally, the analysis of food retail businesses and community gardens underscores the importance of food distribution and accessibility at the neighborhood level.

Food security remains a pressing concern in Guilford County, as evidenced by data on food deserts, public assistance utilization, and calls for emergency food aid. Socioeconomic disparities are reflected in rates of food insecurity, participation in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, and community needs assessments, highlighting systemic barriers to achieving food equity.

By examining these interrelated components, this section aims to inform policy recommendations, community interventions, and strategic initiatives designed to enhance food access, improve nutritional outcomes, and strengthen local food systems. The findings presented serve as a foundation for collaborative efforts among policymakers, nonprofit organizations, and community stakeholders to ensure that all residents of Guilford County have equitable access to healthy and affordable food.

## Household Food Costs in Guilford County

Table 5 - Household Food Expenditures (Consumer Expenditure Estimates 2022)

Items	High Point	Greensboro	Guilford County
<b>Total Food Cost</b>	\$7,030	\$6,969	\$7,193
<b>Total Food at Home Cost</b>	\$6,337	\$6,295	\$6,501
<b>Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs</b>	\$1,315	\$1,311	\$1,350
<b>Cereals and bakery products</b>	\$793	\$790	\$816
<b>Dairy products</b>	\$608	\$603	\$625
<b>Fruits and vegetables</b>	\$1,254	\$1,242	\$1,280
• <b>Fresh fruits</b>	\$464	\$461	\$475
• <b>Fresh vegetables</b>	\$409	\$403	\$413
• <b>Frozen fruits and fruit juices</b>	\$25	\$25	\$26
• <b>Processed fruits</b>	\$162	\$161	\$168
• <b>Processed vegetables</b>	\$219	\$217	\$224
<b>Other food at home</b>	\$2,367	\$2,349	\$2,431
<b>Frozen prepared foods</b>	\$198	\$202	\$203
<b>Nonalcoholic beverages</b>	\$648	\$636	\$660
<b>Bottled water</b>	\$100	\$99	\$103

The Consumer Expenditure Estimates dataset was created by SimplyAnalytics using small area estimation techniques.<sup>7</sup> This data estimates the local household expenditures on common household categories. The aggregate food expenditure for Guilford County for all households reached \$1.6 billion in 2022, with \$1.4 billion spent on food at home. Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs accounted for \$299.8 million, and fruits and vegetables totaled \$284.2 million reinforcing the high demand for these items.

Guilford County household expenditure on food was \$7,193 on average in 2022 or about 11%-13% of median household incomes. This figure was slightly higher than Greensboro and High Point households indicating that families in suburban areas are spending more on average than counterparts in the cities. Lower spending in urban areas may also indicate financial constraints or limited access to affordable, high-quality food.

The map (next page) depicts the average household spending on food in 2022 by census tracts. The data is represented in a gradient, with darker shades of blue indicating higher food expenditure and lighter shades representing lower expenditure. The central areas of Greensboro, as well as certain suburban regions, exhibit moderate spending levels, primarily in the \$4,000-\$7,000 range. Meanwhile, the more rural or peripheral areas,

<sup>7</sup> SimplyAnalytics (2024). SimplyAnalytics Consumer Expenditure Estimates Data 2022.

particularly to the northwest and southeast of Greensboro, show lower food expenditures, often below \$3,000. Food security efforts in these regions should consider addressing potential barriers, such as income disparities and access to fresh produce. Programs promoting affordable food options and nutritional education could help bridge these gaps, ensuring that all households meet their dietary needs. In contrast, select tracts, especially in suburban and affluent zones, indicate significantly higher expenditures, exceeding \$8,000 annually. This distribution likely reflects socioeconomic disparities and varying access to food resources across the region.

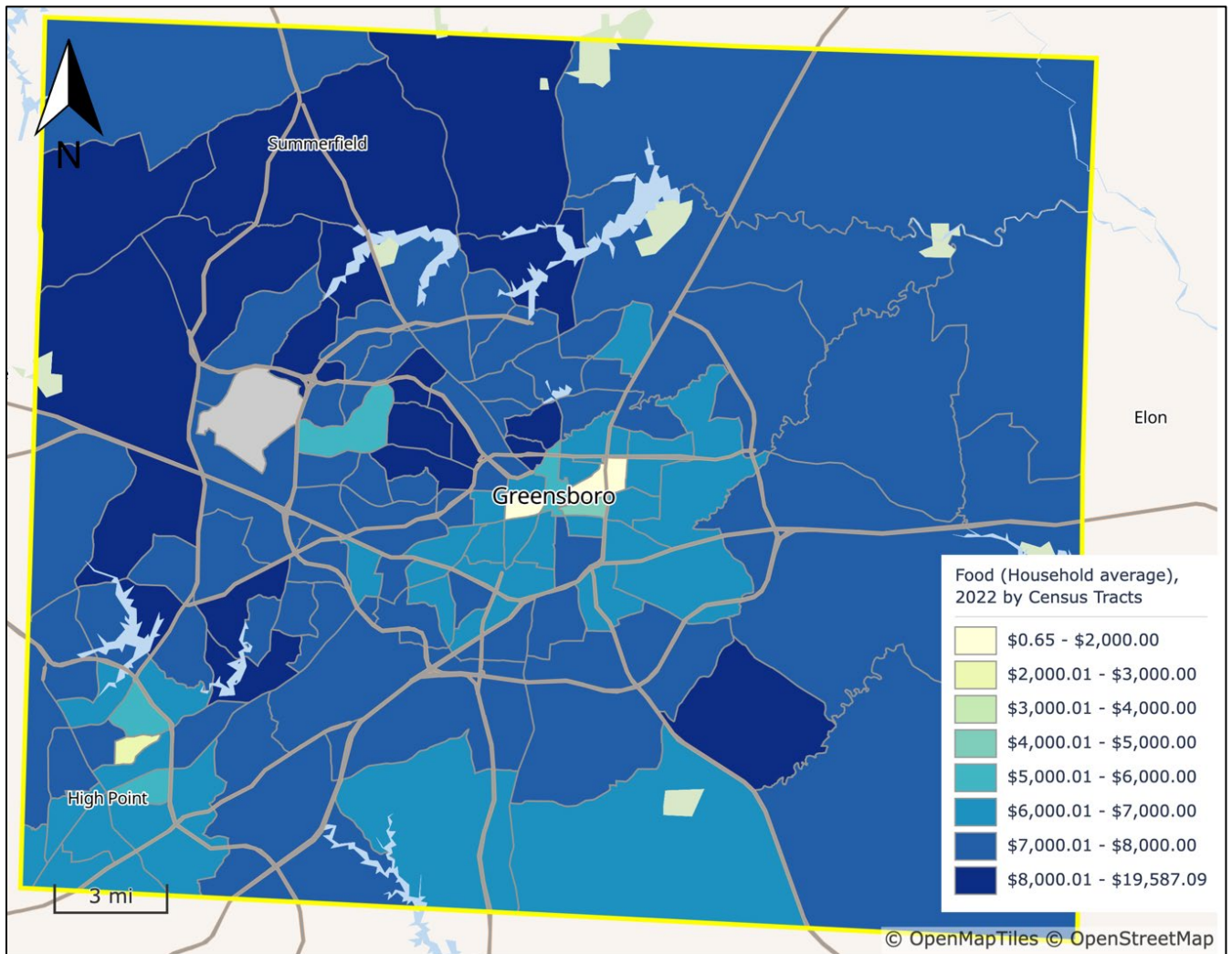


Figure 8 –Household Food Expenditures by Census Tract (Consumer Expenditure 2022)

## Farms, Gardens, and Food Manufacturing

### Local Farms

The 2017 *Guilford County Local Farms and Food Profile* provided a snapshot of agricultural trends in Guilford County using data from the 2017 and 2012 USDA Census.<sup>8</sup> The report highlighted a decline in farmland, with total farm acreage decreasing by 6% to 76,352 acres and the number of farms dropping by 5% to 854. The average farm size was 89 acres. The total value of agricultural products sold was \$52.2 million reflecting an overall decline. The county had 487 female producers and 887 male producers, with an average principal producer age of 59.8 years. Additionally, 135 farmers were identified as new or beginning farmers. The data reflected shifting agricultural trends, with declines in traditional sectors and a rise in direct marketing and niche farming practices.

By 2022, Guilford County boasted a diverse agricultural sector including 775 farms and 94,798 acres of farmland.<sup>9</sup> Crops account for 68% of production and livestock, poultry, and related products making up the remaining 32%. Field crops such as soybeans, wheat, and corn are cultivated, with soybeans covering 8,446 acres, wheat 4,657 acres, and corn 3,712 acres. Forage crops, including hay and haylage, occupy 12,603 acres, supporting the county's livestock industry.

Agriculture significantly contributes to the local economy with \$68,164,000 in market value of products sold.<sup>10</sup> Among the \$68 million in agricultural products are nursery, greenhouse, floriculture, and sod products, with sales totaling over \$25 million, ranking it third in the state for this category. In the livestock sector, poultry and eggs are prominent, generating approximately \$11.6 million in sales. The county also supports cattle and dairy farming, with cattle and calves numbering around 9,980 and milk sales contributing about \$2.9 million.

The table that follows provides data on the characteristics of farms in Guilford County. Overall, Guilford County's agriculture is characterized by a blend of traditional and modern farms, but most are small (62% are under 50 acres) and generate less than \$5,000 annually (53%). In terms of size, the majority of farms (392) fall into the 10 to 49-acre range, followed by 196 farms in the 50 to 179-acre range. Smaller farms, between 1 to 9 acres, account for

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<sup>8</sup> North Carolina State Extension (2017). *Guilford County local farms and food profile*. North Carolina Digital Collections. <https://digital.ncdcr.gov/Documents/Detail/guilford-county-local-farms-and-food-profile/3689868?item=4667911>

<sup>9</sup> US Department of Agriculture (2022). *County Summary Highlights*. Retrieved from: [https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2022/Full\\_Report/Volume\\_1\\_Chapter\\_2\\_County\\_Level/North\\_Carolina/st37\\_2\\_001\\_001.pdf](https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2022/Full_Report/Volume_1_Chapter_2_County_Level/North_Carolina/st37_2_001_001.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> US Department of Agriculture (2022). *County Summary Highlights*. Retrieved from: [https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2022/Full\\_Report/Volume\\_1\\_Chapter\\_2\\_County\\_Level/North\\_Carolina/st37\\_2\\_001\\_001.pdf](https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2022/Full_Report/Volume_1_Chapter_2_County_Level/North_Carolina/st37_2_001_001.pdf)

87, while larger farms are less common, with 54 farms in the 180 to 499-acre range, 29 in the 500 to 999-acre range, and only 17 exceeding 1,000 acres.

When considering value of sales, 311 farms generate less than \$2,500 annually. Sales between \$2,500 and \$4,999 account for 98 farms, and 89 farms fall into the \$5,000 to \$9,999 category. Farms earning between \$10,000 and \$24,999 total 97, while 44 farms have sales between \$25,000 and \$49,999. Those earning between \$50,000 and \$99,999 comprise 54 farms, with 82 farms generating \$100,000 or more in annual sales. This distribution highlights the predominance of smaller-scale farms and the diverse economic contributions across size categories.

Table 6 – Farm Characteristics Guilford County (US Department of Agriculture 2022)

<b>Farm Characteristics</b>	<b>Number</b>
<b>Farms by size:</b>	
<b>1 to 9 acres.</b>	87
<b>10 to 49 acres</b>	392
<b>50 to 179 acres</b>	196
<b>180 to 499 acres</b>	54
<b>500 to 999 acres</b>	29
<b>1,000 acres or more</b>	17
<b>Farms by value of sales:</b>	
<b>Less than \$2,500</b>	311
<b>\$2,500 to \$4,999</b>	98
<b>\$5,000 to \$9,999</b>	89
<b>\$10,000 to \$24,999</b>	97
<b>\$25,000 to \$49,999</b>	44
<b>\$50,000 to \$99,999</b>	54
<b>\$100,000 or more</b>	82

## Community Gardens

Data compiled by interns from UNCG provided garden area measurements and other information providing a comprehensive overview of community gardens in Guilford County.<sup>11</sup> The compiled list was surveyed, with 69% contacted, as part of the project. The total garden area assessed is 9.12 acres, with an average garden size of 0.19 acres.

Among the surveyed gardens, 70.5% are classified as active (74 gardens), while 12.4% are of unknown status (13 gardens). The remaining 17.1% fall under other classifications, including starting, inactive, pending, or in progress (18 gardens). The harvest recipients and the types of produce grown are self-reported by garden contacts, with common crops documented based on the highest-yielding or most frequently grown produce.

Community gardens are often affiliated with organizations that help sustain them. The dataset shows that faith-based organizations support the largest share, accounting for 24.9% (63 gardens). Donation-based gardens make up 16.2% (41 gardens), followed by neighborhood gardens at 9.5% (24 gardens), community organizations at 9.1% (23 gardens), and allotment (open plot) gardens at 8.7% (22 gardens). Other categories exist but with lower representation. Geographically, the highest concentration of gardens is in zip codes 27406, 27260, and 27410, each hosting 11 gardens (~11.3%). Zip code 27401 follows with 10 gardens (~10.3%), while 27405 and 27403 each contain 9 gardens (~9.3%).

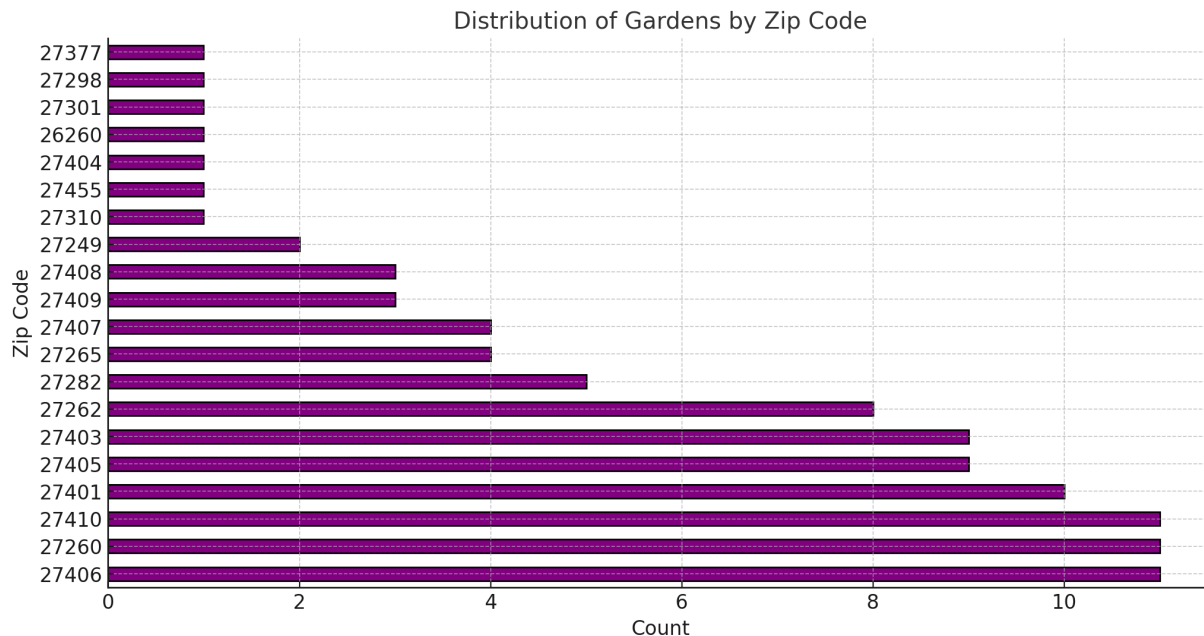


Figure 9 - Distribution of Community Gardens by Zip Code

<sup>11</sup> See [https://myguilford-my.sharepoint.com/:x/g/person/amckim\\_guilfordcountync\\_gov/ETy3YmHbtn1InLPVOzYdIYMBK2qkOAzSufK5Pfx5bc6xZA?e=GQOXCA](https://myguilford-my.sharepoint.com/:x/g/person/amckim_guilfordcountync_gov/ETy3YmHbtn1InLPVOzYdIYMBK2qkOAzSufK5Pfx5bc6xZA?e=GQOXCA)

## Food Manufacturing

In 2015 the *North Carolina Food Manufacturing Task Force* identified food manufacturing as a major economic opportunity for the state.<sup>12</sup> With a strong agricultural base and well-developed infrastructure, North Carolina was well-positioned to become a national leader in food processing. The Task Force recommended establishing a statewide food manufacturing network, improving business recruitment strategies, and expanding entrepreneurial support through policy reforms and infrastructure investments.

Today, according to the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina, the food and beverage manufacturing sector has become a significant contributor to the state's economy, employing over 70,000 individuals and ranking as the fourth largest in the United States.<sup>13</sup> The state's central location on the East Coast provides access to more than 180 million consumers within a day's drive, making it an ideal hub for distribution. North Carolina's pro-business environment is highlighted by a low corporate tax rate of 2.25%, which is set to decrease to 0% by 2030. The presence of leading research institutions, such as North Carolina State University's Food Innovation Lab, supports companies in product development and innovation. These factors, combined with a skilled workforce, make North Carolina an attractive destination for food and beverage manufacturing companies.

Food manufacturing in Guilford County, North Carolina, forms an integral part of the state's robust and diverse industry. The county benefits from its strategic location, which supports transportation and logistics, and from North Carolina's large manufacturing workforce. Prominent food manufacturing companies in Guilford County include Mother Murphy's Laboratories, Inc., specializing in flavor manufacturing for a variety of industries; Chandler Foods, Inc., engaged in food processing; Curtis Packing Company, a food manufacturing business; K.L.B. Enterprises, Inc., involved in contract manufacturing; and Homeland Creamery, LLC, a Julian-based producer of premium dairy products. Additionally, smaller companies such as Hops and Nuts, Drakes Fresh Pasta Co, KimBees, Inc., Kyookz, and LC America, Inc. contribute to the county's food manufacturing landscape. This dynamic industry reflects the county's potential for growth and its strategic importance within North Carolina's food manufacturing economy.<sup>14</sup>

The table that follows illustrates the distribution of employment, payroll, and establishments within the food manufacturing sector in Guilford County compared to the state of North Carolina. Guilford County hosts a total of 1,405 food manufacturing

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<sup>12</sup> 2015 North Carolina Food Manufacturing Task Force Final Report  
<https://webservices.ncleg.gov/ViewDocSiteFile/29569>

<sup>13</sup> Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina. (2025). *Food & beverage manufacturing in North Carolina*. Retrieved from <https://edpnc.com/industries/food-bev/>

<sup>14</sup> See <https://www.manufacturednc.com/search?naics=311&industries=11&counties=41>

employees across 37 establishments. The annual payroll for food manufacturing in Guilford County is \$86.1 million, which is approximately 3.1% of North Carolina’s total of \$2.75 billion. Within the specialty segment of fruit and vegetable preserving, Guilford County employs 164 workers (3.6% of the state total) in four establishments, with an annual payroll of \$8.05 million. The "Other Food Manufacturing" category employs 446 individuals in Guilford County, spread across eight establishments, with an annual payroll of \$26.25 million, accounting for nearly 9.6% of the state total for this segment.

These data suggest that while Guilford County contributes significantly to North Carolina’s food manufacturing industry, it plays a relatively modest role in terms of employment and payroll compared to the statewide scale. However, the presence of specialized segments like fruit and vegetable preserving could indicate targeted growth opportunities in niche markets within the county. This information could guide policymakers and industry leaders in strategic planning to bolster local economic development within this sector especially for tackling gaps in local food systems.

Table 7 - Food Manufacturing (NAICS 311)

<b>Attribute</b>	<b>Guilford County</b>	<b>North Carolina</b>
<b>Food Manufacturing Total Mid-March Employees</b>	1,405	58,976
<b>Food Manufacturing Total First Quarter Payroll (\$1,000)</b>	\$20,396	\$643,030
<b>Food Manufacturing Total Annual Payroll (\$1,000)</b>	\$86,106	\$2,745,733
<b>Food Manufacturing Total Number of Establishments</b>	37	751
<b>Fruit and Vegetable Preserving and Specialty Food Manufacturing Total Mid-March Employees</b>	164	4,612
<b>Fruit and Vegetable Preserving and Specialty Food Manufacturing Total First Quarter Payroll (\$1,000)</b>	\$1,825	\$58,897
<b>Fruit and Vegetable Preserving and Specialty Food Manufacturing Total Annual Payroll (\$1,000)</b>	\$8,046	\$263,548
<b>Fruit and Vegetable Preserving and Specialty Food Manufacturing Total Number of Establishments</b>	4	42
<b>Other Food Manufacturing Total Mid-March Employees</b>	446	5,174
<b>Other Food Manufacturing Total First Quarter Payroll (\$1,000)</b>	\$5,976	\$70,247
<b>Other Food Manufacturing Total Annual Payroll (\$1,000)</b>	\$26,247	\$272,912
<b>Other Food Manufacturing Total Number of Establishments</b>	8	84

## Food Retail

In North Carolina, the supermarkets and grocery stores industry is projected to grow, with Guilford County being one of the key contributors to this expansion.<sup>15</sup> The food retail sector significantly contributes to Guilford County's economy. The County has a dynamic food retail environment that caters to a wide range of consumer preferences. The county is home to a variety of supermarkets, specialty grocers, farmers markets, and local food initiatives, reflecting its rich agricultural heritage and commitment to supporting local producers.

The table below provides a breakdown of food retail businesses in Guilford County by business sector and their distribution across Greensboro, High Point, and other parts of the County. There are 285 supermarkets and other grocery stores. The majority located in Greensboro (172), followed by High Point (80) and other areas (33). Convenience stores are the second largest sector with 175 establishments with 62% located in Greensboro (n=109).

Specialty food stores, meat markets, and fish and seafood markets have fewer establishments, reflecting their more niche market presence. Baked goods stores and confectionery/nut stores are also moderately represented.

Table 8 - Retail Food Businesses (2022)

Primary NAICS	Business Sector	Greensboro	High Point	Other Parts of County	Total
445110	Supermarkets and Grocery	172	80	33	285
445131	Convenience Stores	109	31	35	175
445230	Specialty Food Stores	3	2	1	460
445240	Meat Markets	21	4	3	28
445250	Fish and Seafood Markets	3	2	0	5
445291	Baked Goods Stores	135	43	46	33
445292	Confectionery and Nut Stores	24	5	5	34
445298	All Other Specialty Food Stores	73	32	8	113

The data in the following table shows the employment, payroll, and establishment distribution in the food retail sector of Guilford County, NC, in comparison to the state of North Carolina. Guilford County's food and beverage stores employed 6,317 workers in 2022, representing approximately 5% of the state's total of 124,384 employees. The sector's annual payroll in the county was \$134.0 million, about 5.1% of the state's \$2.6 billion, spread across 235 establishments. Within specialty food stores, Guilford County had 121 employees in 25 establishments, accounting for a relatively small portion of the state's

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.ibisworld.com/us/industry/north-carolina/supermarkets-grocery-stores/14044/>

3,092 employees and 563 establishments. The payroll for specialty food stores in Guilford County was \$2.4 million annually, which is only 3% of the state total for this segment. The data suggests that Guilford County’s food retail sector, while modestly sized relative to the statewide industry, is a key local employer. Specialty food stores remain a niche segment in the county with potential for growth, as indicated by their smaller workforce and payroll relative to the broader food retail category.

Table 9 - Food Retail Employees and Payroll (2022)

<b>Attribute</b>	<b>Guilford County</b>	<b>North Carolina</b>
<b>Food and Beverage Stores Total Mid-March Employees</b>	6,317	124,384
<b>Food and Beverage Stores Total First Quarter Payroll (\$1,000)</b>	\$33,990	\$662,984
<b>Food and Beverage Stores Total Annual Payroll (\$1,000)</b>	\$134,014	\$2,612,413
<b>Food and Beverage Stores Total Number of Establishments</b>	235	4,144
<b>Specialty Food Stores Total Mid-March Employees</b>	121	3,092
<b>Specialty Food Stores Total First Quarter Payroll (\$1,000)</b>	\$501	\$15,552
<b>Specialty Food Stores Total Annual Payroll (\$1,000)</b>	\$2,365	\$79,905
<b>Specialty Food Stores Total Number of Establishments</b>	25	563
<b>Other Specialty Food Stores Total Mid-March Employees</b>	41	1,364
<b>Other Specialty Food Stores Total First Quarter Payroll (\$1,000)</b>	\$189	\$6,434
<b>Other Specialty Food Stores Total Annual Payroll (\$1,000)</b>	\$1,043	\$30,534
<b>Other Specialty Food Stores Total Number of Establishments</b>	10	252
<b>All Other Specialty Food Stores Total Mid-March Employees</b>	36	757
<b>All Other Specialty Food Stores Total First Quarter Payroll (\$1,000)</b>	\$182	\$3,429
<b>All Other Specialty Food Stores Total Annual Payroll (\$1,000)</b>	\$866	\$16,604
<b># All Other Specialty Food Stores Total Number of Establishments</b>	7	144

## Primary Food Sources

As part of a 2023 Guilford County Needs Assessment,<sup>16</sup> developed by the National Institute of Minority Economic Development for the Welfare Reform Liaison Project (WRLP) and the Guilford County Department of Social Services (GC-DHHS-DSS), survey respondents indicated utilizing a range of retail establishments and non-profits for their food needs:

- Primary food sources: Food Lion (72.8% of respondents) and Walmart (68.8%) were the most common sources of food, followed by Harris Teeter (29.0%) and Aldi's (24.1%).
- Smaller stores: A significant portion of respondents relied on smaller convenience stores like Dollar General (13.0%), Family Dollar (13.0%), and the Dollar Store (12.3%).
- Alternative sources: Only 8.3% of respondents used food banks or food pantries, and 1.2% relied on soup kitchens, highlighting limited utilization of charitable food programs.

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<sup>16</sup> <https://theinstitutenc.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/WRLP-DSS-Sociodemographic-Context-Guilford-County-12-21-2022.pdf>

## Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Utilization

About 16.24% of families in Guilford County receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, a rate higher than the state average (ACS 2019-2023). Most (65%) of food-insecure individuals in Guilford County were eligible for SNAP according to Feeding America's Map the Meal Gap project.

Across the county the data shows a steady increase in SNAP participation rates from 2010 to a peak in 2016, followed by a gradual decline until 2020, after which the rates rise again. The data suggests that SNAP participation trends align with broader economic fluctuations, including increased demand for food assistance during economic downturns like the mid-2010s and the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020-2021. High Point consistently exhibits higher participation rates compared to Greensboro and Guilford County, highlighting localized economic challenges in the area.

The geographic distribution of public assistance and SNAP benefits follows that of race/ethnic segregation and concentrations of poverty in Guilford County. The darkest-shaded block groups in the map below, indicate the highest percentages of households receiving SNAP. They follow patterns of food insecurity and poverty and are clustered in Greensboro's central and southern neighborhoods as well as around High Point in the southwest. Meanwhile, lighter-shaded areas with lower participation rates appear mostly in the northern suburbs.

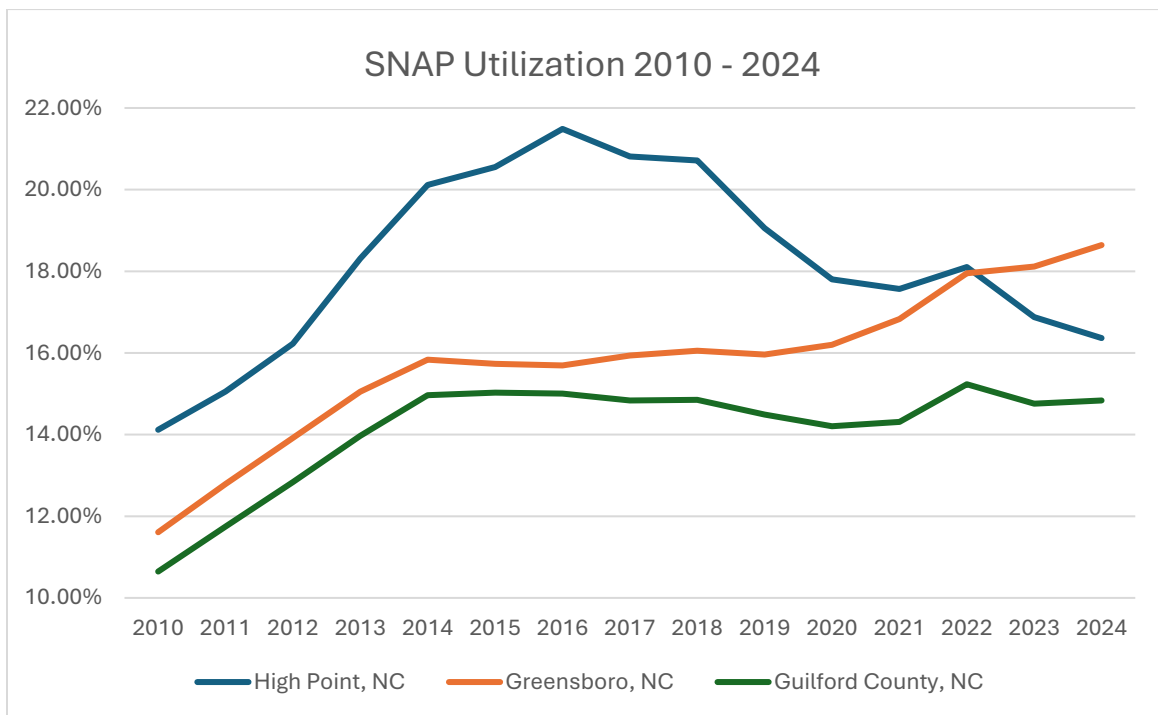


Figure 10 – SNAP Utilization 2010-2024 Guilford County

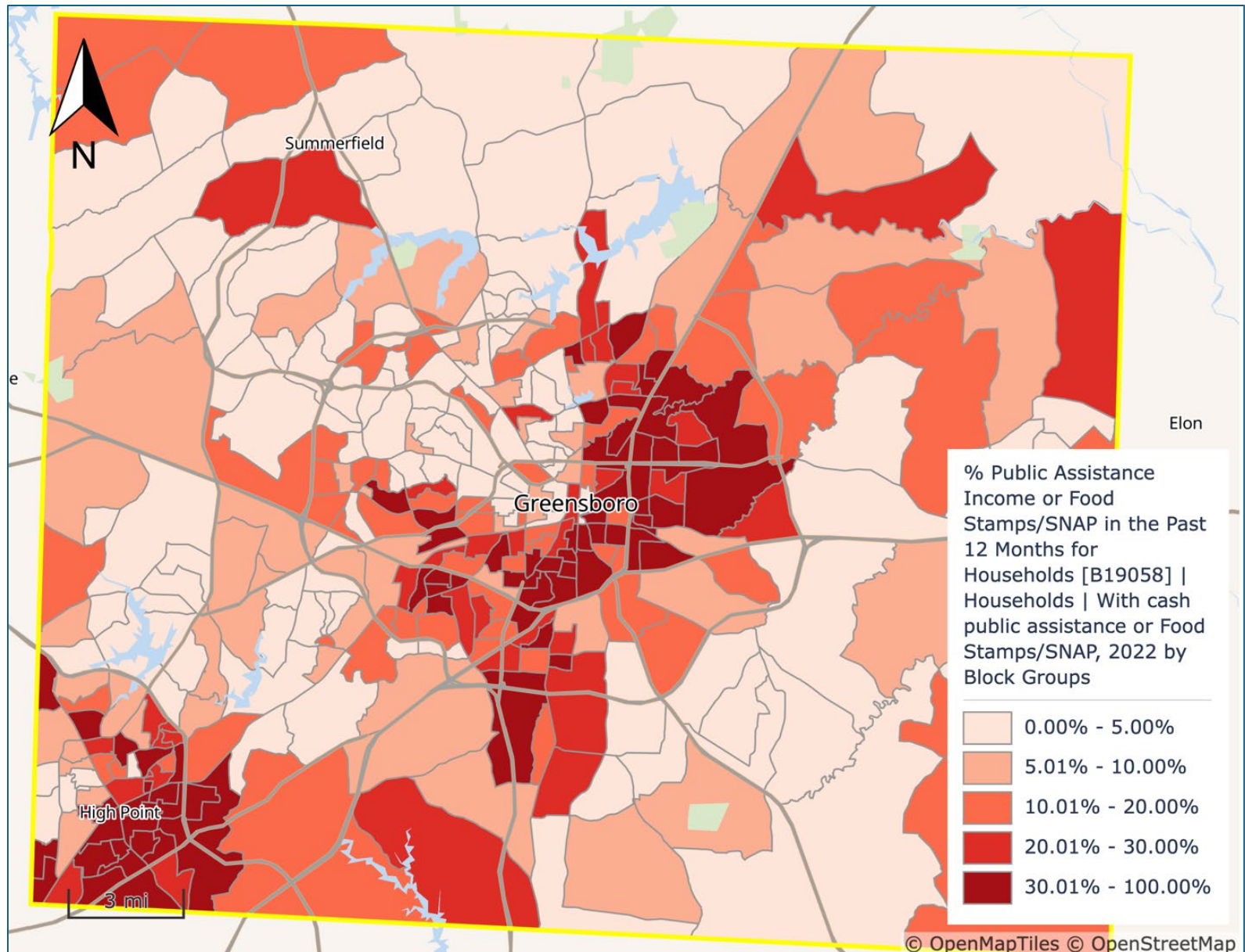


Figure 11 - SNAP Participation by Block Group (ACS 2022)

## SNAP Assistance by Race & Ethnicity

Households headed by Black or African American individuals have the highest rates of SNAP receipt across all geographic regions. In High Point, 30.57% of Black households receive SNAP benefits, compared to 27.67% in Greensboro, and 26.27% in Guilford County overall. This is significantly higher than the state average of 25.16%. The trend suggests that Black households in urban areas within Guilford County rely more heavily on food assistance programs than the statewide average.

American Indian and Alaska Native households have the highest SNAP participation rate in the dataset. In Greensboro, 49.03% of these households receive SNAP benefits, compared to 41.73% in High Point, 39.38% in Guilford County, and 27.84% statewide. These figures indicate that Indigenous communities are disproportionately affected by food insecurity.

Among Asian households, the SNAP participation rate varies. High Point has a 20.36% participation rate, significantly higher than 9.06% in Greensboro and 11.70% in Guilford County. The statewide rate for Asian households is 5.50%, meaning Asian households in High Point are utilizing food assistance programs at a much higher rate than their counterparts elsewhere. This may be related to the high proportion of Asian refugees that have been resettled in High Point.

Hispanic and Latino households also show a high level of SNAP reliance. In Greensboro, 23.22% of Hispanic households receive SNAP benefits, higher than the 21.87% county rate and significantly above the 15.51% state average. In High Point, 18.22% of Hispanic households receive food assistance, a lower percentage than in Greensboro but still well above the overall White household rate.

Households with a White householder alone have the lowest SNAP participation rates among major racial groups, with 8.67% in High Point, 6.73% in Greensboro, and 6.44% in Guilford County, compared to 7.95% statewide. Notably, non-Hispanic White households have even lower rates of participation, at 7.70% in High Point and 6.11% in Greensboro, demonstrating a clear racial disparity in economic vulnerability.

This analysis underscores the structural inequalities that drive public assistance reliance and suggests a need for targeted policy interventions that address economic disparities in food security across racial and ethnic categories.

Table 10 – Characteristics of Households Receiving Public Assistance (ACS 2022)

Attribute	High Point	Greensboro	Guilford County	North Carolina
<b>White alone receiving SNAP</b>	2030	3775	7575	224525
<b>% White Alone receiving SNAP</b>	8.67	6.73	6.44	7.95
<b>Black alone receiving SNAP</b>	4444	14143	19075	217466
<b>% Black Alone receiving SNAP</b>	30.57	27.67	26.27	25.16
<b>American Indian Alone receiving SNAP</b>	53	151	204	10961
<b>% American Indian Alone receiving SNAP</b>	41.73	49.03	39.38	27.84
<b>Asian Alone receiving SNAP</b>	536	421	987	5871
<b>% Asian Alone receiving SNAP</b>	20.36	9.06	11.7	5.5
<b>Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander receiving SNAP</b>	0	18	18	456
<b>% Hawaiian or Pacific Islander receiving SNAP</b>	0	45	45	17.85
<b>Some Other Race Alone receiving SNAP</b>	204	779	1258	18145
<b>% Some Other Race Alone receiving SNAP</b>	18.65	23.66	23.55	16.18
<b>Two or More Races receiving SNAP</b>	448	1064	1657	25644
<b>% Two or More Races receiving SNAP</b>	19.94	22.74	20.15	16.39
<b>White Alone, Not Hispanic receiving SNAP</b>	1725	3249	6569	210895
<b>% White Alone, Not Hispanic receiving SNAP</b>	7.7	6.11	5.82	7.73
<b>Hispanic or Latino receiving SNAP</b>	597	1703	2751	42657
<b>% Hispanic or Latino receiving SNAP</b>	18.22	23.22	21.87	15.51

### SNAP Assistance for Children Under 18

The percentage of children under 18 years old living in households receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI), cash public assistance, or Food Stamps/SNAP varies across locations in the county as well. Greensboro has the highest proportion of children in public assistance households at 37.83%, followed by High Point at 32.39%, and Guilford County at 31.00%. This is significantly higher than the statewide rate of 26.54%. The data suggests that children in urban areas within Guilford County are more likely to live in households that are in poverty and reliant on public assistance compared to the state average.

Among children in public assistance households, those in family households make up the majority. Greensboro again leads with 37.76% of children in family households receiving public assistance, compared to 31.27% in High Point and 30.72% in Guilford County overall. However, among family structures, married-couple families have the lowest percentage of public assistance recipients, with 11.01% in High Point, 12.54% in Greensboro, and 11.20% in Guilford County. This aligns with state-level trends, where married-couple families have a public assistance rate of 9.87%.

Table 11 – Characteristics of Households Receiving Public Assistance (ACS 2022)

<b>Attribute</b>	<b>High Point</b>	<b>Greensboro</b>	<b>Guilford County</b>	<b>North Carolina</b>
<b>Population under 18 years in households</b>	25680	65428	118069	2280141
<b>Living in household with public assistance</b>	8318	24750	36602	605126
<b>% Living in household with public assistance</b>	32.39	37.83	31	26.54
<b>Living in family household with assistance</b>	8030	24704	36268	598269
<b>% Living in family household with assistance</b>	31.27	37.76	30.72	26.24
<b>Living in household with public assistance - In married-couple family</b>	2827	8207	13228	224977
<b>% Living in household with public assistance - In married-couple family</b>	11.01	12.54	11.2	9.87
<b>Living in household with public assistance - In male householder, no spouse present</b>	390	1905	2655	53242
<b>% Living in household with public assistance - In male householder, no spouse present</b>	1.52	2.91	2.25	2.34
<b>Living in household with public assistance - In female householder, no spouse present</b>	4813	14592	20385	320050
<b>% Living in household with public assistance - In female householder, no spouse present</b>	18.74	22.3	17.27	14.04
<b>Living in household with public assistance - In nonfamily households</b>	288	46	334	6857
<b>% Living in household with public assistance - In nonfamily households</b>	1.12	0.07	0.28	0.3
<b>Living in household with no assistance</b>	17362	40678	81467	1675015
<b>% Living in household with no assistance</b>	67.61	62.17	69	73.46
<b>Households with public assistance</b>	7974	21564	32420	529578
<b>% Households with public assistance</b>	18.1	17.95	15.23	12.9
<b>Households with no public assistance</b>	36075	98573	180405	3575654
<b>% Households with no public assistance</b>	81.9	82.05	84.77	87.1
<b>Median income - Households with public assistance</b>	24640	29592	29076	26749
<b>Median income - Households with no public assistance</b>	69314	62014	70544	72844

In contrast, households headed by a female householder with no spouse present exhibit significantly higher rates of reliance on public assistance. 22.30% of children in Greensboro in such households receive benefits, followed by 18.74% in High Point and 17.27% in Guilford County. The statewide rate is lower at 14.04%. Male-headed single-parent households have a much lower public assistance rate, ranging from 1.52% in High Point to 2.91% in Greensboro.

### Experiences with SNAP in Guilford County

Findings from the 2023 Guilford County Needs Assessment Report,<sup>17</sup> which included an assessment of SNAP, showed that 60% of respondents found registering for SNAP and WIC somewhat to extremely easy, with over 50% receiving approval within a week. No significant differences in ease of SNAP/WIC registration were observed across social categories like age, educational attainment, disability status, race/ethnicity, or immigrant status. Participants in the project, which included DSS staff, non-profits, and SNAP recipients, recommended addressing eligibility gaps in SNAP requirements. They suggested expanding income thresholds to include the working poor, college students, seniors, refugees, and other food-insecure groups, particularly those who narrowly exceed current income limits but still face significant food hardships. Additionally, expanding the range of eligible foods and goods, such as fresh produce, diapers, and baby wipes, along with implementing free delivery or providing transportation assistance, would improve access for vulnerable populations. Improvements to the application process were also mentioned, including streamlining through online and mobile platforms, offering real-time updates, reducing delays in card delivery, and ensuring better communication with applicants through bilingual staff and accessible customer support.

Customer service enhancements were also recommended by study participants, with a focus on training staff to be more empathetic and responsive, reducing wait times, and improving phone availability. To better meet the needs of food-insecure households, the report suggests increasing the dollar amount of benefits distributed and adjusting them for inflation, with more frequent disbursements to help families manage their resources effectively. Lastly, greater awareness of SNAP and WIC programs was cited. This could be achieved through increased outreach efforts, community engagement, and targeted advertising on social media and other platforms.

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<sup>17</sup> <https://theinstitutenc.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/WRLP-DSS-Sociodemographic-Context-Guilford-County-12-21-2022.pdf>

## SNAP Retail Locations

The analysis of SNAP retail locations in Guilford County reveals significant variations in the distribution of store types across High Point, Greensboro, and other areas of the county.

Supermarkets, which generally provide a full selection of fresh produce, meats, and staple foods, have 28 locations in Greensboro, 8 in High Point, and 10 in other parts of the county. The relatively low number of supermarkets in High Point, despite its population size, may indicate that many residents rely on smaller grocery stores or convenience stores for their food needs.

Grocery stores, which typically offer a more diverse selection of fresh and packaged foods, are less common, with 34 locations in Greensboro, 14 in High Point, and only 1 in other parts of the county. This limited distribution suggests that residents outside of the major cities may have fewer grocery store options for using their SNAP benefits, potentially contributing to food deserts in rural or suburban areas.

Super stores such as Walmart and large retailers that accept SNAP benefits are most prevalent in Greensboro, with 23 locations, compared to 5 in High Point and 3 in other parts of the county. The higher concentration of super stores in Greensboro suggests that residents have greater access to large retailers that often offer lower prices and bulk purchasing options.

Convenience stores make up the largest category of SNAP-authorized retailers, with 151 locations in Greensboro, 56 in High Point, and 26 in other parts of the county. However, they carry the least inventory of fresh fruits and vegetables and are generally higher cost than other food retail. The second-largest category is "Other" stores, which includes specialty food shops, pharmacies, or other retail establishments that accept SNAP benefits. Greensboro has 80 such locations, followed by 29 in High Point and 21 in other areas.

Overall, the data highlights a high concentration of convenience stores and smaller food retailers, particularly in urban areas, while more traditional grocery outlets and supermarkets are less evenly distributed across the county. This suggests potential disparities in access to nutritious and affordable food, particularly in non-urban parts of Guilford County. Addressing these gaps in food access could be an important consideration for local policymakers and organizations working to improve food security and nutrition for SNAP recipients.

Table 12 - SNAP Retail Locations in Guilford County (USDA 2023)

Store Type	High Point	Greensboro	Other Parts Guilford	Total
Convenience Store	56	151	26	233
Other	29	80	21	130
Grocery Store	14	34	1	49
Supermarket	8	28	10	46
Super Store	5	23	3	31
Specialty Store	2	3	0	5
Farmers and Markets	2	6	4	12

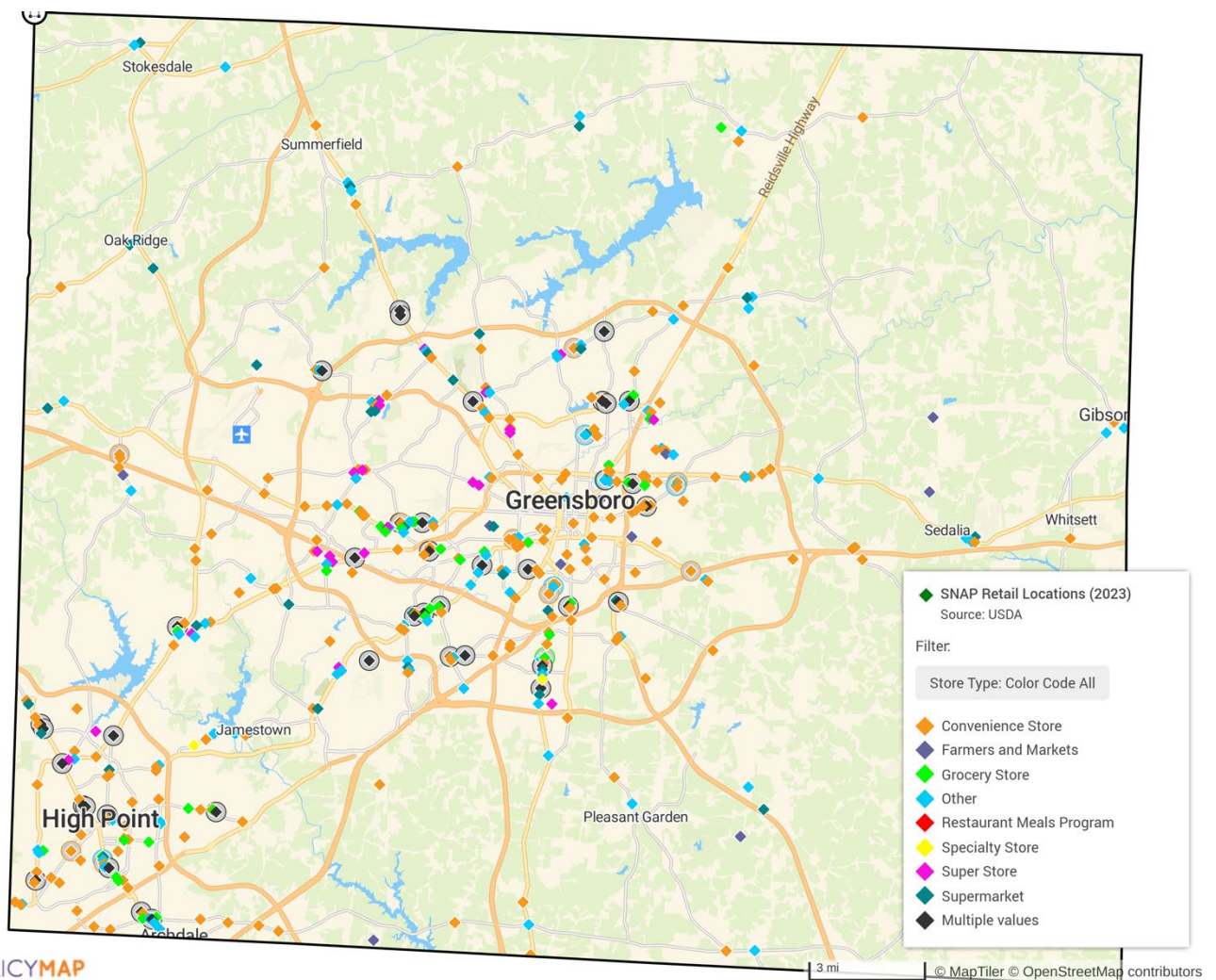


Figure 12 - SNAP Retail Locations (USDA 2023)

## Secondary Food Security & Food Access Data

Food Security and Food Access are closely related but distinct concepts. Food security refers to having reliable and consistent access to enough nutritious food to lead an active, healthy life. It encompasses aspects of availability, affordability, and stability over time. On the other hand, food access focuses specifically on the physical and economic ability of individuals or communities to obtain sufficient, nutritious food. While food security is a broader measure that includes stability and utilization, food access highlights the practical and immediate challenges people face in obtaining healthy food options.

According to *County Health Rankings*<sup>18</sup> 13.7% of Guilford County's population lacked adequate access to food, with the rate among children notably higher at 23.3%. In 2022, about 68% of food-insecure children in Guilford County qualified for free or reduced-price school meals, living in households earning less than 185% of the NSLP poverty threshold. These figures, published by Feeding America's Map the Meal Gap project, reflect the USDA's definition of food insecurity as limited or uncertain access to nutritionally adequate food.

The issue of food insecurity is linked to adverse health outcomes, including weight gain and premature mortality. Food-insecure households, particularly those with children, face challenges in maintaining a balanced diet, often leading to higher consumption of low-cost, calorie-dense but nutrient-poor foods. This dietary pattern exacerbates health disparities, particularly in low-income and minority populations. Additionally, the *Lifetime Eating and Physical Activity Practices Report (2020)* highlights the mental health burden of food insecurity, which contributes to stress, anxiety, and depression among affected individuals and families.

Food security and food access have been a well-documented issues in Guilford County. For example, the *2020 Lifetime Eating and Physical Activity Practices (LEAP) Report*<sup>19</sup> found that food insecurity and limited access to healthy food are persistent challenges in Guilford County, contributing to diet-related illnesses and poor health outcomes. The report highlights gaps in available data, especially regarding where people access food and physical activity resources. Additionally, the LEAP initiative emphasizes the importance of addressing both individual behaviors and systemic social determinants of health. The report recommends investing in community participation, improving data collection

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<sup>18</sup> University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute. *County Health Rankings & Roadmaps 2024*. [www.countyhealthrankings.org](http://www.countyhealthrankings.org).

<sup>19</sup> LeGreco, M., Edwards, K. E., Haldeman, L., Janke, E., Shultz, S. J., Smith, M., Colville, K., & Hochrein, J. (2020). *Lifetime Eating and Physical Activity (LEAP) 2020 report: Pursuing common goals and common measures in Greensboro and Guilford County, NC*. Greensboro, NC.

methodologies, and developing structured programs to enhance accessibility to nutritious food and physical activity opportunities.

## United Way NC 211 Food-Related Calls

According to United Way NC 211 Data for Feb 08, 2024 to Feb 06, 2025 there were 14,891 requests for assistance in Guilford County. Food requests (5.6% of all calls) were the third highest behind housing (50.3% of calls) and utilities assistance (27.2% of calls). In all there were 834 calls for food assistance, up 50% over the previous year. The majority of inquiries, 65%, were about accessing food pantries, reflecting a significant reliance on this resource. Requests for assistance with buying food accounted for 15.9%, followed by home-delivered meals at 8.2%. Smaller proportions of calls were related to soup kitchens and meals-to-go (5.2%), feeding children (2.5%), and holiday meals (2.3%). Other food-related needs, including specialized or miscellaneous services, made up less than 1% of inquiries. These figures emphasize the critical role of food pantries and the ongoing demand for targeted food assistance programs to meet diverse community needs.

## Community Health Survey Findings for Guilford County

The 2023-2024 Guilford County Community Health Assessment<sup>20</sup> highlights significant disparities in food access, neighborhood infrastructure, and the increasing prevalence of fast-food establishments, all of which impact health outcomes.

Despite an increase in grocery establishments, food insecurity remains prevalent, particularly among marginalized populations. The rapid expansion of fast-food establishments exacerbates dietary risks, particularly in neighborhoods where healthy food options are scarce.

Moreover, the report highlights significant concerns regarding food security and dietary habits among residents, particularly in vulnerable populations. Food insecurity remains a persistent issue, disproportionately affecting marginalized groups, and dietary patterns indicate limited fruit and vegetable consumption among many respondents.

## Neighborhood and Built Environment

Guilford County's food landscape is shaped by disparities in grocery store availability and food access. While the number of grocery establishments increased slightly from 2010 to 2021, reaching 21.61 per 100,000 population, food insecurity remains a critical issue. Approximately 20.1% of the county's low-income population (35,598 people) live in areas with low food access, defined as being more than a mile (urban) or ten miles (rural) from a grocery store. This rate is comparable to national trends, but slightly lower than North

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<sup>20</sup> See <https://www.guilfordcountync.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/15752/638755701516670000>

Carolina's overall 21.28% rate of low food access. Limited access to fresh food exacerbates health inequalities, particularly in communities with high levels of poverty.

### Rise in Fast-Food Restaurants in Guilford County

Between 2010 and 2020, the number of fast-food restaurants per 100,000 people increased by 21%, rising from 71 to 86.83. This surge in fast-food outlets is significant because such establishments often contribute to poor dietary habits and obesity, particularly in lower-income communities where healthier food options are scarce. Fast-food prevalence reflects not only a measure of dietary behaviors but also environmental influences on health outcomes, as these restaurants are more likely to be located in neighborhoods with limited access to full-service grocery stores.

### Food Insecurity: Worrying About Running Out of Food

Over the past 12 months, 20.1% of survey respondents reported worrying that they would run out of food before having enough money to buy more. Individuals living in higher Social Vulnerability Index (SVI)<sup>21</sup> areas reported worrying at significantly higher rates (29.4%) compared to those in lower SVI areas (17.6%). Food insecurity was also more prevalent among Hispanic (30.0%) and Black (30.7%) respondents, who were twice as likely as White respondents (13.5%) to experience such concerns. Additionally, food insecurity was more common among younger individuals (26.3% for those under 50 compared to 14.3% for those over 50), women (25.7% vs. 11.6% for men), renters (28.9% vs. 16.1% for homeowners), and those with lower educational attainment (29.9% for high school or less, decreasing to 13.5% for those with a bachelor's degree or higher).

### Cutting Meal Sizes or Skipping Meals

An estimated 13.7% of respondents reported having to cut the size of meals or skip meals due to financial constraints in the past year. Again, disparities were evident based on SVI levels and demographic factors. Those in higher SVI communities were almost twice as likely (21.5%) to reduce meal sizes or skip meals compared to those in lower SVI areas (11.6%). Black and Hispanic respondents (20.2% and 12.2%, respectively) were more likely to experience this than White respondents (9.2%). Additionally, food-related hardships disproportionately affected renters (23.6%) compared to homeowners (8.8%), women (17.4% vs. 9.2% for men), and those under 50 (17.7% vs. 9.7% for those over 50).

### Fruit and Vegetable Consumption

The survey also assessed dietary habits, specifically the number of daily servings of fruits and vegetables consumed by respondents. The data revealed that a significant portion of

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<sup>21</sup> See <https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/place-health/php/svi/index.html>

residents consume fewer than the recommended servings. Nearly half of respondents reported eating only 1-2 servings per day, while a smaller percentage consumed 3-4 servings daily. Given the limited access to fresh food in some communities, this trend raises concerns about nutritional deficiencies and long-term health implications.

## Challenges Residents Face in Accessing Food Services

The County Community Health Assessment also highlights challenges residents face in accessing essential community services like food assistance program. Over the past 12 months, many respondents reported needing specific services but encountering barriers to access. Among all respondents, 24.8% of residents required help with food costs. Despite this need many residents faced difficulties in finding or using services. Those in higher Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) areas were more likely to report difficulties accessing food assistance. Demographic disparities were also evident. Renters, lower-income individuals, and racial minorities were more likely to experience barriers to accessing community support. Additionally, individuals under 50 years old, women, and those with lower educational attainment encountered more difficulties securing the resources they needed.

## USDA Limited Supermarket Access (Food Deserts)

Relative to other counties, Guilford is actually above average in food access. The Food Environment Index, which measures access to healthy food environments where 0 represents the worst food environment and 10 represents the best, stands at 7.8 for Guilford.<sup>22</sup> A higher score indicates a healthier overall food environment, suggesting better access to affordable, nutritious food for the community. A score of 7.8 indicates that while there are some challenges in accessing healthy food due to distance or cost, the situation is not as severe as in counties with lower scores. However, it also suggests that there is room for improvement to enhance access to healthy food options and reduce food insecurity. Overall, there is a need for well targeted interventions to improve food access and reduce food insecurity in particular neighborhood.

While overall Guilford fares better than most in the Food Environment Index, we nevertheless see specific census tracts where food is more difficult to access due to distance, transportation, or the lack of available healthy foods. The map which follows identifies areas in and around the County that are classified as Limited Supermarket Access (LSA)<sup>23</sup> areas or Limited-Access/Low-Population Areas. These classifications highlight challenges related to food access and provide insight into potential interventions to improve access to nutritious food. Dark purple regions on the map represent Limited Supermarket

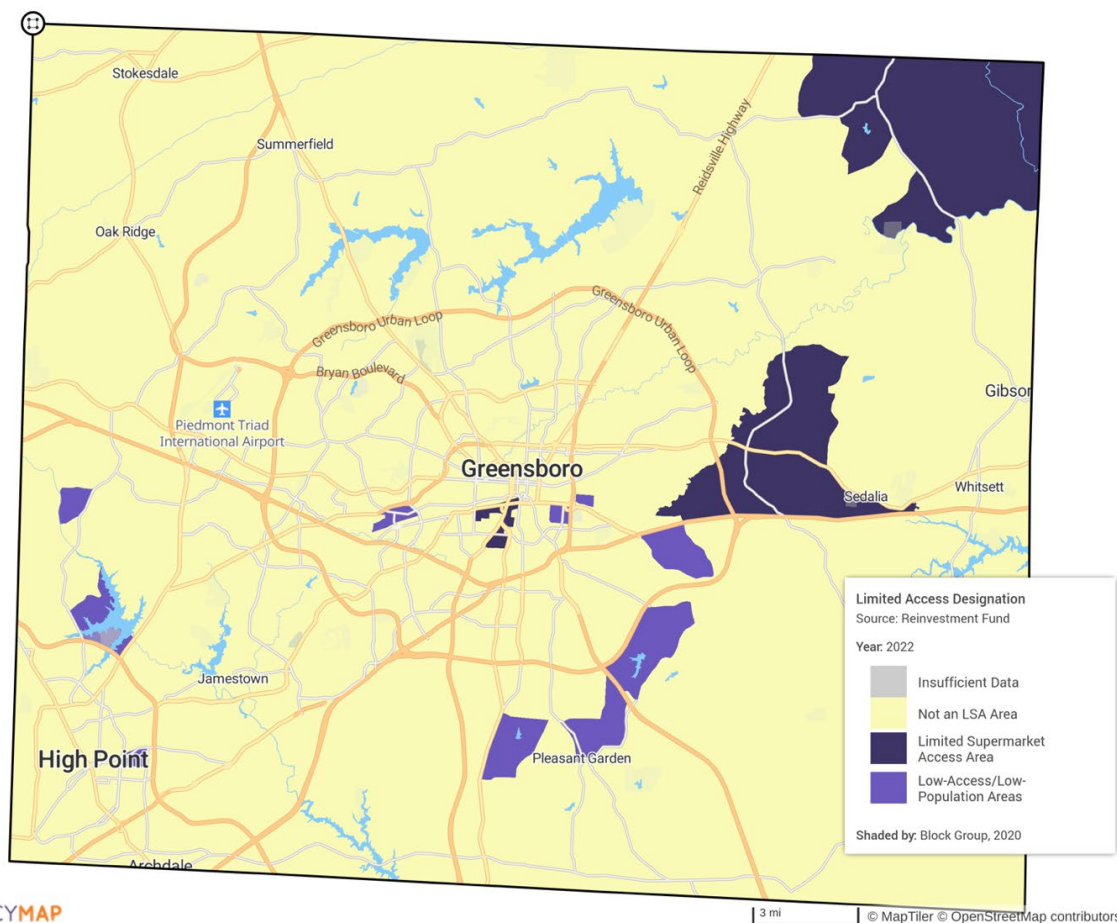
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<sup>22</sup> <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/health-data/health-factors/health-behaviors/diet-and-exercise/food-environment-index?year=2024>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.reinvestment.com/research/limited-supermarket-analysis/>

Access (LSA) areas, which are block groups with at least 5,000 residents who travel significantly farther to reach a full-service supermarket compared to similar areas with higher incomes. These areas are ideal candidates for the establishment of traditional brick-and-mortar food retail stores. They suggest underserved communities with a sufficient population density to sustain a supermarket.

The lighter purple regions are Limited-Access/Low-Population Areas, which have smaller populations (1,000–5,000 residents) and similarly require long travel distances to reach supermarkets. These areas are less densely populated and might benefit from smaller-scale or alternative interventions. Strategies here could include smaller format stores, food cooperatives, or culturally tailored solutions to support food access. Notably, the map identifies clusters of these areas predominantly to the east and south of Greensboro, as well as smaller pockets near High Point and Pleasant Garden. These designations signal opportunities for tailored food access solutions, whether through traditional grocery development, mobile markets, or innovative community-based approaches. By addressing these gaps, stakeholders can enhance food security and community health in the region.



POLICYMAP  
Figure 13 - Limited Access Designations (PolicyMap 2022)

## Public & Stakeholder Input

Food insecurity remains a persistent challenge in Guilford County, affecting individuals and families across diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. Understanding the complex factors contributing to food insecurity requires a holistic approach that centers community voices and lived experiences. This study presents findings from a comprehensive public input process designed to assess the barriers, inequities, and opportunities for improving food access within the county.

Community perspectives are essential for understanding the lived experiences and challenges associated with food insecurity, accessibility, and food justice. This section presents findings of public input gathered through multiple qualitative and quantitative methods, including interviews, focus groups, a resident survey, and a photovoice project. Each method contributed unique insights, allowing for a comprehensive examination of food security challenges within Guilford County.

Three primary methods of public engagement were used to collect qualitative and quantitative insights: (1) The *Framing the Future Photovoice Project*, an effort of the N.C. Cooperative Extension, empowered residents to document their experiences with food access through photography and storytelling; (2) Focus Groups and Interviews conducted by the N.C. Cooperative Extension, which engaged a diverse range of stakeholders—including food assistance recipients, nonprofit leaders, community advocates, and public health officials—to discuss systemic barriers and potential policy solutions; and (3) A Resident Survey, conducted by Innovative Research Insights, which provided a quantitative snapshot of food affordability, availability, and public assistance utilization trends in Guilford County.

This section highlights the voices of those directly impacted by food insecurity, presenting their experiences, challenges, and proposed solutions to inform local policies and initiatives aimed at improving food access and reducing hunger in Guilford County. By highlighting the voices of those directly impacted by food insecurity, this study serves as a critical tool for informing local policies and initiatives aimed at creating a more just and equitable food system in Guilford County.

## A Visual Exploration of Food Justice in Guilford County

The "Framing the Future" PhotoVoice project implemented by N.C. Cooperative Extension and Guilford County Government as part of the data collection for this report, focuses on food insecurity in Guilford County, where 13.7% of residents face chronic challenges accessing nutritious food. This photovoice project explored community food insecurity, waste reduction, and access to nutrition in Guilford County through participatory photography and group discussions. Guided by the "SHOWED" mnemonic, participants shared their experiences, insights, and potential solutions to food insecurity. This report synthesizes the findings from the narratives, transcripts, and discussions, highlighting key themes and emphasizing food justice as a critical framework for addressing inequities.

Photovoice is a participatory action research method developed by Caroline Wang and Mary Ann Burris in the 1990s, initially to amplify the voices of rural women in China regarding reproductive health concerns. The method combines photography and narrative to enable participants to document and reflect on their lived experiences, fostering empowerment and influencing policy change (Wang & Burris, 1997; Strack, 2017). It is deeply rooted in principles of social justice, critical consciousness (Freire), and community-based participatory research (CBPR), aiming to highlight community strengths and concerns, encourage critical dialogue, and engage stakeholders for actionable change (Catalani & Minkler, 2009; Strack, 2017).

Photovoice participants use cameras to capture aspects of their lives or communities, focusing on both challenges and resources. These images are later discussed in group settings using prompts like the SHOWED method,<sup>24</sup> which guides participants in identifying the significance of their photos and the systemic factors influencing them. The final stage often includes exhibitions where participants share their findings with the public and policymakers, aiming to incite change (Wang et al., 1997; Nykiforuk et al., 2011).

Photovoice has been applied across diverse contexts, including health disparities, environmental justice, and food security. Its participatory nature fosters community engagement, enhances participants' self-efficacy, and provides nuanced insights that traditional methods may overlook. However, it also requires significant resources, careful ethical considerations, and strong community-researcher collaboration to ensure meaningful outcomes (Catalani & Minkler, 2009; Nykiforuk et al., 2011).

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<sup>24</sup> See [https://communityengagement.uncg.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/What-is-Photovoice-A-Breif-Summary\\_Strack-Dec-2017.pdf](https://communityengagement.uncg.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/What-is-Photovoice-A-Breif-Summary_Strack-Dec-2017.pdf)

## Process Employed in the Framing the Future Study

The study aimed to document community perceptions of food justice, amplify marginalized voices, and inform local policy and interventions. Participants for the study were recruited through community networks and trained in photovoice techniques, including ethical considerations, and photography skills. Training emphasized the importance of storytelling and respecting the privacy and dignity of subjects in their photographs. Participants captured photographs illustrating their experiences with food insecurity, including barriers, community strengths, and resources.

Focus groups and interviews, facilitated by project staff, provided a platform for participants to discuss their photographs. Using questions adapted from the SHOWED method, discussions explored themes such as personal impact, community resources, and potential policy changes. Participants highlighted issues like limited access to fresh food, the impact of socioeconomic disparities, food waste, and the resilience of local communities.

In April 2025, select photographs and narratives will be curated for a public exhibit aimed at engaging policymakers, community leaders, and residents. This exhibition will serve as a catalyst for dialogue on food justice and a medium for educating policy makers. Feedback from participants and stakeholders will guide future food security strategies in Guilford County.

## Food Justice Lens

Food justice, as a lens, highlights the inequities inherent in food systems and demonstrates the need for fair access to nutritious, culturally appropriate food for all individuals. The narratives in this project underscore systemic barriers that disproportionately affect marginalized communities. For instance, food insecurity was discussed as prevalent among seniors, individuals with fixed incomes, and those experiencing homelessness. These inequities are exacerbated by structural factors such as transportation, outreach, and rigid program requirements. Utilizing the "SHOWED" mnemonic - asking what participants *See*, what is *Happening*, how it relates to *Our lives*, *Why* the issue exists, how it can *Educate* others, and what we can *Do* - the project created space for participants to share lived experiences and offer actionable insights in addressing food injustices in our community.



## FRAMING THE FUTURE: A PHOTOVOICE EXPLORATION OF FOOD JUSTICE

All Guilford County residents are invited to participate in this Photovoice project that will inform the creation of a food security plan in Guilford County. Join in the collaboration to create food programs and policies that will directly affect issues in your own backyard.

**Are you passionate about addressing hunger issues in our community?**

**Share your story & advocate for change**

**Connect with community members working toward a common goal**

### How Does Photovoice Work?

- 01**  
Go for a walk or drive in your neighborhood
- 02**  
Look for examples around you of food security, food access & hunger
- 03**  
Stop when you notice an example of food security, food access, and/or hunger
- 04**  
Take a picture  
After sharing pictures, you'll be invited to share your stories during individual interviews or focus groups.

**To sign up or learn more, contact Alyssa McKim:**

  **336-641-2421** | [amckim@guilfordcountync.gov](mailto:amckim@guilfordcountync.gov)

Figure 14 – Recruitment Flier - A Photovoice Exploration of Food Justice

## Theme: Accessibility

Food access emerged as a pervasive concern across participant narratives highlighting the stark disparity between food abundance and insecurity. Programs like Backpack Beginnings and initiatives such as Food Lion Feeds demonstrate community-driven solutions aimed at mitigating food insecurity. These efforts illustrate the importance of structured support systems that provide free or low-cost food options to those in need. However, the reliance on charitable giving and donations also suggests systemic gaps in policy and social safety nets.

George Drawdy's photographic series, *"What's Behind the Door,"* juxtaposed images of well-stocked refrigerators with empty ones, illustrating inequities in food availability. His poignant reflection, *"Some people have it, and some don't,"* encapsulates the systemic barriers faced by many communities. Similarly, Alicia, a caregiver for her elderly mother, described the barriers faced by seniors reliant on food voucher programs, such as transportation requirements and rigid attendance rules. She stated, *"Life happens, and these stipulations aren't senior-friendly"* (e.g., transportation requirements and penalties for missed participation)

Winnie Merritt's Do-Good Pantry project further exemplified the realities of food insecurity, particularly in a middle- to low-income neighborhood. While donations initially sustained the pantry, they dwindled over time, forcing her to purchase non-nutritious but popular items such as instant noodles and crackers. This fluctuation mirrors the precarious nature of food access for vulnerable communities. Winnie's narrative underscores the growing reliance on emergency food sources as systemic gaps persist.

## Theme: Food and Housing

The intersection of food access and housing was a recurring theme. Alicia noted, *"Food and shelter are interconnected; a lack of one signals challenges with the other,"* highlighting the intertwined nature of basic needs. Stories of unhoused individuals accessing community gardens after hours further illustrated the desperation caused by hunger and the critical importance of accessible food sources.

## Theme: Nutrition Education and Practical Solutions

Participants emphasized the importance of nutrition education in addressing food insecurity. The images of candy, noodles, and other easily accessible but nutritionally poor foods highlights a critical issue—food insecurity is not just about scarcity but about the quality of food available. While some communities may have access to snacks and treats, essential nutritious meals remain out of reach. This paradox underscores the need for interventions that address both food availability and nutritional adequacy.

Several images and narratives highlight the cost of nutritious food as a significant barrier. Families often resort to cheaper, less healthy options like instant noodles to meet their basic dietary needs. This illustrates the systemic issue where economic constraints dictate food choices, leading to long-term health consequences.

Some though discussed how to make low-cost food stuff into more healthy meals. For example, Alicia (at the GHPFA) shared how she transformed instant noodles into healthier meals by incorporating fresh vegetables, demonstrating how small adjustments can improve nutritional outcomes. *"You don't have the luxury of wasting anything; you make it work,"* she reflected. Such practical solutions underscore the need for community programs that equip individuals with skills to maximize limited resources.

### Theme: Food Waste and Mutual Aid

Many participants documented the issue of food waste, emphasizing how surplus food is often discarded while others struggle with hunger. The habit of purchasing excess food that goes uneaten, or leaving behind portions that could otherwise be consumed, reflects a broader cultural issue of overconsumption and inefficiency. The narratives call for more mindful consumption habits to reduce waste and redirect resources to those in need.

Participants identified food waste as an area of opportunity in the broader context of food justice. Kristen Smith, a college student, demonstrated how surplus food from Guilford College could be repurposed to feed those experiencing homelessness. She would pick up leftovers after lunch, repackage them and place them into the fridge for the houseless community or those who lacked access to cooking devices. Her efforts highlight the role of individual and community-led initiatives in reducing waste and promoting equitable food distribution. By repackaging leftovers into meals for underserved communities, Kristen demonstrated the transformative potential of small-scale initiatives. Youth participants from the Leo Club echoed this sentiment, expressing frustration at the wastefulness of uneaten food while advocating for strategies to redistribute excess resources to those in need.

### Theme: Public Assistance and SNAP

Participants emphasize the daily struggle of relying on limited resources, such as SNAP benefits or paycheck-to-paycheck living, which forces difficult trade-offs between survival and well-being. A participant explained:

*"Food insecurity affects myself and the people close to me in our everyday lives. Whether that be depending on SNAP benefits for assistance or simply living paycheck to paycheck, there's this air of scarcity that can't be pushed under the rug. Oftentimes we are forced to prioritize making sure there is*

*food on the table over investing in things that would bring us joy or mental wellness.”*

## Theme: Community Solutions to Food Insecurity

Community efforts are growing stronger, with collaborative food distribution and advocacy emerging as key strategies for systemic change. Organizations such as TBFL&BFN, Second Harvest, Cone Health Foundation, and NC Cooperative Extension are recognized for their impactful work. Overall, the community is undergoing a significant awakening to food insecurity's relevance, with a call to sustain this momentum and commitment to long-term solutions.

The reflections from participants emphasize a moral and ethical responsibility to address food insecurity. Many express a sense of frustration with the contrast between food abundance in some communities and the hunger experienced by others. The narratives advocate for more thoughtful food consumption, increased donations to food banks, and broader efforts to address hunger at the structural level.

The narratives underscored the transformative potential of community gardening. Eli Saavedra Villatoro's account of harvesting blueberries with his daughter at the Teaching Garden at High Point Library highlighted the educational and nutritional benefits of such spaces. As a dietitian, Villatoro emphasized the importance of teaching sustainable practices to foster self-reliance and resilience in food systems. Similarly, the Peaceful Seeds community garden and the Freedom Fridge in the Warnersville neighborhood in Greensboro demonstrated how collective gardening efforts can build community solidarity and provide fresh produce to those facing food insecurity. As a participant explained:

*“Peaceful Seeds of Warnersville and the Freedom Fridge. Both of these are excellent entities committed to the longevity of food insecurity work, but who could also grow in effectiveness. The freedom fridge completely serves its purpose, but could improve everyday quality. Peaceful Seeds has become a beautiful hub of knowledge and easy grab and go for neighbors in the summer, but certainly could extend operations throughout more seasons and produce a higher yield.”*

## Participant Recommendations

The *Framing the Future: A Photovoice Exploration of Food Justice* project highlights the pressing need for systemic change in addressing food insecurity, waste, and inequity. By amplifying the voices of participants, this report underscores the importance of community-driven solutions, mutual aid, and policy reform. A food justice framework is essential to creating a more equitable, sustainable, and resilient food system where every individual has access to nutritious food and the opportunity to thrive.

The Photovoice project sheds light on the interconnected issues of food insecurity, waste, and access while celebrating community resilience. By elevating participants' voices, this report advocates for systemic changes that build equity, sustainability, and mutual support.

A recurring theme in the discussions was the need for systemic improvements to food access programs. Recommendations included reducing transportation and attendance requirements, increasing funding for shelters, and fostering partnerships between established organizations and grassroots initiatives. Participants also called for better follow-up on nutrition education programs to ensure sustainability and long-term impact.

Addressing these inequities requires a multifaceted approach. Expanding mutual aid networks, as demonstrated by Kristen Smith's food redistribution efforts, is one effective strategy. Similarly, investing in community gardens can empower local communities to produce their own food, fostering both self-reliance and solidarity. Education plays a vital role in achieving food justice. Providing culturally relevant nutrition education, coupled with resources to make healthier food choices, can empower individuals to improve their dietary habits. Furthermore, incorporating equity-focused policies, such as eliminating transportation requirements for food programs and increasing accessibility for unhoused individuals, can reduce systemic barriers. Policymakers must also prioritize funding for programs that directly address food insecurity while making existing programs more inclusive and flexible.

## Photographs & Narratives



### Backpack Beginnings: A Community Resource for Free Nutritious Food Access Leo Club

*All families deserve access to nutritious food, which is why I'm thankful our community has Backpack Beginnings. Backpack Beginnings is a place where families can go to shop for the food they need free of charge.*



## The Impact of \$6: Food Lion Feeds Boxes Supporting Local Families in Need Leo Club

*How significant is \$6? That is the cost of a Food Lion Feeds box containing non-perishable food items. The boxes are distributed to local food banks, which helps families in need. Through its partnership with Feeding America, Food Lion guarantees a minimum donation of 1 million meals. This picture illustrates the significance of \$6 and its impact on our community.*



## What's Behind the Door Today? George Drawdy

*In a world where food abundance exists alongside hunger, it's unacceptable that many people lack consistent access to basic nutrition. Society must take action to ensure that everyone can meet their daily dietary needs. By improving food preservation methods, reducing waste, and fostering a culture of sharing, we can create a more equitable food system where no one goes hungry. Together, we can turn excess into sustenance, bridging the gap between those who have and those who do not.*



## Do-Good-Pantry, Keeping Hope Alive Winnie Merritt

*Our mini pantry project was initiated by my grandson, Paul Sealy. It is located at my house on Bridges Drive, High Point 27262. Our road is a thorough fare between busy Eastchester Dr. and Lexington St.*

*I have lived in this neighborhood since 2008, it is middle to low income, with a mix of homeowners and rentals. When we first got here there were more homeowners who had been here for some time before we moved in. As the years passed, people either moved away or died. Rentals became more prevalent. Crimes increased, such as drug sales, (which were already happening) and others more violent. Recently two houses have been made into Air B&Bs - easy to rent as the University is nearby.*

*Pantry has frequent donations as well as many visitors. People cone in cars, walking, bicycles and a motorized wheelchair.*

*You may wonder why I stay here. I love this neighborhood and have gotten to know several of the newer arrivals. Next week I am hosting a backyard gathering to encourage them to know each other better.*



## Plowed Over One Last Time Alicia Caldwell

*On the corner of Elm and Vail used to sit a garden in an unoccupied field. Residents of Elm Towers, a senior and disabled housing community, would plant and work the field. It was never authorized; However, one or more residents would plant it almost every year. Seeing it on the Southside was a given, every Sunday as we drive to church.*

*Among the wreckage that indicate construction and "progress," is the chair that an older woman would sit in, husking corn. It was not authorized for use by the community, but it was for food. **Free food - Needed food** in an underserved, food insecure, poor community just one block from the booming furniture market.*

## Honor our Elders Alicia Caldwell

*My nonprofit, LIVE Better, received money through the food security fund granted by the Greater High Point Food Alliance, to provide 15 gardens to residents living in 27260. The intention of the small, raised gardens was to allow participants to explore gardening, decide about whether it is something they can continue, and the reward of having some measure of food security and hopefully eat more vegetables. My mother enjoyed when we were a part of a community garden but has thoroughly enjoyed the self-sufficiency her garden bed has brought, sharing the harvest with her neighbors and helping put food on our table.*

*My aunt, going through the process of using the Senior Nutrition Program's vouchers at the High Point Farmers Market. Another important program that offers seniors the ability to supplement what they can or can't afford, themselves.*



The Cost of Survival: Instant Noodles as a  
Symbol of Affordable but Unhealthy Choices  
**Leo Club**

*This picture symbolizes how good and healthy food most of the time are expensive, so people buy cheap food to have something to eat and survive. Instant noodles are cheap but unhealthy.*



**Excess vs. Need: Mindful Consumption to Address Hunger Inequality**  
**Leo Club**

*Sometimes, people buy fries even though they already have a sandwich. They might not even be hungry, but they just want those fries because they look good or maybe they just feel like eating something more. It's kind of like a habit or a treat for them.*

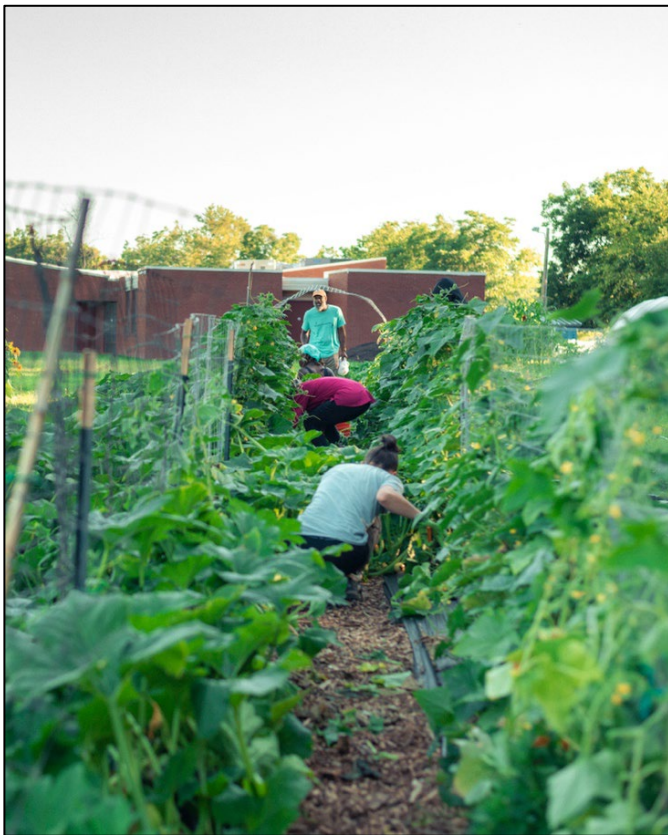
*But then, think about kids who don't have anything to eat. While some people are getting extra food just because they can, there are kids who would be happy to have just a sandwich or even a small piece of bread. They go to bed hungry and wake up not knowing if they'll get to eat that day. It's sad because the difference is so huge.*

*Maybe we can all do something to help, like donating to food banks or being more mindful about not wasting food.*



**Sweet Paradox: Candy Abundance Amid Nutritional Insecurity**  
**Leo Club**

*This photo shows a box filled with various candies, a common sight during festivities or celebrations. While it may appear to symbolize abundance, it highlights a deeper paradox when considered in the context of child hunger. Candy is an easily accessible indulgence, and is found very often some communities where nutrition is scarce. Children in food-insecure households may also have access to treats like these but lack nutritious meals that provide essential vitamins and minerals. This highlights that child hunger is not solely a result of financial constraints but often stems from a lack of access to nutrient-rich and wholesome food. This image serves as a subtle reminder of the need to address the nutritional gaps that persist even in environments where food, albeit unhealthy, seems plentiful.*



**Seeds of Change: Building Community  
Through Food Reclamation and Mutual Aid  
Peaceful Seed**

*Photo 1: (previous page) Community members at Peaceful Seeds of Warnersville are harvesting cucumbers, demonstrating the power of mutual aid and the collective effort to foster food security and gardening skills.*

*Photo 2: A smashed and eaten watermelon, grown on the farm, symbolizes the impact of access to fresh food for unhoused individuals, who rely on the land's harvest to meet their immediate needs.*

*Photo 3: A college student and Peaceful Seeds intern, Kristen Smith, places repackaged meals into a Freedom Fridge, reflecting her commitment to reducing food waste and supporting the unhoused community despite facing challenges of her own.*



**Mindful Consumption: Reducing Food Waste for a Sustainable Future  
Leo Club**

*This shows how people buy more than they need, which leads to food waste. Instead of wasting the resources other people could have ate, we should only take the amount we can consume. In this way, perfectly good food isn't being thrown out.*



### Behind-The Scenes A Simple Gesture

*The Wyndham Golf Tournament is committed to food recovery. Every year after the tournament, A Simple Gesture coordinates distribution of excess food from the event to local nonprofits. This year ASG distributed over **7,000 pounds** of excess food to nine local nonprofits.*

*Wasting less food is something we all have control over. While we look to restaurants, caterers, and grocery stores to take the lead on food recovery, the biggest source of wasted food is in our own homes. A Simple Gesture highlights the value of food, from the farmers who created it to the water that was used to grow it to the trucks and trains that transported it to the grocery store employees who stocked it.*

*The EPA emphasizes upcycling and donating excess food **(#1)**, using excess food to feed animals **(#2)**, and composting **(#3)** to make the best use of our resources.*



## Community Kitchen and Snack Bowl Eli Burnette

*Food availability means little if access is denied. While some have resources, many struggle to even prepare a meal, trapped by a system that overlooks their needs. With billions in government funds, we must demand better solutions for the homeless and vulnerable—more shelters, more support, more compassion. Every one of us is just a paycheck away from hardship, and it's time to recognize that we all share a responsibility to uplift one another. Compassion and action are essential; let's build a society where no one goes hungry, and every individual is valued.*



**Eva Rose Harvesting Blueberries**  
**Eli Saavedra Villatoro**

*The Teaching Garden at the High Point Library is such a wonderful place to explore and learn about vegetables, herbs, other plants, and berries! I personally love blueberries, so I could not wait to take my daughter (2 years old at the time) to share a special moment together. As a Dietitian, I love having the opportunity to visit and support community spaces that offer hands-on lessons on how to grow your own vegetables.*

## Community Needs and Preferences - Focus Groups & Interview Input

This section of the report synthesizes qualitative data from multiple focus groups and listening session interviews to assess food security challenges and identify systemic gaps within the local food network. The sessions featured a diverse group of stakeholders representing various roles and organizations connected to food security as well as individuals with lived experience. Thematic analysis reveals key issues affecting food access, affordability, stigma, and program efficiency. Insights from various stakeholders, including community members, food service providers, and advocacy organizations, inform this assessment. Recommendations from participants are given to on how best to gaps and issues identified.

### Methods of Data Collection & Analysis

The work plan for the Guilford County Food Security Plan included a strategy for engaging stakeholders through focus groups and interviews. Six focus group and listening session interviews were completed between August 27, 2024, and December 19, 2024. Recordings and/or notes were taken by the facilitators and used as the text for analysis by the research consultant. The focus groups and listening session interviews aimed to explore issues related to food security, WIC access, school meal programs, and community collaboration in addressing hunger. These discussions included a diverse range of participants, including nonprofit leaders, public health officials, WIC recipients, school representatives, and food security advocates. Each session was tailored to address specific aspects of food insecurity, from the challenges faced by families relying on WIC to the coordination of food programs across various service providers.

Analyzing transcripts from these sessions was a detailed and systematic process that involved several steps to transform raw qualitative data into actionable insights. This qualitative analysis primarily focused on identifying patterns, themes, and deeper meanings from the responses given by participants. Transcripts and notes were reviewed multiple times in an iterative process. This familiarization helped in gaining an understanding of the overall content, context, and nuances present in the responses, allowing the researcher to begin thinking about potential themes and patterns.

Themes represented overarching ideas or motifs that were significant to the research topic. This involved grouping related interview elements into potential themes and sub-themes, refining the definitions and names of these themes, and ensuring they accurately represented the data. The final step involved weaving together the analytic narrative and data extracts and contextualizing the analysis in relation to the research topic.

Table 13 – Focus Groups/Listen Sessions Attendees and Themes

Focus Group	Participants	Key Themes
<b>Helping Hands</b>	Interview with director of community organization focused on coordination between different service providers	Food insecurity, homelessness services, need for community clinic involvement, importance of stakeholder collaboration.
<b>New Hope</b>	Interview with director of community organization focused on community engagement, and planning efforts	Collaboration between food programs and public health, inclusion of immigrant communities, community-based food security planning.
<b>Nourish Our Future</b>	Attended by ~25 participants, approximately 12 individuals speak based on notes. Various community food security roles.	WIC barriers, food waste reduction, universal free school meals, stigma reduction, impact of Child Tax Credit on food security.
<b>Triad Baby Love</b>	11 people from TBL’s core organizational partners including DSHS, nurses, counselors.	insufficient WIC benefits for formula-feeding mothers
<b>Mothers Participating In WIC</b>	11 Mothers 1 father, and multiple infants who have lived experience with WIC and food insecurity. From different areas (Gibsonville, Greensboro, Burlington) discussing food access challenges, transportation issues, and experiences with WIC.	Food deserts, lack of transportation to grocery stores, reliance on food pantries, insufficient WIC benefits for formula-feeding mothers. Inequities in WIC benefits, breastfeeding vs. formula feeding disparities, food deserts in rural communities, and need localized support.
<b>Youth Hunger Gap</b>	7 participants represent philanthropy and various food security organizations. Participants make up the Youth Hunger Gap Working group (est. in 2020)	Expanding school meal programs, involving principals in food security efforts, challenges with food distribution tracking, importance of school-based pantries.

### Focus Group & Listening Sessions Findings

Six sessions were completed during the fourth quarter of 2024 including the following groups: Helping Hands Director; The Director of New Hope; Nourish Our Future; Triad Baby Love Partners; WIC enrolled Mothers; and the Youth Hunger Gap working group. The Helping Hands and New Hope were structured as interviews with directors of community organizations, discussing collaboration between service providers and broader planning efforts for food security. Nourish Our Future had approximately 25 participants, with around 12 individuals actively contributing to discussions about WIC barriers, food waste reduction, and policy improvements. Triad Baby Love was attended by 11 organizational

partners, focusing on disparities in WIC benefits, breastfeeding support, and food deserts. WIC Mothers included between 11 mothers and 1 father and multiple infants, from different communities, emphasizing transportation barriers, reliance on food pantries, and the challenges of formula-feeding under WIC policies. Finally, the Youth Hunger Gap focus group involved seven participants from philanthropy and food security organizations who participate in the working group, discussing school meal programs, food distribution challenges, and the role of school-based pantries. These focus groups provided valuable insights into the systemic and logistical barriers to food access and opportunities for policy and programmatic improvements.

## Key Themes

The themes identified in the qualitative analysis highlight crucial but sometimes overlooked aspects of food security, including the struggles of multi-generational caregivers, immigrant families, college students, and those needing culturally appropriate foods. Food insecurity persists in low-resource communities due to barriers such as transportation limitations, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and restrictive policies. Existing food assistance programs like WIC and SNAP often fail to adequately support those in need, particularly families who barely exceed eligibility thresholds. Geographic inequities further exacerbate food insecurity, as many underserved communities lack access to nearby grocery stores and fresh food options. Additionally, the stigma associated with food assistance discourages participation highlighting the need for inclusive and destigmatized support programs.

### *Systemic Barriers & Gaps in Existing Food Programs*

Food insecurity remains a significant challenge in low-resource communities, exacerbated by transportation barriers, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and restrictive policies. Despite the existence of food assistance programs such as WIC, SNAP, and food pantries, many families continue to struggle with accessibility and adequacy issues. These benefits often fall short, particularly for those who barely exceed eligibility thresholds but still experience financial hardship. Furthermore, rigid eligibility requirements often exclude families who are barely making ends meet, adding another layer of difficulty.

One community member expressed frustration with these restrictions, stating, “If you don’t fit within a criteria, all the time it gets real technical... I have parents who don’t qualify for anything, and they’re barely making ends meet” (Triad Baby Love Focus Group). She explained further, “Some qualify for WIC, food stamps, and things like that, but I have those that are over income by a dollar and are struggling” (Triad Baby Love Focus Group). Additionally, families find assistance to be insufficient. Parents with infants often find that formula allowances are inadequate, forcing them to seek alternative means to feed their babies. As one participant described, “I think she was like four cans of formula short because her baby was eating more” (Triad Baby Love Focus Group). Another significant

barrier is the complexity of eligibility criteria, which often excludes individuals who are only slightly above income thresholds. One participant explained, “If you don’t fit within a certain criteria, all the time it gets real technical... I have parents who don’t qualify for anything, and they’re barely making ends meet” (Triad Baby Love Focus Group).

Food pantries, which serve as a safety net for those unable to access traditional benefits, also face significant challenges in meeting demand. A representative from a local food pantry explained, “We have people coming through our pantry, and our produce is all on a tray shelf. We say, ‘Okay, you can get one thing’ because we don’t have enough for everyone to take multiple items. We have 120 people coming through here, so I have to make sure everyone gets something” (Helping Hands Triangulation Focus Group). These shortages indicate that while food pantries provide crucial support, they are often under-resourced and unable to fully meet community needs.

Beyond families, students are also affected by gaps in food assistance. A retired high school counselor emphasized how the current system often overlooks students in need, stating, “We are missing the people who are actually hungry, have to figure out how to get money for the students that don’t have money for lunch” (Nourish Our Future Listening Session). Additionally, under-enrollment in free and reduced lunch programs has created new barriers to addressing hunger. One focus group participant pointed out that “Families are not filling out free and reduced lunch applications, which means we are going to stop being able to track who actually needs food assistance. If fewer people apply, we lose the ability to see the gap between how many families need help and how many are receiving benefits” (Youth Hunger Gap Focus Group).

### *Transportation and Geographic Inequities*

Access to food remains a major challenge for many communities, particularly those in rural and underserved urban areas. Limited grocery store availability, unreliable transportation, and economic constraints make it difficult for individuals to obtain fresh and nutritious food. Many individuals struggle to access nutritious food due to geographic and economic limitations, forcing them to travel long distances just to find a grocery store.

As one participant noted, “I didn’t realize... we don’t have a grocery store. I have to go literally forever... or to Greensboro” (WIC Mothers Focus Group). As one Mothers Participating in WIC Focus Group participant noted, “*To get fresh food, you have to go to Food Lion or Publix, which is 10 to 20 minutes away... and it’s expensive.*” This participant elaborated, explaining that “*The closest thing to a grocery store is Dollar General, and that’s what people have to rely on*” (WIC Mothers Focus Group).

For those without reliable transportation, accessing food can be even more challenging. In many areas, public transit options are either nonexistent or unreliable, making grocery trips

a significant burden. A participant from the WIC Mothers Focus Group described the logistical struggle of shopping for food without a personal vehicle: *“It’s transportation to get there, transportation to get back. I can get there, but then how do I carry all these bags back, especially if I have my kids with me?”* (WIC Mothers Focus Group). Another speaker highlighted the added challenge of transporting perishable foods.

The issue extends beyond rural areas, as some urban neighborhoods also lack sufficient grocery stores and rely on corner stores or dollar stores for food purchases. These locations typically lack fresh produce and offer only limited, high-cost food options. One participant from the Nourish Our Future Listening Session emphasized the need for community-based solutions, suggesting, *“Guilford County needs more mobile markets or pantries closer to residential areas”* (Nourish Our Future Listening Session ). Similarly, another community member from the Triad Baby Love Focus Group pointed out that *“food deserts are a huge issue—people can’t buy fresh food if they don’t have a store nearby”* (Triad Baby Love Focus Group).

Efforts to address these inequities have included mobile food distribution programs, though availability remains inconsistent. Some communities have seen success in launching mobile pantries, but there is a need for greater expansion and regularity. A participant from the Triad Baby Love Focus Group described one such initiative: *“There’s a mobile market that comes once a month for parents with kids at the schools. It helps, but it’s not enough”* (Triad Baby Love Focus Group). Others suggested building partnerships with local farmers to bring fresh food into low-access neighborhoods. *“There have been successful farmers markets in Greensboro, and networks are looking for ways to expand access to fresh meat and vegetables at a local level”* (Triad Baby Love Focus Group).

Additionally, transportation challenges disproportionately affect WIC families, making frequent trips for required check-ins burdensome. A representative from the Guilford County Partnership for Children emphasized the importance of addressing this issue, stating, *“WIC families have a hard time with transportation, so limiting the need to go for frequent checks would be huge”* (Nourish Our Future Listening Session).

### *Stigma and Strain in Food Assistance*

The stigma surrounding food assistance programs, particularly in schools and retail settings, discourages participation and creates social divisions. Moreover, the psychological burden of food insecurity is profound, particularly among parents and caregivers who struggle to provide for their families. The constant stress of ensuring their children have enough to eat takes an emotional toll, leading to feelings of shame, anxiety, and helplessness. Many participants expressed frustration with how programs are structured and perceived, often making individuals feel ashamed or unworthy of support.

A retired high school counselor recalled how “students reacted when getting a ticket for free lunch” and emphasized that “the way we present these programs matters” (Nourish Our Future Listening Session). To address this issue, some advocates suggest universal food access for students to remove the distinction between those who receive assistance and those who do not. One participant recommended that schools, “Give food to everyone. If they don’t want it, they can put it on a share table—this removes stigma” (Nourish Our Future Listening Session).

Retail environments also present significant challenges for individuals using food assistance benefits, contributing to embarrassment and exclusion. A WIC recipient shared an experience at a grocery store where their benefits were not accepted: “One woman went to Whole Foods to use her WIC benefits and was told ‘we don’t do that here’—she was so confused and embarrassed” (WIC Mothers Focus Group). Another participant highlighted inconsistencies in store policies, stating, “Some stores don’t have proper WIC labeling, so you don’t know what’s covered until you get to the register, and then people look at you funny if something gets declined” (WIC Mothers Focus Group).

Parents often feel a deep sense of shame when seeking assistance, even though there are external economic conditions beyond their control, such as rising food costs. A participant from the Nourish Our Future Listening Session emphasized, “*Parents feel ashamed asking for help, even though it’s not their fault that food costs are so high*”. Similarly, caregivers trying to navigate food assistance programs face significant frustration. One provider shared their experience working with families: “*They call me up in tears, asking what they can do because their food stamps got cut off after they got a small raise*” (Triad Baby Love Focus Group).

Beyond the stress of securing food, food insecurity often intersects with other basic needs, exacerbating the emotional strain on families. A local non-profit which provides food assistance described the emotional turmoil they witness: “*We have people that are crying and panicking because they can’t pay their rent, they can’t pay their utilities, and now they’re trying to figure out how they’re going to put food on the table*” (Helping Hands). This intersection of financial insecurity and food access creates a relentless cycle of anxiety for many families, as they juggle multiple essential expenses while trying to keep their households stable.

### *Multi-Generational and Unofficial Caregiver Struggles*

Many grandparents and other unofficial caregivers are raising children without access to financial support systems, which affects their ability to provide adequate food. A nonprofit executive explained, “*There are many grandparents that are caring for children but do not officially have custody of them, so they are not getting money and are trying to raise children off of their Social Security benefits. The grandparents end up choosing between food and*

*medicine and they are doing the best they can but they are not providing enough food for the children and need a lot of help." (Nourish Our Future Listening Session)*

In addition to these issues, program restrictions on multi-generational households create further barriers. Families who live with older relatives often find themselves unable to access food benefits due to technical eligibility rules. As one participant explained, "A lot of times, if we have a mom that lives with her parent who's on SNAP benefits, those benefits do not extend to her or her child. So now you have three generations under one roof, but the only person who controls the benefits is the grandparent" (Triad Baby Love Focus Group). This structural gap leaves many families struggling to access the nutrition they need despite living in households that technically receive assistance.

Space constraints in over-crowded homes also contribute to food insecurity in multigenerational households, particularly for those living in small or shared spaces. A participant noted, "*There are families that live in a single room, and there is barely enough space to walk, let alone store food. Imagine trying to keep food fresh in that situation*" (Triad Baby Love Focus Group). Such environments make it difficult to stock up on perishable items or take advantage of bulk food discounts, further limiting families' ability to secure nutritious meals.

Efforts to address these issues have included advocating for policy changes to recognize informal caregiving arrangements and expanding eligibility for food assistance programs. A representative from the Greater High Point Food Alliance shared that "*GHPFA met with the Alliance for Aging about the certification process for grandparents taking care of children and the children living in their household. The issue was passed further up to the governor*" (Nourish Our Future Listening Session).

#### *Challenges Faced by Immigrant and Refugee Families*

Bureaucratic barriers further complicate access to food assistance programs, particularly for non-English speakers and those unfamiliar with complex application processes. The director of a local federal program noted, "WIC and SNAP applications should be streamlined. Many non-English speaking families have trouble navigating the system." (Nourish Our Future Listening Session) Similarly, a food security coordinator described encountering a Latino family at a pantry who struggled to complete an application due to language barriers. "The family was a family of four, mom has a job and father had two jobs but got laid off from one, so they couldn't afford food. No one at the pantry spoke Spanish, so they sat there not knowing how to ask for help" (Nourish Our Future Listening Session).

Other challenges arise for immigrants who fear interacting with government agencies. Language barriers and fear of documentation requirements prevent many immigrant and refugee families from accessing food assistance programs. Even when eligible, they may

struggle to navigate bureaucratic hurdles. One community member noted, “She was terrified to talk to the social worker, even though that person wasn’t even from social services. She assumed any documentation process could be used against her, so she just wouldn’t ask for help” (Triad Baby Love Focus Group).

#### *Food Access Barriers for College Students*

Food insecurity presents unique challenges for college students, who often face rising food costs while living in dorms or shared housing with limited storage and cooking options. Many students struggle to afford nutritious meals, particularly as meal plans do not always cover their full needs. A recent college graduate described the difficulty of managing food expenses: “Food got more expensive during the pandemic, and it was harder to buy healthy foods without going broke. Dining hall food is included in tuition, but students might run out of meal swipes, and dorms don’t have space to cook or store food. Many students don’t even know how to cook or how to stretch meals” (Nourish Our Future Listening Session).

While food insecurity is often associated with low-income families, college students—especially those living off-campus—encounter significant barriers to affording and accessing nutritious food. One participant explained, “Students might run out of food swipes, and dining halls might not be great. Some campuses tried to implement Swipe Out Hunger, but it’s not widespread” (Nourish Our Future Listening Session). Another participant noted that food access challenges are exacerbated by a lack of financial literacy and cooking skills, stating, “Students living alone for the first time might not know how to cook, lack storage space, or struggle to afford healthy food” (Nourish Our Future Listening Session).

In addition to financial constraints, some students lack transportation to affordable grocery stores, making it difficult to purchase fresh and nutritious food. One advocate pointed out, “We know students need food, but some of them don’t have cars, and the closest grocery store might be miles away. If they rely on campus dining, they’re stuck with whatever options are available” (Youth Hunger Gap Focus Group).

#### *Need for Culturally Appropriate Food*

Many food assistance programs fail to consider cultural preferences and dietary restrictions, leading to food waste and underutilization. Community members emphasized the importance of providing diverse food options that reflect the needs of various populations. One participant highlighted the issue faced by institutions, stating, “*Rehab facilities and some community centers can’t receive food from food banks because they don’t have options that align with their residents’ needs*” (Nourish Our Future Listening Session).

For food assistance programs to be truly effective, they must offer perishable and culturally relevant foods. A food security advocate noted, *“If we want these programs to work, they need to have more perishable and culturally specific foods. We are seeing a 30% increase in demand for these types of items”* (Nourish Our Future Listening Session). Similarly, a food pantry leader expressed the need for better representation of ethnic food preferences: *“We have more than just green beans and corn. On Thursday nights, we see a lot of Hispanics, and the black beans go out the door immediately. That’s what they like. So how do we get more of those items that are appropriate for the Hispanic population?”* (Helping Hands).

This issue extends beyond Hispanic communities to other cultural groups. Another advocate pointed out, *“We have some people who are Asian, so how do we get food that is more appropriate or relevant to the Asian population?”* (Helping Hands). In some cases, food pantries distribute items that do not align with cultural or religious dietary practices, leading to significant waste. A community leader explained, *“People were getting food, getting food, getting food, and then they were throwing it away. If they weren’t throwing it away, they were just putting it in the bags outside the dumpsters. And it wasn’t that they didn’t appreciate it—it was because they were given all this food they don’t even eat because of their culture or their religion”* (MAPP Meeting).

Efforts to address these concerns have included direct engagement with communities to identify their needs and adjust food distribution accordingly. A community organizer emphasized the importance of listening to people’s needs, stating, *“You won’t know that people don’t want some of the food you’re giving unless you talk to them”* (New Hope ). Some organizations have started working with local farmers and cultural food networks to diversify available options. An advocate for food justice shared, *“We work with African American farmers to provide opportunities for them and find schools, organizations, etc., where they can provide their fresh produce”* (Nourish Our Future Listening Session).

### *Food Labeling, Expired Food, and Food Recalls*

The issue of food quality is also a concern among participants, particularly in donated and subsidized food programs. Many participants raised concerns about expired food being distributed, the lack of awareness about food recalls, and the inconsistency in food safety guidelines. Some recipients reported that the quality of food from food banks varied widely, with one participant noting, *“Sometimes you get a good box from Out of the Garden, but a lot of times it’s food that’s about to expire or already expired”* (Triad Baby Love Focus Group).

Food recalls pose another serious risk, particularly for communities that may not have access to real-time information about affected products. One participant raised the question, *“How do you keep someone from eating something that could make them sick if they don’t know there’s a recall?”* (Triad Baby Love Focus Group). This issue is particularly

relevant for low-income households, where people are more likely to rely on donated or subsidized food and may not have easy access to updated recall notices.

Participants also emphasized the environmental and ethical implications of food waste. One advocate pointed out that *“food waste is a big contributor to climate change, and yet only 2% or less of food is donated instead of discarded”* (Nourish Our Future Listening Session). This highlights the need for improved food distribution systems that prioritize safety while minimizing waste.

The challenge of food labeling for products that qualify for WIC also emerged as an issue. Participants described difficulties in navigating changing food packaging requirements. A speaker from the WIC Mothers Focus Group highlighted the confusion surrounding product sizes and labeling inconsistencies: *“Some stores carry 18-ounce cereal boxes, others only have 12-ounce boxes, but you’re allowed 52 ounces total. If you can’t do the math or don’t realize the sizes are different, you might not get the food you need”* (WIC Mothers Focus Group). Another explained, *“Stores have power over labeling, and we’re not really sure if it’s WIC or the stores, but either way, it creates barriers. Something as simple as changing a label can mess you up”* (WIC Mothers Focus Group).

#### *Impact of School Funding Shifts on Food Security*

Public schools provide a crucial safety net for food-insecure children through free meal programs. The Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) has been instrumental in providing free meals to students without requiring families to complete eligibility forms. In Guilford County, *“110 out of 120 schools currently provide free meals through CEP, but if funding shifts continue, that number could decrease”* (Nourish Our Future Listening Session). A speaker from the Youth Hunger Gap Focus Group explained that while CEP has expanded due to federal policy changes, the long-term sustainability of the program remains uncertain. *“The Federal Government lowered the CEP threshold, meaning the percentage of free and reduced lunch needed to qualify was reduced from 40% to 25%. This has allowed nearly every school in Guilford County to offer free meals, but budget shifts could jeopardize this progress”* (Youth Hunger Gap Focus Group).

Beyond direct meal provision, school meal programs play a critical role in student well-being and academic success. One participant emphasized the connection between nutrition and learning outcomes, stating, *“If they’re hungry, they cannot perform. There is no education without nutrition”* (Youth Hunger Gap Focus Group, Charlene Gladney). However, shifts in funding toward charter schools with less oversight pose a significant threat to these programs. One participant expressed concern, stating, *“Dollars going to charter schools are being taken away from public schools. If we keep taking money away, hunger will increase, and fewer schools will have free lunch”* (Nourish Our Future Listening Session).

Furthermore, after-school meal programs provide essential support for children who might otherwise go without dinner. A participant shared, *“I give whatever I can get. If all I can get is a snack, I give a snack. If I can get dinner, I give dinner. The kids need dinner—many of them won’t have a full meal at home”* (Youth Hunger Gap Focus Group, Charlene Gladney).

### *Community-Based Solutions*

Stakeholders emphasize the importance of community-driven solutions, policy reforms, and data integration to strengthen food security efforts. A major priority among advocates is the modernization of food assistance programs, particularly WIC and SNAP, to improve accessibility and efficiency. One stakeholder highlighted the need for a streamlined process, stating, *“We need to modernize WIC. If WIC and SNAP applications were the same, it would remove a huge barrier”* (Nourish Our Future Listening Session).

Local partnerships have emerged as another key strategy for bridging food access gaps. Expanding collaborations between schools, faith organizations, and small grocers has been identified as a promising approach. A community leader emphasized this need: *“More community partnerships with schools, faith groups, and small grocers could bridge the gaps”* (New Hope). Similarly, community members have advocated for tailored programs that address the unique needs of individual schools and neighborhoods, rather than applying a standardized approach. A speaker from the Youth Hunger Gap Focus Group proposed a more flexible framework, stating, *“Programs need to be better tailored to individual school and community needs. A ‘menu’ approach would work better than a one-size-fits-all model”* (Youth Hunger Gap Focus Group).

In addition to local initiatives, stakeholders advocate for expanded food recovery efforts to minimize waste and maximize food redistribution. Some organizations have implemented community fridge programs, allowing surplus food to be stored and accessed by those in need. A participant involved in such efforts shared, *“SHARE fridge stores surplus food, is open to anyone [in the schools] at any time. The program is adapted to different schools and their needs”* (Nourish Our Future Listening Session). Ultimately, strengthening food security requires a multi-pronged approach that integrates policy changes, enhanced community partnerships, improved data sharing, and expanded food recovery programs.

### **Summary of Key Findings from Focus Groups & Interviews**

Stakeholders, including nonprofit leaders, public health officials, WIC recipients, and food security advocates, provided insights into the systemic barriers affecting food access, affordability, stigma, and the effectiveness of assistance programs. Key themes emerging from the study reveal systemic issues such as bureaucratic hurdles, and restrictive policies that limit access to food assistance programs like WIC and SNAP. Many families barely exceeding income thresholds struggle to obtain benefits, leaving them in financial distress.

Participants also identified stigma as a significant barrier, with many individuals feeling ashamed to seek assistance.

Specific demographic groups face unique challenges. Multi-generational caregivers, particularly grandparents raising children without formal custody, lack financial support. Immigrant and refugee families encounter language barriers and fear engaging with government agencies, preventing them from accessing available food resources. College students experience food insecurity due to rising costs, limited meal plan coverage, and lack of affordable grocery options near campuses. The need for culturally appropriate foods remains a critical issue, as many food assistance programs don't yet accommodate diverse dietary preferences, resulting in food waste and underutilization.

Structural limitations in food distribution systems exacerbate the crisis. Additionally, transportation challenges and geographic disparities contribute to food insecurity, particularly in rural areas where grocery stores are scarce. Food pantries frequently face shortages, forcing them to ration supplies. School meal programs are essential for children's well-being but shifts in funding and under-enrollment in free and reduced lunch programs threaten their sustainability.

Efforts to improve food security must include policy reforms, enhanced community collaboration, and better integration of data to guide interventions. Stakeholders emphasize the need for streamlined WIC and SNAP application processes, expanded school meal programs, and community-based initiatives such as mobile markets and culturally relevant food options. Strengthening partnerships among schools, nonprofits, and local grocers is essential to addressing these challenges. Ultimately, a multi-pronged approach combining policy advocacy, community-driven solutions, and increased resource allocation is necessary to ensure equitable food access for all residents.

## Resident Perspectives & Food Access Trends – Food Systems Survey

The Guilford County Food System Assessment Survey was designed to gather insights from residents about food access, affordability, and food security challenges in the community. It covered topics such as household demographics, income and food expenses, experiences with food insecurity, barriers to accessing healthy food, preferred food sources, transportation methods, and the use of food assistance programs. The survey also explored community food resources, sustainability practices, and potential improvements to the local food system. The responses may inform future initiatives aimed at ensuring equitable access to nutritious and culturally relevant food for all residents in Guilford County.

The multimodal survey was deployed online (via Qualtrics) and on paper (oversampling aging populations in particular). Online solicitations were made through social media as well as through community partner organizations such as members of the Guilford County Food Action Network with direct emails, newsletters, and other electronic appeals. Paper surveys were distributed at senior centers and other location where populations with limited digital access may be found. Responses were anonymous. Participants had the option to enter a separate sweepstakes for a \$100 gift card as an incentive.



**We Want to Hear from You!**

Take our survey and register for a chance to win a \$100 gift card.

**NC COOPERATIVE EXTENSION**

Visit <https://tinyurl.com/GuilfordFoodSystems> to complete the survey by Saturday, March 1.



Figure 15 - Outreach Materials from Food Systems Survey

## Methods of Analysis

The process of analyzing the quantitative and qualitative responses to the surveys involved several steps to ensure a thorough and meaningful evaluation of the data collected. The quantitative data from the surveys were analyzed using IBM SPSS version 30.0.1.0, a powerful statistical software tool that supports decision-making processes with rigorous analytics.

### *Quantitative Data Analysis:*

1. **Data Cleaning and Preparation:** Initially, the collected survey data was cleaned and prepared for analysis. This step included checking for missing values, filtering out incomplete responses, omitting responses from outside of Guilford County, and ensuring that the data was correctly formatted for analysis in SPSS.
2. **Descriptive Statistics:** Using IBM SPSS, the analyst computed descriptive statistics for the quantitative survey responses. Frequency distributions were also generated to identify patterns and trends in the data. Crosstabulation by race/ethnicity and other characteristics were also explored.
3. **Graphical Representations:** SPSS was used to create various charts and graphs like histograms, bar charts, and pie charts. These visual representations provided a clear and immediate understanding of the data, facilitating easy communication of the findings to stakeholders.

### *Qualitative Data Analysis:*

1. **Thematic Analysis:** The qualitative responses were subjected to thematic analysis to extract meaningful themes and patterns. This involved reading through the responses to identify common themes, categorizing the data according to these themes, and analyzing the context and frequency of the themes.
2. **Integration of Qualitative Insights with Quantitative Findings:** The qualitative themes were then integrated with the quantitative findings to provide a holistic view of the survey results. This integration helped in understanding the "why" behind the numerical trends observed in the quantitative analysis.

By using both quantitative and qualitative analysis methods a comprehensive understanding of the feedback provided by stakeholders is possible. The statistical capabilities of SPSS enhanced the reliability of the quantitative analysis, while the detailed examination of qualitative responses offered depth to the insights, ensuring that the strategic decisions will be well-informed and grounded in actual stakeholder feedback.

## Response Rate & Statistical Reliability

A total of 742 responses were received between January 29, 2025 and March 3, 2025. After cleaning responses from outside of Guilford County and those that failed captcha (potentially indicating access from automated “bots”), as well as those responses that were completely blank, there was a total of 606 valid final responses.

The survey results provide a statistically sound representation of Guilford County, with 606 completed and valid responses achieving a 95% confidence level and a  $\pm 4\%$  margin of error. This means that the survey findings are likely to reflect the broader community's opinions within this margin of error in 95 out of 100 cases.

However, while the response rate is robust, some notable biases may exist. The data is slightly skewed toward white respondents (57.3% respondents vs. the county's 54.2%) and significantly skewed toward female respondents (78.1% of responses were from women). This suggests that the survey results may be more reflective of female perspectives and experiences. It is quite common for female respondents to be over-represented in public opinion surveys. Several studies and survey organizations have noted that women tend to participate in surveys at higher rates than men.<sup>25</sup> This phenomenon is observed across different types of surveys, including political polls, health studies, and social science research.

None-the-less, the income distribution of respondents is concentrated toward lower and moderate-income households, with 58% earning below 80% of the Area Median Income. These disparities suggest that the survey sample may provide a strong reflection of those with low-to-moderate incomes. This is particularly relevant when assessing issues such as food insecurity, housing affordability, and access to social services, as the survey responses are more likely to capture the experiences of economically vulnerable populations. However, caution should be taken in generalizing the survey results to the entire county, as wealthier households are notably underrepresented.

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<sup>25</sup> See Smith, W. G. (2008). Does gender influence online survey participation? A record-linkage analysis of university faculty online survey response behavior. *ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED501717*. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED501717.pdf> AND Slauson-Blevins, K., & Johnson, K. M. (2016). Doing gender, doing surveys? Women's gatekeeping and men's nonresponse in multi-actor reproductive surveys. *Sociological Inquiry*, 86(3), 427–449. DOI:10.1111/soin.12122

## Location of Respondents

The map below presents a breakdown of U.S. zip codes from survey respondents, with a focus on Guilford County, North Carolina. The top five zip codes with the most responses in Guilford County include 27405 (northeast Greensboro, 13.26%), 27410 (northwest Greensboro, 9.47%), 27406 (south Greensboro, 8.84%), 27455 (north Greensboro, 7.37%), and 27265 (High Point, 6.95%). These five areas collectively account for nearly half of the total responses. Other notable zip codes in Greensboro include 27403, 27407, and 27408, each representing 5.89% of the respondents. The data suggests a broad geographic distribution of participants across the county, with a higher concentration in Greensboro and High Point.

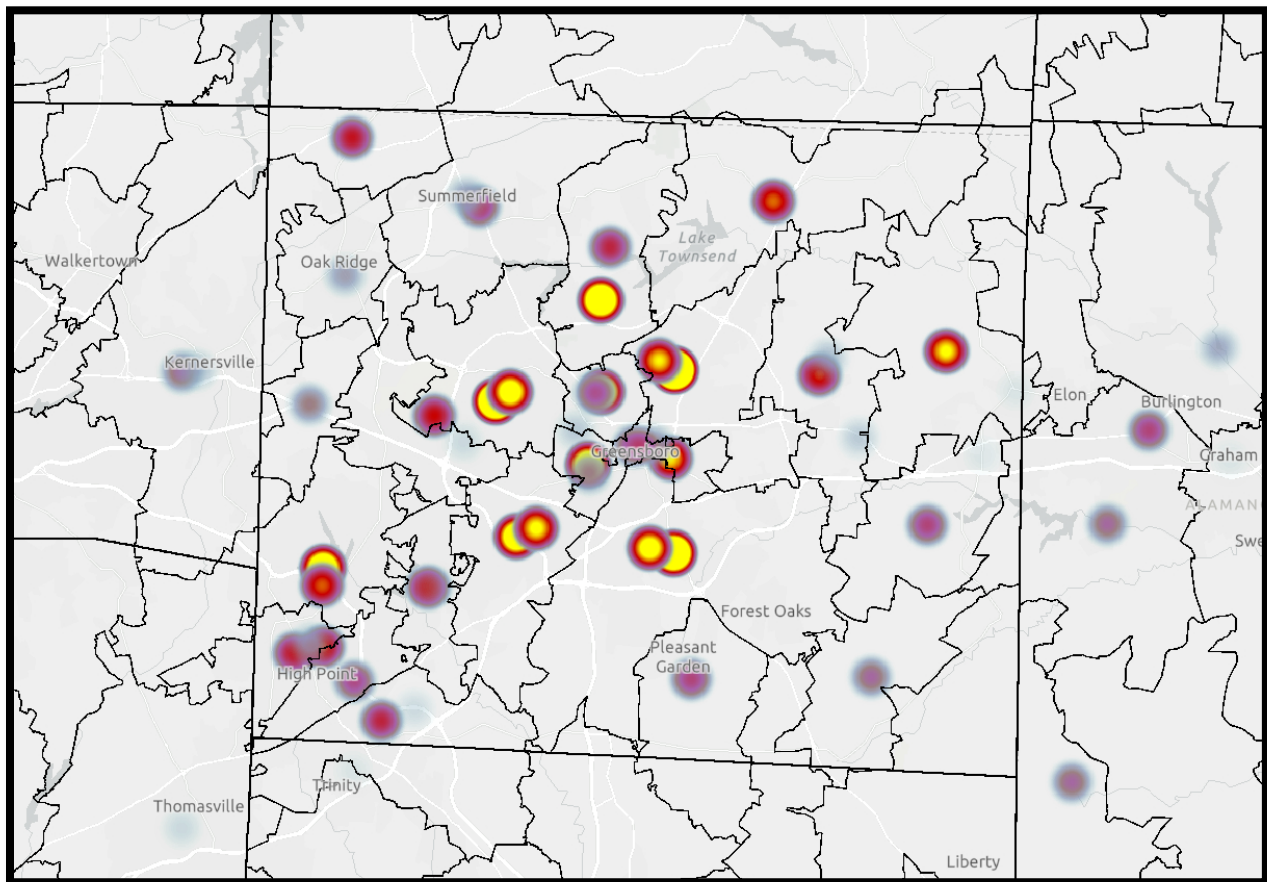


Figure 16 - Location of Respondents by Zip Codes

## Race & Ethnicity

The survey responses reflect a demographic composition that is slightly skewed compared to the broader Guilford County population. White or Caucasian respondents made up 57.3% of the sample, slightly higher than the county’s 54.2%, while Black or African American respondents comprised 29.0%, which is underrepresented compared to the county’s 36.3%. American Indian/Native American or Alaska Native individuals were notably overrepresented at 3.6% compared to the county’s 0.8%, as were Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander respondents at 1.0% compared to 0.1% in the county. Asian respondents, however, were significantly underrepresented, making up only 1.3% of the sample compared to 5.7% countywide. Among respondents, 8.5% identified as Hispanic, which is slightly lower than the county’s 10.2%. Notably, 110 responses were missing race/ethnic information and 26 indicated they wished not to report race.

Table 14 – Race and Ethnicity of Respondents

<b>Race/ Ethnicity</b>	<b>N Responses</b>	<b>% Responses</b>	<b>Guilford County</b>
<b>White or Caucasian</b>	301	57.3%	54.2%
<b>Black or African American</b>	152	29.0%	36.3%
<b>American Indian/Native American/Alaska</b>	19	3.6%	0.8%
<b>Asian</b>	7	1.3%	5.7%
<b>Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander</b>	5	1.0%	0.1%
<b>Other</b>	15	2.9%	
<b>Prefer not to say</b>	26	5.0%	
<b>Total</b>	525	100.0%	
<b>Missing</b>	110		
<b>Hispanic</b>	42	8.5%	10.2%

## Sex/Gender Characteristics

The survey responses show a significant gender imbalance, with women making up 78.1% of respondents, while men account for only 18%. A small percentage (0.2%) identified as "Other," and 3.6% preferred not to disclose their gender.

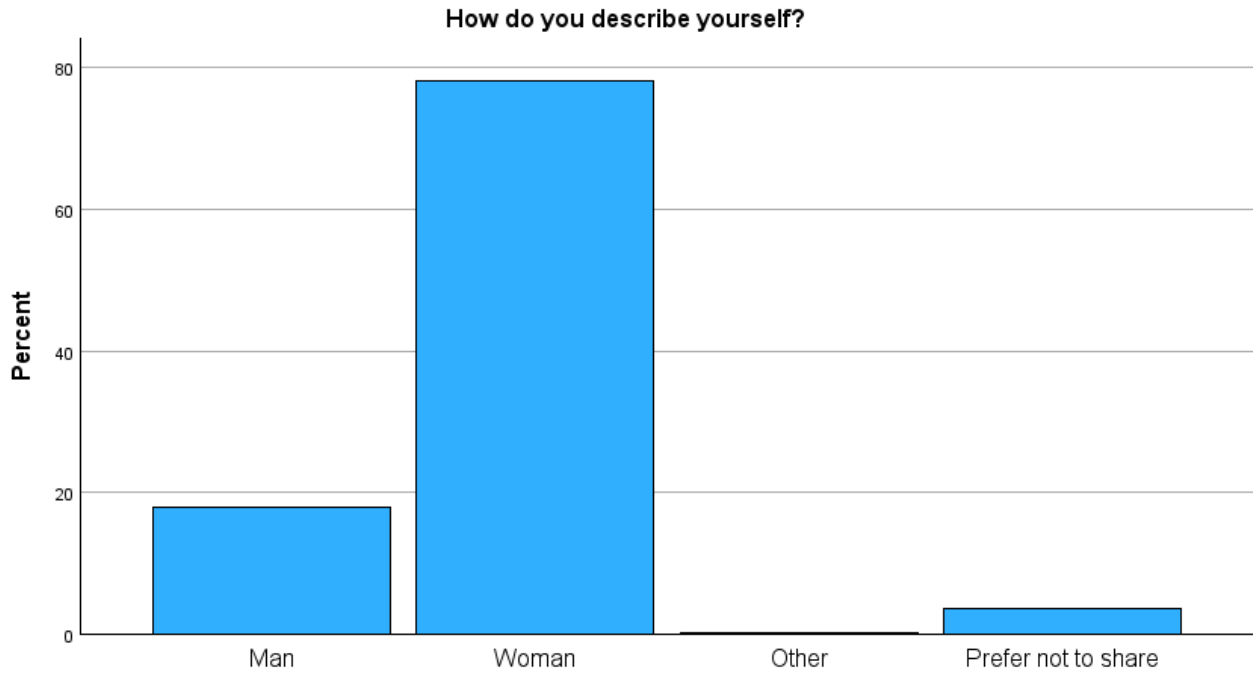


Figure 17 - Sex/Gender of Respondents

## Educational Attainment

The educational attainment of survey respondents is skewed toward higher levels of education. Among valid responses, 29.8% reported holding a bachelor’s degree, while 26.8% had a graduate or professional degree, making up more than half (56.6%) of the respondents. An additional 11.1% had an associate’s or technical degree, and 18.5% had completed some college but did not earn a degree. Those with only a high school diploma or GED accounted for 8.5%, while 2.2% had some high school education or less. A small percentage (3.0%) preferred not to disclose their education level. This suggests that the survey sample is more highly educated than the general population, which may influence perspectives on economic and social issues.

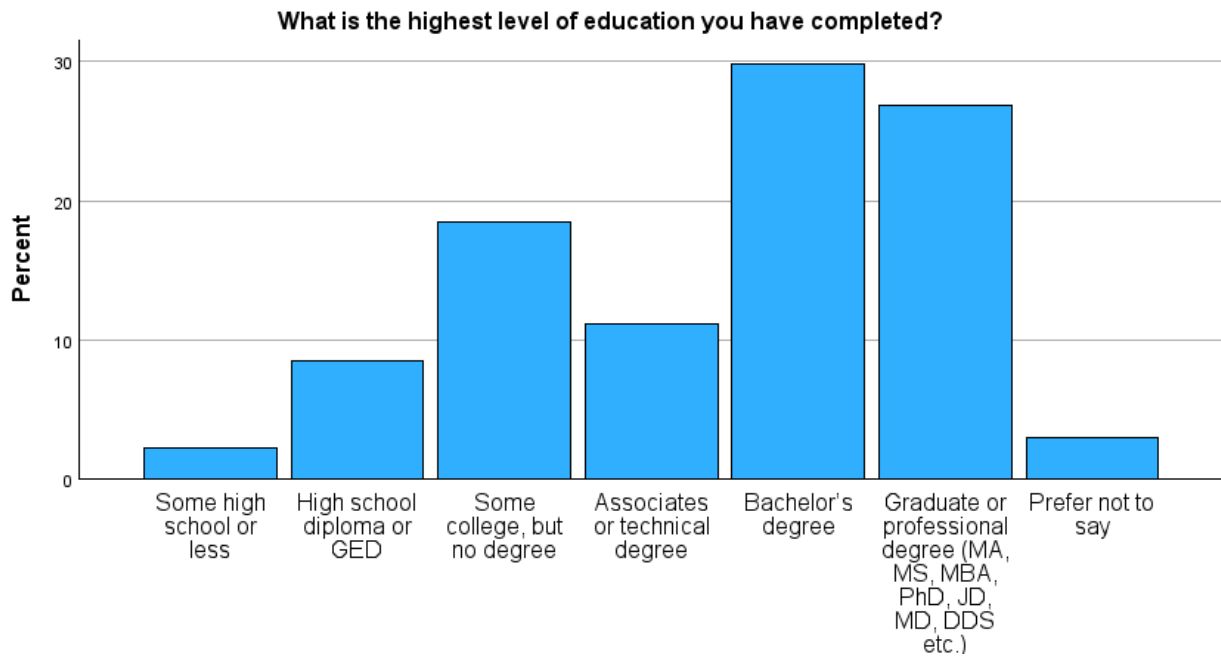


Figure 18 - Educational Attainment

## Age Distribution

The age distribution of survey respondents shows a strong representation of older adults. Among valid responses, 27.8% were 65 years or older, making up the largest age group. Those aged 55-64 accounted for 18.1%, while 17.1% were between 45-54 years old. The 35-44 age group comprised 17.9% of respondents, and 14.3% were between 25-34 years old. Younger respondents were less represented, with only 4.2% in the 18-24 age group and 0.8% under 18. The remaining 16.8% of responses were missing. This indicates that the survey sample is weighted toward older populations, which may influence perspectives on economic and social issues.

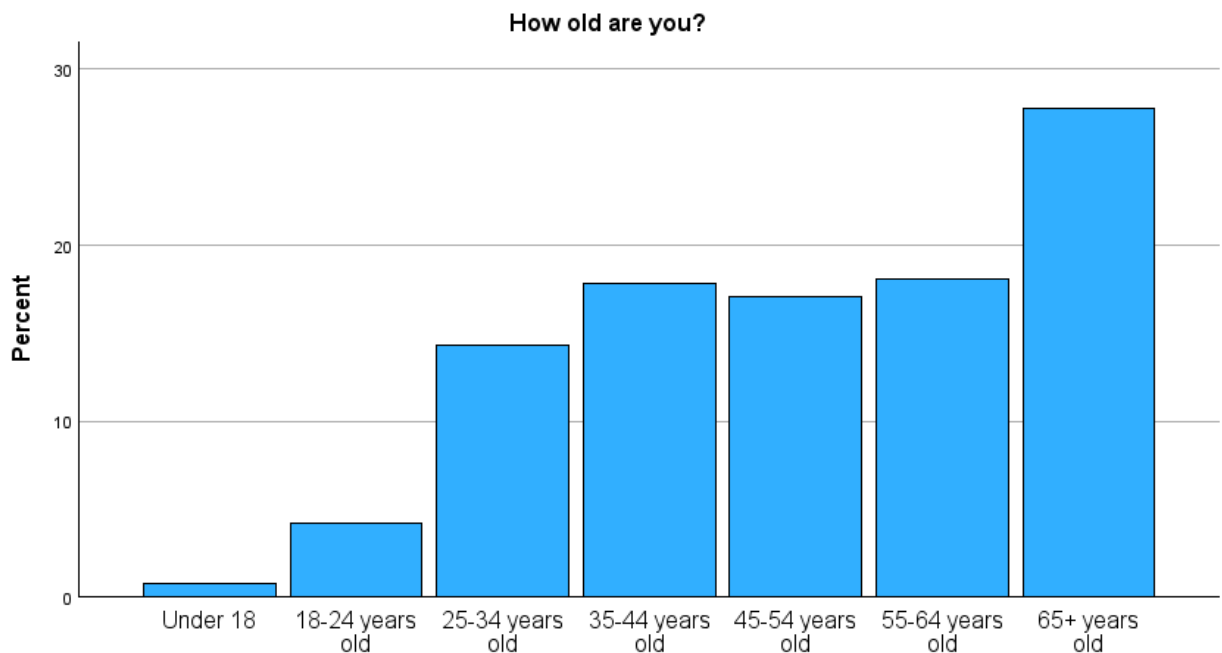


Figure 19 - Age Distribution of Respondents

## Household Characteristics

The majority of respondents live in households of two people (34.9%), followed by those who live alone (21.6%) and those in three-person households (20.6%). Four-person households account for 12.0%, while smaller percentages report living in households of five (6.6%) or six (2.2%). Only a small fraction (less than 2%) resides in households with seven or more people, with just 0.2% reporting more than ten members.

The majority of respondents live in households with two adults (69.8%), followed by those with three adults (16.3%) and four adults (6.1%). Very few (1.3% or less) report living in households with five or more adults.

The majority of households have two adults earning income (60.5%), followed by those with only one income-earning adult (23.1%) and three-income households (10.0%). A small percentage (3.2%) report no adults earning income, while households with four or more earners are rare, making up just 3.7% combined.

These findings highlight the predominance of smaller households with a limited number of income earners, which may have implications for economic stability and food security within the community.

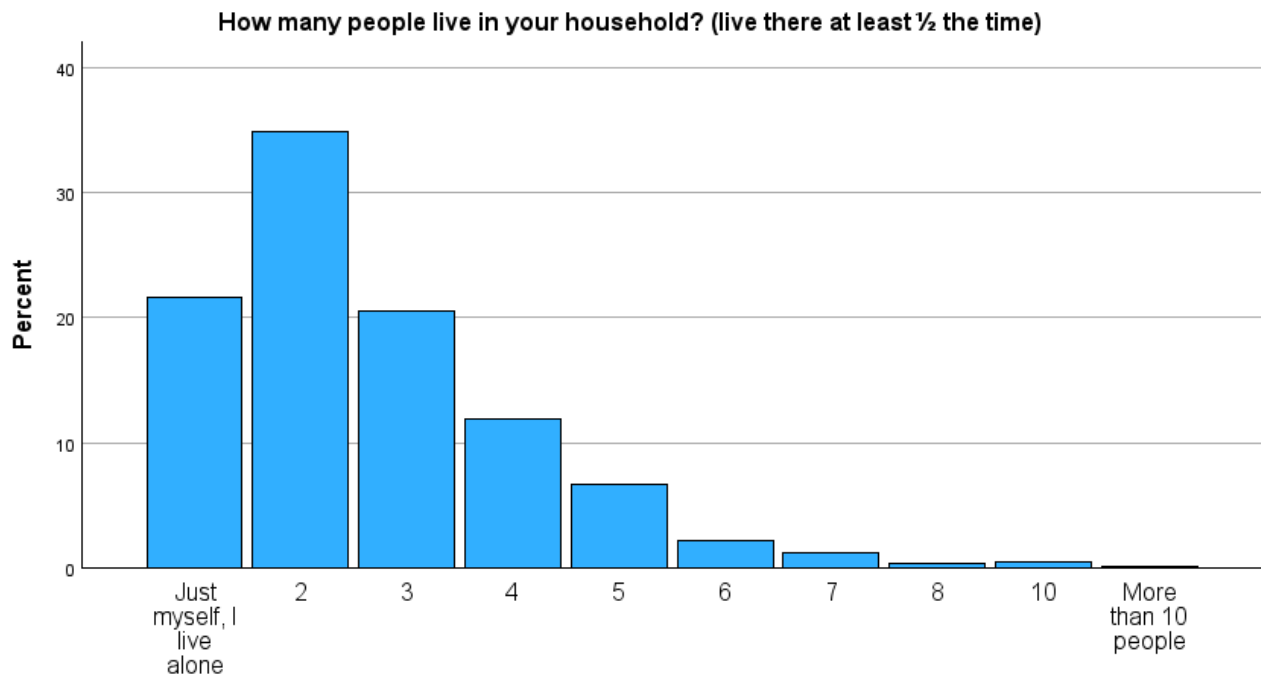


Figure 20 - Number of People in Household

## Household Income

The reported monthly earnings indicate a concentration of lower-income households compared to the broader income distribution in Guilford County. A significant portion (58%) of respondents earn below \$5,000 per month, which translates to an annual income of \$60,000 or less. In contrast, U.S. Census data for Guilford County shows that only about 47% of households fall within this income range, suggesting an overrepresentation of lower-income individuals in the survey sample.

The survey data also shows that 21.7% of respondents earn \$2,000 or less per month (equivalent to \$24,000 annually), highlighting a substantial presence of low-income individuals. This is notably higher than the county’s Census data, which indicates that only 14% of households earn below \$25,000 annually. Meanwhile, higher-income brackets are underrepresented in the survey; only 7.7% of respondents report earning over \$10,000 monthly (equivalent to more than \$120,000 annually), whereas Census data indicates that about 33% of Guilford County households earn over \$100,000 per year. The computed mean monthly income (using mid points for each range) was \$4,610 per month.

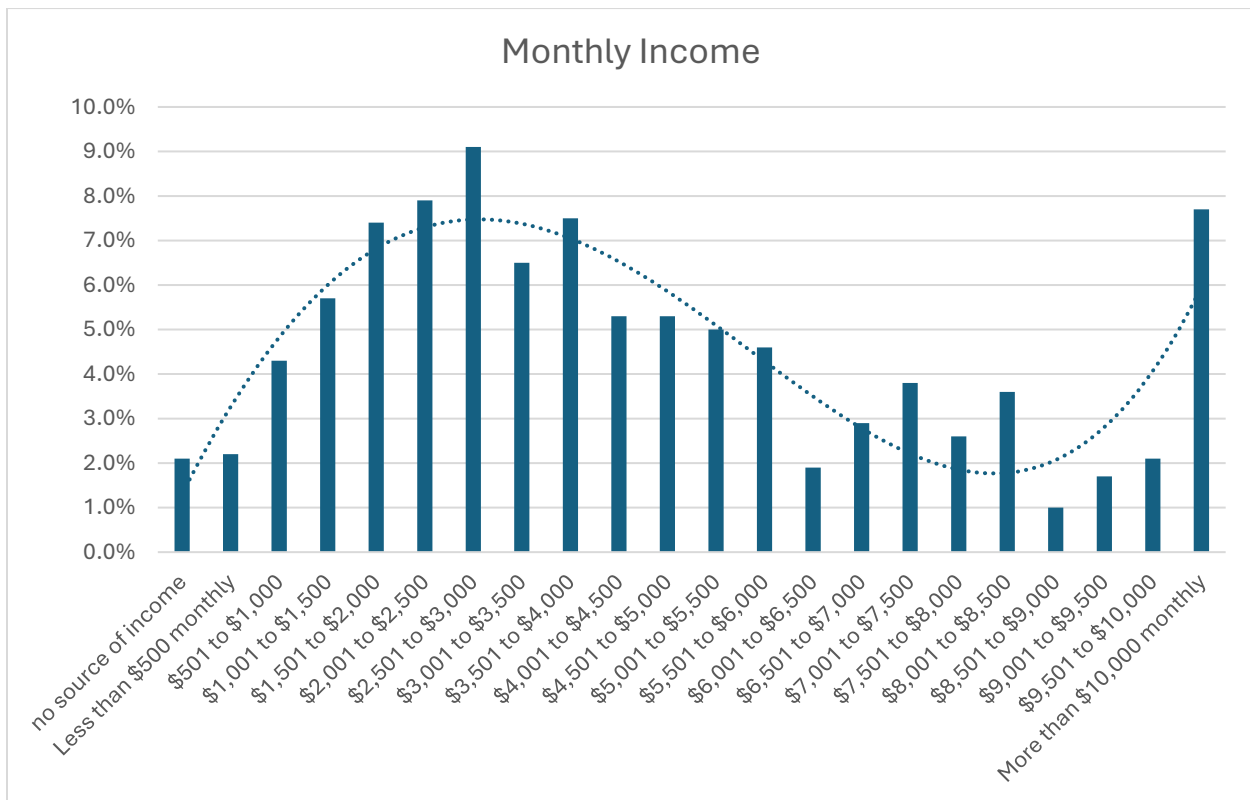


Figure 21 - Monthly Reported Income

## Monthly Food Costs

The majority of households spend between \$301 and \$400 per month on food (15.6%), followed by those spending \$401 to \$500 (13.4%) and \$201 to \$300 (12.1%). About 10.7% of households report spending \$501 to \$600, while smaller percentages fall into higher spending brackets. Notably, 3.4% of households spend less than \$100 per month on food, and only 0.8% report spending over \$2,000 monthly. Overall, most households fall within the \$201 to \$600 range, with spending gradually decreasing at higher levels. The computed mean food cost (using mid points for each range) was \$592.87 per month.

**How much does your household spend on food each month? (Include federal or state benefits, such as SNAP, WIC, etc.)**

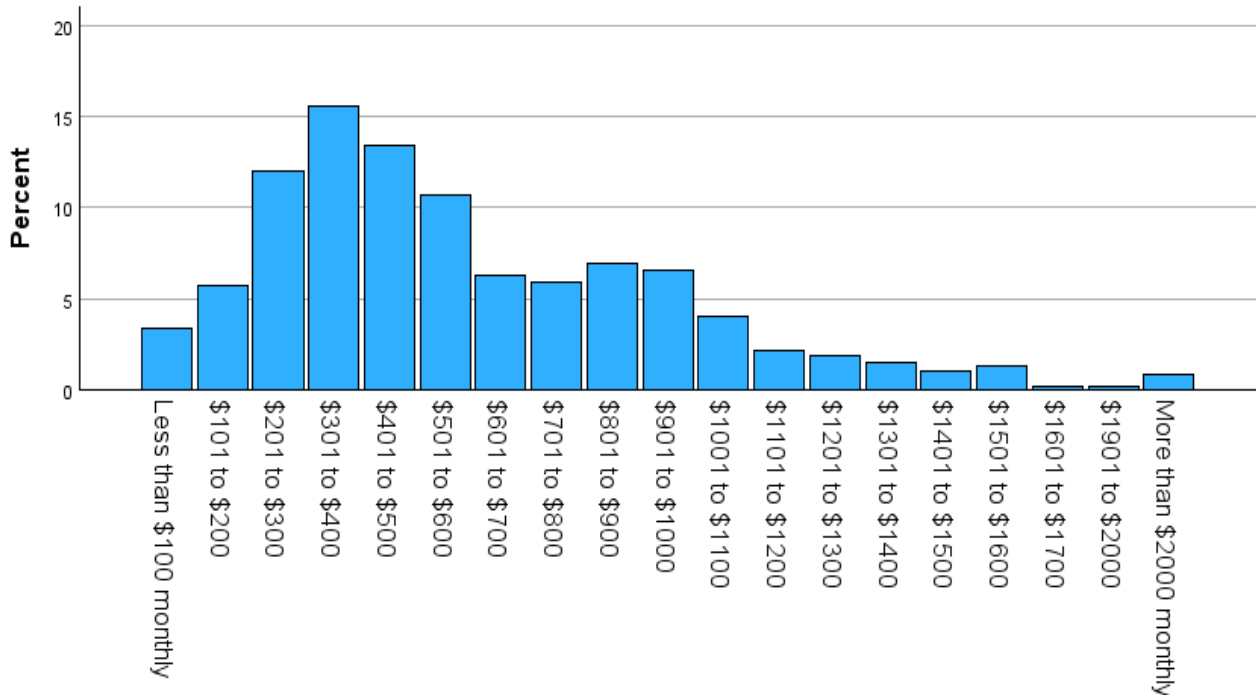


Figure 22 - Monthly Food Expenditures

*Monthly Food Costs as Proportion of Income by Race/Ethnicity*

Monthly food costs as a share of income were imputed from reported monthly income and food expenditures. On average food was 19.68% of monthly income with a range from 1% to 540% reported.

The table below presents data on monthly income, food costs, and the proportion of income spent on food across different racial and ethnic groups. White (Non-Hispanic) respondents have the highest average monthly income at \$5,303.98, while also spending the lowest proportion of their income on food (17%, or \$613.16). Black (Non-Hispanic) households report a lower average income of \$4,125.94, with food expenses of \$535.45, making up 20% of their income. Hispanic respondents, across all racial categories, earn an average of \$4,006.41 per month and spend \$652.38 on food, amounting to 22% of their income. The Mixed Race (Non-Hispanic) group has the lowest reported monthly income at \$3,355.26, yet their food costs are relatively high (\$583.33), making food expenses a larger burden at 25% of their total income.

These findings indicate income and racial disparities in food affordability, with lower-income minority groups dedicating a higher percentage of their earnings to food, potentially impacting financial stability and access to other necessities.

<b>Race</b>	<b>Income (imputed mean)</b>	<b>Food Cost (imputed mean)</b>	<b>Ratio Food/Income</b>
<b>White (Non-Hispanic)</b>	\$5,303.98	\$613.16	17%
<b>Black (Non-Hispanic)</b>	\$4,125.94	\$535.45	20%
<b>Mixed Race (Non-Hispanic)</b>	\$3,355.26	\$583.33	25%
<b>Hispanic (Any Race)</b>	\$4,006.41	\$652.38	22%

*Figure 23 - Monthly Income, Food Costs, and Ratio of Food to Income*

## Food Rationing by Income, Age, & Race/Ethnicity

The summary table below highlights disparities in food rationing across race, ethnicity, sex, and age. Overall, 50.1% of respondents reported rationing food (having chosen not to buy food, bought lower-quality food, skipped meals, or ate less due to financial constraints in the past year) due to financial constraints, but certain groups experienced significantly higher rates. Mixed-race (77.8%) and Hispanic (73.2%) respondents had the highest rates of food rationing, followed closely by Black (57.7%) respondents, indicating racial and ethnic disparities in food security. In contrast, White (42.8%), Asian (25.0%), and Native American (0.0%) respondents reported lower instances of food rationing, suggesting differences in economic stability, community support, or access to resources.

Gender disparities also emerged, with 53.5% of women reporting food rationing compared to 39.1% of men, reinforcing existing research that women—especially those in caregiving roles or single-parent households—are more vulnerable to food insecurity.

Age trends indicate that younger adults (18-24 years old) experienced the highest levels of food rationing (71.4%), followed by the 35-44 age group (66.7%) and 25-34 age group (59.2%), suggesting that financial instability among young adults, including student debt and lower wages, contributes to food insecurity. In contrast, older adults (65+) had the lowest rate (32.6%), likely due to social security benefits or more stable financial situations.

These findings suggest that food insecurity disproportionately affects marginalized racial/ethnic groups, younger adults, and women. Policymakers and community organizations should consider targeted interventions, such as expanding food assistance programs, increasing access to affordable groceries in underserved communities, and addressing economic disparities that contribute to food rationing.

Table 15 - Summary Table Food Rationing by Race/Ethnicity, Sex, & Age

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>White (Non-Hispanic)</b>	42.8%	57.2%
<b>Black (Non-Hispanic)</b>	57.7%	42.3%
<b>Native American (Non-Hispanic)</b>	0.0%	100.0%
<b>Asian</b>	25.0%	75.0%
<b>Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander</b>	100.0%	0.0%
<b>Other</b>	50.0%	50.0%
<b>Mixed Race (Non-Hispanic)</b>	77.8%	22.2%
<b>Hispanic (Any Race)</b>	73.2%	26.8%
<b>Man</b>	39.1%	60.9%
<b>Woman</b>	53.5%	46.5%
<b>Under 18</b>	25.0%	75.0%
<b>18-24 years old</b>	71.4%	28.6%
<b>25-34 years old</b>	59.2%	40.8%
<b>35-44 years old</b>	66.7%	33.3%
<b>45-54 years old</b>	56.5%	43.5%
<b>55-64 years old</b>	46.1%	53.9%
<b>65+ years old</b>	32.6%	67.4%

### *Reasons for Rationing*

For those who reported having to ration their food, the most common financial reason for food insecurity is inflation, with 65.4% of respondents who ration indicating that rising food prices make it difficult to afford meals. Other major factors include unexpected expenses such as medical bills or car repairs (50.2%), insufficient income (45.6%), and high housing costs (43.8%). Utility bills (42.4%), debt repayment (36.7%), and transportation costs (27.2%) also significantly impact food affordability. Medical expenses (23.7%), irregular income (22.6%), and savings depletion (22.3%) contribute further financial strain. Less commonly cited but still relevant are job loss (19.1%), financial support for others (14.1%), and childcare costs (8.8%). Overall, a combination of economic pressures, essential living expenses, and financial instability limit households' ability to afford sufficient and quality food.

Table 16 - Financial Reasons for Rationing

<b>What are some of the financial reasons why you have chosen not to buy food, bought food of less quality, skipped meals, or ate less in the last year?</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>% Responses</b>	<b>% Cases</b>
<b>Inflation:</b> Rising prices of food and other goods make it difficult to afford meals.	185	15.00%	65.40%
<b>Unexpected expenses:</b> I had an emergency expense (e.g., medical bills, car repairs).	142	11.50%	50.20%
<b>Insufficient income:</b> My earnings are not enough to cover my basic needs.	129	10.40%	45.60%
<b>High housing costs:</b> Rent/mortgage payments take up most of my income.	124	10.00%	43.80%
<b>Utility costs:</b> I prioritize paying for electricity, water, or heating over food.	120	9.70%	42.40%
<b>Debt repayment:</b> Loan, student loan, or credit card payments reduce my food budget.	104	8.40%	36.70%
<b>Transportation costs:</b> Gas, car payments, or public transportation fees are too high.	77	6.20%	27.20%
<b>Medical expenses:</b> Healthcare or prescription costs leave little for groceries.	67	5.40%	23.70%
<b>Irregular income:</b> My earnings fluctuate, making budgeting difficult.	64	5.20%	22.60%
Savings depletion: I ran out of savings to rely on.	63	5.10%	22.30%
<b>Loss of income:</b> I lost a job or experienced reduced work hours.	54	4.40%	19.10%
<b>Supporting others:</b> I am financially supporting family members or dependents including alimony or child support.	40	3.20%	14.10%
<b>Childcare costs:</b> Paying for childcare limits how much I can spend on food.	25	2.00%	8.80%
<b>Financial literacy:</b> I struggle with budgeting or managing money effectively.	24	1.90%	8.50%
<b>None of the above.</b>	6	0.50%	2.10%
<b>Other</b>	11	0.90%	3.90%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1235</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>436.40%</b>

*Access to Enough & Preferred Foods*

Nearly half (47.3%) of respondents reported having enough of the kinds of food they want to eat, while 38.0% stated they had enough food but not always the kinds they preferred. However, 10.6% indicated that they sometimes did not have enough to eat, and 3.0% reported often not having enough food. This suggests that while the majority have adequate food access, a significant portion of households still experience some level of food hardship.

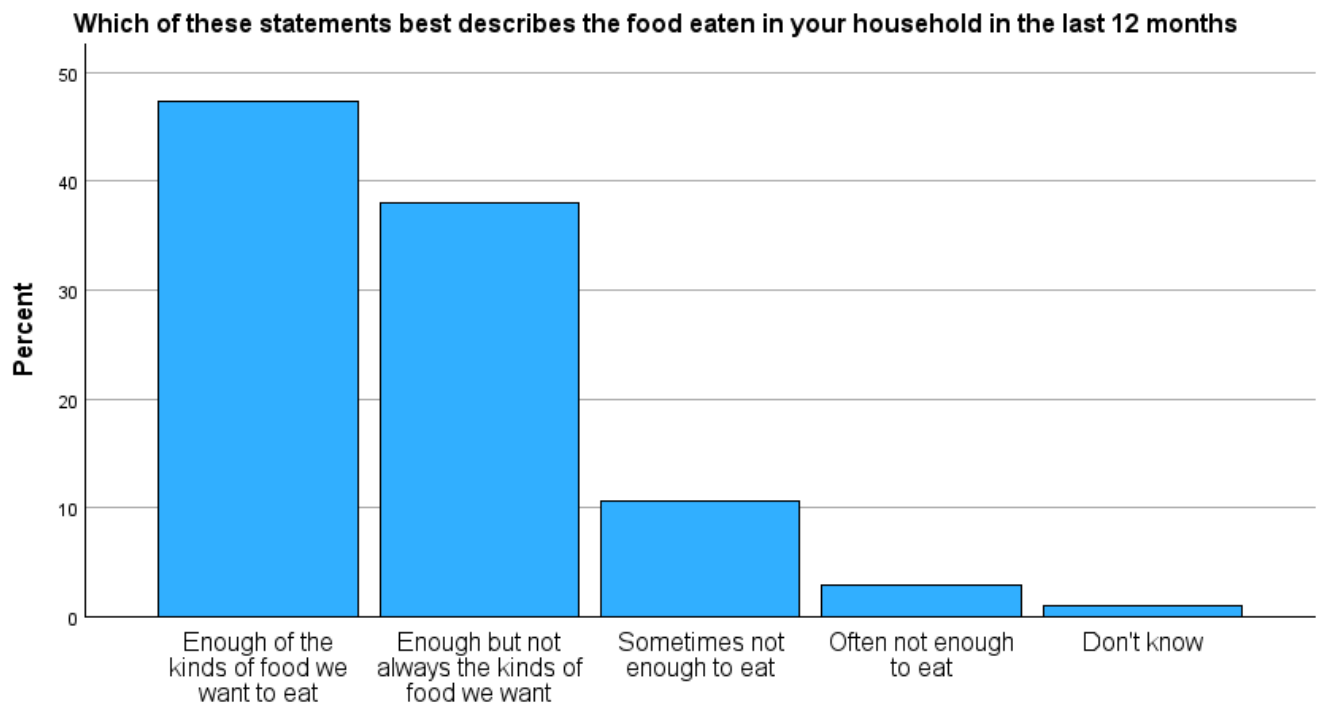


Figure 24 -Enough Food and The Kinds Preferred

*Food Affordability, Food Hardship, & Hunger*

Food insecurity affects a significant portion of respondents, with 43.3% expressing concern that their food would run out before they could afford more (32.4% sometimes, 11% often). Similarly, 37.7% reported that the food they purchased did not last, and they lacked money to buy more (26.8% sometimes, 10.9% often). Additionally, nearly half (48.2%) stated they couldn't afford to eat balanced meals (29.1% sometimes, 19.1% often), highlighting financial constraints affecting food quality and availability.

Over two-thirds (67.4%) of respondents who had rationed their food reported that they or other adults in their household had to cut the size of meals or skip meals in the past year due to a lack of money for food. Among those affected, 44.0% experienced this some months but not every month, while 34.7% reported it happening almost every month. Only 19.2% faced this issue for just one or two months.

Food insecurity has significantly impacted many respondents over the past year. About 37.1% reported eating less than they felt they should due to a lack of money for food, while 23.7% experienced hunger but did not eat because they could not afford food. Additionally, 15.8% reported losing weight for the same reason.

A smaller but significant portion (24.7%) stated they or other adults in their household went an entire day without eating due to financial constraints. Among those who skipped meals for a full day, 48.1% experienced it some months but not every month, and 44.4% faced this hardship almost every month. These findings underscore the persistent and severe nature of food insecurity for many households.

*Table 17 - Household Food Insecurity*

<b>In the last 12 months</b>	<b>Never True</b>	<b>Sometimes True</b>	<b>Often True</b>
We worried whether our food would run out before we got money to buy more	56.7%	32.4%	11.0%
The food that we bought just didn't last, and we didn't have money to get more.	62.4%	26.8%	10.9%
We couldn't afford to eat balanced meals.	51.8%	29.1%	19.1%

Table 18 – Food Restrictions

In the last 12 months	Yes	No
Did you ever eat less than you felt you should because there wasn't enough money for food?	37.1%	62.9%
Were you every hungry but didn't eat because there wasn't enough money for food?	23.7%	76.3%
Did you lose weight because there wasn't enough money for food?	15.8%	84.2%
Did you or other adults in your household ever not eat for a whole day because there wasn't enough money for food?	24.7%	75.3%

## Respondent Self-Definition of Food Insecure

The responses to the question, "In your own words, what does food insecurity mean to you?" revealed several key themes, including financial struggles, lack of access to food, nutritional deficiencies, and hunger. Below is a breakdown of the major themes and insights drawn from the responses.

### Financial Struggles

The most commonly cited aspect of food insecurity was financial hardship, with 136 responses (25%) explicitly mentioning money-related struggles. Many respondents expressed that food insecurity meant not having enough money to buy food or having to make difficult choices between necessities. One respondent stated, "Not having enough money to get what I need," while another described the challenge as, "Struggling to afford meals, even when working full time." These responses underscore the economic pressures that force individuals and families into food-insecure situations. Additional examples include:

- *"Unsure about having enough funds for food and accessing to purchase."*
- *"Well, I work a full-time job and have a child in college, and I pay all the bills, and a lot of times I'm skimping on food. It's quite embarrassing, and I'm not on welfare or food card, and it makes me mad to see folks at the grocery store with two baskets and misuse of the card and selling people money off the card."*
- *"When a person cannot afford to buy food or does not have a way to access food needed."*
- *"That you don't have enough money to buy food or just not enough food."*

### Lack of Access

A significant portion of responses (132 responses, 24%) highlighted accessibility issues, referring not only to financial limitations but also to geographic and logistical barriers. Several respondents noted the difficulty of getting to stores that offer affordable, healthy

food, particularly in food deserts. One individual described food insecurity as "Not being able to access food when you need it, whether because of location, lack of transportation, or other obstacles." This theme emphasizes that food insecurity is not just about affordability but also about physical availability. Additional examples include:

- *"To me, food insecurity is not having the resources to access food. Those resources could be financial or geographical."*
- *"To me, food insecurity covers not having access to grocery stores in your immediate area, not being able to pay for food items for your family, not having access to healthier meals due to cost or availability, having to skip meals, or reduce sizes."*
- *"This means that food cannot be safely supplied, leading to the possibility of starvation and a lack of fresh food."*

### *Nutritional Deficiency*

Another common theme was nutritional quality, with 87 responses (16%) expressing concerns about the inability to access or afford healthy food. Many described food insecurity as being forced to eat unhealthy or inadequate diets due to cost constraints. One respondent noted, "It means eating cheap, unhealthy food because that's all I can afford," while another stated, "When fresh food is out of reach and you have to rely on processed meals." These responses highlight the intersection of food insecurity and public health, particularly in relation to diet-related illnesses. Additional examples include:

- *"To obtain healthy food without worrying if it will be enough until the next paycheck."*
- *"This would mean having poor nutrition and going hungry! No one in this country should ever go hungry, but now we have a madman running the country. Pathetic circumstances we now live in."*
- *"This means that damage may occur to the body and that the children in the family may not get enough nutrients."*
- *"The lack of nutrients in the quality of food available for the income received."*
- *"This would mean having poor nutrition and going hungry! No one in this country should ever go hungry, but now we have a madman running the country. Pathetic circumstances we now live in."*

### *Hunger and Starvation*

While fewer in number, 24 respondents (4%) explicitly mentioned hunger and starvation as defining characteristics of food insecurity. These individuals described experiences of skipping meals, going to bed hungry, or enduring long periods without food. One respondent shared, "Going without meals because there is nothing in the house," while another stated,

"Feeling the pain of an empty stomach and knowing there's no food coming anytime soon." These accounts reflect the most extreme and dire experiences of food insecurity. Additional examples include:

- *"This means that food cannot be safely supplied, leading to the possibility of starvation and a lack of fresh food."*
- *"Not having the money to buy fresh produce or balanced meals. Not able to buy my child healthy snacks because others are cheaper. I eat very little to make sure my child has enough to eat and is not hungry."*
- *"Not having enough money to purchase enough food so that you and family are hungry or worrying that you might not have enough, needing to be very careful about what you purchase to have enough, not being able to purchase what is healthy or even what you like to eat."*

#### *Other Responses*

Interestingly, 256 responses (47%) did not fit neatly into any of the predefined categories, highlighting the complexity and multidimensional nature of food insecurity. Some responses touched on emotional and psychological distress, such as feeling ashamed or anxious about food uncertainty. Others mentioned reliance on government aid and community food programs but did not elaborate on their experiences. Some examples include:

- *"When food is limited."*
- *"We have failed as a nation and state to help those in need. Failed to be able to survive as needed because of life-changing things."*
- *"To me, it means being ashamed or embarrassed for not having enough food to feed yourself or your family."*
- *"Where you have to be mindful of what you're spending on food to make sure things stretch."*
- *"The president is creating a trade war, and I fear I will not have enough money to pay the bills, pay education costs for my dependent, and pay for food."*
- *"When you have kids in your household, as long as there's food for them, I don't worry about it. But when they're used to a lifestyle of eating junk and everything, and when it comes down to semi-struggling, then that's when you need to change your eating habits and start buying smarter and saving so money can last longer. So we all have to learn lessons when things happen."*

This analysis reveals that food insecurity is perceived of in various ways, ranging from financial struggles and lack of access to food to deeper concerns about nutrition, hunger, and psychological distress. While affordability is a dominant theme, it is intertwined with accessibility and quality concerns.

*Respondent Meets Self-Definition of Food Insecure*

Slightly more than half (54.0%) of respondents reported never experiencing food insecurity (as they defined it themselves), yet 34.1% indicated they sometimes faced it and a smaller but notable portion of respondents considered their household to be food insecure often (7.9%) or very often (4.0%). These findings suggest many households struggle with food insecurity, and a significant portion (11%) experience it.

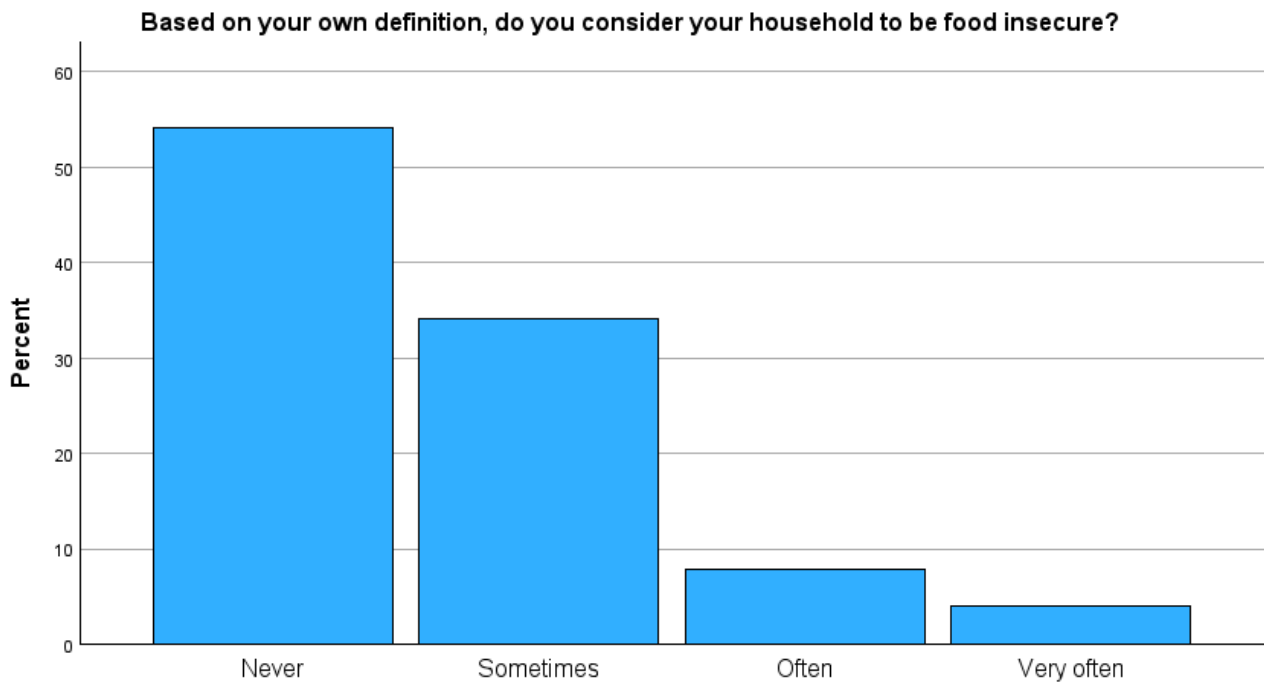


Figure 25 - Food Insecurity Based on Self-Defined Criteria

## Access to Nutritious Foods

While economic uncertainty clearly impacts food affordability, 67.8% of respondents reported having consistent access to healthy and nutritious food they enjoy, yet 32.2% indicated they do not. This suggests that while most households have reliable access to nutritious food, nearly one-third still face challenges in maintaining a consistent and enjoyable diet.

Among racial groups, individuals identifying as Mixed Race (Non-Hispanic) report the highest level of food insecurity, with 61.1% indicating they do not have access to food. The "Other" category also reports significant food insecurity, with 50% lacking access. Black (Non-Hispanic) respondents (36.6%) and Hispanic (Any Race) respondents (33.3%) also show relatively high percentages of food insecurity. In terms of gender, women (32.9%) report higher food insecurity than men (19.5%). Among age groups, young adults (25-34 years old) have the highest rate of food insecurity (37.1%), followed closely by those aged 45-54 (36.9%). These disparities highlight the need for targeted interventions to address food insecurity among racially diverse populations, young adults, and women.

Table 19 - Summary Table Food Access by Race/Ethnicity, Sex, & Age

Respondents	Yes	No
<b>White (Non-Hispanic)</b>	76.0%	24.0%
<b>Black (Non-Hispanic)</b>	63.4%	36.6%
<b>Native American (Non-Hispanic)</b>	100.0%	
<b>Asian</b>	100.0%	
<b>Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander</b>	100.0%	
<b>Other</b>	50.0%	50.0%
<b>Mixed Race (Non-Hispanic)</b>	38.9%	61.1%
<b>Hispanic (Any Race)</b>	66.7%	33.3%
<b>Man</b>	80.5%	19.5%
<b>Woman</b>	67.1%	32.9%
<b>Under 18</b>	100.0%	
<b>18-24 years old</b>	71.4%	28.6%
<b>25-34 years old</b>	62.9%	37.1%
<b>35-44 years old</b>	64.0%	36.0%
<b>45-54 years old</b>	63.1%	36.9%
<b>55-64 years old</b>	64.4%	35.6%
<b>65+ years old</b>	79.9%	20.1%

### *Barriers to Access Among Those with Food Hardships*

The table on the next page presents barriers to accessing healthy and nutritious food among those who indicated food hardship, with respondents able to select multiple challenges. The most frequently cited barrier, affecting 82.1% of cases, is the affordability of healthy food, highlighting economic constraints as a primary issue. Additionally, 65.4% of respondents indicate that unhealthy, processed food is a more affordable and convenient option, further underscoring the role of cost and accessibility in food choices. Time constraints (24.6%), dietary restrictions (20.7%), and physical or health limitations (16.2%) are also notable barriers.

Other structural and logistical challenges, such as the absence of nearby stores with fresh food (15.1%), lack of reliable transportation (11.7%), and the unavailability of culturally relevant food options (9.5%), contribute to limited food access. Lower percentages of respondents report barriers related to food preparation knowledge, storage, and understanding of nutrition. While less common, issues such as stigma around food assistance (6.7%) and safety concerns when accessing food (3.9%) also impact food security. These findings emphasize the intersection of economic hardship, convenience, and structural barriers in shaping food access disparities.

Further analysis indicates that affordability of healthy and nutritious food is a significant barrier across various social demographics, but some groups are disproportionately impacted. Age-wise, those aged 35-44, 45-54, 55-64, and 65+ years old report the highest rates of food affordability challenges, with 85.7%, 96.9%, 87.5%, and 87.9% respectively indicating that they struggle to afford healthy food. This suggests that middle-aged and older adults face notable economic constraints, possibly due to factors such as underemployment, fixed incomes, or healthcare-related financial burdens.

Women report a higher rate of difficulty in affording nutritious food, with 87.2% selecting this barrier, compared to 78.9% of men. This disparity aligns with broader economic trends where women, particularly those in caregiving roles or facing gender pay gaps, may have less financial security.

Racial disparities in food affordability are also evident. Black respondents report the highest rate of struggle, with 94.1% indicating that they cannot always afford healthy food, followed by Hispanic respondents at 68.8%. White non-Hispanic individuals reported an 84.1% rate of difficulty. Notably, respondents identifying as Native American, Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, or mixed race all reported 100% rates of difficulty affording healthy food. This finding underscores the persistent racial inequities in economic stability and food access, with historically marginalized groups facing systemic barriers that limit their financial capacity to maintain a nutritious diet.

Table 20 - Barriers to Accessing Healthy & Nutritious Food

<b>What barriers do you experience to having consistent access to healthy and nutritious food you enjoy?</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>% Responses</b>	<b>% Cases</b>
I can't always afford healthy and nutritious food.	147	27.2%	82.1%
Unhealthy and processed food is more affordable and convenient than healthy options.	117	21.6%	65.4%
I don't have enough time to plan, shop for, or prepare healthy meals.	44	8.1%	24.6%
I have food allergies or dietary restrictions that limit my access to affordable and nutritious options.	37	6.8%	20.7%
I have physical or health limitations that make it difficult to shop for or prepare nutritious food.	29	5.4%	16.2%
There are no nearby stores that sell fresh or nutritious food in my area.	27	5.0%	15.1%
I lack reliable transportation to access stores that sell healthy food.	21	3.9%	11.7%
The stores near me don't carry culturally relevant or preferred healthy food options.	17	3.1%	9.5%
I don't know how to prepare healthy meals	15	2.8%	8.4%
I don't have adequate storage or refrigeration at home for fresh or perishable foods.	15	2.8%	8.4%
I don't understand nutrition well enough to make healthy choices.	14	2.6%	7.8%
Fresh and nutritious foods are only available seasonally in my area.	13	2.4%	7.3%
I feel uncomfortable or stigma around using food assistance programs	12	2.2%	6.7%
I don't feel safe traveling to or shopping in areas where I could access healthy food.	7	1.3%	3.9%
I don't have a working stove or oven	6	1.1%	3.4%
Language barriers make it difficult for me to understand food labels, recipes, or nutrition information.	5	0.9%	2.8%
I don't have pots, pans, or other items to cook with	5	0.9%	2.8%
I don't have running water	1	0.2%	0.6%
Other	9	1.7%	5.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>541</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>302.2%</b>

## Primary Sources of Food

This table provides insights into the various food sources utilized by respondents, with supermarkets being the most commonly used source, reported by 92.9% of cases. Fast food and restaurants rank second, with 30.2% of cases indicating reliance on these sources, followed closely by warehouse clubs (27.7%) and farmers’ markets (25.8%). Local grocery stores also serve as a significant source of food (22.5%). Specialty stores (15.8%) and homegrown food (14.3%) are also notable sources, albeit to a lesser extent. The reliance on food pantries (10.9%), government programs (9.9%), and convenience stores (9.9%) suggests that some experience constraints affecting their access to food. The presence of alternative food sources, such as community gardens (4.4%), hunting/fishing (2.5%), and meal delivery services (2.7%), indicates that some seek diverse methods to meet their needs. These findings highlight the dominance of supermarkets and fast food/restaurants as the primary food provider while also emphasizing the importance of local markets, prepared foods, and community-based food programs in supporting food access.

Table 21 - Primary Source of Foods

Where do you primarily get your food? (Select all that apply)	N	% Responses	% Cases
Supermarkets	487	29.1%	92.9%
Fast Food or Restaurants	158	9.4%	30.2%
Warehouse Clubs	145	8.7%	27.7%
Farmers’ Markets	135	8.1%	25.8%
Local Grocery Stores	118	7.0%	22.5%
Specialty Stores	83	5.0%	15.8%
Homegrown Food	75	4.5%	14.3%
Food Pantries	57	3.4%	10.9%
Convenience Stores	52	3.1%	9.9%
Government Programs	52	3.1%	9.9%
Friends, Neighbors, or Family	50	3.0%	9.5%
Delivery Services	47	2.8%	9.0%
Food Co-ops	36	2.1%	6.9%
Online Grocery Stores	34	2.0%	6.5%
Free community meal/ soup kitchen program	34	2.0%	6.5%
Workplace or School Programs	29	1.7%	5.5%
Community Gardens	23	1.4%	4.4%
Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA)	14	0.8%	2.7%
Meal Delivery Services	14	0.8%	2.7%
Hunting, Fishing, and Foraging	13	0.8%	2.5%
Meal Kit Services	8	0.5%	1.5%
Other	11	0.7%	2.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1675</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>319.7%</b>

### *Primary Consideration in Acquiring Food*

The survey responses indicate that cost is the most important factor when purchasing or acquiring food, with 89.6% of respondents choosing it as a priority. Freshness follows closely, being important to 77.2% of respondents, highlighting a strong preference for high-quality, perishable foods. Nutritional value is another significant concern, with 63.6% of respondents prioritizing it. Convenience is a factor for 38.7%, suggesting that ease of access and preparation also play a notable role in food choices. Organic or sustainably produced food is valued by 27.1%, while locally sourced food is important to 22.6% of respondents. The availability of culturally relevant foods is a consideration for 12.2%, indicating that while it is less commonly prioritized, it is still meaningful to a portion of the population. The findings suggest that affordability, freshness, and nutrition are the dominant concerns when acquiring food, while sustainability, locality, and cultural relevance are secondary but still relevant factors.

*Table 22 - Most Important Factors in Acquiring Food*

<b>What factors are most important to you when purchasing or acquiring food?</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>% Responses</b>	<b>% Cases</b>
<b>Cost</b>	463	26.8%	89.6%
<b>Freshness</b>	399	23.1%	77.2%
<b>Nutritional value</b>	329	19.0%	63.6%
<b>Convenience</b>	200	11.6%	38.7%
<b>Organic or sustainably produced</b>	140	8.1%	27.1%
<b>Locally sourced</b>	117	6.8%	22.6%
<b>Availability of culturally relevant foods</b>	63	3.6%	12.2%
<b>Other</b>	19	1.1%	3.7%
<b>Total</b>	1730	100.0%	334.6%

*Frequency, Distance, & Mode of Transportation to Primary Food Source*

Most of respondents acquire food on a weekly basis (38.1%) or even several times a week (27.2%). Another 23.6% acquire food several times a month, while a smaller portion (5.2%) obtain food only once a month. Very few individuals get food less frequently, with 1.3% acquiring food every other month and 0.4% less than every other month.

The data indicates that most respondents (66.7%) travel within a five-mile radius for food. A notable 10.8% travel ten miles, and smaller portions of the population report traveling 15 miles (3.8%) or 20 miles (1.6%). These findings highlight that while most individuals have food access within a reasonable distance, if they have personal transportation, there is a subset of the population that may face greater food access challenges due to longer travel requirements.

The majority of respondents (81.6%) rely on a personal vehicle as their primary mode of transportation to obtain food, highlighting the importance of car access for food security. A smaller portion (5.8%) depend on rides from family, friends, or neighbors, while 2.9% use public transit to reach food sources. Food delivery services serve as a method for 4.0% of respondents, suggesting that some individuals do not travel at all to obtain food. Alternative transportation methods such as walking (2.1%), bicycling (0.8%), and ride-share services (1.2%) are used less frequently. The data indicates that food access is heavily dependent on vehicle ownership, and those without access to personal transportation may face additional barriers in obtaining groceries, particularly if relying on public transit, shared rides, or delivery services.

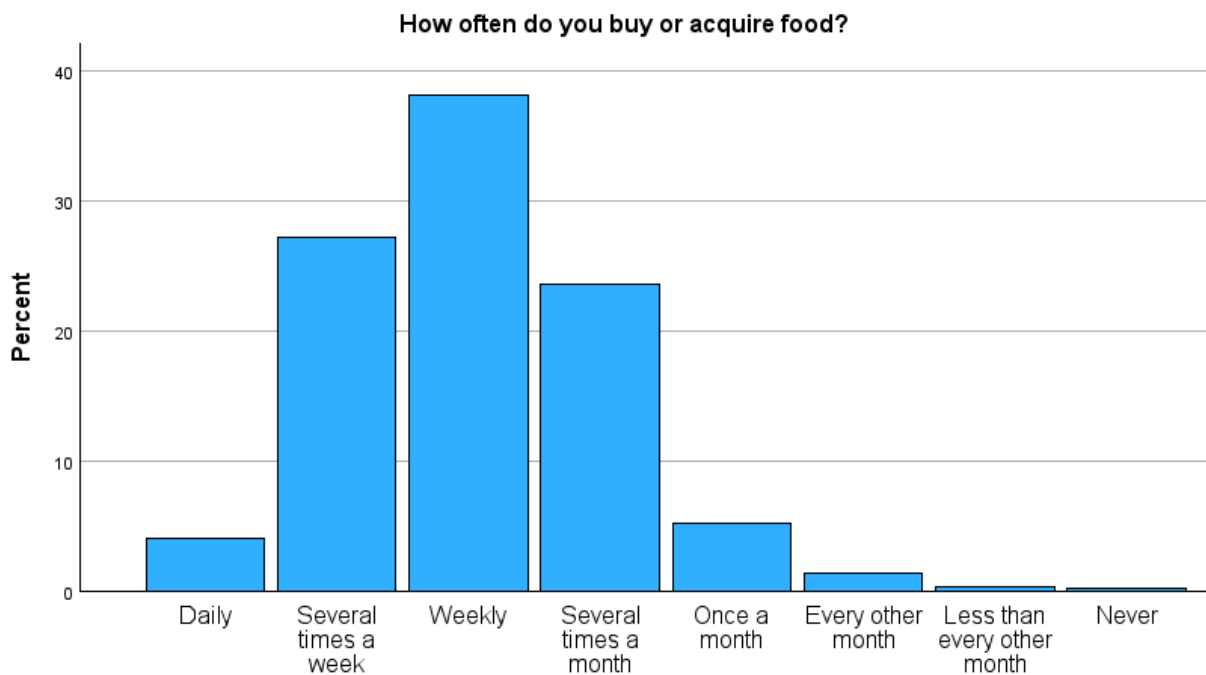


Figure 26 - Frequency of Acquiring Food

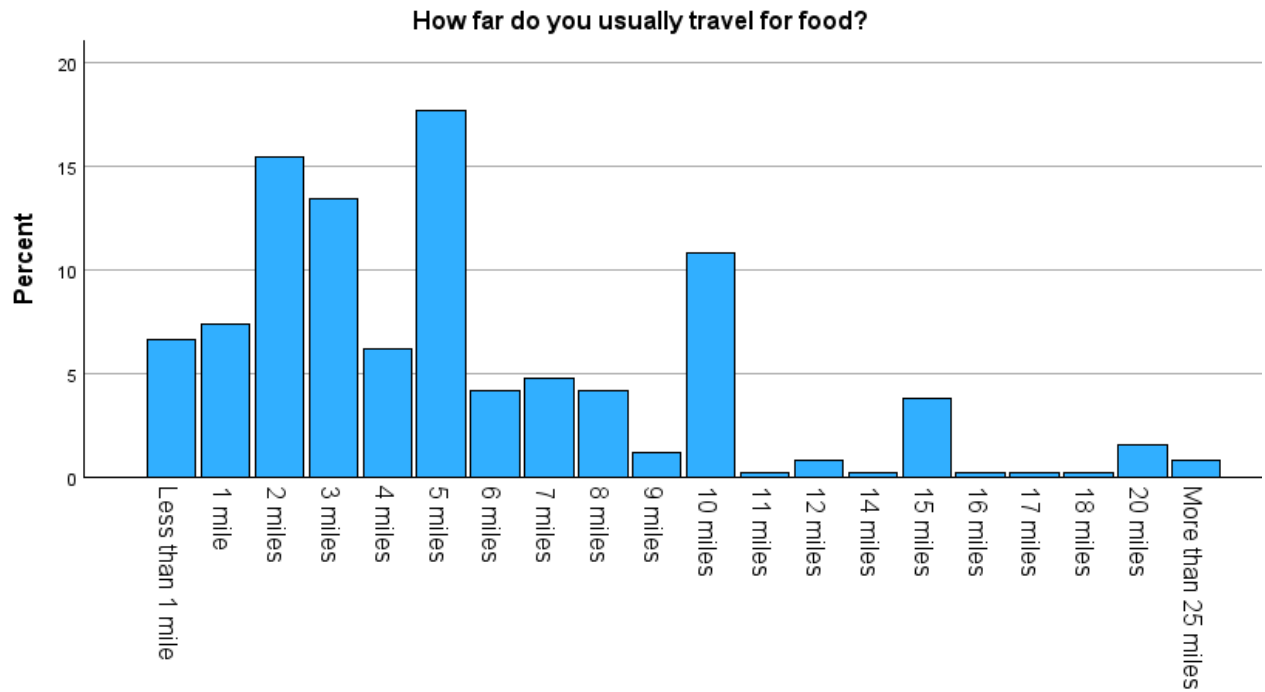


Figure 27 - Distance Travelled to Primary Food Source

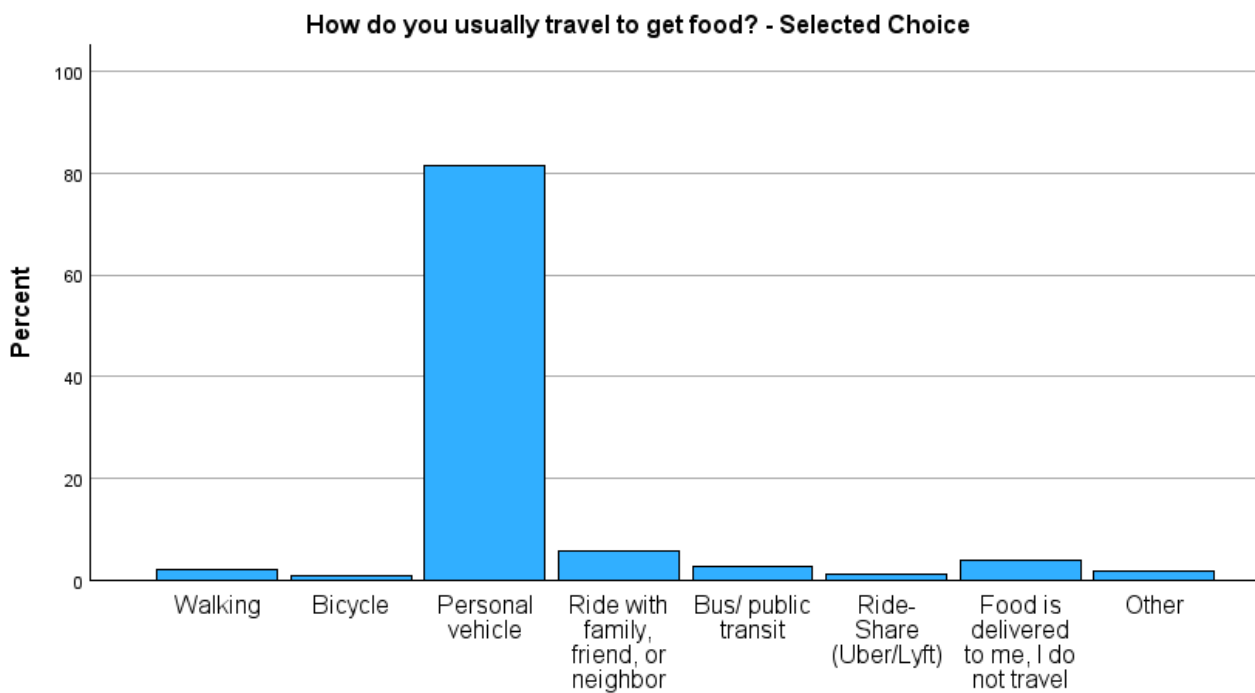


Figure 28 - Primary Transportation to Food Source

### *Food Affordability, Variety, & Quality*

The data indicates that affordability of healthy and nutritious food is a concern for many respondents. While 5.6% of participants find it "Very Affordable" and 28.5% consider it "Somewhat Affordable," a significant portion (23.7%) remain neutral on the issue. However, affordability challenges are evident, with 32.6% of respondents rating food as "Somewhat Unaffordable" and 9.5% as "Very Unaffordable," meaning that over 42% of respondents experience difficulties in accessing affordable nutritious food. These findings suggest that while some individuals find healthy food reasonably priced, a substantial percentage of the population perceives it as a financial burden, potentially indicating a need for support programs to improve food affordability.

For the variety of food available, the majority of respondents rated it as either "Good" (37.5%) or "Average" (34.0%), together accounting for 71.5% of valid responses. A smaller proportion (21.7%) rated food variety as "Excellent," while a minority found it lacking, with 4.9% rating it as "Poor" and 2.0% as "Very Poor." Regarding the quality of food available, the distribution of responses is similar, with "Good" (37.2%) and "Average" (37.2%) making up the majority (74.5%). The percentage of those rating food quality as "Excellent" is slightly lower (19.2%) compared to food variety, while those who rated it as "Poor" (4.8%) or "Very Poor" (1.6%) remain a small fraction. The overall trend suggests that while food variety and quality are generally perceived as acceptable or good, there is a potential need for improvement to increase the proportion of residents who view these factors as excellent.

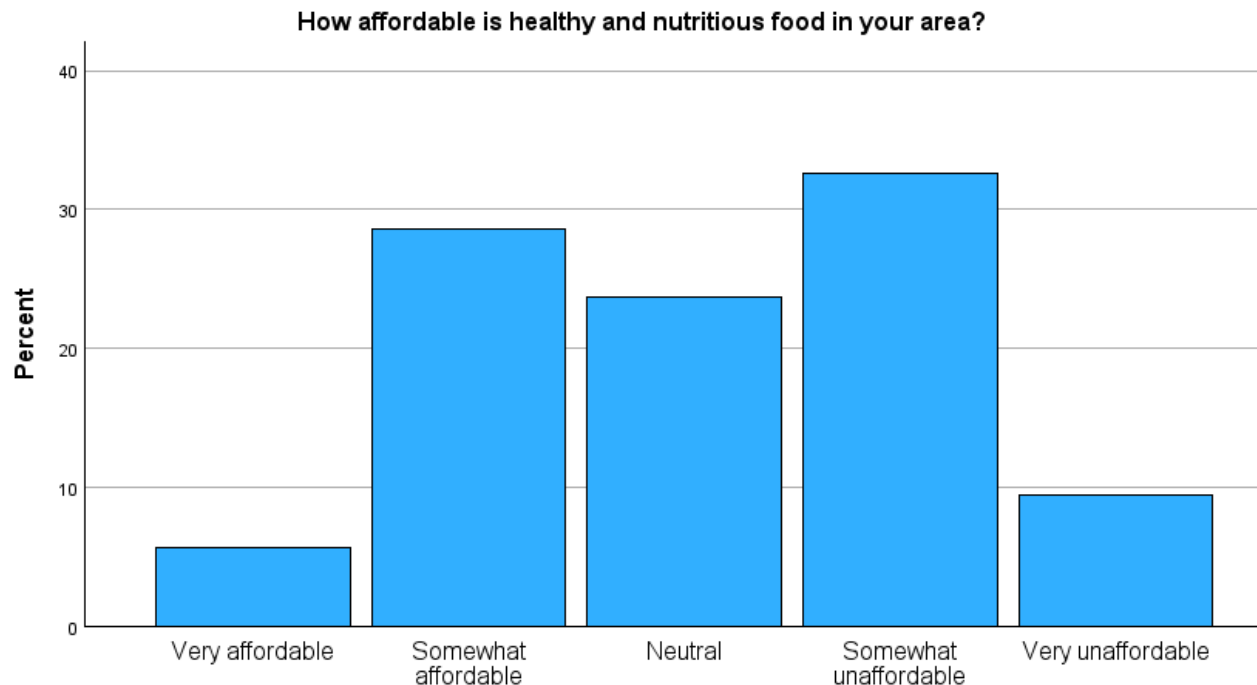


Figure 29 - Affordability of Healthy & Nutritious Food

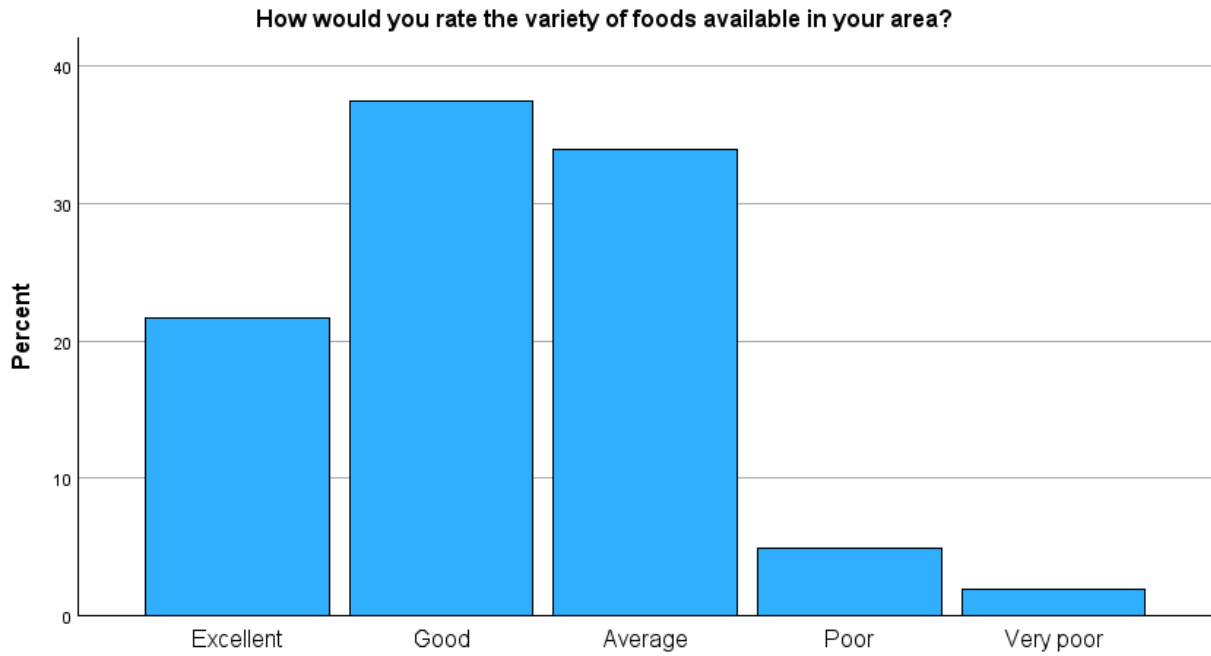


Figure 30 – Variety of Foods

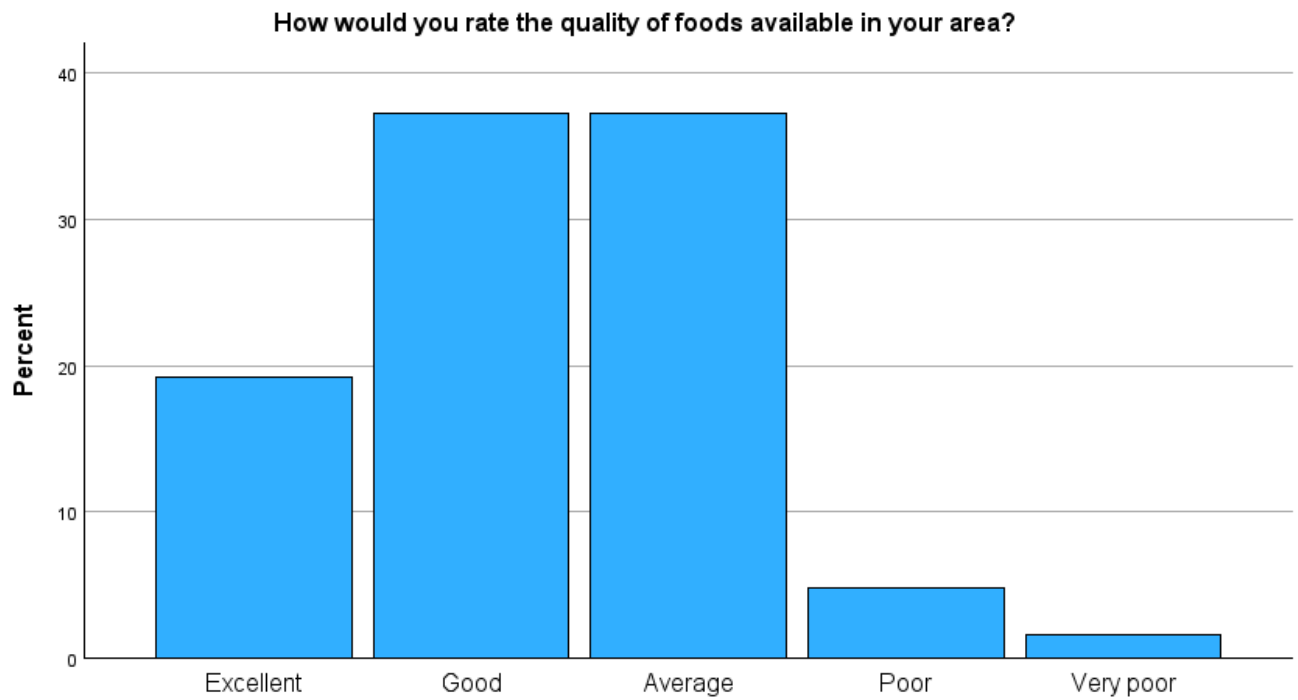


Figure 31 – Quality of Foods

## Food Assistance Programs

While the prior question explored primary sources of food and a majority of respondents (73.5%) indicated they do not use any food assistance programs as their primary source of food, this question asked respondents if they have ever used food assistance in the last year. The findings indicate that a majority of respondents (67.7%) did not use any food assistance programs in the past year, suggesting that most individuals in the surveyed population may not rely on such support. However, 17.6% of respondents accessed SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program), making it the most commonly used assistance program. Food Pantries were the second most frequently utilized resource, with 12.9% of respondents reporting their use. Other notable programs include School Meals Programs (5.7%), WIC (5.1%), and Backpack Programs (5.0%), indicating that a portion of the population, particularly families with children, rely on targeted food assistance services.

Less commonly used programs include Fresh Mobile Produce Programs (4.8%), Meal or Soup Kitchens (4.2%), and senior-specific resources like Senior Resources of Guilford (1.8%) and the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (1.6%). The total percentage of cases exceeds 100% (128.1%), reflecting that some individuals used multiple food assistance programs.

These results highlight that while food insecurity affects a minority of respondents, there is a diverse range of resources accessed by those in need.

<b>Have you used any food assistance programs in the last year? (Select all that apply)</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>% Responses</b>	<b>% Cases</b>
<b>No, I have not used any food assistance programs in the last year</b>	342	52.9%	67.7%
<b>SNAP - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program</b>	89	13.8%	17.6%
<b>Food Pantries</b>	65	10.0%	12.9%
<b>School Meals Programs</b>	29	4.5%	5.7%
<b>WIC - Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)</b>	26	4.0%	5.1%
<b>Backpack Programs</b>	25	3.9%	5.0%
<b>Fresh Mobile Produce Programs</b>	24	3.7%	4.8%
<b>Meal or Soup Kitchens</b>	21	3.2%	4.2%
<b>Senior Resources of Guilford</b>	9	1.4%	1.8%
<b>Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program</b>	8	1.2%	1.6%
<b>Other</b>	9	1.4%	1.8%
<b>Total</b>	647	100.0%	128.1%

### Most Common Food Pantry Items

Among those who use food pantries, the most commonly received item is canned goods (38.5%), followed by fresh vegetables and fruit (15.4%). Other frequently distributed items include miscellaneous food products (12.3%), meat (10.8%), and dried goods like rice and pasta (7.7%). Dairy products such as milk, cheese, and yogurt account for 4.6% of distributed items, while bread and snacks are each received by 3.1% of users. Less commonly obtained items include eggs, desserts, and personal hygiene products (each at 1.5%). The data suggests that non-perishable and staple items are the most frequently distributed through food pantries, while fresh and perishable items are less commonly available.

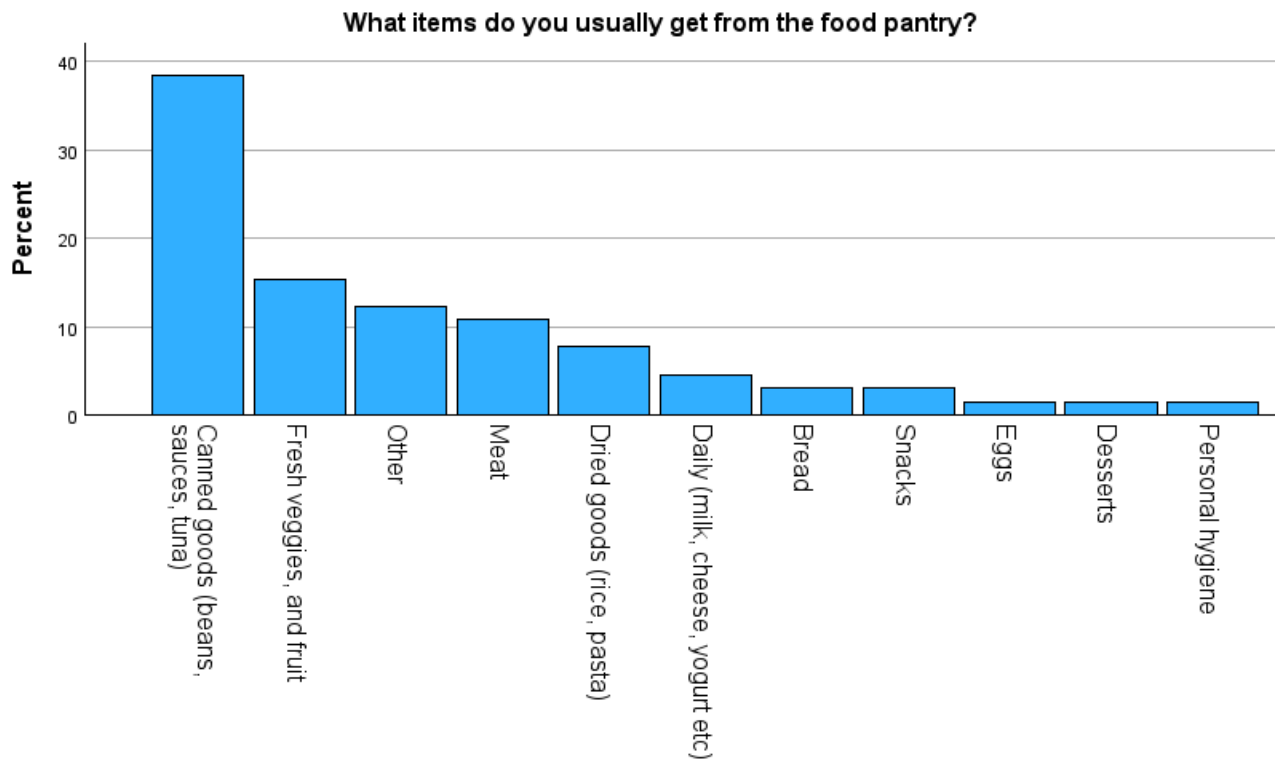


Figure 32 - Most Common Food Pantry Items

### *Items Desired from Food Pantry*

The responses indicate that the most commonly desired items from food pantries are fresh produce (25 mentions), including fruits and vegetables, often with concerns about their quality and shelf life. Meat (16 mentions) is another high-demand item, with several respondents noting that current pantry distributions do not provide enough to meet their needs. Other notable categories include staples like rice, flour, sugar, bread, and pasta (4 mentions), as well as requests for greater variety and better quality of food (2 mentions). Some responses fell into an "Other" category (5 mentions), reflecting unique or unspecified needs. An example is one respondent said, "Things not covered by food stamps including tp, feminine hygiene items, detergent, basic toiletries." Overall, the responses highlight a strong demand for perishable, high-protein, and nutrient-dense food options, along with concerns about freshness, availability, and overall selection.

### *Satisfaction with Food Assistance Programs*

The data indicates that among those who responded, 37.9% are somewhat satisfied with local food assistance programs, while 11.8% are extremely satisfied, bringing the total satisfaction rate to nearly 50%. However, 23.7% of respondents remain neutral, expressing neither satisfaction nor dissatisfaction. Dissatisfaction is notable, with 16.6% somewhat dissatisfied and 10.1% extremely dissatisfied, meaning that over a quarter (26.7%) of respondents have concerns about these programs.

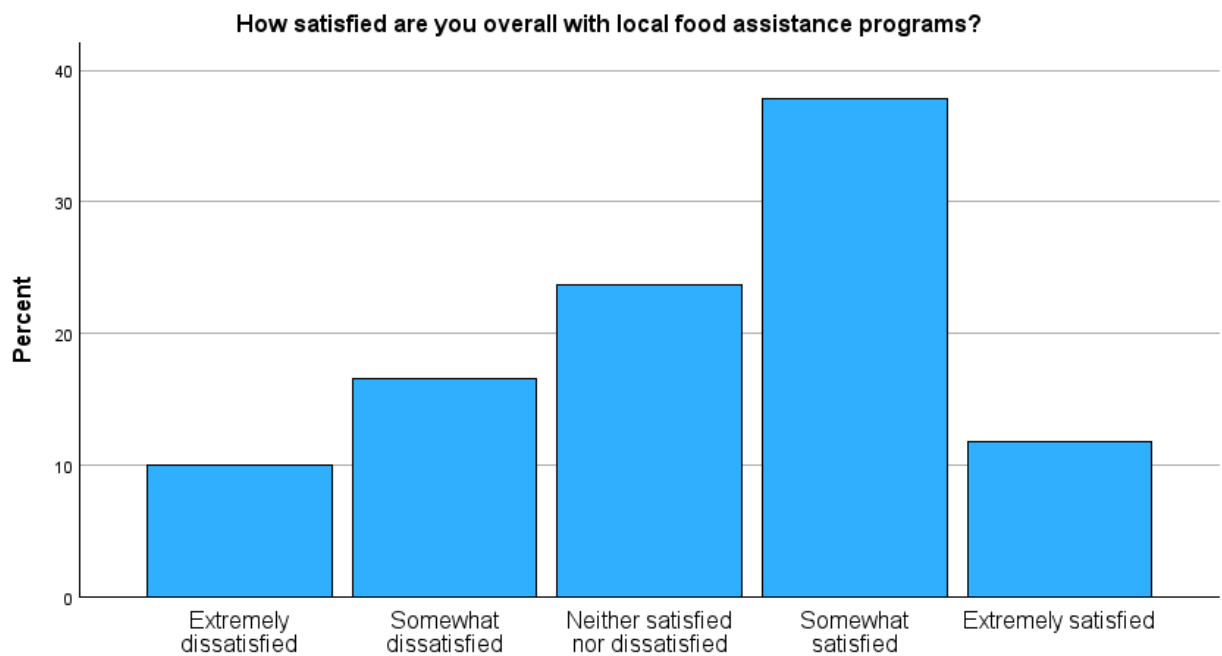


Figure 33 - Satisfaction with Local Food Assistance Programs

### *Reasons Not to Use Food Assistance*

Participants were also asked why they don't use food assistance programs. The most common reason was simply not needing assistance, with 60.9% of valid responses indicating this. Another significant barrier was perceived ineligibility, as 26.6% of respondents did not believe they qualified for food assistance. A smaller but notable group (4.7%) avoided these programs because they felt others were in greater need and did not want to take away resources. Transportation issues (1.8%) and feeling overwhelmed by the process or circumstances (1.8%) also discouraged participation. A small percentage cited lack of knowledge about available assistance (1.5%), stigma or embarrassment (0.9%), or a complex application process (0.6%) as barriers. Other less frequent reasons included inconvenient hours (0.6%), cultural or dietary mismatches (0.3%), and concerns over food quality or nutrition (0.3%). These findings suggest that while many simply do not require assistance, structural barriers—such as eligibility confusion, logistical challenges, and social stigma—may be preventing some individuals in need from accessing food support.

*Table 23 - Reasons Not to Use Food Assistance*

<b>Why haven't you used any food assistance programs in the past year?</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>
<b>I have no need for food assistance.</b>	206	60.9
<b>Ineligibility, I don't think I qualify</b>	90	26.6
<b>Others need it more and I don't want to "take away" resources.</b>	16	4.7
<b>I do not have transportation.</b>	6	1.8
<b>I am overwhelmed from the process or the circumstances that led to needing assistance.</b>	6	1.8
<b>I don't know how or where to get assistance.</b>	5	1.5
<b>I avoid using food assistance programs due to stigma or embarrassment.</b>	3	0.9
<b>The application process is too complicated or complex</b>	2	0.6
<b>Food assistance is provided at inconvenient hours or days.</b>	2	0.6
<b>Local food assistance doesn't meet my cultural needs or dietary preferences.</b>	1	0.3
<b>Local food assistance isn't fresh, healthy, or nutritious.</b>	1	0.3
<b>Total</b>	338	100

## Local Food System

### *Local Food-Related Activities & Participation*

Nearly a third (31.8%) of survey participants engaged in a local food-related activities and programs over the past year, reflecting a strong commitment to food security, sustainability, and community involvement. Many took part in community-supported agriculture (CSA) programs, such as one respondent who shared, "I participated in a community-supported agriculture program this past year. It was a great experience, as I received fresh, locally grown produce and learned more about sustainable farming practices." Similarly, others were involved in farmers' markets and cooperative food initiatives, with one participant noting, "I run (and buy about 1/2 my family's food at) a farmers market and have a CSA. I do fundraising to support a SNAP matching campaign at our market."

A significant number of respondents contributed to community gardening efforts. Some worked directly in church or neighborhood gardens, while others managed food-growing initiatives. Some respondents also engaged in home gardening and food-sharing networks, stating, "Our family, including my wife's parents next door, raise vegetables and herbs in gardens we share with one another." Yet others who wanted to do home gardening faced challenges due to housing restrictions: "I tried to grow my own garden. But I am on public housing. They made me stop trying to grow a garden."

Many individuals volunteered at food pantries, meal programs, and mobile food markets, providing direct support to food-insecure populations. One respondent described their efforts: "I help serve breakfast every Friday at Greensboro Urban Ministries. I donate a bag of food every month to Simple Gestures. I volunteer at Charlie's Garden which is part of Out of the Garden Project." Another noted their involvement in supporting senior nutrition efforts: "Growing High Point's senior delivery program provides fresh produce to those who need it most."

Several participants also engaged in education and advocacy efforts around food security and nutrition. One individual described their initiative: "I helped get a Spartan Open Pantry-to-Go location in UNCG's Jackson Library and I keep an eye on it to help stock it with additional items and report any issues to the pantry staff." Others taught cooking classes or organized seminars on food insecurity to spread awareness and provide practical skills to their communities.

Overall, the responses indicate that participants are deeply engaged in a diverse range of food-related activities, including food production, distribution, education, and advocacy. Their efforts not only support personal and family nutrition but also contribute to larger community-based food security initiatives, demonstrating a strong network of local food activism.

### *Community Has Adequate Local Food Producers*

Perceptions of access to local food resources are mixed. 42.9% of respondents believe their community does not have adequate farmers' markets, community gardens, or local food producers, while 36.2% feel their community does have sufficient resources. Another 20.9% were unsure, indicating that many may not be aware of the availability of local food sources. These responses suggest that, while some residents feel they have good access to local food options, a significant portion of the population perceives a gap in availability, which could indicate a need for increased awareness or expansion of local food initiatives.

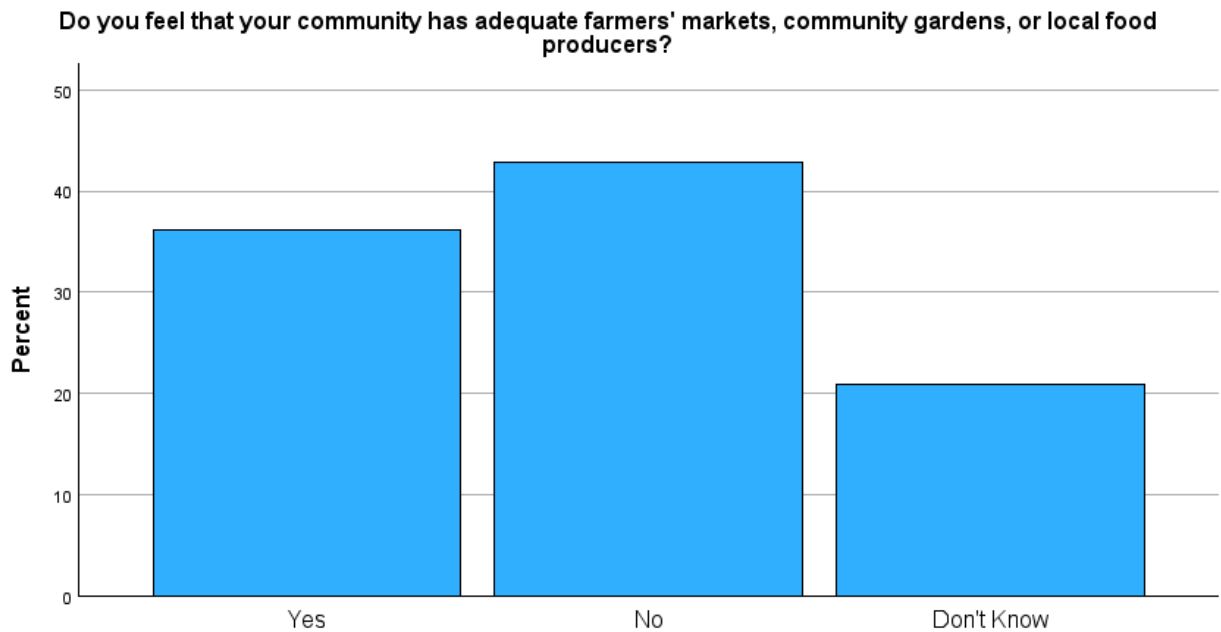


Figure 34 – Adequacy of Local Food Production

### Support for Local Food Producers

A strong majority of respondents value supporting local farmers and food producers, with 48.7% considering it very important and another 33.3% viewing it as somewhat important, totaling 82.1% in favor of supporting local food sources. 14.8% of respondents were neutral, suggesting they may not prioritize local food but do not actively oppose it. Only 2.4% felt supporting local farmers was not very important, and 0.8% saw it as not important at all. These findings indicate strong community support for local food systems, though not all individuals are highly engaged in their promotion.

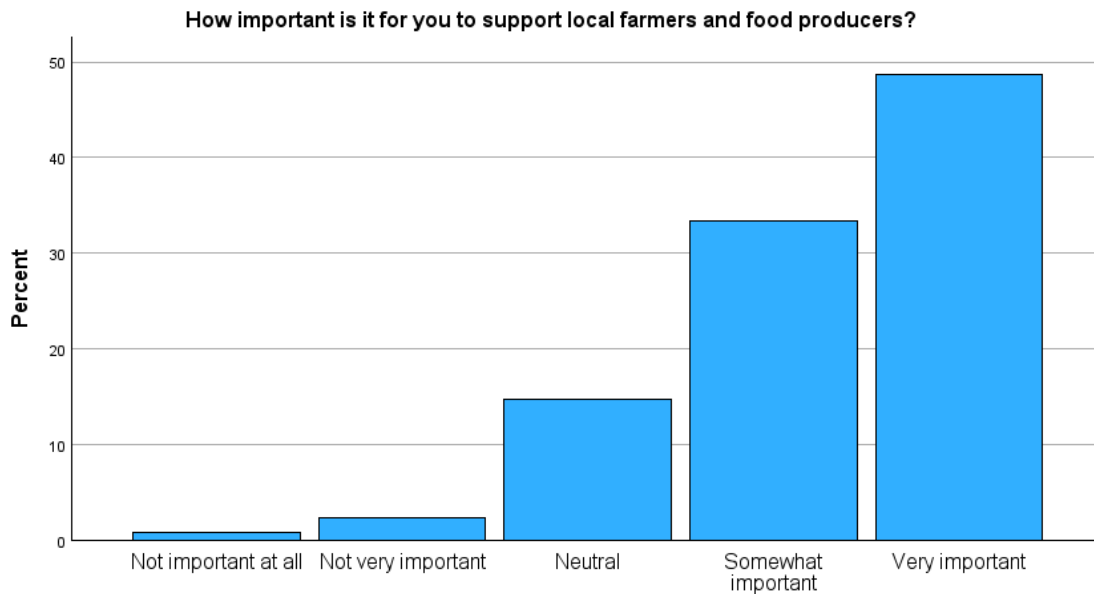


Figure 35- Support for Local Food Production

### Support for Sustainable Practices

Sustainability in food systems is a high priority for most respondents, with 39.4% rating it as extremely important and 35.4% as very important, making up a combined 74.8% who strongly support sustainability efforts. 17.1% rated it as moderately important, while 6.6% saw it as slightly important. Only 1.6% of respondents felt that sustainable food practices were not at all important. These findings suggest that respondents see value in sustainable food initiatives, such as reducing food waste and promoting organic farming, which could indicate broad community interest in policies and programs that support environmentally friendly food systems.

How important is it to you that your community supports sustainable food practices (e.g., reducing food waste, promoting organic farming, supporting local farmers)?

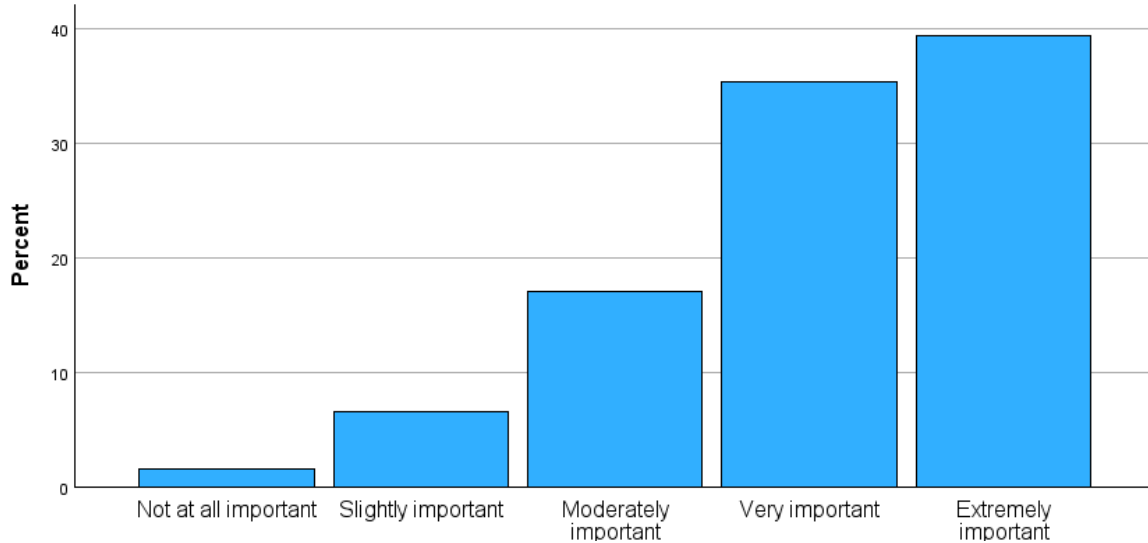
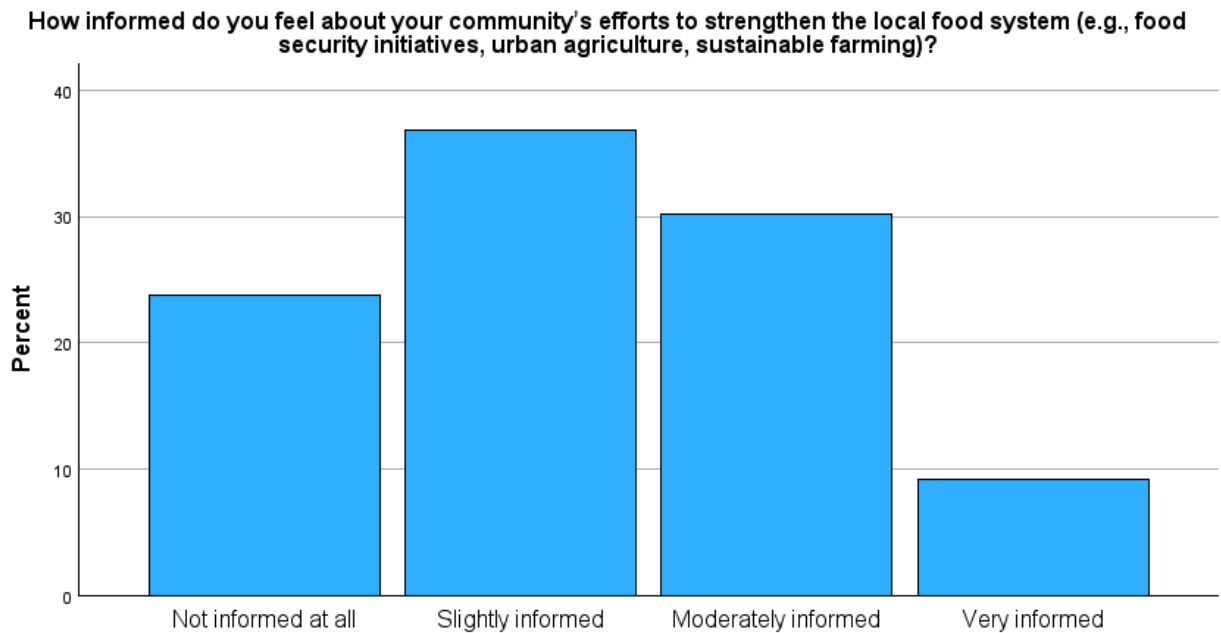


Figure 36 – Support for Sustainable Food Practices

### *Awareness of Local Food System*

The data indicates that most respondents have limited level of awareness about their community’s efforts to strengthen the local food system, and a substantial portion remains uninformed. Among the 500 valid responses, 36.8% reported being slightly informed, while 30.2% described themselves as moderately informed. This means that a combined 67% of respondents have at least some awareness of food security initiatives, urban agriculture, and sustainable farming efforts in their community. However, a notable 23.8% of respondents stated that they are not informed at all, highlighting a significant gap in community engagement or communication about these initiatives. Only 9.2% of respondents identified as very informed, suggesting that deep knowledge of local food system efforts is relatively rare. The findings suggest a need for greater outreach and educational efforts to inform the public about local food sustainability programs. Given that nearly one in four people reported being completely uninformed, improving accessibility to information on food security initiatives could increase community participation and support.



*Figure 37 - Awareness of Local Food System*

### *Changes to Local Food System*

The table which follows reveals that community members prioritize several key changes to improve their local food system, with the most frequently desired improvement being more affordable healthy food options, as indicated by 71.0% of respondents. This finding underscores the significant concern regarding food affordability and accessibility. The second most common response was a call for greater support for local farmers and producers, with 65.6% of respondents advocating for this change, suggesting a strong community interest in bolstering local agriculture and sustainable food production.

Additionally, 62.2% of respondents expressed a desire for more farmers' markets or local food stands, reflecting a demand for increased direct access to fresh and locally sourced foods. Nearly half (49.3%) of respondents also emphasized the need for an expansion of food assistance programs, highlighting the ongoing issue of food insecurity within the community. Furthermore, 38.2% of respondents wanted increased food education and cooking classes, and 35.4% sought better transportation to food access points, indicating that knowledge and physical access remain barriers to healthy eating.

The write-in responses to the "other" category highlight several key themes related to improving the local food system, including food affordability, grocery store access, support for local farmers, food justice, and community education. Several respondents pointed to the lack of grocery stores in certain areas, particularly in underserved communities. One respondent noted, "We only have 1 grocery store—more would be nice," while another advocated for "More grocery store access for District 4 residents." Similarly, a respondent emphasized the need for "Better access to quality food on the direct south side of town," and another called for "Less food deserts in historically Black neighborhoods." This reflects concerns over inequitable food distribution and accessibility.

Food justice concerns were also raised, particularly regarding fair wages for food industry workers. One respondent stated, "Workers dealing with food are paid fairly and are unionized." Additionally, another advocated for "Promoting veganism since all protein comes from plants and much food insecurity comes from people eating too much meat, dairy, and eggs (as well as those things causing most health problems)." These comments reflect broader concerns about the ethical and environmental implications of food systems.

Some respondents highlighted the importance of educational initiatives and food assistance programs. One suggested "More programs for kids/teens geared around nutrition, budget cooking, couponing, using benefits, etc." Another proposed "Ambassador programs to connect individuals on SNAP to local food resources like farmers markets." Additionally, a respondent mentioned "Farmers market coupons" as a way to make fresh food more accessible.

Table 24 - Changes to Local Food System

What changes would you like to see in your community to improve the local food system?	N	% Responses	% Cases
More affordable healthy food options	357	21.6%	71.0%
Greater support for local farmers and producers	330	19.9%	65.6%
More farmers' markets or local food stands	313	18.9%	62.2%
Expansion of food assistance programs	248	15.0%	49.3%
Increased food education and cooking classes	192	11.6%	38.2%
Better transportation to food access points	178	10.8%	35.4%
Other	37	2.2%	7.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1655</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>329.0%</b>

### *Food System Priorities*

Addressing child hunger in schools is the most pressing food-related issue for respondents, with 21.3% selecting this as their top priority. The second most common concern is the lack of places to buy healthy food, chosen by 18.0% of respondents, highlighting the issue of food deserts and limited access to nutritious options. Food waste is another key issue, with 12.6% of respondents identifying it as an area that needs community attention.

Additionally, there is considerable interest in expanding community gardens (11.7%) and providing more opportunities to learn about available resources (11.7%), indicating a demand for local food production and better awareness of existing food assistance programs. Financial support for food and farming businesses is also seen as important, with 7.9% supporting loans and grants and 6.7% advocating for more support for entrepreneurs in the food sector.

Smaller but notable portions of respondents expressed interest in helping people access federal food programs (5.1%), increasing technical/job training in food-related industries (3.2%), and expanding shared-use kitchens (1.8%). Overall, the results highlight a strong community interest in tackling food insecurity through a combination of direct assistance, improved access, sustainability efforts, and economic support for food-based businesses.

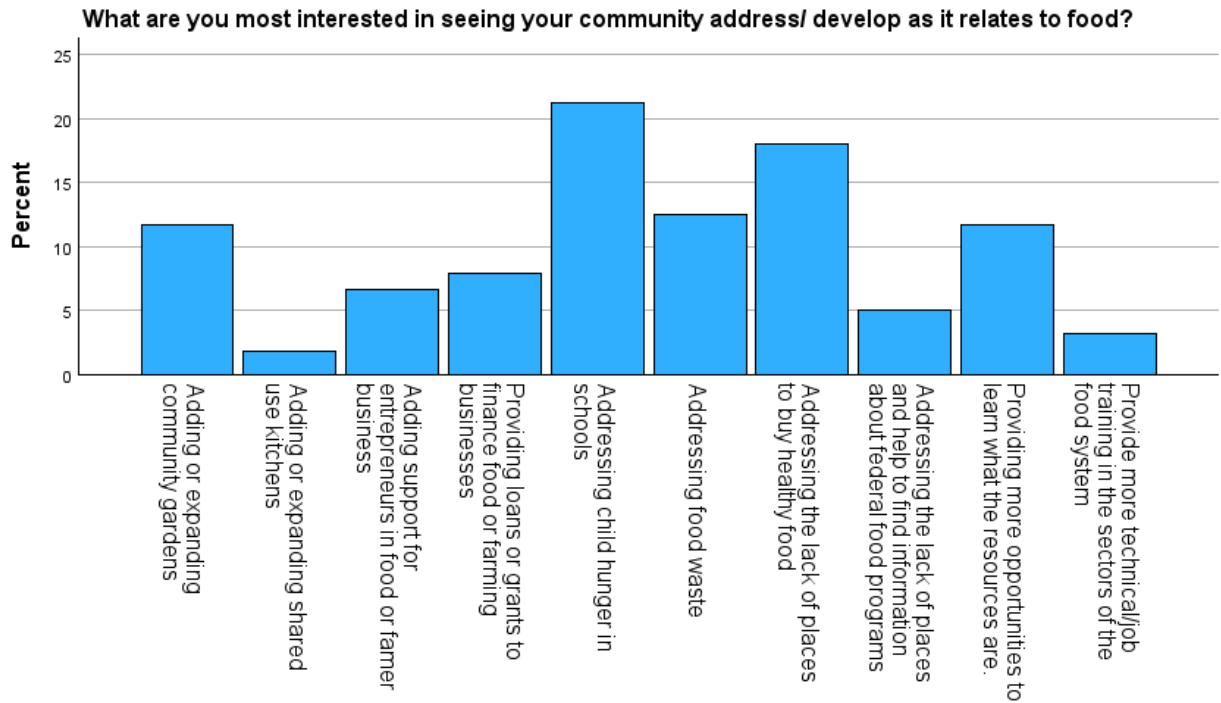


Figure 38 – Food System Priorities

## Recommendations for Improving Food Access & Security

Participants were asked to suggest ways to improve food access or security (See Appendix C). Thematic analysis of responses to improving food access and security in the community reveals several key areas of concern. The responses demonstrate that food insecurity is a complex issue involving not just availability but affordability, accessibility, and education. The most commonly mentioned barriers were transportation, lack of grocery stores, and food affordability. Respondents proposed solutions such as mobile food markets, increasing community gardens, strengthening food assistance programs, and implementing food waste reduction initiatives.

### Food Affordability

Many respondents mentioned that even when food is available, it is often unaffordable. They emphasized the high cost of food and the need to make nutritious options more affordable. Many cited the increasing prices of fresh produce, meat, and dairy as barriers to accessing healthy food. Examples included:

- "Lower the prices on fruits/vegetables and fresh meats such as poultry. I recently was at Lowes Foods in Whitsett and noticed that a frozen turkey was \$81.00. Nobody can afford that!"
- "I would make food cheaper and more accessible in the communities with people of color as it is systemically set up in Guilford County."

- *"Providing more stores or markets is all well and good, but if many people cannot afford food, then the point is moot."*
- *"Lower prices on nutritious food. It's way cheaper and easier to buy junk and packaged foods. Fruits, vegetables, and meat are sometimes not bought because I can't afford them."*
- *"The simplest way to help food insecurity would be to repeal the tax on food. Only about 10 states tax groceries because it's so regressive."*

### *Grocery Store Access*

Many respondents cited the lack of grocery stores, especially in food deserts, as a significant barrier to food access. Respondents expressed frustration over long distances to grocery stores and the prevalence of gas stations and convenience stores as primary food sources.

- *"Where I reside in zip code 27405, we have nowhere to go besides a Food Lion."*
- *"There are areas in Greensboro where residents cannot walk to a grocery store. I would like to see more stores or markets in all areas of the city."*
- *"We need a Trader Joe's, Sprouts, Aldi, or Lidl in Gibsonville. The only places to buy food in walking distance are small restaurants, Dollar Tree, and Dollar General. For fresh food, I have to travel to multiple grocery stores."*
- *"Six miles to a grocery store in every direction is too far. We need a grocery store in Pleasant Garden."*
- *"There are at least six grocery stores within five miles of my house, but when I travel to the east side of town, I see only one full-service store."*

### *Transportation & Accessibility*

Hand-in-hand with location of grocery stores was the lack of transportation. Many respondents highlighted difficulties in physically accessing food sources due to limited transportation options. This was especially a concern for individuals in rural or underserved urban areas.

- *"I have my own car and find it more difficult than it should be, I can't imagine for someone who doesn't have a car because we don't even have bus service in this area."*
- *"Public transportation options in the county/rural areas need improvement. People can't get to food banks or stores without access to a car."*

- *"To me, it's not transporting people to where the food is, it's bringing the food into the neighborhoods in need: pop-up grocery stores, farmers markets, pantries."*

### *Food Waste Reduction*

Several responses focused on the need to reduce food waste and improve redistribution systems. Participants suggested that grocery stores and restaurants should donate excess food to food banks instead of discarding it.

- *"Prevent food waste by distributing excess food through schools."*
- *"Receive supermarket surpluses, farm surpluses, and distribute them to low-income families for free or at low prices."*
- *"Make it illegal for stores to pour bleach on food they throw away. It's inhumane to destroy edible food that could go to those in need."*
- *"If I could only make one change, it would be to lessen food waste by providing fresh produce to the public, rather than allowing it to go bad and be thrown out. There are also places that will pour bleach on produce that has been thrown away to keep anyone from dumpster diving. I think this practice should be illegal as it is extremely inhumane, wasteful, and hateful."*

### *Food Pantries & Assistance*

Some respondents emphasized the need to strengthen existing food assistance programs. They also called for expanded food assistance programs, including increased SNAP benefits and more accessible food pantries.

- *"Increase government assistance programs so that more people are eligible for food aid."*
- *"Provide free organic, good-quality food to working families at least once a month in multiple locations throughout the city."*
- *"More volunteers available to help at community gardens and local farms. The work really takes a village."*
- *"Expand government benefits—families that are 'above' income guidelines are barely making it."*
- *"Food pantries on wheels for low-income families because not everybody has a car to drive to pantries."*

## Community Gardens & Urban Farming

Some participants focused on self-sufficiency through urban farming and community gardens. Several responses suggested creating more opportunities for residents to grow their own food, particularly in underutilized urban spaces.

- *"The establishment of food sharing and mutual aid networks can promote interaction and cooperation among community members."* Another emphasized education: *"Community gardens and empowering people with knowledge on how to grow their own food should not be underestimated."*
- *"To have more community gardens because I think everyone in the community would benefit from this."*
- *"Helping people have access to communal growing of fresh produce could be an opportunity for intergenerational collaboration and learning."*
- *"More community gardens. More food stamp/farmer programs. Transportation to the Colfax Farmers Market."*

## Nutrition & Education

A few responses focused on the importance of education in making healthy food choices.

- *"Weekly cooking classes and nutrition lectures. Low-income families, in particular, are taught low-cost healthy recipes and ingredient preservation techniques."*
- *"Support education on plant-based diets. Our society eats meat every meal, and it's killing us."*
- *"Promote healthy practices and educate families on how to stretch food budgets and cook nutritious meals."*

Overall, the responses highlight a combination of economic, infrastructural, and systemic barriers to food security. The most common concerns revolve around making food more affordable, increasing grocery store access, reducing waste, expanding food assistance programs, and fostering community-based solutions like urban farming. While respondents proposed various solutions, the overarching theme is the need for structural changes to ensure equitable food access for all members of the community. While some respondents advocated for government intervention, others emphasized community-driven solutions, such as cooperative farming and mutual aid networks. Overall, the responses highlight a strong desire for systemic changes to ensure equitable access to fresh, affordable, and healthy food for all.

## Support Needed in the Next Year

Participants were also asked, “What are the best ways we can support your food needs or concerns in the next year?” Based on the survey responses, several key themes emerged regarding how the community seeks support for food-related concerns in the coming year.

Many respondents again highlighted the need for better access to fresh, affordable food, emphasizing financial barriers and the availability of food in their communities. Some expressed the challenge of obtaining healthy and nutritious food at reasonable prices, stating that "better access to affordable fresh foods" and "affordable prices" would significantly improve their situation.

Another prevalent concern was the need for improvements in food assistance programs such as SNAP benefits and other aid initiatives. Respondents emphasized that current assistance often falls short in addressing rising costs, with one stating that "adjustments to SNAP benefits to accommodate the rising cost of living" are necessary. Others simply called for "any type of assistance to get food and groceries" and "better federal or state assistance to those in need" to ensure that individuals and families have resources to meet their needs.

Beyond direct assistance, many respondents also underscored the importance of community education and advocacy programs to empower individuals and families. Suggestions included implementing nutrition and food preservation programs, as well as broader efforts to raise awareness about food security issues. One respondent suggested, "Educate and empower those most affected by food insecurity," while another recommended, "Add educational programs, maybe through Ag Extension, on nutrition and food preservation." A strong call for advocacy was also present, with a respondent stating the need to "be a voice for nutrition."

Additionally, some respondents emphasized the need for broader policy changes and systemic solutions to food insecurity. They urged decision-makers to go beyond surface-level solutions and address root causes, with one respondent stating, "Address the real issue I just mentioned. Ask the right questions about food insecurity and why it's happening." Others advocated for government support and strategic initiatives, including calls to "advocate and sponsor more healthy food education at the state level" and to increase "better federal or state assistance to those in need."

Overall, the responses indicate a strong need for action on multiple fronts, including direct assistance, economic accessibility, educational initiatives, infrastructure improvements, and policy advocacy. Addressing food insecurity effectively will require a combination of immediate relief measures and long-term systemic changes to ensure that all community members have access to the food they need.

## Report Summary & Conclusions

### Sociodemographic Profile

Guilford County, home to approximately 553,275 residents, exhibits significant economic and racial disparities that directly impact food insecurity. The county's population is diverse, with 48.2% White, 34.3% Black, 5.8% Asian, and 9.5% Hispanic or Latino residents. A clear pattern of racial segregation exists, where Black residents are concentrated in central Greensboro and parts of High Point, while White residents dominate the suburban and rural areas. This segregation is mirrored in economic conditions, with poverty disproportionately affecting communities of color. The poverty rate is 15.2% countywide, but even more troubling, 21% of children live in poverty. Greensboro has the highest poverty rate at 17.55%, compared to 12.42% in High Point, exacerbating food insecurity for families with limited financial resources.

Economic disparities are further reflected in household income levels. While the county's median household income is \$63,972, it is lower in Greensboro (\$54,346) and High Point (\$57,617). Additionally, 40.2% of households earn below \$50,000, classifying them as low-income and eligible for federal and state assistance programs. Employment trends also play a crucial role in economic stability. The leading industries—healthcare (14.8%), manufacturing (12.9%), retail (11.5%), and education (9.94%)—employ a significant portion of the workforce, yet jobs in retail and food services often provide low wages with limited benefits. Although the county's unemployment rate is 3.8%, many working families still struggle to meet basic needs, including adequate nutrition.

The housing market adds another layer of financial strain, with nearly 47.15% of renters and 19.24% of homeowners considered cost-burdened, meaning they spend more than 30% of their income on housing costs. The median rent is \$1,063, while home values have risen to \$264,784, making it increasingly difficult for low-income families to secure stable housing. When rent and housing costs consume the majority of household income, little remains for food, often forcing families to rely on food pantries or government assistance programs. Additionally, food deserts exist in economically disadvantaged areas, particularly in East Greensboro and parts of High Point, where grocery stores are scarce, and residents have limited access to fresh, healthy food.

Beyond economic hardships, digital and healthcare disparities further contribute to food insecurity. Approximately 7.1% of households lack a computer, and 8.3% rely solely on smartphones for internet access, limiting their ability to apply for jobs, access food assistance programs, or order groceries online. Additionally, five census tracts in East Greensboro are designated medically underserved, meaning they lack sufficient healthcare resources. This shortage, combined with high rates of chronic disease, mental health

concerns, and limited access to preventive care, further exacerbates financial instability and food insecurity.

## Literature Review on Food Security Measurement

The literature review on food security measurement highlights the multidimensional nature of food insecurity, emphasizing the importance of availability, access, utilization, and stability in ensuring consistent access to nutritious food. Food insecurity is a key driver of economic instability, public health disparities, and social inequities, particularly affecting marginalized populations. Various measurement frameworks have been developed to assess food insecurity, including those by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). These frameworks highlight the economic and physical barriers to food access, the impact of sudden economic shocks, and the role of nutritional and health factors in determining food utilization.

In North Carolina, food insecurity rates remain high, with 10.9% of the population affected, including one in six children. Research has shown a historical reliance on emergency food providers (EFPs) despite declining participation in federal nutrition assistance programs like SNAP. In Guilford County, approximately 74,080 residents (13.7%) experience food insecurity, with 35% of affected individuals earning above the SNAP eligibility threshold, making them ineligible for federal assistance despite ongoing food hardships. The average cost of a meal in the county is \$4.18, contributing to an annual food budget shortfall of \$58.1 million. Studies also indicate transportation barriers and affordability issues as key obstacles in accessing fresh and nutritious food, particularly in low-income and minority neighborhoods in Greensboro and High Point.

Food insecurity affects rural and urban communities differently. Rural food insecurity is linked to food deserts, limited supermarket access, and transportation barriers, while urban food insecurity is influenced by neighborhood disparities in food retail distribution and the prevalence of unhealthy food outlets. Research highlights psychosocial stressors, household composition, and social support as factors influencing food security, while child-focused studies emphasize the psychological and nutritional impact of food insecurity on children.

To address food insecurity, measurement methodologies play a critical role in policy development and resource allocation. Tools such as the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES), the U.S. Household Food Security Survey Module (HFSSM), and the Household Food Insecurity Access Scale (HFIAS) are widely used to assess household- and individual-level experiences of food insecurity. These tools help identify at-risk populations, track food hardship trends, and evaluate intervention programs. Additionally, geospatial analysis using

GIS has been instrumental in mapping food deserts and identifying high-risk areas in Guilford County, linking food insecurity to chronic health conditions and socioeconomic disparities.

Community-based solutions and policy interventions are essential in combating food insecurity. Initiatives like the LEAP program in Guilford County focus on barrier identification, healthy eating promotion, and stakeholder engagement. Additionally, state-led policies, such as North Carolina's State Action Plan for Nutrition Security, aim to reduce food insecurity through expanded SNAP and WIC enrollment, strengthened food system linkages, and local food access programs. Research suggests that addressing systemic inequities, including transportation access, socioeconomic disparities, and racial inequalities, is key to long-term solutions.

## Food Production, Affordability, And Assistance

The food production, affordability, and assistance analysis in Guilford County highlights key challenges and opportunities related to food security. Household food costs indicate that the average annual expenditure on food is \$7,193, with \$6,501 spent on food at home. Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs account for \$299.8 million in total spending, while fruits and vegetables amount to \$284.2 million. Spending disparities exist across the county, with lower expenditures in urban areas like Greensboro and High Point, which may reflect financial constraints and limited access to affordable, nutritious food. In contrast, suburban and affluent areas report higher food expenditures, exceeding \$8,000 annually, reinforcing socioeconomic disparities in food access.

Agricultural production in Guilford County has seen shifts, with the total farm acreage decreasing by 6% since 2012. The county currently has 775 farms and nearly 95,000 acres of farmland, with crops making up 68% of production and livestock 32%. Despite producing \$68.1 million in agricultural goods annually, over 62% of farms are small (under 50 acres) and 53% generate less than \$5,000 in sales annually, signaling a dominance of small-scale, low-revenue farms. Poultry and eggs generate \$11.6 million, while dairy contributes \$2.9 million, highlighting opportunities to strengthen local food systems and farm sustainability.

Community gardens play a role in supplementing local food access, with 74 active gardens covering 9.12 acres. Most gardens are faith-based (24.9%) or donation-based (16.2%), serving specific communities. While community gardens provide fresh produce, their small size and limited reach indicate that they cannot replace broader food security interventions.

Additionally, food manufacturing in the county, though an integral part of the economy, employs only 1,405 workers across 37 establishments, contributing 3.1% of the state's total food manufacturing payroll. Specialties such as fruit and vegetable processing remain limited, suggesting potential for growth in local food processing industries.

Food retail trends reveal that supermarkets and grocery stores dominate Guilford County's food landscape, with 285 grocery stores and 175 convenience stores. However, specialty food stores, meat markets, and seafood markets remain scarce, limiting access to culturally diverse and high-quality fresh foods.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) plays a crucial role in addressing food insecurity in Guilford County, where 16.24% of families receive SNAP benefits, a rate higher than the state average. The majority of food-insecure individuals (65%) qualify for SNAP, yet disparities in participation persist. SNAP enrollment has fluctuated with economic conditions, peaking in 2016, declining until 2020, and rising again due to the COVID-19 pandemic's economic impact. High Point consistently reports higher SNAP participation rates than Greensboro and the county overall, reflecting localized economic hardships.

The geographic distribution of SNAP recipients aligns with patterns of racial segregation and poverty, with high concentrations in central and southern Greensboro and southwestern High Point. In contrast, suburban areas in northern Guilford County have significantly lower participation rates, highlighting income and racial disparities in food assistance reliance. Black households have the highest SNAP participation rate, with 30.57% in High Point, 27.67% in Greensboro, and 26.27% countywide, all exceeding the state average of 25.16%. American Indian and Alaska Native households experience even higher SNAP reliance, with 49.03% in Greensboro and 39.38% countywide receiving benefits. Asian and Hispanic households also rely heavily on SNAP, with participation rates in High Point (20.36% and 18.22%, respectively) significantly exceeding statewide averages. In contrast, White households have the lowest SNAP participation rates, with just 6.44% in Guilford County, reflecting racial disparities in economic vulnerability and food access.

Children under 18 years old are disproportionately affected, with 31% of Guilford County's children living in households receiving public assistance, a rate significantly higher than the state average of 26.54%. In Greensboro, the rate climbs to 37.83%, further emphasizing urban food insecurity among children. Households headed by single mothers exhibit the highest SNAP reliance, with 22.3% in Greensboro and 17.27% countywide receiving benefits. Conversely, married-couple families have the lowest public assistance rates, mirroring state trends. These figures reinforce the role of structural inequalities in shaping food security outcomes.

Despite the need for food assistance, barriers to SNAP accessibility remain. According to a 2023 Guilford County Needs Assessment, 60% of applicants found the registration process easy, with most receiving approval within one week. However, gaps in eligibility criteria prevent certain food-insecure groups—such as low-wage workers, college students, and seniors—from qualifying for SNAP benefits. Community stakeholders recommend raising

income thresholds, expanding eligible food items (e.g., fresh produce, baby supplies), offering free grocery delivery, and improving customer service through bilingual staff and streamlined online applications.

SNAP retail accessibility varies across the county. Greensboro hosts the highest number of supermarkets (28), grocery stores (34), and superstores (23), while High Point has fewer supermarkets (8) and grocery stores (14) despite higher food insecurity rates. Convenience stores dominate SNAP-authorized retailers, with 151 in Greensboro and 56 in High Point, but they often lack fresh and nutritious options. The limited presence of farmers' markets (12 countywide) further restricts access to fresh, locally grown food for SNAP recipients.

Overall, racial, geographic, and structural disparities shape SNAP utilization in Guilford County, with Black, Indigenous, and Hispanic households, single-parent families, and urban communities experiencing the greatest need. Policy reforms expanding eligibility, improving food retail access, and reducing bureaucratic barriers could enhance food security and economic stability for vulnerable populations. Addressing these disparities is essential for ensuring equitable access to nutritious food and reducing food insecurity in Guilford County.

## Food Security & Food Access

Food insecurity remains a persistent issue in Guilford County, with 13.7% of residents lacking adequate access to food, a figure that rises to 23.3% among children. Many food-insecure children depend on free or reduced-price school meals, with 68% qualifying based on household income below 185% of the federal poverty threshold. Food insecurity is closely linked to negative health outcomes, including higher rates of obesity, poor diet quality, and increased mental health burdens such as stress, anxiety, and depression. Research from the Lifetime Eating and Physical Activity Practices (LEAP) Report (2020) further underscores diet-related illnesses and the role of social determinants in shaping food access and health disparities.

Food assistance needs have risen sharply, as reflected in United Way NC 211 data, which recorded 834 food-related assistance calls in the past year, a 50% increase over the previous year. Most calls (65%) were requests for food pantries, while others sought help with buying food (15.9%), home-delivered meals (8.2%), and feeding children (2.5%). This growing demand for emergency food resources highlights the ongoing financial strain on many households.

The 2023-2024 Guilford County Community Health Assessment further exposes disparities in food access and the built environment, particularly in low-income neighborhoods with limited access to grocery stores and healthy food. While the county saw a slight increase in grocery stores, 20.1% of low-income residents (35,598 people) still live in food deserts,

defined as being over a mile (urban) or 10 miles (rural) from a grocery store. At the same time, the number of fast-food restaurants per 100,000 people rose by 21%, increasing from 71 in 2010 to 86.83 in 2020, reinforcing poor dietary patterns in areas with fewer fresh food options.

Surveys show that 20.1% of respondents worried about running out of food, with Black (30.7%) and Hispanic (30%) residents more than twice as likely as White residents (13.5%) to face food insecurity. Additionally, 13.7% of respondents had to cut meal sizes or skip meals, with renters (23.6%) and those in high social vulnerability index (SVI) areas (21.5%) experiencing these hardships at higher rates.

While Guilford County performs above average on the USDA Food Environment Index (7.8/10), significant disparities persist in specific census tracts. Areas classified as Limited Supermarket Access (LSA) or Low-Population Access zones—particularly in eastern and southern Greensboro, High Point, and Pleasant Garden—highlight opportunities for food policy interventions. Potential solutions include brick-and-mortar grocery expansion, mobile food markets, food cooperatives, or culturally tailored food programs.

## Public Input

Three modes of public input provided insight into the lived experiences of residents in Guilford County. Through photovoice, interviews, focus groups, and survey data, residents and stakeholders highlighted persistent challenges such as transportation limitations, inadequate food assistance programs, and the impact of economic hardship on food access. The insights from this input underscore the urgent need for structural reforms in food security policies while recognizing the vital role of community-led solutions. Addressing food insecurity in Guilford County requires a combination of policy advocacy, resource allocation, and stronger community partnerships.

## Photovoice

The Photovoice section highlights firsthand experiences of food insecurity in Guilford County, capturing visual and narrative accounts from residents navigating challenges in food access, affordability, and quality. Participants documented gaps in grocery store access, particularly in low-income neighborhoods where fresh produce is scarce, and processed, high-sodium foods dominate available options. Many images depicted long distances to supermarkets, emphasizing transportation barriers, with some residents relying on dollar stores or gas stations for basic groceries due to the lack of nearby full-service grocery stores.

Several photos illustrated poor food quality in retail settings, including wilted produce and expired items in local stores, reinforcing the inequitable distribution of fresh, nutritious

foods across different socioeconomic areas. Participants also highlighted cultural food disparities, noting the lack of diverse food options that meet the dietary needs of immigrant and refugee communities. Additionally, school meal portions and quality concerns were visually documented, with students expressing dissatisfaction with limited variety and inadequate serving sizes.

On a positive note, the Photovoice project also showcased resilient community efforts, such as urban gardens, food pantries, and mutual aid networks that help bridge the gap for food-insecure households. Images of community fridges, food-sharing programs, and cooperative markets illustrated grassroots responses to systemic food access issues. The visual documentation strongly supports the need for policy interventions to expand grocery access, improve food quality, and enhance community-driven solutions to food insecurity.

### Interview and Focus Group Findings

The interview and focus group findings reveal deep-rooted barriers to food security in Guilford County, shaped by economic hardship, transportation challenges, and gaps in public assistance programs. Participants emphasized the high cost of nutritious food, noting that fresh produce, lean proteins, and culturally appropriate foods are often unaffordable for low-income families. Many rely on SNAP benefits, food pantries, or meal programs, but these supports are insufficient or difficult to access due to restrictive eligibility rules, documentation requirements, and social stigma. Working poor families, college students, and undocumented immigrants were particularly affected, often falling through the cracks of existing food assistance programs.

Transportation emerged as a critical barrier, with many participants describing long travel times to grocery stores, limited bus routes, and the financial strain of rideshare or taxi services. Seniors, single parents, and individuals with disabilities face additional difficulties in accessing food due to mobility limitations and a lack of nearby grocery stores in food deserts. Participants also highlighted the prevalence of unhealthy food options, with fast-food restaurants, dollar stores, and convenience shops outnumbering full-service grocery stores in low-income areas.

Despite these challenges, focus group participants emphasized community-driven solutions such as urban farming, food-sharing initiatives, and mobile food markets. Many supported policy interventions to improve food affordability, expand transportation options, and increase culturally inclusive food choices in pantries and meal programs. Overall, the interviews and focus groups underscore the need for systemic changes to enhance food access, reduce economic strain, and empower community-based food solutions.

## Survey Findings

The survey findings highlight significant disparities in food access, affordability, and reliance on food assistance programs in Guilford County. Over 20% of respondents reported experiencing food insecurity in the past year, with higher rates among low-income households, renters, and communities of color (in line with findings from the 2023 Community Health Survey).

The primary barriers to food security included high food costs (65.4%), lack of transportation (42.8%), and limited availability of fresh food in local stores (39.2%). A notable portion of respondents (20.1%) worried about running out of food, and 13.7% had to skip meals or reduce portion sizes due to financial constraints, with Black and Hispanic residents experiencing these hardships at disproportionately higher rates.

Survey data also confirmed the heavy reliance on food assistance programs, with 16.2% of households receiving SNAP benefits and 65% of food-insecure individuals qualifying for aid. However, many respondents indicated challenges in accessing SNAP, WIC, and food pantries, citing complex application processes, stigma, and eligibility restrictions as significant barriers.

Additionally, food pantries were the most utilized resource (65% of food assistance users), followed by free meal programs (15.9%). Despite these programs, a lack of culturally appropriate food options and inconsistent pantry hours were commonly reported concerns.

In terms of food access, transportation remained a major issue, particularly for seniors, individuals with disabilities, and families without reliable vehicles. Over 28% of respondents stated they had difficulty reaching a full-service grocery store, with many relying on dollar stores and convenience shops for food purchases.

The survey also captured dietary habits, revealing that nearly half of respondents consumed fewer than the recommended servings of fruits and vegetables daily, with cost and availability cited as primary barriers.

Overall, the survey results underscore the urgent need for policy and community interventions to expand food assistance eligibility, improve transportation options, and increase access to affordable, nutritious food in underserved areas. Participants strongly supported mobile food markets, improved food pantry networks, and financial relief for low-income households as key solutions to combat food insecurity in Guilford County.

## Recommendations Derived from Community Input

Based on insights from the photovoice project, interviews, focus groups, and survey data, several key recommendations emerge to enhance food security in Guilford County. These

recommendations address systemic barriers, community-driven solutions, and policy-level interventions to improve access to nutritious and affordable food.

### **Expand and Improve Access to Food Assistance Programs**

- Streamline the WIC and SNAP application process by integrating applications into a single, simplified system to reduce bureaucratic barriers.
- Reduce transportation challenges by expanding remote WIC services and lowering in-person check-in requirements for families with mobility limitations.
- Advocate for universal free school meals to eliminate food insecurity among children and remove stigma associated with meal programs.
- Incentivizing fresh produce purchases through SNAP, increasing funding for food banks to stock healthier options, and supporting local farmers' markets that accept food assistance.
- Expanding food assistance programs to accommodate diverse dietary needs for immigrant and refugee communities.

### **Reduce Stigma and Bureaucratic Barriers to Food Assistance**

- Normalize food assistance for all students to ensure no visible distinction exists between children receiving free meals and those who do not.
- Improve outreach and awareness campaigns, particularly among immigrant and refugee communities, to increase trust in food programs and address concerns about documentation.
- Increase outreach through community events, social media, and multilingual educational materials to improve participation rates.

### **Strengthen Community-Based Food Security Solutions**

- Increase collaboration with Black farmers and local food producers to integrate fresh, culturally relevant foods into food assistance programs.
- Expand school-based food pantries and choice pantries to provide grocery-style experiences that preserve dignity and increase participation.
- Develop a community-led food security network to enhance coordination between food pantries, nonprofit organizations, and policymakers.

### **Improve Transportation and Geographic Access to Food**

- Expand mobile food pantry services to reach food deserts and underserved communities.

- Improve public transit routes to grocery stores and explore partnerships with rideshare services to provide transportation assistance for food access.
- Subsidize transportation costs for underserved communities.

#### **Enhance Food Recovery and Reduce Waste**

- Strengthen food labeling education to reduce unnecessary food waste at both retail and household levels.
- Develop more food recovery partnerships between farmers, grocery stores, and food banks to redistribute excess food to those in need.

#### **Address Food Security Challenges for Vulnerable Populations**

- Expand food security programs for college students, including meal-sharing initiatives and campus food pantries.
- Expanding free and reduced-price meal programs and ensure that school pantries are well-stocked and accessible.
- Provide targeted food assistance for grandparents raising grandchildren, a group often overlooked in existing programs.
- Ensure food banks and pantries stock culturally appropriate foods to better serve immigrant and refugee populations.

#### **Advance Policy and Structural Changes to Reduce Food Insecurity**

- Advocate for the reinstatement of the expanded Child Tax Credit to provide financial relief for families struggling with food costs.
- Increase funding for public school meal programs over charter schools to support equitable access to nutritious meals.

#### **Improve Data Sharing and Research on Food Security**

- Develop a centralized food security information hub to provide up-to-date resources and assistance program details in one accessible location.
- Encourage transparency in food distribution systems to ensure that food assistance efforts align with community needs and preferences.

By implementing these recommendations through expanded partnerships, targeted interventions, and structural reforms, Guilford County can take significant steps toward building a more equitable, sustainable, and resilient food system.

## Recommendations & Implementation Plan

This section introduces actionable solutions aimed at addressing the complex and persistent barriers to equitable and reliable food access across Guilford County. Grounded in the data analysis and insights from stakeholder interviews, public listening sessions, and surveys, the recommendations and implementation plan provide a roadmap for fostering inclusive access to healthy and nutritious food for all segments of the community. The recommendations outlined here aim to empower underserved communities and create solutions to solve food insecurity and food access.

### Strategy 1: Improve Access to Healthy and Affordable Food

#### Action 1.1: Expand and Improve Food Assistance Programs

- **Description:** Increase the reach and effectiveness of SNAP, WIC, and local food banks by reducing administrative barriers and increasing awareness.
- **Justification:** Many residents face bureaucratic hurdles in accessing SNAP and other food assistance programs. Expanding eligibility and reducing stigma can increase participation.
- **Intended Impact:** Higher SNAP and WIC enrollment rates, improved food security for low-income families.
- **Timeline:** Near-to-midterm (6-12 months).
- **Considerations:** Requires policy advocacy and improved outreach strategies.
- **Stakeholders:** Guilford County DSS, local food banks, NC DHHS, advocacy groups.
- **Next Action Steps:** Conduct a policy review, streamline the application process, increase multilingual outreach efforts.

#### Action 1.2: Establish Mobile Grocery and Fresh Produce Markets

- **Description:** Develop mobile markets to bring affordable, fresh produce to food deserts and underserved communities.
- **Justification:** Many low-income and rural communities lack access to full-service grocery stores.
- **Intended Impact:** Increased access to fresh, healthy foods, reducing reliance on convenience stores.
- **Timeline:** Midterm (12-24 months).
- **Considerations:** Requires investment in food distribution logistics and partnerships with local farmers.
- **Stakeholders:** Farmers' markets, nonprofit organizations, local government.

- **Next Action Steps:** Secure funding for mobile food initiatives, partner with local farmers, and develop distribution plans.

### Action 1.3: Advocate for Policy Changes to Improve Food Assistance Accessibility

- **Description:** Work with state and federal policymakers to simplify the application and renewal process for SNAP and WIC, increase benefit amounts, and expand eligibility to underserved populations.
- **Justification:** Many low-income households struggle with bureaucratic hurdles, stigma, and inadequate benefit amounts that do not keep pace with inflation and local food costs.
- **Intended Impact:** Increased long-term enrollment and retention in food assistance programs, reducing food insecurity rates.
- **Timeline:** Long-term (3+ years).
- **Considerations:** Requires legislative advocacy, public awareness campaigns, and data-driven policy recommendations.
- **Stakeholders:** NC DHHS, state and federal legislators, advocacy organizations, food security coalitions.
- **Next Action Steps:** Build coalitions, conduct research on policy impact, develop advocacy strategies, and engage directly with policymakers.

## Strategy 2: Strengthen Local Food Systems

### Action 2.1: Increase Support for Community Gardens and Urban Farms

- **Description:** Develop more community gardens and incentivize urban farming, especially in food deserts.
- **Justification:** Community gardens provide fresh, affordable produce and encourage self-sufficiency.
- **Intended Impact:** Increased local food production, improved nutrition, and strengthened community ties.
- **Timeline:** Midterm (12-24 months).
- **Considerations:** Requires land use planning, water access, and community engagement.
- **Stakeholders:** Local government, nonprofit organizations, urban farmers, neighborhood associations.

- **Next Action Steps:** Identify potential garden sites, create micro-grant programs for local growers, engage schools in garden education.

## Action 2.2: Partner with Local Black and Immigrant Farmers

- **Description:** Strengthen partnerships with Black and immigrant farmers to integrate culturally relevant foods into assistance programs.
- **Justification:** Many food assistance programs fail to provide culturally appropriate foods, leading to food waste.
- **Intended Impact:** Increased participation in food assistance programs, reduced waste, and greater cultural inclusivity.
- **Timeline:** Midterm (12-24 months).
- **Considerations:** Requires policy incentives and long-term community engagement.
- **Stakeholders:** Local farmers, food banks, cultural organizations.
- **Next Action Steps:** Develop culturally responsive food distribution plans, provide financial incentives for local farmers, and expand farmers' markets that accept food assistance.

## Action 2.3: Establish a Regional Food Hub for Local Farmers and Small Food Producers

- **Description:** Develop a centralized food distribution hub to support local farmers, increase access to wholesale markets, and streamline food distribution to schools, food banks, and local retailers.
- **Justification:** Many small farmers struggle to connect with larger markets, and food retailers face challenges sourcing fresh, local produce. A regional food hub would improve logistics, increase farmer revenues, and enhance food access in underserved areas.
- **Intended Impact:** Strengthened local food system, improved economic stability for small farmers, and expanded access to fresh produce.
- **Timeline:** Long-term (3+ years).
- **Considerations:** Requires land acquisition, funding for infrastructure, and partnerships with farmers, retailers, and distributors.
- **Stakeholders:** Local farmers, agricultural cooperatives, grocery retailers, schools, nonprofit organizations.
- **Next Action Steps:** Conduct feasibility study, secure funding and land, develop partnerships with producers and distributors, launch pilot operations.

## Strategy 3: Address Transportation and Geographic Barriers to Food Access

### Action 3.1: Expand Transportation Options for Grocery Access

- **Description:** Improve public transit routes to grocery stores and support mobile markets in underserved areas.
- **Justification:** Lack of transportation is a key barrier to food access in rural and low-income urban areas.
- **Intended Impact:** Increased food access for residents without reliable transportation.
- **Timeline:** Near-term (6-12 months).
- **Considerations:** Requires collaboration with transportation agencies and funding for mobile markets.
- **Stakeholders:** City of Greensboro, local transit authorities, grocery stores, food cooperatives.
- **Next Action Steps:** Assess food access gaps, negotiate grocery shuttle services, secure funding for mobile markets.

### Action 3.2: Expand Home-Delivered Food Services

- **Description:** Scale up home delivery programs for seniors, individuals with disabilities, and families without transportation.
- **Justification:** Many homebound individuals face severe food access challenges.
- **Intended Impact:** Increased access to nutritious meals for vulnerable populations.
- **Timeline:** Midterm (12-18 months).
- **Considerations:** Requires volunteer networks and partnerships with local meal delivery services.
- **Stakeholders:** Nonprofit organizations, senior centers, public health agencies.
- **Next Action Steps:** Expand existing food delivery programs, recruit volunteers, and seek funding for transportation costs.

### Action 3.3: Develop a Public-Private Partnership for Permanent Grocery Store Investments in Food Deserts

- **Description:** Work with grocery chains, local businesses, and municipalities to incentivize permanent grocery store development in underserved communities, using tax incentives, subsidies, and cooperative business models.

- **Justification:** Mobile markets and food banks provide short-term relief, but sustainable food access requires **permanent, full-service grocery stores** in areas currently designated as food deserts.
- **Intended Impact:** Increased long-term food security and economic revitalization in underserved neighborhoods.
- **Timeline:** Long-term (3+ years).
- **Considerations:** Requires investment incentives, zoning policy adjustments, and partnerships with retailers willing to enter low-income markets.
- **Stakeholders:** Local governments, economic development agencies, grocery store chains, community investors.
- **Next Action Steps:** Conduct a market feasibility study, develop incentive packages, engage grocery chains and local entrepreneurs, and secure funding commitments.

## Strategy 4: Reduce Food Waste and Strengthen Food Recovery Networks

### Action 4.1: Implement a Countywide Food Rescue Program

- **Description:** Establish food recovery partnerships between restaurants, grocery stores, and food banks.
- **Justification:** Large amounts of edible food are wasted while food insecurity persists.
- **Intended Impact:** Reduce food waste, increase food availability for low-income households.
- **Timeline:** Midterm (12-18 months).
- **Considerations:** Requires logistical planning and liability protections for food donors.
- **Stakeholders:** Local businesses, food banks, faith-based organizations.
- **Next Action Steps:** Establish food rescue infrastructure, create incentives for participation, launch awareness campaigns.

### Action 4.2: Expand Community Fridge Programs

- **Description:** Establish publicly accessible refrigerators stocked with surplus food for those in need.
- **Justification:** Community fridges help address food insecurity while reducing waste.
- **Intended Impact:** Increased access to emergency food resources in underserved neighborhoods.
- **Timeline:** Near-term (6-12 months).

- **Considerations:** Requires funding for refrigeration units and ongoing food donations.
- **Stakeholders:** Community organizations, local businesses, public health departments.
- **Next Action Steps:** Identify locations for fridges, establish partnerships for food sourcing, and launch community engagement campaigns.

### Action 4.3: Create a Countywide Food Waste-to-Energy and Composting Program

- **Description:** Establish a county-led initiative to convert excess food waste from grocery stores, restaurants, and households into renewable energy and compost, reducing landfill waste and supporting local agriculture.
- **Justification:** Guilford County generates large amounts of food waste, which could be repurposed to reduce environmental impact and support local farms.
- **Intended Impact:** Reduction in food waste, improved soil quality for local farmers, and potential energy generation for municipal use.
- **Timeline:** Long-term (3+ years).
- **Considerations:** Requires investment in processing facilities, public education campaigns, and regulatory alignment for waste collection and energy conversion.
- **Stakeholders:** County waste management departments, local farmers, environmental agencies, energy companies.
- **Next Action Steps:** Conduct feasibility studies, secure funding, develop regulatory frameworks, and partner with waste collection and energy companies.

## Strategy 5: Promote Nutrition Education and Healthy Eating Habits

### Action 5.1: Expand Nutrition Education in Schools and Community Centers

- **Description:** Develop culturally relevant nutrition education programs for schools and community centers.
- **Justification:** Many residents struggle with making healthy food choices due to lack of knowledge and affordability.
- **Intended Impact:** Improved dietary habits, reduced diet-related health issues.
- **Timeline:** Near-term (6-12 months).
- **Considerations:** Requires curriculum development and trained educators.
- **Stakeholders:** Schools, community health organizations, Cooperative Extension.
- **Next Action Steps:** Identify funding sources, design curriculum, recruit trainers.

## Action 5.2: Provide Incentives for Healthy Food Purchases

- **Description:** Expand programs that double SNAP benefits for fresh produce at farmers' markets.
- **Justification:** Cost barriers prevent low-income families from purchasing nutritious food.
- **Intended Impact:** Increased fruit and vegetable consumption among low-income households.
- **Timeline:** Midterm (6-18 months).
- **Considerations:** Requires financial incentives and partnerships with local farmers.
- **Stakeholders:** Farmers' markets, SNAP administrators, local government.
- **Next Action Steps:** Secure funding, expand incentive programs, and conduct outreach to increase participation.

## Action 5.3: Integrate Nutrition and Food Systems Education into Public School Curricula

- **Description:** Implement long-term, **standards-based** nutrition and food systems education in K-12 schools, incorporating hands-on learning with school gardens, cooking classes, and local farm partnerships.
- **Justification:** Early education in nutrition and food production is key to **breaking the cycle of food insecurity and poor dietary habits**.
- **Intended Impact:** Long-term improvements in food literacy, healthier dietary habits, and increased interest in sustainable agriculture careers.
- **Timeline:** Long-term (3+ years).
- **Considerations:** Requires curriculum development, teacher training, and funding for school-based food education programs.
- **Stakeholders:** Guilford County Schools, NC Department of Public Instruction, local farms, nutritionists.
- **Next Action Steps:** Develop curriculum frameworks, pilot school garden programs, secure funding for implementation, and train educators in food systems education.

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## Appendix A - Data Sources

### Federal Sources

1. USDA Food Access Research Atlas
  - Geographic level: Census tract.
  - **What it offers:** Maps and data on food access indicators, including distance to grocery stores, vehicle availability, and income.
  - **Link:** [Food Access Research Atlas](#)
2. USDA Food Environment Atlas
  - **Geographic level:** County-level, with some tract-level indicators.
  - **What it offers:** Indicators of food choices, health and well-being, and community characteristics (e.g., store/restaurant availability, SNAP participation).
  - **Link:** [Food Environment Atlas](#)
3. USDA Agricultural Census (via NASS)
  - **Geographic level:** County-level detailed agricultural statistics; some data can be further broken down by region or ZIP code when available.
  - **What it offers:** Data on farms, farmland use, production, commodities, demographics of farm operators.
  - **Link:** [Census of Agriculture](#)
4. USDA Farmers Market Directory
  - **Geographic level:** By ZIP code, city, county.
  - **What it offers:** Directory of registered farmers markets, including addresses, operating times, accepted payment methods (including SNAP/EBT).
  - **Link:** [USDA Farmers Market Directory](#)
5. USDA SNAP and WIC Data
  - **Geographic level:** Typically state and county-level.
  - **What it offers:** SNAP participation rates, WIC redemption data; sometimes includes sub-county breakdowns depending on state-level reporting.
  - **Link:** [FNS Data & Reports](#)
6. American Community Survey (ACS), U.S. Census Bureau
  - **Geographic level:** Census block group, census tract, ZIP Code Tabulation Area (ZCTA), county.
  - **What it offers:** Demographic and economic indicators that can be used to estimate food insecurity drivers—poverty rates, household income, vehicle availability, etc.
  - **Link:** [American Community Survey](#)
7. Census Business Builder: Regional Analyst and Small Business Editions
  - **Geographic level:** County, city, ZIP code, census tract.
  - **What it offers:** Market data, consumer spending, business data (e.g., grocery store density, food retail sales).
  - **Link:** [Census Business Builder](#)
8. HUD Qualified Census Tracts (QCTs)

- Geographic level: Census tract.
- **What it offers:** Identifies tracts eligible for certain federal funding and tax incentives due to high poverty rates. Useful for locating low-income, high-need neighborhoods.
- **Link:** [HUD User - QCTs](#)

## State of North Carolina Data Sources

1. North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS)
  - **Geographic level:** County-level data; some program data may be broken down further.
  - **What it offers:** SNAP enrollment data, WIC participation, free/reduced lunch statistics, other nutrition program data.
  - **Link:** [NCDHHS](#)
2. North Carolina Office of State Budget and Management (OSBM)
  - **Geographic level:** County, municipality, or census tract data.
  - **What it offers:** Population projections, demographic data useful for analyzing local food security needs.
  - **Link:** [OSBM](#)
3. North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI)
  - **Geographic level:** School district and school-level (which can be mapped to neighborhoods).
  - **What it offers:** Data on free and reduced-price lunches by school, which can be aggregated to county or smaller geographic areas.
  - **Link:** [NCDPI Child Nutrition](#)
4. North Carolina Cooperative Extension (NC State / A&T)
  - **Geographic level:** County-level (each county has an Extension Center), with some locally collected data.
  - **What it offers:** Agricultural production data, community garden support programs, research on local food systems.
  - **Local office:** [Guilford County Cooperative Extension](#)
5. UNC Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention / Carolina Hunger Initiative
  - **Geographic level:** County-level, with some studies that break down to census tract.
  - **What it offers:** Research studies, reports, and data on food insecurity and hunger across North Carolina, including pilot projects in some counties.
  - **Link:** [Carolina Hunger Initiative](#)

## Guilford County Government & Municipal Data

1. Guilford County Government Data & Resources
  - **Primary website:** [Guilford County Government](#)
  - Potential offices/departments for data:
    - **Division of Public Health:** May track county-level health indicators, including nutrition, access to healthy foods, WIC usage, etc.
    - **Department of Social Services:** SNAP enrollment, emergency food assistance, local-level data on benefits distribution.
    - **GIS Department:** Potential mapping data on food retailers, food pantries, farmland, and other resources.
2. City of Greensboro Open Data Portal
  - **Geographic level:** City of Greensboro, with some neighborhood-level data.
  - **What it offers:** Can include GIS layers of food retailers, farmers markets, community gardens, etc.
  - **Link:** [City of Greensboro Open Data](#)
3. City of High Point Open Data Portal
  - **Geographic level:** City of High Point, with some neighborhood-level data.
  - **What it offers:** Similar to Greensboro, offers GIS data on local resources, community programs, planning data.
  - **Link:** [City of High Point Open Data](#)
4. **Municipal Planning & Zoning Departments** (Greensboro, High Point, other towns in Guilford County)
  - **Geographic level:** Typically city or neighborhood-level.
  - **What it offers:** Zoning maps (useful to determine where grocery stores, community gardens, and urban agriculture can be located), planned future developments, farmland preservation areas.

## School District Data

1. Guilford County Schools (GCS)
  - **Geographic level:** School-by-school data; can be aggregated by attendance zone or cross-walked to census tracts/block groups.
  - **What it offers:** Free/reduced lunch participation rates, local feeding programs, summer meal programs.
  - **Link:** [Guilford County Schools Child Nutrition](#)
2. North Carolina School Report Cards (state website)
  - Geographic level: School-level.
  - **What it offers:** Demographics of each public school, including free/reduced-price lunch percentages.
  - **Link:** [NC School Report Cards](#)

## Nonprofits, Food Banks, and Local Networks

1. Second Harvest Food Bank of Northwest NC

- **Geographic level:** County-level data; the organization serves multiple counties, including Guilford.
  - **What it offers:** Distribution data (pounds of food distributed, partner agency locations), SNAP outreach information.
  - **Link:** [Second Harvest Food Bank of Northwest NC](#)
2. Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina
- **Geographic level:** Also covers multiple counties; may have localized data for Guilford County.
  - **What it offers:** Similar metrics on food distribution, partner agencies, and programs.
  - **Link:** [Food Bank of CENC](#)
3. Local Pantries and Soup Kitchens
- Examples in Guilford County:
    - Greensboro Urban Ministry
    - Salvation Army of Greensboro
    - Other church-based pantries/soup kitchens (e.g., West End Ministries in High Point).
  - **What they offer:** Some maintain records of how many people they serve, distribution amounts, and geographic areas served.
4. Greater High Point Food Alliance
- **Geographic level:** High Point area; can include local neighborhoods in southwestern Guilford County.
  - **What it offers:** Networks of local organizations, community data, collaboration on food insecurity solutions.
  - **Link:** [Greater High Point Food Alliance](#)
5. United Way of Greater Greensboro
- **Geographic level:** County and city-wide initiatives.
  - **What it offers:** Data on hunger-related programs it funds, 2-1-1 call data about food needs, community reports.
  - **Link:** [United Way of Greater Greensboro](#)
6. United Way of High Point
- **Geographic level:** High Point region.
  - **What it offers:** Similar to the above—info on funded partners and 2-1-1 calls relating to food assistance.
  - **Link:** [United Way of Greater High Point](#)
7. Community Foundation of Greater Greensboro and High Point Community Foundation
- **Geographic level:** County-level philanthropic region.
  - **What they offer:** Grants data, initiative reports on community needs, including food insecurity.
  - Links:
    - Community Foundation of Greater Greensboro
    - [High Point Community Foundation](#)

## Farmers Markets

1. Guilford County Farmers Markets
  - **Examples:** Greensboro Farmers Curb Market, Piedmont Triad Farmers Market, High Point Farmers Market.
  - **What they offer:** Some track EBT/SNAP usage data, vendor counts, and product mix.
  - Links:
    - [Greensboro Farmers Curb Market](#)
    - [NCDA&CS Piedmont Triad Farmers Market](#)
    - [High Point Farmers Market \(City of High Point\)](#)

## Additional Data & Mapping Resources

1. Feeding America's "Map the Meal Gap"
  - **Geographic level:** County and sometimes congressional district; has some child food insecurity data available by county.
  - **What it offers:** Estimates of overall and child food insecurity, average meal costs, eligibility for federal nutrition programs.
  - **Link:** [Map the Meal Gap](#)
2. CDC PLACES (formerly 500 Cities/PLACES project)
  - **Geographic level:** City, census tract.
  - **What it offers:** Chronic disease indicators, preventive behaviors (e.g., fruit/vegetable intake), some nutrition-related data that can indicate possible food insecurity outcomes.
  - **Link:** [CDC PLACES](#)
3. 2-1-1 Counts (United Way's 2-1-1 Data)
  - Geographic level: ZIP code.
  - **What it offers:** Real-time or near real-time data on social service requests, including food-related assistance.
  - **Link:** [2-1-1 Counts](#)

## Appendix B - Survey Instrument



### Guilford County Food Systems

Welcome to the Guilford County Food System Assessment!

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this important survey. Your feedback will help us understand the strengths, challenges, and opportunities within our local food system. The insights gathered will guide initiatives to ensure equitable access to healthy, affordable, and culturally relevant food for all residents.

This survey is designed for residents of Guilford County. By sharing your experiences and opinions, you are contributing to building a stronger, more sustainable food system in our community. This survey is completely voluntary.

Your responses will remain confidential and will be used only for research and planning purposes. Completing the survey will take approximately 10-15 minutes. Please answer all questions honestly and to the best of your ability.

At the end of the survey you will be given the option to enroll in a sweepstakes drawing for one of five \$100 gift cards.

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**1. How many people live in your household? (live there at least ½ the time)**

- Just myself, I live alone
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10
- More than 10 people

**2. How many adults live in your household? (live there at least ½ the time)**

- Just myself
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10
- More than 10 adults



**3. How many adults earn income including salary, wages, tips, retirement income, investment income, benefits (such as social security), or other sources of income?**

- |                               |                                       |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> None | <input type="checkbox"/> 6            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1    | <input type="checkbox"/> 7            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2    | <input type="checkbox"/> 8            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3    | <input type="checkbox"/> 9            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4    | <input type="checkbox"/> 10           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5    | <input type="checkbox"/> More than 10 |

**4. What is your household's monthly income range (including salary, wages, tips, retirement income, investment income, benefits (such as social security), or other sources of income for all who contribute to household expenses)?**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$0 we have no source of income | <input type="checkbox"/> \$5,001 to \$5,500         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less than \$500 monthly         | <input type="checkbox"/> \$5,501 to \$6,000         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$501 to \$1,000                | <input type="checkbox"/> \$6,001 to \$6,500         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,001 to \$1,500              | <input type="checkbox"/> \$6,501 to \$7,000         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,501 to \$2,000              | <input type="checkbox"/> \$7,001 to \$7,500         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$2,001 to \$2,500              | <input type="checkbox"/> \$7,501 to \$8,000         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$2,501 to \$3,000              | <input type="checkbox"/> \$8,001 to \$8,500         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$3,001 to \$3,500              | <input type="checkbox"/> \$8,501 to \$9,000         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$3,501 to \$4,000              | <input type="checkbox"/> \$9,001 to \$9,500         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$4,001 to \$4,500              | <input type="checkbox"/> \$9,501 to \$10,000        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$4,501 to \$5,000              | <input type="checkbox"/> More than \$10,000 monthly |

**5. How much does your household spend on food each month? (Include federal or state benefits, such as SNAP, WIC, etc.)**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less than \$100 monthly | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1101 to \$1200         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$101 to \$200          | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1201 to \$1300         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$201 to \$300          | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1301 to \$1400         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$301 to \$400          | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1401 to \$1500         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$401 to \$500          | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1501 to \$1600         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$501 to \$600          | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1601 to \$1700         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$601 to \$700          | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1701 to \$1800         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$701 to \$800          | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1801 to \$1900         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$801 to \$900          | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1901 to \$2000         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$901 to \$1000         | <input type="checkbox"/> More than \$2000 monthly |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$1001 to \$1100        |   |



**6. In the last year, have you ever chosen not to buy food, bought food of less quality, skipped meals, or ate less than you felt you should due to finances?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know

**7. What are some of the financial reasons why you have chosen not to buy food, bought food of less quality, skipped meals, or ate less in the last year? (select all that apply)**

- Insufficient income: My earnings are not enough to cover my basic needs.
- Unexpected expenses: I had an emergency expense (e.g., medical bills, car repairs).
- High housing costs: Rent/mortgage payments take up most of my income.
- Utility costs: I prioritize paying for electricity, water, or heating over food.
- Transportation costs: Gas, car payments, or public transportation fees are too high.
- Childcare costs: Paying for childcare limits how much I can spend on food.
- Medical expenses: Healthcare or prescription costs leave little for groceries.
- Debt repayment: Loan, student loan, or credit card payments reduce my food budget.
- Loss of income: I lost a job or experienced reduced work hours.
- Irregular income: My earnings fluctuate, making budgeting difficult.
- Savings depletion: I ran out of savings to rely on.
- Supporting others: I am financially supporting family members or dependents including alimony or child support.
- Inflation: Rising prices of food and other goods make it difficult to afford meals.
- Financial literacy: I struggle with budgeting or managing money effectively.
- None of the above.
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**8. Which of these statements best describes the food eaten in your household in the last 12 months**

- Enough of the kinds of food we want to eat
- Enough but not always the kinds of food we want
- Sometimes not enough to eat
- Often not enough to eat
- Don't know



9. For these statements, please tell me whether the statement was often true, sometimes true, or never true for your household in the last 12 months.

	Never True	Sometimes True	Often True	Don't Know
We worried whether our food would run out before we got money to buy more	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The food that we bought just didn't last, and we didn't have money to get more.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We couldn't afford to eat balanced meals.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

10. In the last 12 months did you or other adults in your household ever cut the size of your meals or skip meals because there wasn't enough money for food?

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know

11. How often did this happen?

- Almost every month
- Some months but not every month
- Only 1 or 2 months
- Don't Know

12. In the last 12 months, did you ever eat less than you felt you should because there wasn't enough money for food?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know



**13. In the last 12 months, were you ever hungry but didn't eat because there wasn't enough money for food?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know

**14. In the last 12 months, did you lose weight because there wasn't enough money for food?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know

**15. In the last 12 months, did you or other adults in your household ever not eat for a whole day because there wasn't enough money for food?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know

**16. How often did this happen?**

- Almost every month
- Some months but not every month
- Only 1 or 2 months
- Don't Know

**17. In your own words, what does food insecurity mean to you?**

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**18. Based on your own definition, do you consider your household to be food insecure?**

- Never
- Sometimes
- Often
- Very often

**19. Does your household have consistent access to healthy and nutritious food you enjoy?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know

**20. What barriers do you experience to having consistent access to healthy and nutritious food you enjoy? (select all that apply)**

- I can't always afford healthy and nutritious food.
- Unhealthy and processed food is more affordable and convenient than healthy options.
- There are no nearby stores that sell fresh or nutritious food in my area.
- The stores near me don't carry culturally relevant or preferred healthy food options.
- I lack reliable transportation to access stores that sell healthy food.
- I don't have enough time to plan, shop for, or prepare healthy meals.
- I don't know how to prepare healthy meals
- I don't understand nutrition well enough to make healthy choices.
- I have physical or health limitations that make it difficult to shop for or prepare nutritious food.
- Fresh and nutritious foods are only available seasonally in my area.
- Language barriers make it difficult for me to understand food labels, recipes, or nutrition information.
- I have food allergies or dietary restrictions that limit my access to affordable and nutritious options.
- I don't have adequate storage or refrigeration at home for fresh or perishable foods.
- I don't have a working stove or oven
- I don't have running water
- I don't have pots, pans, or other items to cook with
- I don't feel safe traveling to or shopping in areas where I could access healthy food.
- I feel uncomfortable or stigma around using food assistance programs
- None of the above
- Other \_\_\_\_\_



**21. Where do you primarily get your food? (Select all that apply)**

- Supermarkets: Large grocery chains such as Walmart, Food Lion, Harris Teeter, Trader Joe’s, or Aldi.
- Local Grocery Stores: Smaller, locally owned stores that provide fresh and packaged goods.
- Convenience Stores: Smaller stores like Dollar General, Family Dollar, 7-Eleven, or gas stations, often with limited healthy options.
- Warehouse Clubs: Large stores selling bulk groceries and household items, often with membership fees like Costco or Sam’s Club
- Food Co-ops: Member-owned grocery stores that prioritize locally sourced and sustainable food like Deep Roots,
- Specialty Stores: Health food stores, ethnic grocery stores, or organic markets like Whole Foods, Fresh Market, and Earth Fare or Asian/Latino markets like Super G Mart or Li-Ming’s.
- Online Grocery Stores: Websites or apps such as Amazon Fresh, Instacart, or Shipt for online grocery shopping and delivery.
- Meal Kit Services: Subscription services like HelloFresh, Blue Apron, or Green Chef that deliver pre-portioned ingredients and recipes.
- Farmers’ Markets: Markets where local farmers sell fresh produce, meats, and other goods.
- Community Gardens: Local garden plots where individuals grow and harvest their own produce.
- Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA): Subscription-based programs providing regular deliveries or pickups of seasonal produce.
- Fast Food or Restaurants: Purchasing meals or prepared foods like rotisserie chickens or prepared salads.
- Delivery Services: Apps like Uber Eats or DoorDash delivering groceries or ready-made meals
- Meal Delivery Services: Meal programs for seniors or disabled like Meals on Wheels, community meals, senior dining, etc.
- Free community meal/ soup kitchen program: Community free meal programs like Potter’s House, Open Door Ministries, Church Under the Bridge, etc.
- Government Programs: Accessing food through programs like WIC (Women, Infants, and Children), SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program).
- Food Pantries: Nonprofits or churches offering free groceries to individuals or families in need like One Step Further Community Support & Nutrition Program (CSNP), Out of the Garden Project, Greensboro Urban Ministries, etc.
- Workplace or School Programs: Subsidized lunch programs, employee food boxes, Backpack programs, etc.
- Friends, Neighbors, or Family: Sharing food or receiving groceries from social networks.
- Homegrown Food: Growing fruits, vegetables, or raising livestock for personal consumption.
- Hunting, Fishing, and Foraging: Gathering food directly from nature, such as hunting game, fishing, or foraging for wild plants and mushrooms.
- Other \_\_\_\_\_



**22. How do you usually travel to get food?**

- Walking
- Bicycle
- Personal vehicle
- Ride with family, friend, or neighbor
- Bus/ public transit
- Ride-Share (Uber/Lyft)
- Taxi
- Food is delivered to me, I do not travel
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**23. How far do you usually travel for food?**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 1 mile | <input type="checkbox"/> 14 miles           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 mile           | <input type="checkbox"/> 15 miles           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 miles          | <input type="checkbox"/> 16 miles           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3 miles          | <input type="checkbox"/> 17 miles           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4 miles          | <input type="checkbox"/> 18 miles           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5 miles          | <input type="checkbox"/> 19 miles           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 6 miles          | <input type="checkbox"/> 20 miles           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 7 miles          | <input type="checkbox"/> 21 miles           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 8 miles          | <input type="checkbox"/> 22 miles           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 9 miles          | <input type="checkbox"/> 23 miles           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 10 miles         | <input type="checkbox"/> 24 miles           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 11 miles         | <input type="checkbox"/> 25 miles           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 12 miles         | <input type="checkbox"/> More than 25 miles |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 13 miles         |   |

**24. How often do you buy or acquire food?**

- Daily
- Several times a week
- Weekly
- Several times a month
- Once a month
- Every other month
- Less than every other month
- Never



**25. What factors are most important to you when purchasing or acquiring food?**

**(Select all that apply)**

- Cost
- Freshness
- Nutritional value
- Locally sourced
- Organic or sustainably produced
- Availability of culturally relevant foods
- Convenience
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**26. How affordable is healthy and nutritious food in your area?**

- Very affordable
- Somewhat affordable
- Neutral
- Somewhat unaffordable
- Very unaffordable

**27. How would you rate the variety of foods available in your area?**

- Excellent
- Good
- Average
- Poor
- Very poor

**28. How would you rate the quality of foods available in your area?**

- Excellent
- Good
- Average
- Poor
- Very poor



**29. Have you used any food assistance programs in the last year? (Select all that apply)**

- No, I have not used any food assistance programs in the last year
- SNAP - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
- WIC - Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)
- Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program
- School Meals Programs
- Food Pantries
- Backpack Programs
- Fresh Mobile Produce Programs
- Meal or Soup Kitchens
- Senior Resources of Guilford
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**30. What items do you usually get from the food pantry? (mark all that apply)**

- Fresh veggies, and fruit
- Meat
- Daily (milk, cheese, yogurt etc)
- Canned goods (beans, sauces, tuna)
- Dried goods (rice, pasta)
- Eggs
- Frozen food
- Bread
- Snacks
- Desserts
- Personal hygiene
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**31. What do you wish you could get more of at the pantries?**

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**32. How satisfied are you overall with local food assistance programs?**

- Extremely dissatisfied
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Extremely satisfied

**33. Why haven't you used any food assistance programs in the past year?**

- I have no need for food assistance.
- Ineligibility, I don't think I qualify
- I do not have transportation.
- I don't know how or where to get assistance.
- The application process is too complicated or complex
- Food assistance is provided at inconvenient hours or days.
- Local food pantries or assistance programs in my area are too busy to help me.
- Local food assistance doesn't meet my cultural needs or dietary preferences.
- Local food assistance is too limited in variety or unappealing in choices.
- Local food assistance isn't fresh, healthy, or nutritious.
- Others need it more and I don't want to "take away" resources.
- I avoid using food assistance programs due to stigma or embarrassment.
- Accessing benefits might affect my immigration status or lead to legal trouble.
- I am overwhelmed from the process or the circumstances that led to needing assistance.

**34. Have you participated in any local food-related activities or programs in the past year? (e.g., community-supported agriculture, gardening, food co-ops, etc.)**

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know

**35. Tell us more about the activities or programs**

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**36. How often do you purchase food directly from local sources such as farmers' markets, community gardens, or local farms?**

- Never
- Once to a few times a year
- Several times a year to every few months
- Monthly
- A few times a month
- Weekly or more often

**37. Do you feel that your community has adequate farmers' markets, community gardens, or local food producers?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know

**38. How important is it for you to support local farmers and food producers?**

- Not important at all
- Not very important
- Neutral
- Somewhat important
- Very important

**39. How important is it to you that your community supports sustainable food practices (e.g., reducing food waste, promoting organic farming, supporting local farmers)?**

- Not at all important
- Slightly important
- Moderately important
- Very important
- Extremely important

**40. How informed do you feel about your community's efforts to strengthen the local food system (e.g., food security initiatives, urban agriculture, sustainable farming)?**

- Not informed at all
- Slightly informed
- Moderately informed
- Very informed



**41. What changes would you like to see in your community to improve the local food system? (Select all that apply)**

- More farmers' markets or local food stands
- More affordable healthy food options
- Increased food education and cooking classes
- Better transportation to food access points
- Expansion of food assistance programs
- Greater support for local farmers and producers
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**42. What are you most interested in seeing your community address/ develop as it relates to food?**

- Adding or expanding community gardens
- Adding or expanding shared use kitchens
- Adding support for entrepreneurs in food or farmer business
- Providing loans or grants to finance food or farming businesses
- Addressing child hunger in schools
- Addressing food waste
- Addressing the lack of places to buy healthy food
- Addressing the lack of places and help to find information about federal food programs
- Providing more opportunities to learn what the resources are.
- Provide more technical/job training in the sectors of the food system

**43. How old are you?**

- Under 18
- 18-24 years old
- 25-34 years old
- 35-44 years old
- 45-54 years old
- 55-64 years old
- 65+ years old

**44. Are you of Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino origin?**

- Yes
- No



**45. Choose one or more races that you consider yourself to be**

- White or Caucasian
- Black or African American
- American Indian/Native American or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- Other
- Prefer not to say

**46. How do you describe yourself?**

- Man
- Woman
- Transgender woman
- Transgender man
- Nonbinary
- Other
- Prefer not to share

**47. What is the highest level of education you have completed?**

- Some high school or less
- High school diploma or GED
- Some college, but no degree
- Associates or technical degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Graduate or professional degree (MA, MS, MBA, PhD, JD, MD, DDS etc.)
- Prefer not to say

**48. What is your US Zip Code?**

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**49. If you could make one change to improve food access or security in your community, what would it be and why?**

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**50. What are the best ways we can support your food needs or concerns in the next year?**

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**51. Do you have any additional comments or suggestions about local food systems or food security initiatives that you would like to share?**

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**52. Thank you for taking the time to fill out this survey, your input is extremely important and will be included in the county wide food action plan. If you are interested in being included in the drawing for \$100 gift cards, please complete the following information:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

Postal code: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**53. Thank you for taking the time to fill out this survey, your input is extremely important and will be included in the county wide food action plan. If you are interested in keeping in touch with the food security team or participating in a food security action group, please indicate below:**

- Yes, include me in the contact list.
- No, do not include me in future correspondences.

## Appendix C – Open-Ended Survey Feedback

If you could make one change to improve food access or security in your community, what would it be and why?

- *A better grocery store on the south side of town. Food lion isn't keeping up, aldi on Randleman road had a pool of blood by the atm in the parking lot last time I went. It's a shame that wal mart is the best store I can shop at without taking a cooler.*
- *A better way to communicate to the community that the garden is there for them. It is important for the community to learn to grow their basic products so they can be substantial.*
- *a food pantry closer than having to go to greensboro from gibsonville and snap expansion*
- *A food safety information sharing mechanism can be established on the platform. Because then people will know where the food is better*
- *A little more monthly income. A husband/partner (two income streams) to share expenses. Less political agendas and greed that hikes price of food.*
- *A program to provide nutritious foods to those staying in hotels or tent encampments on a regular basis throughout the week or the month.*
- *A shared food pantry will be set up in the community, where residents can donate excess and unexpired food at home, so that people in need can access it at any time, and improve the convenience of food access*
- *Ability, financial incentives, for mainline grocers to open stores in food desert areas in our city*
- *Absolutely too support farming locally.,And regionally, in a manner similar to other entrepreneurial funding, support systems, and scope. Like all other products, food is supply and demand. If we help create more farmers, there will be more plentiful and affordable food. And higher quality food. Through the natural process of free market competition. Historically in our country, farmers have been the most populous entrepreneurs. But they are a dying breed, left to the corporate farms. Over the last few decades we have seen much funding and focus and effort aimed toward training, encouraging, supporting entrepreneurs in many facets of business and industry, but*

*not in farming... that is the way forward to create the most abundant quality and quality and variety of food, at the most wide availability and lowest cost.*

- *Access to Community Gardens*
- *Access to quality fresh fruits and vegetables that are affordable to promote less dependance on cheaper not as healthy options. I believe it would improve our health and weight.*
- *Access to truly nutritional foods that would hopefully reduce food waste and eventually eliminate all the foods that make us ill.*
- *Accessing more affordable food by growing the community growers and addressing the pricing they implement on their products. Providing subsidy programs or access to farming supplies for free to help decrease cost to farmers and decrease cost of fresh and locally grown produce.*
- *Actually understanding where locally grown food is at and where the farmers markets are located so everyone knows where they can go get fresh food*
- *Add educational programs to help people grow food, use food wisely, and cut out waste in homes and grocery stores.*
- *Add more educational programs about bring and preparing nutritious food.*
- *Add more grocery stores because there are not enough food options near me*
- *add more places to buy locally sourced foods so more people can access*
- *Added variety of grocery stores to increase competition and lower costs.*
- *Adding a few more grocery store options in the 27260 area like a Trader Joe's or Food Lion. There are currently no grocery stores in the area that provide access to nutritious food in a walkable distance.*
- *Adding a grocery store near the apartment community. Many apartment residents are low income and do not have transportation. A grocery within walking distance would be very helpful. Area is dominated by curb markets.*
- *Address food waste, especially food tossed by restaurants & grocery stores, should be donated to food banks and shelters.*
- *Addressing childhood hunger in school and other academic institutions*
- *Adjusting the amount of monetary assistance available to people in my demographic which includes: low income, minority, single, childless adults ages 20-30*
- *Affordable and accessible fruits and veg*

- *Affordable for everyone*
- *Affordable ready access to fresh produce and education/outreach opportunities to help people learn how to enjoy fresh produce and vegetable protein sources*
- *All of the grocery stores and fresh foods are not available within walking distance of underserved communities. Instead there are Gas stations, and convenience stores that sell overpriced, sometimes stale or old food. No fresh fruits or vegetables, and if so they appear to be ready to rot. Meat is of the lowest cut possible and many times the most unhealthiest cut of meat. They buy out of necessity, but also buy unhealthy snacks to eat for meals, sodas, chips, fried chicken, hot frozen pizza. hot dogs, sausages.*
- *area's that have a lack of grocery stores maybe have more farmers to be able to set up stands or if they're is a empty lot in the neighborhood make it available to the neighbors to cultivate*
- *Better access to healthy food*
- *Better access to local produce/food in general. More community building and education on healthy foods.*
- *better access to, and more quality, affordable grocery stores*
- *Better access, including options for food preferences*
- *Better education about budgeting and cooking healthy foods.*
- *better education/information about food security in communities like mine, where we are more food secure, so we can make better informed efforts to help our neighbors in need. outside of my neighborhood, getting the stores and/or gardens into the communities in need.*
- *Better farmer's markets, food pantries need to have more and fresher produce (especially vegetables)*
- *better public transportation*
- *Better sources for special diet foods*
- *Better use of unsold food from grocery stores and restaurants*
- *Bring to the community*
- *Build more smaller grocery stores throughout county*
- *change the entitlement vision of the groups you seem to have problems with. Come on - this survey is for the always a victim group of people*

- *CHEAPER FOOD PRICES*
- *Cheaper groceries in the stores*
- *Cheaper healthy foods*
- *Closer grocery store and Walmart style store*
- *Comida local de agricultores orgánica a mejor costos*
- *Community garden this allows hands on with growing and learning about the food we consume plus it can feed a multitude.*
- *Community garden. Share products.*
- *Continue free school breakfast and lunch forever*
- *Cooperative shared neighborhood agriculture. We need to build small, sustainable food systems to cut down on processed food and support each others well being.*
- *Cost*
- *Cost, I feel it would help everyone if the cost of food is affordable.*
- *Create tax incentives for people to grow their own food in their yards. It would jump start the passion for growing food and provide people with a little incentive to help pay for supplies, time etc.*
- *cultural shifts to reducing food waste*
- *Decrease food cost and increase better choices and fresh selection not outdated in food pantries*
- *Decrease transportation costs*
- *Distribute fresh vegetables at the senior centers to all the people*
- *Drawing a blank on this question....*
- *Easier to access grocery store on bus line*
- *Education in schools, educating families to cook own food, go to fast food restaurants LESS, understanding yourself, why you choose junk food over healthy food choices*
- *Eliminate hunger with churches leading the way. Resources should be combined, mental health professionals available and employers on hand. Communities have to become self sufficient with sustainable resources such as churches, D9 professional organizations and social organizations leading the way. There are enough resources*

*available. We should not depend on government. Our government is apart of the problem.*

- *Eliminating food deserts in areas of the city of High Point. There is a disparity with this with several grocery stores within a 2-3 mile radius in some areas of the city but on Martin Luther King Jr. Dr a Food Lion was shuttered several years ago and a Sav-A-Lot on Lexington Ave/Jamestown Pkwy was shuttered creating food deserts in these communities*
- *Elimination of food deserts.*
- *Enable people to grow their own food.*
- *Enable people who do not have autos or buses near to one or more groceries and might be not able to work have other ways to get there foods or volunteers to take them to shop.*
- *Encourage establishment of neighborhood grocery stores within walking distance of population concentrations.*
- *Ensure that all areas of our community have multiple options of places to buy healthy food. Lower prices to ensure meals stretch for a family.*
- *Equal access to high quality, affordable food.*
- *Establish a community garden to use the idle land in the community to develop a community garden and organize residents to participate in planting. In this way, residents can directly obtain fresh vegetables, reducing pollution and other safety problems that may be caused by transportation*
- *expand current public transportation to farmers markets/grocery stores*
- *Expand government benefits- with rising food costs family that are “above” income guidelines are barley making it*
- *Expand SNAP*
- *Expand SNAP program.*
- *Expanding food assistance resources so that more people could qualify for assistance- even folks who work full time, don't have enough money to buy quality food for their families. Expanding food assistance would help to free up some of the income that is used on groceries, so families feel less strain from paycheck to paycheck.*
- *Farmer's market Randleman Rd area*

- *Farmer's bring vegetables and fruits to the neighborhood.*
- *Farmers market*
- *Farmers market conveniently located. I work a lot so convenience would be helpful*
- *Farmers markets that are affordable. It's a fraction of the price in Ohio than NC.*
- *Find a way to make healthy food more affordable and accessible to everyone*
- *Find employment with an adequate income for the food insecure. Without an on going independent source of income you are just pushing the problem down the road for the next set of politicians to talk about but take no real actions to resolving the problem. Also you would not have the food support you do have today if it were not for the Christian churches found in the communities.*
- *finding quality fresh produce can be difficult at times*
- *Focus on healthy offerings. I get all kinds of cakes and desserts at the Food Pantry but only 2-3 veggies/potatoes.*
- *Food Stamps for Senior Citizens with low income Social Security Check, all other funds depleted due to unforeseen surgeries and hospitalizations, with NO OTHER INCOME BUT Social Security Deposit 1 x mo.*
- *Food Stamps to keep up with rising food costs. Eggs, meat extremely high in price. Yet Food Stamps still, constantly lagging behind*
- *For everyone to have enough quality food to eat.*
- *For healthy food to cost less*
- *For me myself, being able to walk to a grocery store, e.g., the Aldi's planned for Elm and Gate City. For people in more vulnerable situations, more access to healthy food in general, through every available means, including ensuring nutrition for school students.*
- *Free public transportation for seniors to grocery shopping*
- *Free school breakfast and lunch for every child.*
- *Fresh produce, meat and dairy delivery to the home, regardless of eligibility*
- *Gardening, more loans, government funds more retirement money*
- *Get restaurants to donate more food instead of throw it away.*
- *Get the contaminated soil out my community*

- *Give every available home 2 chickens and a raised garden bed.*
- *Give everyone a monthly food voucher*
- *Give people more assistance through SNAP program with better benefits so people will not have to struggle keeping food on the table*
- *Grant loans to Farmers*
- *GROCERY STORES THAT HAVE A VARIETY OF ORGANIC CHOICES AND OTHER HEALTHY OPTIONS, AND A WIDE VARIETY OF FRESH FARM PRODUCE ALL YEAR ROUND.*
- *Grow my own foods without being harassed by city workers or others*
- *Hacer huertos comunitarios . Y también criar aves gallinas*
- *Have a comprehensive resource that lists all community/government supported programs, and also one that lists local food production/farmers locations/markets/stands/etc so we know more than a couple places we can go to support local farmers. The first list ideally would also be printed to hand out to people who cannot access internet. Could be posted on local community housing boards, or at apartments that are traditional locations food insecurity may be present, could be handed out to homeless but with more limited info that is more directly helpful for this group and directions so as to not overwhelm them with un-needed info.*
- *Have delivery for food pantries as I see several neighbors asking for help as they are not able to drive*
- *Have local farmers markets closer by*
- *Have many access points to purchase good quality, affordable food so folks don't have to travel far to get to it. We have a plethora of grocery stores close by our house and it's not far to local farm stores and markets. There are many places in our city where that is not true.*
- *Have more affordable produce available*
- *Have more food options available*
- *have more publicity about the good things going on. Is there a current, active food alliance in Greensboro like in High Point? we need it if there isn't*
- *Have people in the community better informed of the various programs that are available to them.*

- *Having either more different grocery stores or farmer's markets on the east side of the county instead of more ABC stores because there aren't as many food options on the eastern side of the county, but several on the west side.*
- *Having fresh healthy food done like a food truck that goes to several areas that people could get to easier*
- *having like weekend rides to a farmers market or other city markets to help get more healthy local veggies and fruits*
- *Having more produce available to the food pantries that can be distributed to families in need.*
- *Healthier options*
- *Healthy affordable options*
- *Help eat more healthy and providing information to finding food available. Because we need to be together for all to consume healthy foods. Love thy neighbor.*
- *Help implement food pantries*
- *Help people get and keep good jobs, grow some of their own food, and have easy access to fresh farm produce*
- *I do not know because i think my community is pretty food stable Of course i am older with stable income I know what my dad and mom talked about growing in the great depression years on a farm - always with food to eat but not the quality and variety we are now accustomed to*
- *I don't know*
- *I dot work didn't qualify fr disability cause no work 5 of lSt 10 years. Husband's older I have take care of him but I only get 29 ind ebt that pays one meal. Doesn't really help*  
.
- *I honestly don't know.*
- *I live in a food desert, so I would add small grocery stores in areas with food deserts.*
- *I live in an area that has many options for grocery shopping, so I would wish that other areas of the city would have that same access.*
- *I think community gardens and empowering people with knowledge on how to grow their own food should not be underestimated. Not everyone has an interest, but food can very much bring community together to support each other. I feel like one positive during the pandemic was people spent more time outdoors and seemed to take a*

*great interest in gardening and growing their own food-its an important form of education and self-reliance skill.*

- *I want to make food more accessible*
- *I will be retiring in a couple of years. I am looking forward to more time to devote to our food pantry at First UMC and finding ways to make healthier food options available to our neighbors. Many are seniors with special dietary needs and many are seniors with physical limitations that prevent them from cooking for themselves. We already serve one free community meal each month ... but our funding for that is limited. I want to figure out how to provide more fresh produce at those meals and easy, healthy meals for which we could share recipes! Beyond that, we need to be focusing on education and job training so those in need can afford the food they need.*
- *I will make food more affordable for a family to really be able to buy something to eat. It just breaks my heart. How many people can't afford to buy milk how does it cost five to \$10 for 1 gallon of milk? It's a struggle for all of us in the world so I would make food way more affordable than what it is today. It's just getting auto control.*
- *I will make sure that people know how to grow their own vegetables and crops so that they will not have to purchase them just a seed and soil*
- *I wish the Piedmont Triad Farmer's Market had a program like the farmer's market on Market St in Greensboro that offered 50% increased value of EBT. We donate to that program at that Greensboro market. It helps put fresh vegetables in homes with food insecurity*
- *I would base if some one qualifies for SNAP by their Net income not the Gross income. Many people barely miss the qualifying amount but after benefits and taxes they can't afford the basic things like childcare and food.*
- *I would create more community gardens and urban farming initiatives to increase access to fresh produce. This would not only provide healthy food options but also foster community engagement and education about nutrition and sustainable practices.*
- *I would do a neighbor-ran food delivery service like Uber Eats/Doordash/Ride Share to support those who may be unable to obtain food whether you take them to the place or pick the order for them.*
- *I would expand community gardens/educational gardens.*
- *I would expand the resources available for access to food. SNAP benefits are insufficient to support even on person, especially our elders and it doesn't make it*

worth the time to apply. There are that fall above the income rate but cannot afford to feed their families because the cost of living, Food insecurity is a widespread problem. I live in Greensboro and there is all these tax credits and desires to build up Greensboro and the city council supporting luxury housing, why is there no money going into resources to support more families.,

- *I would fund more Meals on Wheels to people who cannot get out to buy or prepare their food. The waitlist is much too long for people who need help immediately.*
- *I would increase availability to healthy foods. There are a lot of low income areas that may not be able to access or afford the higher cost healthy foods. I could support local entrepreneurs or farmers at farmers markets or support incentives that encourages local or corner stores that provide fresh produce in low income communities.*
- *I would like everyone to be able to access fresh produce easily and cheaply*
- *I would like for the county to look at the needs of Seniors. some of us don't qualify for food stamps or snap benefits. there needs to be programs geared towards Seniors and people what have life threatening Health issues from food deficiency.*
- *I would like to have extended bus routes. Routes that go to places where I can get fresh food.*
- *I would like to see a greater diversity of shoppers at farmer's markets. I feel like there is an unspoken barrier between this community resource and under-resourced community members.*
- *I would love to see more farmers markets or produce stands in my area.*
- *I would lower prices and add more security in our communities and reach out more to the people that are truly impacted by everything that's going on in their communities.*
- *I would make food cheaper and more accessible in the communities with people of color as it is systemically set up in Guilford County. In the areas with Caucasian people, there are better stores and more accessible but in the areas with people of color, it is the opposite.*
- *I would put a more accessible grocery store closer to downtown, deep roots is nice but not everyone can afford it.*
- *I would shift the focus from cheap, easy/quick food to balanced, local food (that doesn't use lots of pesticides/herbicides, since that just creates other human & environmental health issues). Farm stands and funding for local organic farmers may*

*help with this. Promoting multi-generational homes may also help with this since it could result in someone being in the home during the day who could help with cooking balanced meals. This could also help alleviate some housing security and food security issues for elderly people.*

- *I would suggest more availability of nutritious foods and programs designed to help lower income households, including school age children and Senior citizens.*
- *I'd love it everyone who needed food had access to it. I'd make sure food access was a top priority. Food access includes places to purchase healthy food and the resources needed to acquire the needed food*
- *I'd screen people that say they need help because I've seen people get free food from pantries that don't need it and they keep what they eat and throw the rest away, and they get food stamps*
- *I'd diversify areas of resource in order to minimize bad patterns*
- *If I could make one change to improve food access and security, it would be to make it more wide known about the resources for the people who are struggling on the day to day basis. For the people who are applying to food stamps, if they are unable to get them o believe some resources should be talked about immediately to help*
- *If I could only make one change it would be to lessen food waste by providing fresh produce to the public, rather than allowing it to go bad and be thrown out. There are also places that will pour bleach on produce that has been thrown away to keep anyone from dumpster diving. I think this practice should be illegal as it is extremely inhumane, wasteful, and hateful to try to harm someone who is so in need they would be willing to eat from the trash.*
- *Improve the access of food. The closest grocery store to me is 4 to 5 miles away. I would also improve the amount of local produce.*
- *Improve the logistics mechanism, set up more shared food market points, so that resources can flow to each other, and make it more convenient for me to buy food.*
- *In conjunction with local farms, restaurants and food banks, a sorting centre is set up using idle space to deliver fresh produce 24 hours a day from garden to canteen to home via electric vans, reducing transport losses and transportation costs for each family. In this way, the problem of not being able to eat fresh food due to the inconvenient transportation can be greatly improved.*
- *Increase access for all and make it easier for people to get help.*
- *Increase availability of food bank*

- *Increase Food Stamps amount Because every month is Food Stamp dependent*
- *increase in transportation options and a central platform for local food resources so that more people can be informed and have access to quality food, which ought to be a human right.*
- *Increase outreach programs within the Community- which often comes together to meet the needs of those seeking assistance. With all the changes rolling out on the Federal Level, Food insecurity is about to get a lot worse, fast!*
- *Increase the government assistance programs so that more people are eligible for assistance.*
- *Increase the number of affordable food retailers on the east side of Greensboro.*
- *Increased cooperation with farms near the community can provide fresh food on a regular basis, as this helps the income of local farms and gives the community the assurance of safe food*
- *Increased funds for school meal programs for breakfast and lunch for school children and availability of that food in a way that does not add a stigma to the children*
- *Increased investment in local foods. Recognition that our region could produce enough food to feed our communities if the resources were allocated towards farms and small food businesses. We are far too reliant on imports, trucking systems and complicated supply chains. It doesn't have to be this way.*
- *Increased knowledge of the programs already in place, such as accepting snap at the Greensboro Curb Market, A Simple Gesture, etc. While it would be great to see a farmers market/ co-op within a reasonable distance of each and every neighborhood in the county, at this moment in time, I believe that just knowing that there are already organizations in place to assist those experiencing hunger would be drastically helpful.*
- *Increased local farmer markets*
- *Increased resources (including land access, business support, and capital access) for small farmers (and especially under-resourced and diverse farmers) that want to scale up- ex: food hubs, processing, aggregation, medicaid food as medicine, & contracts with institutions- that will pay farmers a fair price and they'll be able to make a living. I see this as an opportunity to create good jobs, increase wealth in the community, and allow better access to affordable, fresh, local, culturally relevant and healthy foods for more people.*
- *Increase the accessability to foods and resoulces*

- *Introducing a "shared labor" model, in which residents can participate in planting (e.g., two hours a week) in exchange for free food quotas, both reduces farm labor costs and enhances a sense of community belonging.*
- *It would be great to have resources for pantries to deliver food to those without transportation or have disabilities.*
- *It would be to have food pantries on wheels for low income families because not everybody has a car to drive to pantries and not everyone can afford groceries for an entire household.*
- *It's hard to say but if food was more affordable, and I know it's gone up but it's not the end of the world bad, but it could be more affordable and healthier also. And there are already programs in place but it's still hard*
- *less expensive food without sacrificing quality*
- *Less restrictions on what people need to access things like food pantries. Also make them easier to access.*
- *Local farmer's markets*
- *Local food stand would be amazing.*
- *low income vegetables*
- *Lower cost options for fresh fruits and vegetables. I often use canned or frozen options vs fresh options due to cost.*
- *Lower costs for healthier food.*
- *Lower food cost for higher nutritional items*
- *Lower food costs . And encourage the public to stop littering because of plastic waste.*
- *Lower food prices*
- *Lower grocery prices*
- *lower prices*
- *Lower prices and more healthy options to help people be healthier and live longer.*
- *Lower prices in rent and food lower crime in community*
- *Lower prices on good nutritious food. It's way cheaper and easier to buy junk and packaged foods. I can't eat what I want. I have to wait for sales. Fruits, veg, and meat are sometimes not bought because can't afford it.*

- *Lower the cost of food or increase wages*
- *Lower the price of everything it's too high*
- *Lower the prices on fruits/vegetables and fresh meats such as poultry. I recently was at Lowes Foods in Whitsett and noticed that a frozen turkey was \$81.00. Nobody can afford that!! The store barely had any chicken to offer. Nobody can afford to buy organic. I would do away with the title. It's all BS anyhow.*
- *make food affordable*
- *Make healthy foods more affordable!*
- *Make healthy foods, meats and fresh foods more affordable and charge more for the unhealthy foods so they would be more of a treat.*
- *Make it easier to access funds and places to go good for the most food insecure. Remove barriers to access.*
- *Make it easier to apply for and obtain food stamps or other food assistance*
- *Make nutritious food available to more people.*
- *Make quality vegetables and proteins such as fish, chicken meats affordability for peopl.*
- *Make sure everyone have a place where they can get food without any complications (ie: IF they need food on the weekend they go somewhere)*
- *Making local foods more accessible. More farmers markets.*
- *Many refugees come from homeland of farming. They have a life time of experiences in farming culturally appropriate food. I would love to see free land for refugee and immigrants to farm.*
- *Mejoramiento en sistema y calidad de merienda escolar y variedad de comida menos enlatados y procesados..*
- *More access for seniors to receive help with access, affordability and healthy choices*
- *More access to affordable healthy food that is paired with food literacy education including cooking classes. It pains me to see all these fast-food restaurants popping up in the city, which serve very unhealthy food which is killing our community especially black and brown people.*
- *More access to food pantry's or more pop up meal events*
- *More access to fresh foods in food deserts*

- *More access to healthy snacks for community-based afterschool programs.*
- *More access to local farmers. Increased farmers markets.*
- *More affordable*
- *More affordable and healthier alternatives*
- *More affordable food and transportation to those places, because lots of nutrition foods are expensive and even if they are not some people don't have access to them and need transportation help.*
- *More affordable food options for all community, regardless of income.*
- *More affordable fresh foods to improve community health*
- *More affordable grocery stores instead of high end ones so there are more options to chose from*
- *More affordable markets in "food deserts"*
- *More affordable, healthy food for seniors by going to local community centers*
- *More and better jobs or job training so people can support themselves.*
- *More availability of publications about locations for free food to give to homeless people*
- *More available access to healthy, affordable food*
- *More awareness and a better system to let the community know that food is available and when and where*
- *More basic grocery stores in low income area. Walkable.*
- *More co-op farmers markets with free freshly grown produce. Available at least every two weeks to the community. This would support healthy eating and less stress for those who can't afford the overpriced and over processed produce in the stores*
- *More community gardens. More food stamp / farmer programs. Transportation to the colfax farmers market.*
- *More donations by local businesses to food pantries*
- *More education on how to keep your food safe/fresh and for how long.*
- *More farmer market*
- *More Farmer's Markets. More programs for new farmers.*
- *More farmer's markets throughout the city.*

- *More farmers markets*
- *More farms to give access to fresher produce*
- *More federal money for food stamps and being able to get access to fresh vegetables*
- *More focus on feeding elderly and children.*
- *more food banks*
- *More food for cheaper price*
- *More food services for seniors*
- *More food stamps*
- *more fresh Local foods*
- *More grocery options in our area. Many times our 1 grocery store is nearly empty/out of many things because there are so many people in the area.*
- *More grocery stores and upgrade existing. Lower costs and options for the perceived poor.*
- *More grocery stores in less affluent area.*
- *More grocery stores in poor neighborhoods*
- *More grocery stores throughout Greensboro*
- *More knowledge of available resources*
- *More local farmers market's with some security*
- *More local markets and a list of local farmers who sale to the public. I only know of one local market. I have to travel 20 mins to get there. I have seen several what seems to be local farmers but it is difficult to know whether they sell to the public without knocking on their doors. How times are these days I don't feel safe doing that so I don't stop unless I see a sign that indicates they are selling fruits or vegetables. But it is also hard to know operating hours if you drive by and happen to miss the sale and the sign is gone. These places are usually on the outskirts of the city so one would need to plan this trip as to not waste other resources like fuel.*
- *More locally grown, seasonally appropriate and increase number of farmers markets.*
- *More locally regeneratively grown foods. Affordability. Support for small farmers.*
- *More opportunities for FREE community garden plots all around the city. Community chicken coop for fresh eggs?*

- *more options*
- *More options*
- *More options for food pantries, more support for community gardens, small farmers.*
- *More options for where to buy groceries and better selections in stores for fresh foods*
- *more outreach to educate community on local farmers*
- *More quality food stores, in low income areas*
- *More stores, like mom and pop stores, convenience stores be eligible to qualify for acting EBT cards.*
- *More transparency around the resources in the community for food access. Many people do not know how they can access food or programs that assist with getting food and having more information and transparency would help with that.*
- *More variety in fresh non processed food.*
- *More variety. Having moved to Guilford County from another state, I miss the ethnic markets we had nearby (Italian, Polish, Greek, Middle Eastern, etc.). What I miss most is a good meat market nearby. To find these types of things, I have to drive several miles or cannot find them at all. Food Lion, Walmart, and the rest are fine for basics but I miss a good take and bake pizza from an Italian bakery or homemade perogies and sausage from a Polish store. Don't get me started on the homemade spinach pie and baklava. Maybe as the area grows we'll get more stores/bakeries.*
- *More volunteers available to help at community gardens and the local farms. The work really takes a village and to meet needs, more food needs to be grown in spaces that allow it.*
- *Mutual financial aid and mutual information sharing so people can get what they need/want, when they want it, without hoops to jump through. One of my coworkers works fulltime and has one teenager at home. She cannot always afford food for the two of them. I'm so glad she shared that with me because she thought because she didn't qualify for SNAP that there was no food assistance available to her. I shared some local resources with her that don't require income tests/hoops. There can be such shame in asking for help, particularly if you work fulltime and still can't make ends meet. That is a failure of capitalism, making US feel ashamed for structural problems. There is enough food and money in the world so no one should be hungry. Unequal allocation of resources is the problem, and there is no political will to rebalance that.*

- *No grocery stores never*
- *Nutrition education to give people more knowledge and health literacy, so they can make more informed decisions about their nutrition and how it impacts their overall health and health outcomes.*
- *Nutritional center*
- *Offer food allowance for seniors on a fixed income*
- *Offer free organic good quality food to working families at least once a month in multiple locations throughout the city. Without abusing the service by the same people. This service is only available to those who do not receive government food assistance.*
- *Offer incentives to grocery stores to open stores in food deserts thus making fresh, affordable food available to all.*
- *One change would be that there would be easily accessible resources for individuals, businesses and churches to access where resources are for those who are unhoused and those who are without a job and don't know how to feed their families. For example, where are the little food pantries, where are the food pantries, where are community gardens and any other help for folks who are hungry. Perhaps it's already out there and we just don't know it.*
- *Open government supported supermarkets in areas where needed*
- *Open grocery stores in walking distance because many don't drive or are elderly,*
- *Open store at Greensboro Farmers Curb Market selling locally produced food 7 days a week.*
- *Outreach for the unhoused ensuring they are not going days without eating.*
- *Places to purchase affordable fresh foods in areas that don't have actual grocery stores*
- *Prepped meals available in underserved communities, because not all have access to a kitchen or appliances.*
- *Prevent food waste by distributing excess food through schools*
- *Promote healthy practices*
- *Provide affordable healthy options and educate on food choices. Many have to choose the cheapest option and they contain many ingredients that are harmful to their health. We need to 100% support our farmers but when I purchase at a farmers*

*market the price points are out of control. The food cycle needs more support so the farmers can offer their product to everyone, not just the one who can afford to pay \$6 for 1 tomato. Somewhere the farmers need more support. Education on plant based diets are needed. We live in a eat meat every meal society. It isn't needed and is proven to not be healthy, especially with the way meat is produced.*

- *provide ALL meals at school for free to everyone*
- *Provide food busses/vans to take folks to shop at healthy markets.*
- *Provide more community gardens.*
- *provide more resources for food assistance.*
- *Public school b'fast, lunch, and take home for dinner!*
- *Public transportation options in the county/rural areas.*
- *Quality - We have access to many food resources but the quality of the food lacks. Less processed, more nutritional.*
- *quality restaurants, fast foods, and more grocers, organic farmers markets*
- *Reaching out the residents who make a decent living, but are struggling with debt that significantly impacts monthly expenses. Tools, techniques, or ways to save for higher income brackets, but still have financial strains.*
- *Receive supermarket surpluses, farm surpluses (reduce waste), and distribute them to low-income families for free or at low prices*
- *Reduce cost*
- *Reduce cost and create more available sources*
- *reduce food waste*
- *Reduce waste*
- *Reducing food waste!*
- *Regularly updated food pantry lists and resources. Sometimes list are available at some of the locations, but really outdated. I received one dated 2023. Online resources are also outdated.*
- *Remove HOA's from neighborhoods. It would allow people who live in the community to be able to grow their gardens without the risk of consequences.*
- *sharing food recourses across the county*

- *Silvero gardens in different areas for all the people, so that no one goes hungry.*
- *Six miles to a grocery store in every direction is too far. We need a grocery store in Pleasant Garden. I have my own car and find it more difficult than it should be, I can't imagine for someone who doesn't have a car because we don't even have bus service in this area.*
- *Snap requirements are unrealistic*
- *Stigma*
- *support local farmers and grocery stores*
- *Teach children to grow their own food.*
- *Teach people how to fish instead of handing them fish.*
- *Teach people how to grow vegetables*
- *Tener mucho más información sobre la alimentación y apoyos*
- *The availability and access of food for underserved communities*
- *The establishment of food sharing and mutual aid networks can promote interaction and cooperation among community members.*
- *The free food co ops to supply fresh not expired food*
- *The Glenwood Community is very good at working together but having a better farmers market in this well populated area would be beneficial. We have drop boxes where people donate food and it helps.*
- *The simplest and easiest way to help people with food insecurity would be to repeal the tax on food. Only about 10 states tax groceries because it's so regressive. Repealing the Food Tax would help all North Carolinians who eat, particularly young families and low income people.*
- *There are areas in Greensboro where residents cannot walk to a grocery store. I would like to see more stores or markets in all areas of the city. Also accessible farmers markets mid week.*
- *There are at least six grocery stores within five miles of my house, but when I travel to the east side of town I see only one full service store. I would like to see more grocery stores available in the poorer sections of our town.*
- *There is more fresh and safe food*

- *There needs to be more access or more availability for food pantries. Also, freshness is a concern.*
- *This is an overwhelming question to me. There are so many systematic changes that need to take place to help people gain food sovereignty in Guilford County. If I had to pick one thing to change, I would choose helping people have access to communal growing of fresh produce. This would facilitate the sharing of knowledge of how to grow, how to prepare/eat it, and even how to sell it in the future. This communal growing could be an opportunity for intergenerational collaboration and learning. In turn, this would teach people more about where their food comes from and hopefully inspire a greater appreciation for fresh, organic produce, and the power of a garden tomato vs a grocery store tomato.*
- *To advocate that there be more healthy/better quality foods available in my community and have more reliable and affordable resources of transportation to and from the more healthy, and better quality grocery store/farmers market etc., that also serve/support the community as a whole.*
- *to at least give everyone a way to get to food sources easily*
- *To have at least one community garden in every zip code and to turn what is harvested into a nutritious meal or snack that can be distributed to the homeless or in-need populations in the Triad.*
- *To have more community gardens because I think everyone in the community would benefit from this*
- *To have the government involved as little as possible. Because there are lots of programs already and they need to continue without more programs and ways for our taxes to be spent.*
- *To make healthy n food affordable.*
- *To me, it's not transporting people to where the food is, it's bringing the food into the neighborhoods in need: pop up grocery stores/farmer's markets/pantries. This makes nutritious food more available and removes the embarrassment of accessing a pantry (And, while it is good that people donate food to free pantries, often I see Pop Tarts, sugar cereals, and boxed mac-and-cheese as donations. Setting kids up for heart disease, diabetes, and other chronic illnesses, does not help the child nor society. All it does is assuage the have's guilt.) I will get off my Liberal soap box now.*
- *Training, jobs for people that have a sincere passion to help provide food to anyone needy without going thru a lot of bureaucracy to receive help. It's our responsibility,*

*duty and obligation to share and help meet people's basic needs of food, clean water, and shelter!*

- *Transportation/ Access to get food across our community*
- *Transport to get to food banks/pantries/meals/etc.*
- *Transportation to farmers markets or affordable delivery of CSA/produce boxes with simple, nutritious meal suggestions included.*
- *Try to donate food whenever I can*
- *Trying to attract a FULLY vegan grocery store—many exist in larger cities, esp. in Europe. Most food waste is of meat, dairy and eggs (esp. now with the rampant bird flu, which has resulted in at least 150 million poultry wastefully killed, and which is the primary cause of high egg prices—i.e. government (taxpayer) subsidies to buy MORE innocent animals to be abused and killed for unnecessary protein. Most people are unaware these animal killing industries could not exist without public subsidy. All protein comes from plants, even in the ocean—the simple science of photosynthesis creating amino acids and proteins. Anything like B12 and D3 that people imagine come from meat are supplements given the animals—B12 can be obtained from tasty dried seaweed and D3 from tofu (soybeans).*
- *Union grocery workers making a decent living in our communities. Well paid employees would help all workers put pressure on wages.*
- *Universal free meals in schools including summer meals (with no requirement to eat on site), possibly meal delivery to kids out of school, more safety nets for families whose incomes don't cover all necessities*
- *Unsure*
- *Using this online platform, food safety knowledge lectures, training and other activities can be carried out regularly to popularize the importance of food safety and food storage methods to community residents*
- *Wages need to increase for low-income people in the county. Providing more stores or more markets is all well and good, but if many people cannot afford food, then the point is moot.*
- *We have a farmers market when it's in season for it to open but if I had one change of improvement, it would be to have a Trader Joe's, Sprouts, Aldi, or Lidl right in the middle of Gibsonville. It's a small town but the only walking distance or short travel to stores to get any food small restaurants, the Dollar Tree and Dollar General. All the grocery markets are in Burlington or Greensboro. And even then, I have to make trips*

*to several different stores to purchase healthy, fresh, and available food. For example, one store might have fresh hard apples but the potatoes and berries are always going bad quickly. Or the price of meat may be more affordable at one place but they're frequently out of organic milk and eggs. Or I like to get a healthy brand of options from particular stores like Trader Joe's & Sprouts but WIC is not accepted at either of those locations. (Just some examples of why I choose to travel to multiple grocery stores throughout the month.)*

- *Wean out the notion wean out the notion that people that have done things wrong do not also need food. As well as the fact that our whole community needs to be better about clean up. And people need to understand that throwing trash on the ground instead of in trash cans can lead to further toxicity in our environment*
- *Weekly cooking classes and nutrition lectures. Low-income families, in particular, are taught low-cost healthy recipes and ingredient preservation techniques, such as canning surplus vegetables or pickles. This will not only ensure that food is not wasted, but also control the expenditure costs of low-income families.*
- *When a hurricane hit North Carolina in 2024, local supply chains were disrupted, causing supermarkets to run out of stock. So I hope our governments and organizations can think ahead and strengthen their ability to deal with extreme weather so that basic food supplies can be guaranteed.*
- *Where I reside in zip code 27405. We have no where to go besides a food lion.*
- *You can add some retail outlets that sell safe food in your community, which will also make people eat safe food*

## **What are the best ways we can support your food needs or concerns in the next year?**

- *A better grocery store on the south side of town. Food lion isn't keeping up, aldi on Randleman road had a pool of blood by the atm in the parking lot last time I went. It's a shame that wal mart is the best store I can shop at without taking a cooler.*
- *A better way to communicate to the community that the garden is there for them. It is important for the community to learn to grow their basic products so they can be substantial.*
- *a food pantry closer than having to go to greensboro from gibsonville and snap expansion*

- *A food safety information sharing mechanism can be established on the platform. Because then people will know where the food is better*
- *A little more monthly income. A husband/partner (two income streams) to share expenses. Less political agendas and greed that hikes price of food.*
- *A program to provide nutritious foods to those staying in hotels or tent encampments on a regular basis throughout the week or the month.*
- *A shared food pantry will be set up in the community, where residents can donate excess and unexpired food at home, so that people in need can access it at any time, and improve the convenience of food access*
- *Ability, financial incentives, for mainline grocers to open stores in food desert areas in our city*
- *Absolutely too support farming locally, And regionally, in a manner similar to other entrepreneurial funding, support systems, and scope. Like all other products, food is supply and demand. If we help create more farmers, there will be more plentiful and affordable food. And higher quality food. Through the natural process of free market competition. Historically in our country, farmers have been the most populous entrepreneurs. But they are a dying breed, left to the corporate farms. Over the last few decades we have seen much funding and focus and effort aimed toward training, encouraging, supporting entrepreneurs in many facets of business and industry, but not in farming... that is the way forward to create the most abundant quality and quality and variety of food, at the most wide availability and lowest cost.*
- *Access to Community Gardens*
- *Access to quality fresh fruits and vegetables that are affordable to promote less dependance on cheaper not as healthy options. I believe it would improve our health and weight.*
- *Access to truly nutritional foods that would hopefully reduce food waste and eventually eliminate all the foods that make us ill.*
- *Accessing more affordable food by growing the community growers and addressing the pricing they implement on their products. Providing subsidy programs or access to farming supplies for free to help decrease cost to farmers and decrease cost of fresh and locally grown produce.*
- *Actually understanding where locally grown food is at and where the farmers markets are located so everyone knows where they can go get fresh food*

- *Add educational programs to help people grow food, use food wisely, and cut out waste in homes and grocery stores.*
- *Add more educational programs about bring and preparing nutritious food.*
- *Add more grocery stores because there are not enough food options near me*
- *Add more grocery stores because there are not enough food options near me*
- *add more places to buy locally sourced foods so more people can access*
- *Added variety of grocery stores to increase competition and lower costs.*
- *Adding a few more grocery store options in the 27260 area like a Trader Joe's or Food Lion. There are currently no grocery stores in the area that provide access to nutritious food in a walkable distance.*
- *Adding a grocery store near the apartment community. Many apartment residents are low income and do not have transportation. A grocery within walking distance would be very helpful. Area is dominated by curb markets.*
- *Address food waste, especially food tossed by restaurants & grocery stores, should be donated to food banks and shelters.*
- *Addressing childhood hunger in school and other academic institutions*
- *Adjusting the amount of monetary assistance available to people in my demographic which includes: low income, minority, single, childless adults ages 20-30*
- *Affordable and accessible fruits and veg*
- *Affordable for everyone*
- *Affordable ready access to fresh produce and education/outreach opportunities to help people learn how to enjoy fresh produce and vegetable protein sources*
- *All of the grocery stores and fresh foods are not available within walking distance of underserved communities. Instead there are Gas stations, and convenience stores that sell overpriced, sometimes stale or old food. No fresh fruits or vegetables, and if so they appear to be ready to rot. Meat is of the lowest cut possible and many times the most unhealthiest cut of meat. They buy out of necessity, but also buy unhealthy snacks to eat for meals, sodas, chips, fried chicken, hot frozen pizza. hot dogs, sausages.*
- *area's that have a lack of grocery stores maybe have more farmers to be able to set up stands or if they're is a empty lot in the neighborhood make it available to the neighbors to cultivate*

- *Better access to healthy food*
- *Better access to local produce/food in general. More community building and education on healthy foods.*
- *better access to, and more quality, affordable grocery stores*
- *Better access, including options for food preferences*
- *Better education about budgeting and cooking healthy foods.*
- *better education/information about food security in communities like mine, where we are more food secure, so we can make better informed efforts to help our neighbors in need. outside of my neighborhood, getting the stores and/or gardens into the communities in need.*
- *Better farmer's markets, food pantries need to have more and fresher produce (especially vegetables)*
- *better public transportation*
- *Better sources for special diet foods*
- *Better use of unsold food from grocery stores and restaurants*
- *Bring to the community*
- *Build more smaller grocery stores throughout county*
- *change the entitlement vision of the groups you seem to have problems with. Come on - this survey is for the always a victim group of people*
- *CHEAPER FOOD PRICES*
- *Cheaper groceries in the stores*
- *Cheaper healthy foods*
- *Closer grocery store and Walmart style store*
- *Comida local de agricultores orgánica a mejor costos*
- *Community garden this allows hands on with growing and learning about the food we consume plus it can feed a multitude.*
- *Community garden. Share products.*
- *Continue free school breakfast and lunch forever*
- *Cooperative shared neighborhood agriculture. We need to build small, sustainable food systems to cut down on processed food and support each others well being.*

- Cost
- *Cost, I feel it would help everyone if the cost of food is affordable.*
- *Create tax incentives for people to grow their own food in their yards. It would jump start the passion for growing food and provide people with a little incentive to help pay for supplies, time etc.*
- *cultural shifts to reducing food waste*
- *Decrease food cost and increase better choices and fresh selection not outdated in food pantries*
- *Decrease transportation costs*
- *Distribute fresh vegetables at the senior centers to all the people*
- *Drawing a blank on this question....*
- *Easier to access grocery store on bus line*
- *Education in schools, educating families to cook own food, go to fast food restaurants LESS, understanding yourself, why you choose junk food over healthy food choices*
- *Eliminate hunger with churches leading the way. Resources should be combined, mental health professionals available and employers on hand. Communities have to become self sufficient with sustainable resources such as churches, D9 professional organizations and social organizations leading the way. There are enough resources available. We should not depend on government. Our government is apart of the problem.*
- *Eliminating food deserts in areas of the city of High Point. There is a disparity with this with several grocery stores within a 2-3 mile radius in some areas of the city but on Martin Luther King Jr. Dr a Food Lion was shuttered several years ago and a Sav-A-Lot on Lexington Ave/Jamestown Pkwy was shuttered creating food deserts in these communities*
- *Elimination of food deserts.*
- *Enable people to grow their own food.*
- *Enable people who do not have autos or buses near to one or more groceries and might be not able to work have other ways to get there foods or volunteers to take them to shop.*
- *Encourage establishment of neighborhood grocery stores within walking distance of population concentrations.*

- *encourage people to grow good and incentivize them to do so*
- *Ensure that all areas of our community have multiple options of places to buy healthy food. Lower prices to ensure meals stretch for a family.*
- *Equal access to high quality, affordable food.*
- *Establish a community garden to use the idle land in the community to develop a community garden and organize residents to participate in planting. In this way, residents can directly obtain fresh vegetables, reducing pollution and other safety problems that may be caused by transportation*
- *expand current public transportation to farmers markets/grocery stores*
- *Expand government benefits- with rising food costs family that are “above” income guidelines are barley making it*
- *Expand SNAP*
- *Expand SNAP program.*
- *Expanding food assistance resources so that more people could qualify for assistance- even folks who work full time, don't have enough money to buy quality food for their families. Expanding food assistance would help to free up some of the income that is used on groceries, so families feel less strain from paycheck to paycheck.*
- *Farmer’s bring vegetables and fruits to the neighborhood.*
- *Farmer's market Randleman Rd area*
- *Farmers market*
- *Farmers market conveniently located. I work a lot so convenience would be helpful*
- *Farmers markets that are affordable. It’s a fraction of the price in Ohio than NC.*
- *Find a way to make healthy food more affordable and accessible to everyone*
- *Find employment with an adequate income for the food insecure. Without an on going independent source of income you are just pushing the problem down the road for the next set of politicians to talk about but take no real actions to resolving the problem. Also you would not have the food support you do have today if it were not for the Christian churches found in the communities.*
- *finding quality fresh produce can be difficult at times*

- *Focus on healthy offerings. I get all kinds of cakes and desserts at the Food Pantry but only 2-3 veggies/potatoes.*
- *Food Stamps for Senior Citizens with low income Social Security Check, all other funds depleted due to unforeseen surgeries and hospitalizations, with NO OTHER INCOME BUT Social Security Deposit 1 x mo.*
- *Food Stamps to keep up with rising food costs. Eggs, meat extremely high in price. Yet Food Stamps still, constantly lagging behind*
- *For everyone to have enough quality food to eat.*
- *For healthy food to cost less*
- *For me myself, being able to walk to a grocery store, e.g., the Aldi's planned for Elm and Gate City. For people in more vulnerable situations, more access to healthy food in general, through every available means, including ensuring nutrition for school students.*
- *Free public transportation for seniors to grocery shopping*
- *Free school breakfast and lunch for every child.*
- *Fresh produce, meat and dairy delivery to the home, regardless of eligibility*
- *Gardening, more loans, government funds more retirement money*
- *Get restaurants to donate more food instead of throw it away.*
- *Get the contaminated soil out my community*
- *Give every available home 2 chickens and a raised garden bed.*
- *Give everyone a monthly food voucher*
- *Give people more a assistance threw snap program with better benefits so people will not have to struggle keeping food on the table*
- *Grant loans to Farmers*
- *GROCERY STORES THAT HAVE A VARIETY OF ORGANIC CHOICES AND OTHER HEATHY OPTIONS, AND A WIDE VARIETY OF RESH FARM PRODUCE ALL YEAR ROUND.*
- *Grow my own foods without being harassed by city workers or others*
- *Hacer huertos comunitarios . Y también criar aves gallinas*

- *Have a comprehensive resource that lists all community/government supported programs, and also one that lists local food production/farmers locations/markets/stands/etc so we know more than a couple places we can go to support local farmers. The first list ideally would also be printed to hand out to people who cannot access internet. Could be posted on local community housing boards, or at apartments that are traditional locations food insecurity may be present, could be handed out to homeless but with more limited info that is more directly helpful for this group and directions so as to not overwhelm them with un-needed info.*
- *Have delivery for food pantries as I see several neighbors asking for help as they are not able to drive*
- *Have local farmers markets closer by*
- *Have many access points to purchase good quality, affordable food so folks don't have to travel far to get to it. We have a plethora of grocery stores close by our house and it's not far to local farm stores and markets. There are many places in our city where that is not true.*
- *Have more affordable produce available*
- *Have more food options available*
- *have more publicity about the good things going on. Is there a current, active food alliance in Greensboro like in High Point? we need it is there isn't*
- *Have people in the community better informed of the various programs that are available to them.*
- *Having either more different grocery stores or farmer's markets on the east side of the county instead of more ABC stores because there aren't as many food options on the eastern side of the county, but several on the west side.*
- *Having fresh healthy food done like a food truck that goes to several areas that people could get to easier*
- *having like weekend rides to a farmers market or other city markets to help get more healthy local veggies and fruits*
- *Having more produce available to the food pantries that can be distributed to families in need.*
- *Healthier options*
- *Healthy affordable options*

- *Help eat more healthy and providing information to finding food available. Because we need to be together for all to consume healthy foods. Love thy neighbor.*
- *Help implement food pantries*
- *Help people get and keep good jobs, grow some of their own food, and have easy access to fresh farm produce*
- *I do not know because i think my community is pretty food stable Of course i am older with stable income I know what my dad and mom talked about growing in the great depression years on a farm - always with food to eat but not the quality and variety we are now accustomed to*
- *I don't know*
- *I dot work didn't qualify fr disability cause no work 5 of lSt 10 years. Husband's older I have take care of him but I only get 29 ind ebt that pays one meal. Doesn't really help .*
- *I honestly don't know.*
- *I live in a food desert, so I would add small grocery stores in areas with food deserts.*
- *I live in an area that has many options for grocery shopping, so I would wish that other areas of the city would have that same access.*
- *I think community gardens and empowering people with knowledge on how to grow their own food should not be underestimated. Not everyone has an interest, but food can very much bring community together to support each other. I feel like one positive during the pandemic was people spent more time outdoors and seemed to take a great interest in gardening and growing their own food-its an important form of education and self-reliance skill.*
- *I want to make food more accessible*
- *I will be retiring in a couple of years. I am looking forward to more time to devote to our food pantry at First UMC and finding ways to make healthier food options available to our neighbors. Many are seniors with special dietary needs and many are seniors with physical limitations that prevent them from cooking for themselves. We already serve one free community meal each month ... but our funding for that is limited. I want to figure out how to provide more fresh produce at those meals and easy, healthy meals for which we could share recipes! Beyond that, we need to be focusing on education and job training so those in need can afford the food they need.*

- *I will make food more affordable for a family to really be able to buy something to eat. It just breaks my heart. How many people can't afford to buy milk how does it cost five to \$10 for 1 gallon of milk? It's a struggle for all of us in the world so I would make food way more affordable than what it is today. It's just getting auto control.*
- *I will make sure that people know how to grow their own vegetables and crops so that they will not have to purchase them just a seed and soil*
- *I wish the Piedmont Triad Farmer's Market had a program like the farmer's market on Market St in Greensboro that offered 50% increased value of EBT. We donate to that program at that Greensboro market. It helps put fresh vegetables in homes with food insecurity*
- *I would base if some one qualifies for SNAP by their Net income not the Gross income. Many people barely miss the qualifying amount but after benefits and taxes they can't afford the basic things like childcare and food.*
- *I would create more community gardens and urban farming initiatives to increase access to fresh produce. This would not only provide healthy food options but also foster community engagement and education about nutrition and sustainable practices.*
- *I would do a neighbor-ran food delivery service like Uber Eats/Doordash/Ride Share to support those who may be unable to obtain food whether you take them to the place or pick the order for them.*
- *I would expand community gardens/educational gardens.*
- *I would expand the resources available for access to food. SNAP benefits are insufficient to support even on person, especially our elders and it doesn't make it worth the time to apply. There are that fall above the income rate but cannot afford to feed their families because the cost of living, Food insecurity is a widespread problem. I live in Greensboro and there is all these tax credits and desires to build up Greensboro and the city council supporting luxury housing, why is there no money going into resources to support more families.,*
- *I would fund more Meals on Wheels to people who cannot get out to buy or prepare their food. The waitlist is much too long for people who need help immediately.*
- *I would increase availability to healthy foods. There are a lot of low income areas that may not be able to access or afford the higher cost healthy foods. I could support local entrepreneurs or farmers at farmers markets or support incentives that*

*encourages local or corner stores that provide fresh produce in low income communities.*

- *I would like everyone to be able to access fresh produce easily and cheaply*
- *I would like for the county to look at the needs of Seniors. some of us don't qualify for food stamps or snap benefits. there needs to be programs geared towards Seniors and people what have life threatening Health issues from food deficiency.*
- *I would like to have extended bus routes. Routes that go to places where I can get fresh food.*
- *I would like to see a greater diversity of shoppers at farmer's markets. I feel like there is an unspoken barrier between this community resource and under-resourced community members.*
- *I would love to see more farmers markets or produce stands in my area.*
- *I would lower prices and add more security in our communities and reach out more to the people that are truly impacted by everything that's going on in their communities.*
- *I would make food cheaper and more accessible in the communities with people of color as it is systemically set up in Guilford County. In the areas with Caucasian people, there are better stores and more accessible but in the areas with people of color, it is the opposite.*
- *I would put a more accessible grocery store closer to downtown, deep roots is nice but not everyone can afford it.*
- *I would shift the focus from cheap, easy/quick food to balanced, local food (that doesn't use lots of pesticides/herbicides, since that just creates other human & environmental health issues). Farm stands and funding for local organic farmers may help with this. Promoting multi-generational homes may also help with this since it could result in someone being in the home during the day who could help with cooking balanced meals. This could also help alleviate some housing security and food security issues for elderly people.*
- *I would suggest more availability of nutritious foods and programs designed to help lower income households, including school age children and Senior citizens.*
- *I'd diversify areas of resource in order to minimize bad patterns*

- *I'd love it everyone who needed food had access to it. I'd make sure food access was a top priority. Food access includes places to purchase healthy food and the resources needed to acquire the needed food*
- *I'd screen people that say they need help because I've seen people get free food from pantries that don't need it and they keep what they eat and throw the rest away, and they get food stamps*
- *If I could make one change to improve food access and security, it would be to make it more wide known about the resources for the people who are struggling on the day to day basis. For the people who are applying to food stamps, if they are unable to get them o believe some resources should be talked about immediately to help*
- *If I could make one change, it would be to make sure anyone who has to choose to eat or pay rent/mortgage, has some way to always get something to eat. I'm sure restaurants throw a lot of good food out that could be redistributed. Handouts do not work; the person needs to earn the food in some way. Refer to a restaurant in Raleigh called "A place at the table" for how I think food should be distributed to those who are able to work.*
- *If I could only make one change it would be to lessen food waste by providing fresh produce to the public, rather than allowing it to go bad and be thrown out. There are also places that will pour bleach on produce that has been thrown away to keep anyone from dumpster diving. I think this practice should be illegal as it is extremely inhumane, wasteful, and hateful to try to harm someone who is so in need they would be willing to eat from the trash.*
- *Improve the access of food. The closest grocery store to me is 4 to 5 miles away. I would also improve the amount of local produce.*
- *Improve the logistics mechanism, set up more shared food market points, so that resources can flow to each other, and make it more convenient for me to buy food.*
- *In conjunction with local farms, restaurants and food banks, a sorting centre is set up using idle space to deliver fresh produce 24 hours a day from garden to canteen to home via electric vans, reducing transport losses and transportation costs for each family. In this way, the problem of not being able to eat fresh food due to the inconvenient transportation can be greatly improved.*
- *Increase access for all and make it easier for people to get help.*
- *Increase availability of food bank*
- *Increase Food Stamps amount Because every month is Food Stamp dependent*

- *increase in transportation options and a central platform for local food resources so that more people can be informed and have access to quality food, which ought to be a human right.*
- *Increase outreach programs within the Community- which often comes together to meet the needs of those seeking assistance. With all the changes rolling out on the Federal Level, Food insecurity is about to get a lot worse, fast!*
- *Increase the government assistance programs so that more people are eligible for assistance.*
- *Increase the number of affordable food retailers on the east side of Greensboro.*
- *Increased cooperation with farms near the community can provide fresh food on a regular basis, as this helps the income of local farms and gives the community the assurance of safe food*
- *Increased funds for school meal programs for breakfast and lunch for school children and availability of that food in a way that does not add a stigma to the children*
- *Increased investment in local foods. Recognition that our region could produce enough food to feed our communities if the resources were allocated towards farms and small food businesses. We are far too reliant on imports, trucking systems and complicated supply chains. It doesn't have to be this way.*
- *Increased knowledge of the programs already in place, such as accepting snap at the Greensboro Curb Market, A Simple Gesture, etc. While it would be great to see a farmers market/ co-op within a reasonable distance of each and every neighborhood in the county, at this moment in time, I believe that just knowing that there are already organizations in place to assist those experiencing hunger would be drastically helpful.*
- *Increased local farmer markets*
- *Increased resources (including land access, business support, and capital access) for small farmers (and especially under-resourced and diverse farmers) that want to scale up- ex: food hubs, processing, aggregation, medicaid food as medicine, & contracts with institutions- that will pay farmers a fair price and they'll be able to make a living. I see this as an opportunity to create good jobs, increase wealth in the community, and allow better access to affordable, fresh, local, culturally relevant and healthy foods for more people.*
- *Increase the accessability to foods and resoulces*

- *Introducing a "shared labor" model, in which residents can participate in planting (e.g., two hours a week) in exchange for free food quotas, both reduces farm labor costs and enhances a sense of community belonging.*
- *It would be great to have resources for pantries to deliver food to those without transportation or have disabilities.*
- *It would be to have food pantries on wheels for low income families because not everybody has a car to drive to pantries and not everyone can afford groceries for an entire household.*
- *It's hard to say but if food was more affordable, and I know it's gone up but it's not the end of the world bad, but it could be more affordable and healthier also. And there are already programs in place but it's still hard*
- *less expensive food without sacrificing quality*
- *Less restrictions on what people need to access things like food pantries. Also make them easier to access.*
- *Local farmer's markets*
- *Local food stand would be amazing.*
- *low income vegetables*
- *Lower cost options for fresh fruits and vegetables. I often use canned or frozen options vs fresh options due to cost.*
- *Lower costs for healthier food.*
- *Lower food cost for higher nutritional items*
- *Lower food costs . And encourage the public to stop littering because of plastic waste.*
- *Lower food prices*
- *Lower grocery prices*
- *lower prices*
- *Lower prices and more healthy options to help people be healthier and live longer.*
- *Lower prices in rent and food lower crime in community*
- *Lower prices on good nutritious food. It's way cheaper and easier to buy junk and packaged foods. I can't eat what I want. I have to wait for sales. Fruits, veg, and meat are sometimes not bought because can't afford it.*

- *Lower the cost of food or increase wages*
- *Lower the price of everything it's too high*
- *Lower the prices on fruits/vegetables and fresh meats such as poultry. I recently was at Lowes Foods in Whitsett and noticed that a frozen turkey was \$81.00. Nobody can afford that!! The store barely had any chicken to offer. Nobody can afford to buy organic. I would do away with the title. It's all BS anyhow.*
- *make food affordable*
- *Make healthy foods more affordable!*
- *Make healthy foods, meats and fresh foods more affordable and charge more for the unhealthy foods so they would be more of a treat.*
- *Make it easier to access funds and places to go good for the most food insecure. Remove barriers to access.*
- *Make it easier to apply for and obtain food stamps or other food assistance*
- *Make nutritious food available to more people.*
- *Make quality vegetables and proteins such as fish, chicken meats affordability for peopl.*
- *Make sure everyone have a place where they can get food without any complications (ie: IF they need food on the weekend they go somewhere)*
- *Making local foods more accessible. More farmers markets.*
- *Many refugees come from homeland of farming. They have a life time of experiences in farming culturally appropriate food. I would love to see free land for refugee and immigrants to farm.*
- *Mejoramiento en sistema y calidad de merienda escolar y variedad de comida menos enlatados y procesados..*
- *More access for seniors to receive help with access, affordability and healthy choices*
- *More access to affordable healthy food that is paired with food literacy education including cooking classes. It pains me to see all these fast-food restaurants popping up in the city, which serve very unhealthy food which is killing our community especially black and brown people.*
- *More access to food pantry's or more pop up meal events*
- *More access to fresh foods in food deserts*

- *More access to healthy snacks for community-based afterschool programs.*
- *More access to local farmers. Increased farmers markets.*
- *More affordable*
- *More affordable and healthier alternatives*
- *More affordable food and transportation to those places, because lots of nutrition foods are expensive and even if they are not some people don't have access to them and need transportation help.*
- *More affordable food options for all community, regardless of income.*
- *More affordable fresh foods to improve community health*
- *More affordable grocery stores instead of high end ones so there are more options to chose from*
- *More affordable markets in "food deserts"*
- *More affordable, healthy food for seniors by going to local community centers*
- *More and better jobs or job training so people can support themselves.*
- *More availability of publications about locations for free food to give to homeless people*
- *More available access to healthy, affordable food*
- *More awareness and a better system to let the community know that food is available and when and where*
- *More basic grocery stores in low income area. Walkable.*
- *More co-op farmers markets with free freshly grown produce. Available at least every two weeks to the community. This would support healthy eating and less stress for those who can't afford the overpriced and over processed produce in the stores*
- *More community gardens. More food stamp / farmer programs. Transportation to the colfax farmers market.*
- *More donations by local businesses to food pantries*
- *More education on how to keep your food safe/fresh and for how long.*
- *More farmer market*
- *More farmer's markets throughout the city.*
- *More Farmer's Markets. More programs for new farmers.*

- *More farmers markets*
- *More farms to give access to fresher produce*
- *More federal money for food stamps and being able to get access to fresh vegetables*
- *More focus on feeding elderly and children.*
- *more food banks*
- *More food for cheaper price*
- *More food services for seniors*
- *More food stamps*
- *more fresh Local foods*
- *More grocery options in our area. Many times our 1 grocery store is nearly empty/out or many things because there are so many people in the area.*
- *More grocery stores and upgrade existing. Lower costs and options for the perceived poor.*
- *More grocery stores in less affluent area.*
- *More grocery stores in poor neighborhoods*
- *More grocery stores throughout Greensboro*
- *More knowledge of available resources*
- *More local farmers market's with some security*
- *More local markets and a list of local farmers who sale to the public. I only know of one local market. I have to travel 20 mins to get there. I have seen several what seems to be local farmers but it is difficult to know whether they sell to the public without knocking on their doors. How times are these days I don't feel safe doing that so I don't stop unless I see a sign that indicates they are selling fruits or vegetables. But it is also hard to know operating hours if you drive by and happen to miss the sale and the sign is gone. These places are usually on the outskirts of the city so one would need to plan this trip as to not waste other resources like fuel.*
- *More locally grown, seasonally appropriate and increase number of farmers markets.*
- *More locally regeneratively grown foods. Affordability. Support for small farmers.*
- *More opportunities for FREE community garden plots all around the city. Community chicken coop for fresh eggs?*

- *More options*
- *more options*
- *More options for food pantries, more support for community gardens, small farmers.*
- *More options for where to buy groceries and better selections in stores for fresh foods*
- *more outreach to educate community on local farmers*
- *More quality food stores, in low income areas*
- *More stores, like mom and pop stores, convenience stores be eligible to qualify for acting EBT cards.*
- *More transparency around the resources in the community for food access. Many people do not know how they can access food or programs that assist with getting food and having more information and transparency would help with that.*
- *More variety in fresh non processed food.*
- *More variety. Having moved to Guilford County from another state, I miss the ethnic markets we had nearby (Italian, Polish, Greek, Middle Eastern, etc.). What I miss most is a good meat market nearby. To find these types of things, I have to drive several miles or cannot find them at all. Food Lion, Walmart, and the rest are fine for basics but I miss a good take and bake pizza from an Italian bakery or homemade perogies and sausage from a Polish store. Don't get me started on the homemade spinach pie and baklava. Maybe as the area grows we'll get more stores/bakeries.*
- *More volunteers available to help at community gardens and the local farms. The work really takes a village and to meet needs, more food needs to be grown in spaces that allow it.*
- *Mutual financial aid and mutual information sharing so people can get what they need/want, when they want it, without hoops to jump through. One of my coworkers works fulltime and has one teenager at home. She cannot always afford food for the two of them. I'm so glad she shared that with me because she thought because she didn't qualify for SNAP that there was no food assistance available to her. I shared some local resources with her that don't require income tests/hoops. There can be such shame in asking for help, particularly if you work fulltime and still can't make ends meet. That is a failure of capitalism, making US feel ashamed for structural problems. There is enough food and money in the world so no one should be hungry. Unequal allocation of resources is the problem, and there is no political will to rebalance that.*

- *Nutrition education to give people more knowledge and health literacy, so they can make more informed decisions about their nutrition and how it impacts their overall health and health outcomes.*
- *Nutritional center*
- *Offer food allowance for seniors on a fixed income*
- *Offer free organic good quality food to working families at least once a month in multiple locations throughout the city. Without abusing the service by the same people. This service is only available to those who do not receive government food assistance.*
- *Offer incentives to grocery stores to open stores in food deserts thus making fresh, affordable food available to all.*
- *One change would be that there would be easily accessible resources for individuals, businesses and churches to access where resources are for those who are unhoused and those who are without a job and don't know how to feed their families. For example, where are the little food pantries, where are the food pantries, where are community gardens and any other help for folks who are hungry. Perhaps it's already out there and we just don't know it.*
- *Open government supported supermarkets in areas where needed*
- *Open grocery stores in walking distance because many don't drive or are elderly,*
- *Open store at Greensboro Farmers Curb Market selling locally produced food 7 days a week.*
- *Outreach for the unhoused ensuring they are not going days without eating.*
- *Places to purchase affordable fresh foods in areas that don't have actual grocery stores*
- *Prepped meals available in underserved communities, because not all have access to a kitchen or appliances.*
- *Prevent food waste by distributing excess food through schools*
- *Promote healthy practices*
- *Provide affordable healthy options and educate on food choices. Many have to choose the cheapest option and they contain many ingredients that are harmful to their health. We need to 100% support our farmers but when I purchase at a farmers market the price points are out of control. The food cycle needs more support so the*

*farmers can offer their product to everyone, not just the one who can afford to pay \$6 for 1 tomato. Somewhere the farmers need more support. Education on plant based diets are needed. We live in a eat meat every meal society. It isn't needed and is proven to not be healthy, especially with the way meat is produced.*

- *provide ALL meals at school for free to everyone*
- *Provide food busses/vans to take folks to shop at healthy markets.*
- *Provide more community gardens.*
- *provide more resources for food assistance.*
- *Public school b'fast, lunch, and take home for dinner!*
- *Public transportation options in the county/rural areas.*
- *Quality - We have access to many food resources but the quality of the food lacks. Less processed, more nutritional.*
- *quality restaurants, fast foods, and more grocers, organic farmers markets*
- *Reaching out the residents who make a decent living, but are struggling with debt that significantly impacts monthly expenses. Tools, techniques, or ways to save for higher income brackets, but still have financial strains.*
- *Receive supermarket surpluses, farm surpluses (reduce waste), and distribute them to low-income families for free or at low prices*
- *Reduce cost*
- *Reduce cost and create more available sources*
- *reduce food waste*
- *Reduce waste*
- *Reducing food waste!*
- *Regularly updated food pantry lists and resources. Sometimes list are available at some of the locations, but really outdated. I received one dated 2023. Online resources are also outdated.*
- *Remove HOA's from neighborhoods. It would allow people who live in the community to be able to grow their gardens without the risk of consequences.*
- *sharing food recourses across the county*
- *Silvero gardens in different areas for all the people, so that no one goes hungry.*

- *Six miles to a grocery store in every direction is too far. We need a grocery store in Pleasant Garden. I have my own car and find it more difficult than it should be, I can't imagine for someone who doesn't have a car because we don't even have bus service in this area.*
- *Snap requirements are unrealistic*
- *Stigma*
- *support local farmers and grocery stores*
- *Teach children to grow their own food.*
- *Teach people how to fish instead of handing them fish.*
- *Teach people how to grow vegetables*
- *Tener mucho más información sobre la alimentación y apoyos*
- *The availability and access of food for underserved communities*
- *The establishment of food sharing and mutual aid networks can promote interaction and cooperation among community members.*
- *The free food co ops to supply fresh not expired food*
- *The Glenwood Community is very good at working together but having a better farmers market in this well populated area would be beneficial. We have drop boxes where people donate food and it helps.*
- *The simplest and easiest way to help people with food insecurity would be to repeal the tax on food. Only about 10 states tax groceries because it's so regressive. Repealing the Food Tax would help all North Carolinians who eat, particularly young families and low income people.*
- *There are areas in Greensboro where residents cannot walk to a grocery store. I would like to see more stores or markets in all areas of the city. Also accessible farmers markets mid week.*
- *There are at least six grocery stores within five miles of my house, but when I travel to the east side of town I see only one full service store. I would like to see more grocery stores available in the poorer sections of our town.*
- *There is more fresh and safe food*
- *There needs to be more access or more availability for food pantries. Also, freshness is a concern.*

- *This is an overwhelming question to me. There are so many systematic changes that need to take place to help people gain food sovereignty in Guilford County. If I had to pick one thing to change, I would choose helping people have access to communal growing of fresh produce. This would facilitate the sharing of knowledge of how to grow, how to prepare/eat it, and even how to sell it in the future. This communal growing could be an opportunity for intergenerational collaboration and learning. In turn, this would teach people more about where their food comes from and hopefully inspire a greater appreciation for fresh, organic produce, and the power of a garden tomato vs a grocery store tomato.*
- *To advocate that there be more healthy/better quality foods available in my community and have more reliable and affordable resources of transportation to and from the more healthy, and better quality grocery store/farmers market etc., that also serve/support the community as a whole.*
- *to at least give everyone a way to get to food sources easily*
- *To have at least one community garden in every zip code and to turn what is harvested into a nutritious meal or snack that can be distributed to the homeless or in-need populations in the Triad.*
- *To have more community gardens because I think everyone in the community would benefit from this*
- *To have the government involved as little as possible. Because there are lots of programs already and they need to continue without more programs and ways for our taxes to be spent.*
- *To make healthy n food affordable.*
- *To me, it's not transporting people to where the food is, it's bringing the food into the neighborhoods in need: pop up grocery stores/farmer's markets/pantries. This makes nutritious food more available and removes the embarrassment of accessing a pantry (And, while it is good that people donate food to free pantries, often I see Pop Tarts, sugar cereals, and boxed mac-and-cheese as donations. Setting kids up for heart disease, diabetes, and other chronic illnesses, does not help the child nor society. All it does is assuage the have's guilt.) I will get off my Liberal soap box now.*
- *Training, jobs for people that have a sincere passion to help provide food to anyone needy without going thru a lot of bureaucracy to receive help. It's our responsibility, duty and obligation to share and help meet people's basic needs of food, clean water, and shelter!*

- *Transporation/Access to get food across our community*
- *Transport to get to food banks/pantries/meals/etc.*
- *Transportation to farmers markets or affordable delivery of CSA/produce boxes with simple, nutritious meal suggestions included.*
- *Try to donate food whenever I can*
- *Trying to attract a FULLY vegan grocery store—many exist in larger cities, esp. in Europe. Most food waste is of meat, dairy and eggs (esp. now with the rampant bird flu, which has resulted in at least 150 million poultry wastefully killed, and which is the primary cause of high egg prices—i.e. government (taxpayer) subsidies to buy MORE innocent animals to be abused and killed for unnecessary protein. Most people are unaware these animal killing industries could not exist without public subsidy. All protein comes from plants, even in the ocean—the simple science of photosynthesis creating amino acids and proteins. Anything like B12 and D3 that people imagine come from meat are supplements given the animals—B12 can be obtained from tasty dried seaweed and D3 from tofu (soybeans).*
- *Union grocery workers making a decent living in our communities. Well paid employees would help all workers put pressure on wages.*
- *Universal free meals in schools including summer meals (with no requirement to eat on site), possibly meal delivery to kids out of school, more safety nets for families whose incomes don't cover all necessities*
- *Unsure*
- *Using this online platform, food safety knowledge lectures, training and other activities can be carried out regularly to popularize the importance of food safety and food storage methods to community residents*
- *Wages need to increase for low-income people in the county. Providing more stores or more markets is all well and good, but if many people cannot afford food, then the point is moot.*
- *We have a farmers market when it's in season for it to open but if I had one change of improvement, it would be to have a Trader Joe's, Sprouts, Aldi, or Lidl right in the middle of Gibsonville. It's a small town but the only walking distance or short travel to stores to get any food small restaurants, the Dollar Tree and Dollar General. All the grocery markets are in Burlington or Greensboro. And even then, I have to make trips to several different stores to purchase healthy, fresh, and available food. For example, one store might have fresh hard apples but the potatoes and berries are*

*always going bad quickly. Or the price of meat may be more affordable at one place but they're frequently out of organic milk and eggs. Or I like to get a healthy brand of options from particular stores like Trader Joe's & Sprouts but WIC is not accepted at either of those locations. (Just some examples of why I choose to travel to multiple grocery stores throughout the month.)*

- *We need more affordable, nutritious food options/distribution points in impacted neighborhoods.*
- *We need to work cooperatively in our community in addressing food insecurity.*
- *Wean out the notion wean out the notion that people that have done things wrong do not also need food. As well as the fact that our whole community needs to be better about clean up. And people need to understand that throwing trash on the ground instead of in trash cans can lead to further toxicity in our environment*
- *Weekly cooking classes and nutrition lectures. Low-income families, in particular, are taught low-cost healthy recipes and ingredient preservation techniques, such as canning surplus vegetables or pickles. This will not only ensure that food is not wasted, but also control the expenditure costs of low-income families.*
- *When a hurricane hit North Carolina in 2024, local supply chains were disrupted, causing supermarkets to run out of stock. So I hope our governments and organizations can think ahead and strengthen their ability to deal with extreme weather so that basic food supplies can be guaranteed.*
- *Where I reside in zip code 27405. We have no where to go besides a food lion.*
- *Yes*
- *You can add some retail outlets that sell safe food in your community, which will also make people eat safe food*