

Durham County Food Security Update Presentation to the Board of County Commissioners

Raina Goldstein Bunnag, County Food Security Coordinator

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Cooperative Extension

Agenda

1. History of County Food Security Position
2. DCo Food Security Landscape
3. Current Food Security Initiatives
4. Upcoming Plans and Opportunities
5. Questions & BOCC Input



Durham County
Food Security



County Food Security Coordinator History

- The County Food Security Coordinator position was created by BOCC in FY 21 with community support driven by ongoing efforts to improve food access and the food system in Durham County and the onset of pandemic-related food security challenges.
 - Facilitates internal (County) and external (community) coordination of food security initiatives, policies, and services, including the County Food Security Network and a forthcoming Food System Assessment and Planning process.
 - Supports County leadership and the BOCC to inform and advise on food security issues as needed.
 - Manages Durham County's Food Security Investments, including \$3.6 million in ARPA supported food security projects, including County Food Security Grants
 - Supports an intergovernmental food security team including County and City Departments and Durham Public Schools
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Durham County Food Security Landscape



Food Security vs Nutrition Security

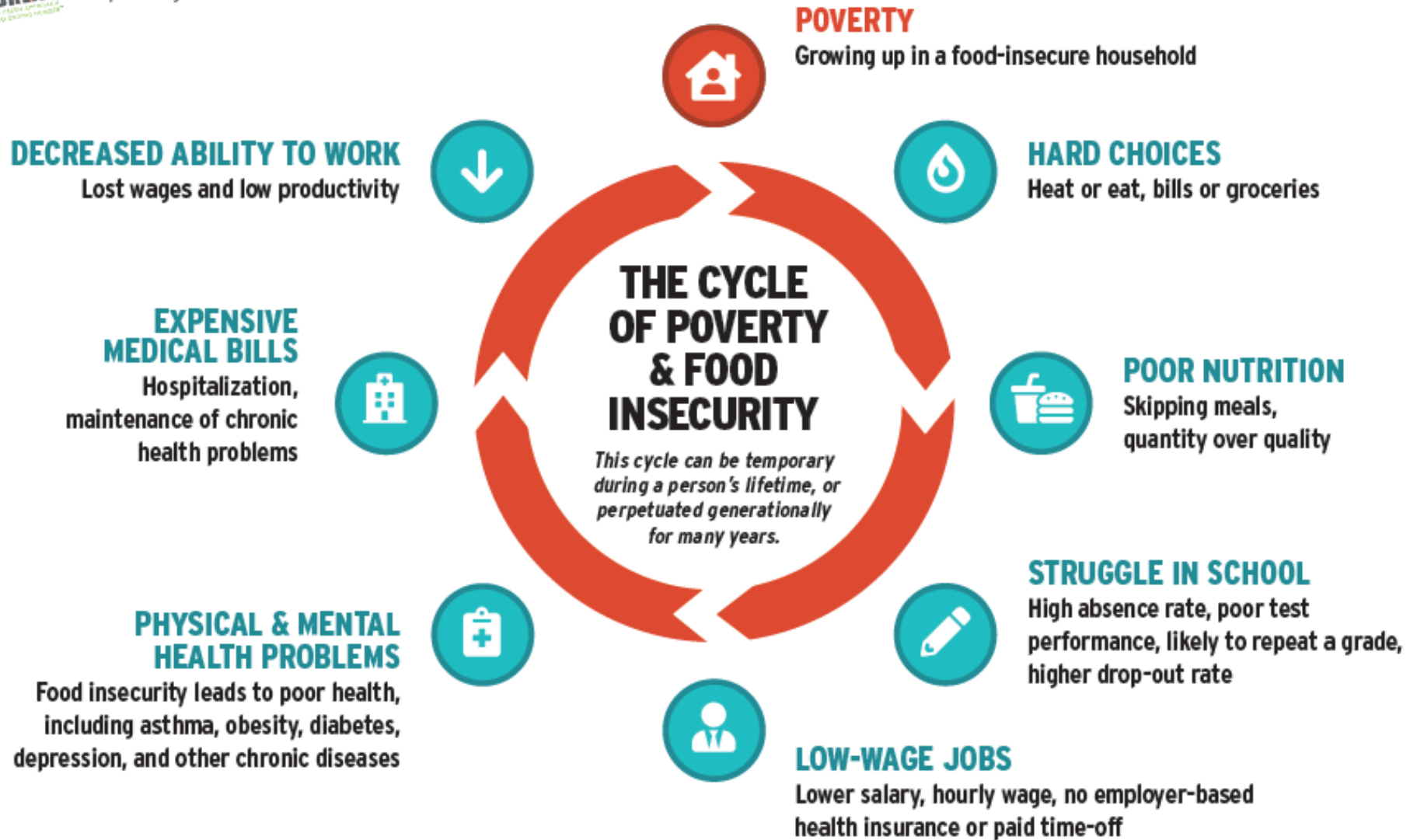
- **Food security** - access to enough food for an active, healthy life
- **Nutrition security** - all Americans have consistent and equitable access to healthy, safe, and affordable foods essential to optimal health and well-being

USDA Definitions





Thank you for permission to adapt this diagram.



DCom Food Security Landscape – Assets

- Free school meals for all DPS students
- Significant County food security investments
- Strong SNAP (DCom DSS) and WIC (Lincoln) programs
- Community programs and advocacy
- Multiple farmers markets including year-round options
- Over 60 food pantries
- Community gardens and mutual aid



DCo Food Security Landscape – Challenges

- Past and future policy changes affecting nutrition (and related) assistance (SNAP, SNAP-Ed, Medicaid, etc.)
- Government shutdown (fall 2025)
- Increased food prices
- Lost jobs and wages
- Affordable housing challenges

Food Insecurity Rates - 2023

- 2023: most recent data at County and State level
- Durham's total food insecurity is lower than NC and about equal to the US
- Significant disparities among population groups

	Durham	NC	US
Total %	13.8	15	14.3
Children	18.3	18.9	19.2
Black	26	28	*
Latino	22	23	*
White (non-Hispanic)	10	10	*

Data from [Feeding America Map the Meal Gap](#)

*Data unavailable

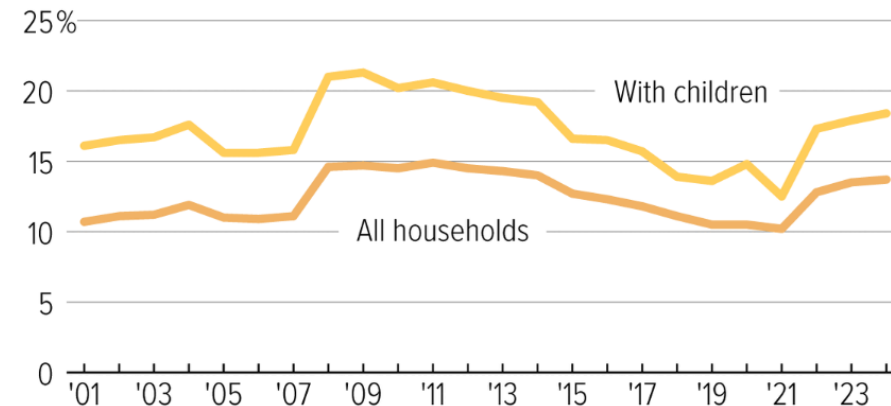
U.S. Food Security Trends

Household Food Security in the United States Report 2024

- Nationwide food security rates did not change from 2023 to 2024
 - They increased significantly the two previous years
- 18.4% of households with children were food insecure
 - Significantly higher than the all time low of 12.5% in 2021 (due to COVID relief)
- SNAP participation has decreased by more than 3 million people (8 percent) since H.R. 1 enactment (July 2025 -January 2026)

Household Food Insecurity Remained Steady in 2024

Share of households that lacked access to adequate food at some point in the year



Source: Economic Research Service, "Household Food Security in the United States in 2024," U.S. Department of Agriculture, December 2025

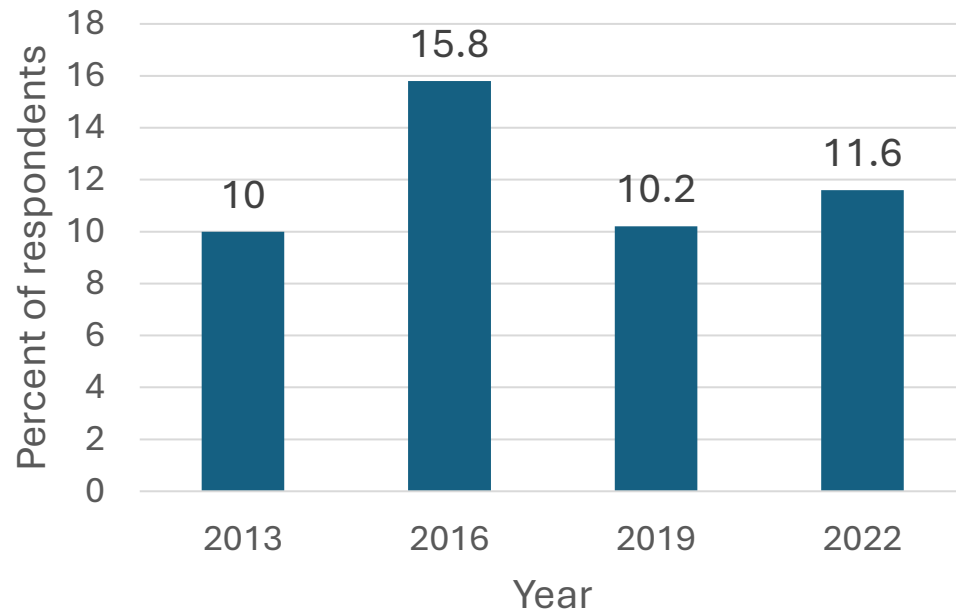
CENTER ON BUDGET AND POLICY PRIORITIES | CBPP.ORG

Source: [Center for Budget & Policy Priorities](#)

Durham County Community Health Assessment – 2022 Data

In the last 12 months, did you ever cut the size of your meals or skip meals because there wasn't enough money for food?

(Indicator of very low food security)



In the past 12 months, did you ever worry your food would run out before you got money to buy more?

(Indicator of marginal or low food security)



Current Food Security Initiatives



DCo Food Security Approach

Enhance the social safety net to meet current needs

Systemic change efforts to improve long-term food security





DCo ARPA Food Security Investment

Total Investment - \$3,617,764

Projects

- Emergency Community Food Assistance – Food Boxes
 - Community Accountable Grocery Store in Northeast Central Durham
 - Durham County Food Security Grants Program
 - Supporting Food Access and Services for Older Adults
 - Double Bucks Program
-

ARPA - Emergency Community Food Assistance

Contract Term: September 2023 - August 2025
(project closed)

Community Partner: Inter-Faith Food Shuttle

Funding Amount: \$1,985,368

Highlights:

- 38 Durham pantries received monthly food deliveries of produce and eggs
- 1,544,947 pounds of food (1,282,018 meals) distributed to Durham families via food boxes



This program received a **93%** satisfaction rating from participating food pantries.

ARPA - East Durham Market

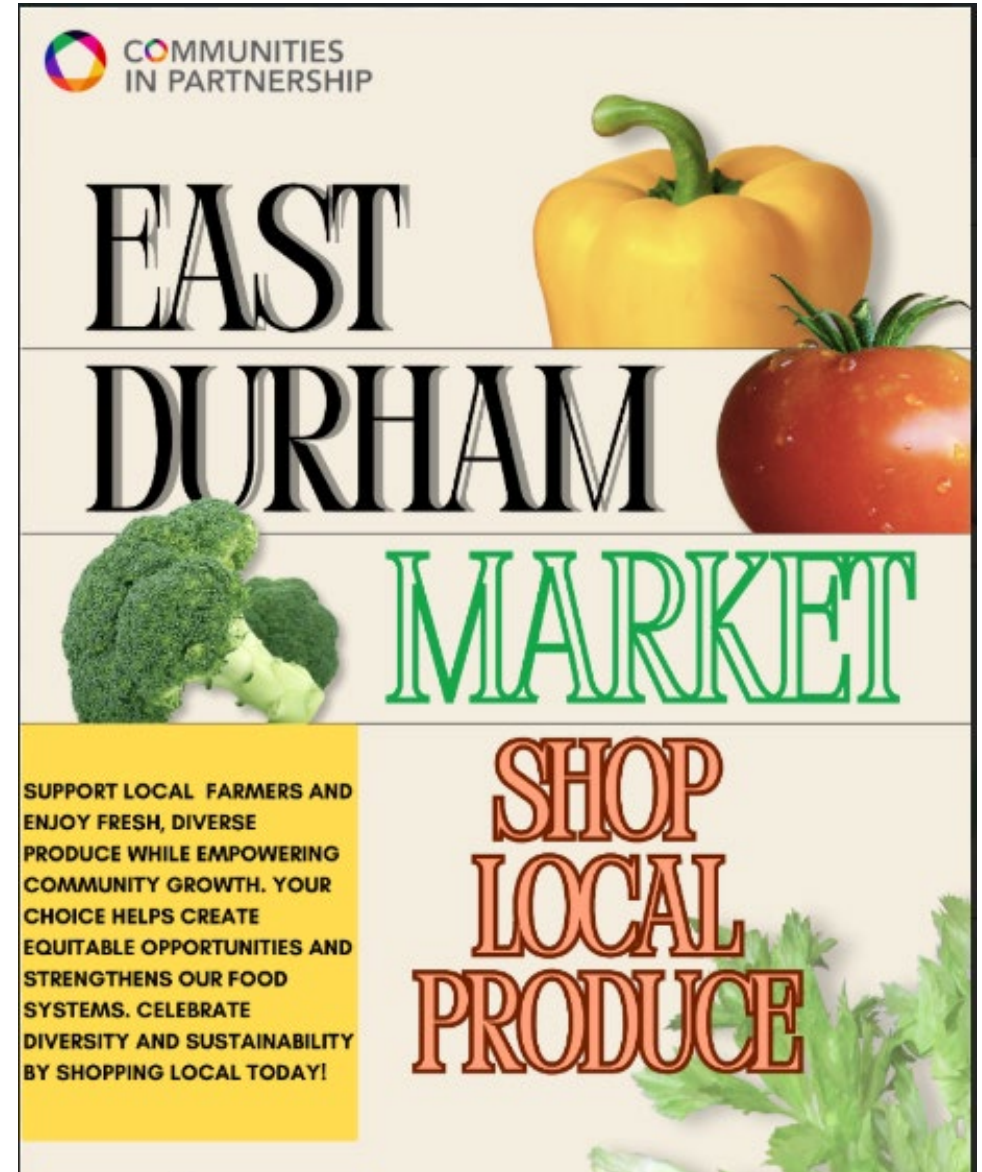
Contract Term - October 2023 - September 2025
(project closed)

Community Partner - Communities in Partnership

Funding Amount - \$365,000

Highlights -

- The market purchased a total of \$42,628 from local and regional producers
- Several new employees were hired, with focus on hiring from the local community



ARPA – County Food Security Grants

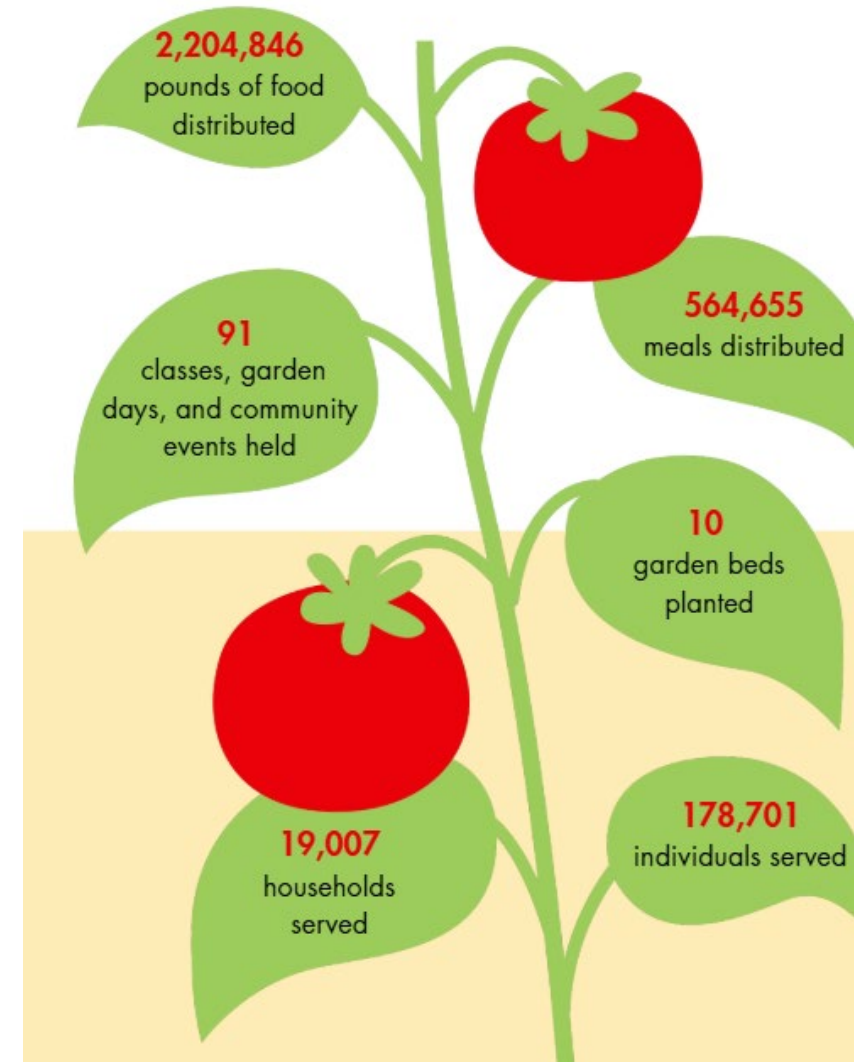
Contract Term : July 2024 - September 2025
(project closed)

Community Partner: Communities in Partnership

Funding Amount: \$532,000

Highlights:

- Awards to 26 local non-profit organizations
- \$400,000 distributed
 - Grant range was \$5,000 - \$25,000
- Projects included varied food security needs, with an emphasis on systems changes



ARPA – Durham Center for Senior Life

Contract Term: October 2023- September 2026

Community Partner: Durham Center for Senior Life (DCSL)

Funding Amount: \$120,000 (ARPA Interest)

Highlights:

- EATS: Shop & Grab Express
- Home delivered food to seniors who are home bound
- Providing Elderly with Additional Sustenance (PEAS) – frozen meals distribution for adults with Activities of Daily Living (ADLs) challenges
- Referrals for food insecure seniors to meet other basic needs



ARPA - Double Bucks

- **Contract Term:** Sept. 2023 – Sept. 2026
- **Funding Amount** - \$1,985,368
- **Community Partners** -
 - Farmer Foodshare (fiscal agent)
 - North Durham Farmers' Market
 - Black Farmers' Market (Durham location)
 - Durham Farmers' Market
 - South Durham Farmers' Market



TRIANGLE DOUBLE BUCKS DATA

CY 2025: January - December, 2025

DURHAM COUNTY MARKETS: Black FM, Durham, South Durham & North Durham



\$120,732

Total DOUBLE BUCKS Reimbursed
across 3 OCo Farmers' Markets

\$47,336

Total SNAP/EBT
converted into tokens



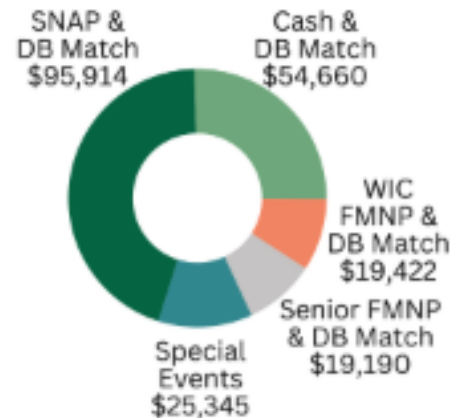
2,754

Total DB Program
Transactions



539

Unique SNAP &
WIC Households



\$214,531

Total Entering Local Economy
Across the 4 Durham County
Farmers' Markets
Double Bucks Programs



County Food Security Grants - History

Purpose: Funds non-profit organizations to deliver a wide range of community food projects

Focus: Creating long-term food systems changes while addressing immediate need

Prior to FY21: Food security grant funding awarded through Durham County nonprofit grant process

- This includes a COVID response program in 2020

Starting in FY21: Food Security Grants became a separate program

Funding history:

- FY21-22 - \$400,000
- FY22-23 - \$475,000
- FY23-24- \$532,000 (ARPA)
- FY 25-26 - \$332,000



Photo Courtesy Get Happy



Photo Courtesy Durham Center for Senior Life

County Food Security Grants – Current Cycle

- **\$332,000 in FY25-26 budget**
 - \$325,000 will be distributed
 - Awards between \$20,000 - \$50,000
 - Intentional shift to larger award amounts and more extensive projects
- **Grant process managed internally**
 - Grant funds are managed through Cooperative Extension
 - Technical assistance from Organizational Effectiveness (OE)
 - Additional support provided by Public Health (DINE) and Soil & Water
- **Increased response to RFA**
 - 55 applications, totaling \$2,248,210 in requests
 - Can only award 14% of request
 - Comparison to 24-25 response
 - 38 applications, totaling \$1,237,194.09
 - Awarded 28 projects, \$400,000 total, 32% of request
- **Award announcements by mid-May**



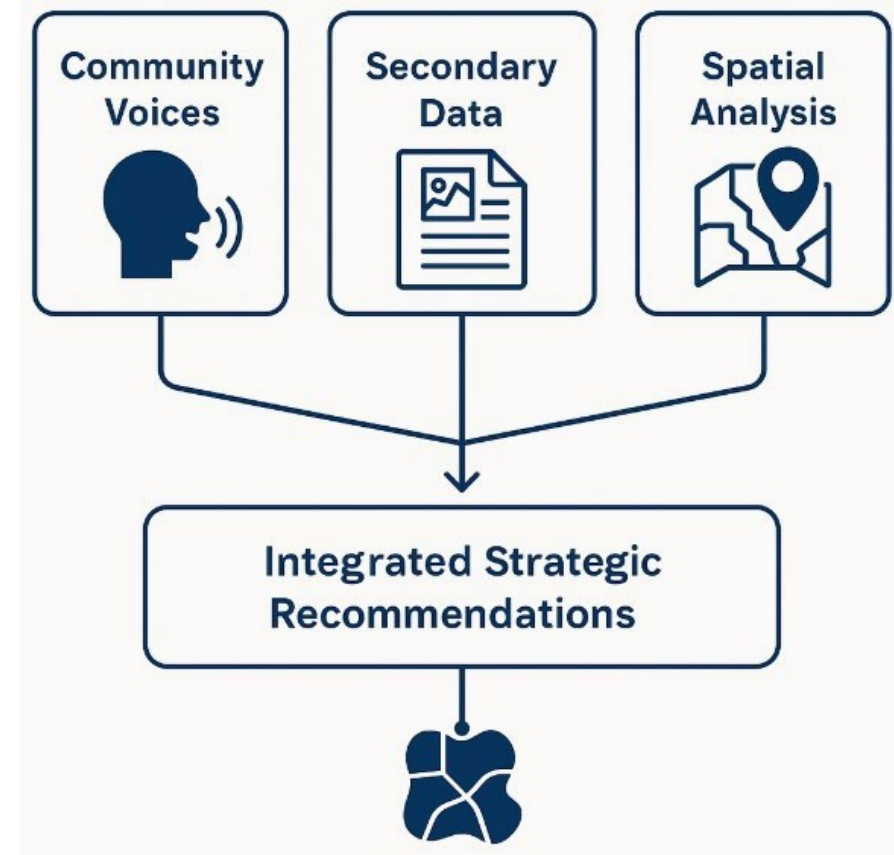
Food System Assessment Overview

Timeline: 18 months

Purpose:

- Identify assets and gaps in our current food system work
- Recommend policies, programs, and resources to ensure long-term food and nutrition security.

Final Product: 10-year strategic plan with data-driven, community-centered recommendations



Food System Assessment Status Update

Vendor: Key Environmental Consulting

Subcontractor: Planning4Health Solutions

Completed:

- **January 2026:** Contract executed
- **February 2026:** Kickoff meeting
- **March – April 2026:**
 - Stakeholder planning meetings
 - Steering committee development

Next Steps:

- **May 2026 :** Finalize community engagement plan
- **June 2026:** Community engagement kickoff
- **December 2026:** Larger engagement activities complete

Durham County Food Assessment & Strategic Plan Community Engagement Process



Other Food Security Initiatives

- **Focus**

- Capacity building (internal and external)
- Partnerships

- **Initiatives**

- DCo Farm Campus
- Durham Hunger Day
- Regional food system collaboration
- Support for DPS school nutrition
- Food Security Network



DCo Food Security Network



DCo Food Security Network - Overview



- Wide range of sectors and communities represented
- Monthly Network meetings and food policy discussions
- 450+ listserv members
- Highlights
 - May 2025 - Durham Food System Tour
 - October 2025 – Resource and information sharing during SNAP lapse
 - Dec 2025 – In-person joint meeting with Partnership for a Healthy Durham
 - March 2026 – Come to the Table Conference
 - April 2026 – FRAC Anti-Hunger Policy Conference

DCom Food Security Network - Highlight Everyone Eats. Durham

- Food pantry collaborative
 - Built to meet growing needs
 - 15 Durham food pantries
 - Collectively serves over 30,000 people per month
- Campaign led by the food pantries
 - Administrative support from DINE (DCom Public Health)
- Collective fundraiser targeting both individual and institutional/corporate donors

EVERYONE EATS.
 **Durham** Emergency Fund Drive



Did you know?

Durham County food pantries currently work to meet the needs of **at least 50,000 residents.**

Hunger is rising.

↓ Decrease in federal funding =
Reliance on food pantries **increased** ↑ 30%

Upcoming Plans and Opportunities



Upcoming Work



- Increased Network collaborations
- Continue Farm Campus project with Golden LEAF funding
- Durham Hunger Day – Join us on June 7!
- Support 2026 Food Security awardees through project period
- Identify additional funding opportunities to sustain efforts

Opportunities

- Maintain strong County food security investments
- Continued two-prong focus on social safety net supports AND long-term, systemic food systems change
- Use results from food system assessment to shape and prioritize future work
- Closely monitor how social and political changes affect individuals and partner organizations
- Explore Food is Medicine partnerships



Thank you!

Questions & Discussion

