

# School Based Food Security Strategies

## Cooperative Extension & Toward Zero Waste Report

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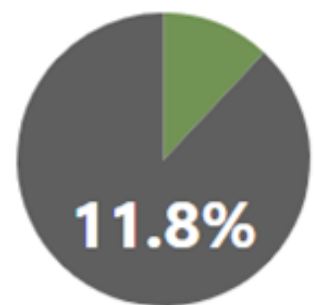
# Agenda

- **Child hunger in Wake County**
- **Wake County Food Security Work Group**
- **Wake County supported school based strategies**
- **Feature: Toward Zero Waste's School Programs - Stop Hunger & Restore Earth (SHARE) & Compostable Trays**

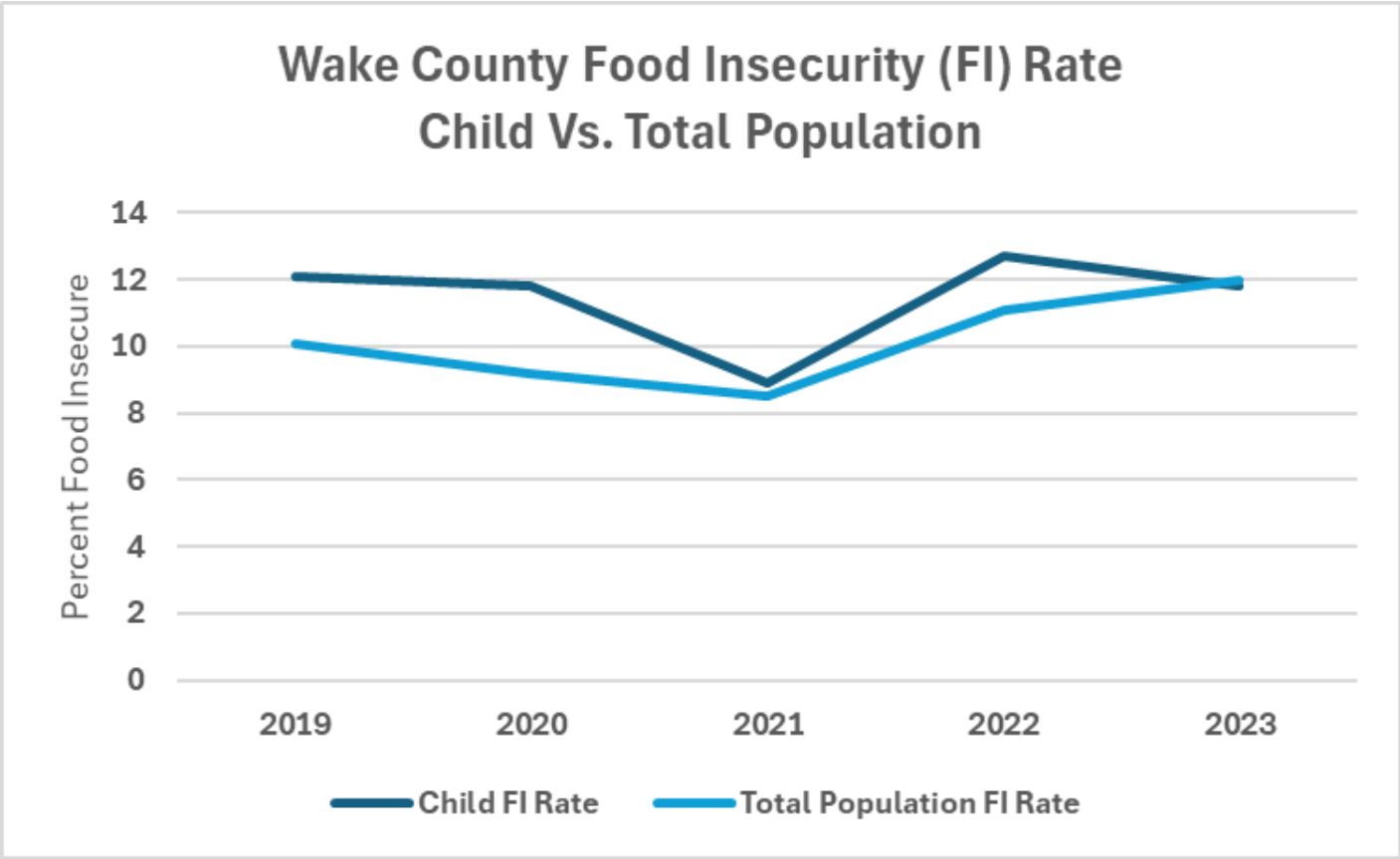
# Child Hunger in Wake County, NC

**Students eligible for Free & Reduced Priced Lunch**  
**2025- 2026**  
42.4 % of students

**Map the Meal Gap - 2023**  
**Child Food Insecurity Rate**



**31,640 Children**



[Hunger & Poverty in the United States | Map the Meal Gap](#)

# School Strategies to Combat Food Insecurity

Backpack Buddies & “Weekend Power Packs”

Free & Reduced Lunch & Universal Meal Programs

School Food Pantries

Summer Food Service Program (SUNMeals & SUNBucks)

Stop Hunger & Restore Earth (SHARE)

# Wake County Food Security Work Group

**Established 2014**

**Policy workgroup focused on child hunger in Wake County Public Schools**

**Annual Dedicated Food Resource Survey to assess resource distribution**

## **Programs of Focus**

- School Nutrition Services (Universal Breakfast, and Community Eligibility Provision)
- School Pantries
- Summer Food Service (SUNMeals)
- Toward Zero Waste - SHARE

## **Members:**

- Tara Waters – Wake County Board of Commissioner
- Sam Hersey – WCPSS Board Member
- Tiffany Lawrence – Child Nutrition Services Director, WCPSS
- Michael Pesce – Director of School Social Workers, WCPSS
- Stantavia Wright – Assistant Division Director, Economic Services & FNS, Wake County
- Katherine Williams – Director, Wake Cooperative Extension
- Ann Rollins – Chair, Health & Human Services Board
- Sydney Mierop – Program Manager, Wake County Cooperative Extension

# Wake County Supported Strategies - CEP & USB

## Community Eligibility Program (CEP)

- Wake County provides supplemental reimbursement
- Wake County supports 5 of the 43 CEP schools with supplemental funding

## Universal School Breakfast (USB)

- Five schools offering universal breakfast only for 2025 - 2026 school year
- All supported with Wake County funds

**FY25 Total Meals** - 350,984 meals

**FY 25 Total Expenditures**- \$263,441.50

**FY26 Wake County Funding WCPSS Child Nutrition Services** - \$308,320.00



For list of schools visit: [School Meals / Free Meal Programs at Schools](#)

# Wake County Supported Strategies - Pantries

## School Food Pantries

- Wake County Currently supports **21** pantries
- **56** Total pantries in WCPSS (2024-2025 survey data)

## FY25 Total Meals for Wake Supported Pantries:

58,278 meals

## FY26 Funding for Food Pantries - \$53,400.00

- Interfaith Food Shuttle & Food Bank of Central & Eastern NC

# Toward Zero Waste- SHARE Program



**A food recovery program by Toward Zero Waste with Wake County Public School System to capture wholesome leftovers from Child Nutrition Services and feed students, rather than landfills.**



# Toward Zero Waste- SHARE Program

## March 2025

- MOA with WCPSS for pilot program for 1 year
- Funding - Lonnie and Carol Poole Family Foundation
- Phase 1 - program launched at 8 pilot elementary schools

## July-September 2025

- Funding - Poole Family Foundation and Community Donors
- Phase 2 - Program launched at 10 schools (4 middle schools)
- 29 additional schools on "interested" list for future phases

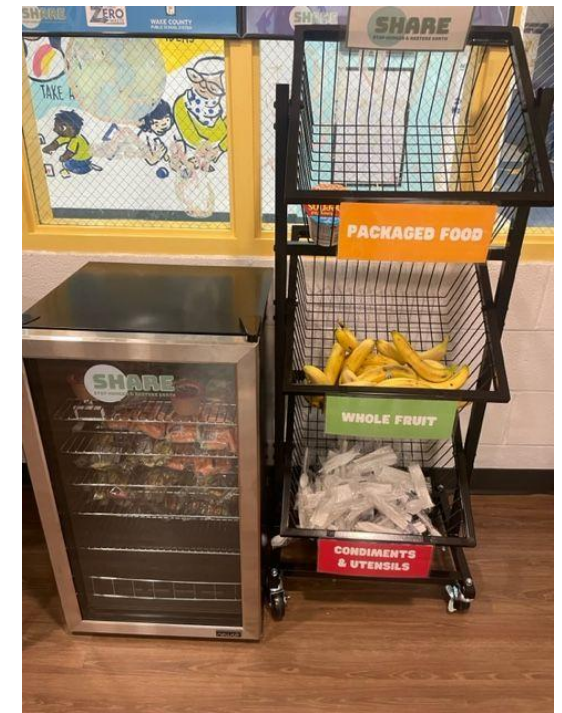
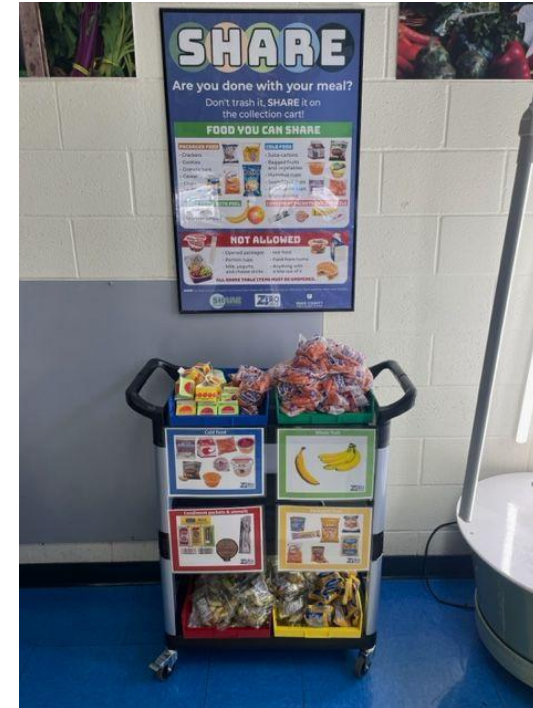
# Toward Zero Waste- SHARE Program

## SHARE Process

**1** Students place unwanted, unopen allowed food items from their tray onto the SHARE Collection Cart during meals.

**2** Students access the cart to donate or take items during meals as permitted by the school. Leftover items are transferred to the SHARE Fridge and Pantry Cart by the school's SHARE team.

**3** Students may access items throughout the day. Missed breakfast? Forgot to pack a snack? Check out the SHARE Fridge and Pantry Cart!



# TZW - SHARE Program –Highlights

- First lunch at Millbrook Elem = 18 juices, 65 bags of carrots, 50 bags of apple slices, and 25 packages of graham crackers.
- A student at Poe Elem arrived late, missing breakfast. She was able to get a bag of apple slices and a juice carton from the SHARE Fridge.
- 41 food items donated per day/per school = **7,380 items** in one school year



# County Support – TZW SHARE

## Wake County Cooperative Extension Support

- 10 hours/week AmeriCorps VISTA for capacity building

## Wake County Environmental Services - additional staff support

- Environmental Education Program Coordinator for program management of Phase 1 schools (8)

# TZW- Compostable Tray Program

- Partnered with **9 WCPSS PTA groups** to purchase compostable fiber trays
- Some schools also compost food scraps through a private compost hauler
- To date **>465,000 trays** have been diverted from the landfill



# Questions

# Thank You

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