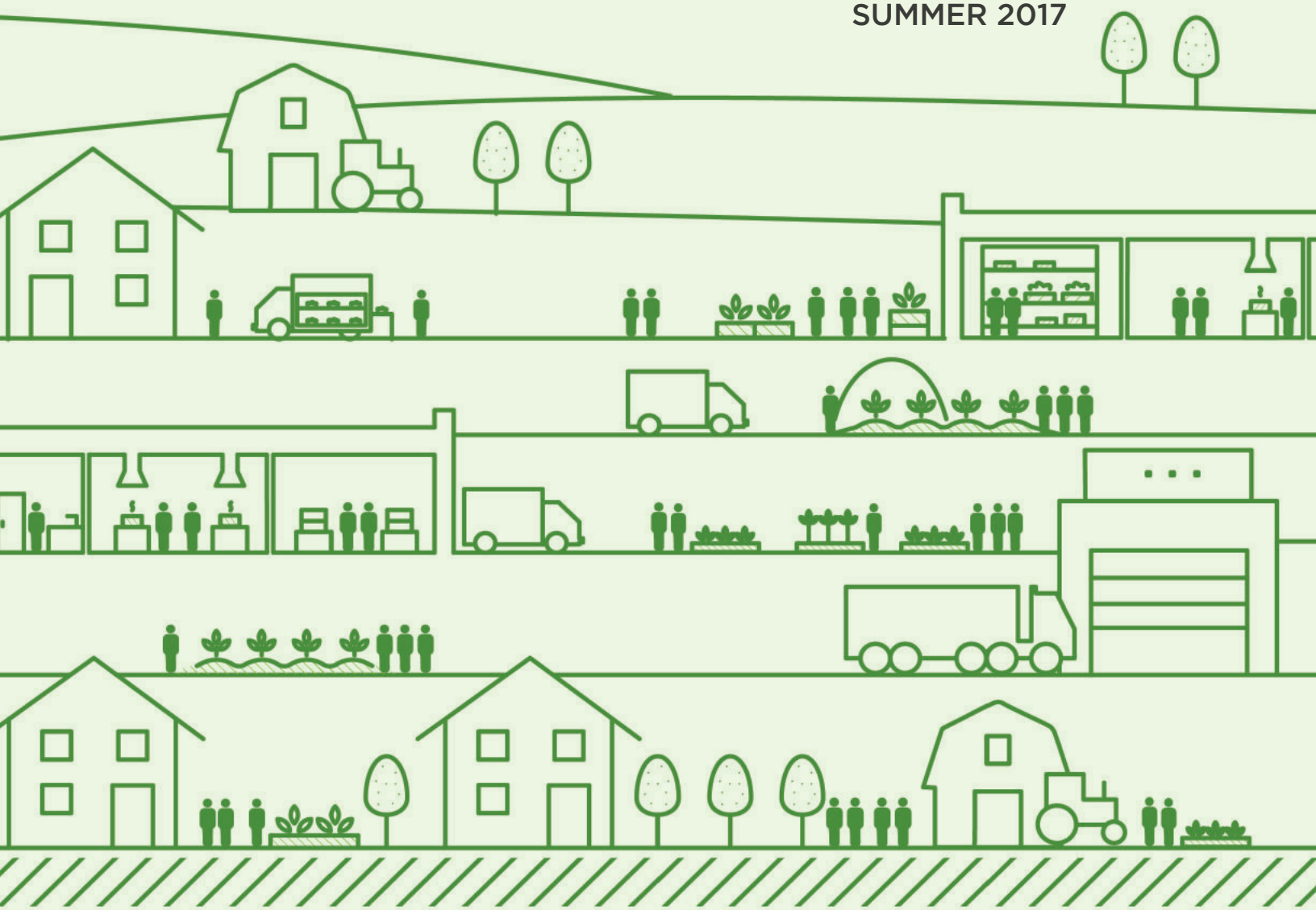
WAKE COUNTY
NORTH CAROLINA

Moving Beyond Hunger

COMPREHENSIVE FOOD SECURITY PLAN AND ACTION MANUAL FOR WAKE COUNTY

SUMMER 2017



Moving Beyond Hunger:

COMPREHENSIVE FOOD SECURITY PLAN AND
ACTION MANUAL FOR WAKE COUNTY

Summer 2017

This Plan was developed with the generous participation of community members, food security organizations, resource experts, and other stakeholders throughout Wake County. This broad community input has led to a County-specific and inclusive Plan that reflects Wake County needs, resources, and priorities. Thank you to all who gave their time to this project, and who will continue to make a difference for Wake County.

Project Team

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Capital Area Food Network

A food council for Wake County, established 2015.
Mission: To cultivate healthy people, communities, and economies through vibrant food and farm systems.
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Community Food Lab

Community Food Lab is a design and consulting firm bringing innovative systems thinking to urgent food system challenges.
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Preface

In 2014, a group of Wake County leaders came together to explore issues and opportunities around childhood hunger in the County. This working group spent much of the first year initiating school-based strategies and establishing the metrics and short term policy goals associated with them.

The group, comprised of elected leaders and upper level management from Cooperative Extension, Human Services and the Wake County Public School System, determined that the majority of strategies being explored were focused on emergency relief rather than capacity-building. We learned that tackling food insecurity would require multi-sector collaborations; would involve building the entire food system; and was directly linked to the overall social and economic vitality of our community.

The group learned about the organizational and community landscape related to food systems; and subsequently, reached out to the local food council in our area, the Capital Area Food Network (CAFN). Through this emerging collective impact initiative, the Food Security Work Group connected with Community Food Lab, a local firm with the capacity for helping our community take a broader perspective and turn positive intent into ACTION.

Hunger and the prospect of addressing it, we know, is a complex issue that reflects underlying social determinants of health, including poverty, equity and the need for systems that cultivate human capital throughout our community. We also know there are many opportunities for us to advance food security with a shared agenda. There are opportunities to innovate and align, and there are specific policy roles for Wake County leaders.

This Plan and Action Manual are designed to start moving the County towards food security and a sustainable food future. By building a culture of connections and nourishment, the resources and capability within Wake County can be aligned towards strong support for those in need, resilience, and self-reliance for all communities.



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1. Overview



"The quest for food security can be the common thread that links the different challenges we face and helps build a sustainable future."

– José Graziano da Silva,
United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
Director-General

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Executive Summary

AN AMBITIOUS COURSE AND A STRONG FOUNDATION

This ambitious, comprehensive guide to mobilize Wake County's food security efforts builds from a strong foundation. Wake County is home to extensive hunger resources and food security expertise. Recently, Wake County has seen a movement towards greater food security coordination and development of new food policy.

Spurring this movement is an increasing awareness among County and municipal leaders of the key role that food security plays in the vitality of Wake County communities. In particular, the Wake County Food Security Working Group has established effective leadership with the strong commitment of the Wake County Human Services Board and support from the Wake County Board of Commissioners.

Around the same time as the creation of the Wake County Food Security Working Group, the Capital Area Food Network (CAFN) has emerged as a community-based food policy council. CAFN is organized with four action circles focused on different aspects of a healthy food system, and has community networks and growing community capacity that are well-positioned to support policy advocacy and active partnerships. CAFN's Food Access Circle focuses directly on food security issues, and through development of this Plan has already begun collaborating on County-led efforts. CAFN's Food Access Circle and the Food Security Working Group represent the needed structure for launching a viable Comprehensive Food Security Plan. Activities, policies, and partnerships can be created or expanded within a strong framework of community and local government support.

BUILDING BLOCKS

With five strategies, five indicators of progress, and 41 recommended actions to undertake over three years, this Plan is built to guide action within this framework of support. It links existing efforts, leverages new leadership, and provides everyone in Wake County a roadmap to participate. Twenty-four different organizations and local government departments are identified as leading or convening partners for the Actions, and over 120 Wake County organizations are listed as Existing or Potential Partners.

This inclusive participation reflects Wake County's numerous and diverse resources and is based on the belief that, even if one's contribution is small, we all have something to contribute. The Plan also builds on the growing awareness that collective and coordinated efforts can solve our most entrenched problems.

FIVE STRATEGIES provide the backbone for a comprehensive approach:

1 Ensure Food Access
2 Communicate and Educate
3 Develop Sustainable Food Supply
4 Build Economic Opportunity
5 Leading through Networks

Built directly from an open-ended process of research and engagement, these five strategies direct a holistic, systems-based approach and form the essential starting points for a truly comprehensive plan.

To measure progress and target efforts within each Strategy, the following **FIVE INDICATORS** are proposed:

1 The Meal Gap tracks the need for food among at-risk families alongside Wake County's ability to fulfill that need through improved household resources or food assistance programs.
2 Community Participation measures the number of Wake County residents learning about food or volunteering to make a better food system.
3 County-based Food Supply targets local food production and the diversion of food waste to food rescue programs.
4 The Food Job Index is a proposed metric to show the health and strength of jobs in the food sector as a part of the overall local economy.
5 Organizational Connections will measure collaborations and networking among Wake organizations.

Weaving these Strategies and Indicators together is the Plan's unique approach to food security, that focuses explicitly on building a culture of connections and nourishment through all actions. New capacity and greater lasting impact will grow from an active culture of connections. Nourishment is a multifaceted idea that speaks to nutrition, spiritual fulfillment, and the emotional resilience that is central to healthy lives and communities.

These are ambitious ideas, and alone they may inspire but not lead to change. Food security depends on commitment of partners and the ability to coordinate efforts across the County.

IMPLEMENTING ACTION

The Action Manual at the heart of this Plan makes aspirations of change tangible through each clearly framed, pragmatic Action. Partners are suggested, actions are described, and measurable outcomes proposed. Through these 41 Actions, the **entire food system is engaged to create solutions for food security.**

The Actions proposed address the diverse underlying causes of food insecurity, and also recognize that even as we work to eliminate the causes of food insecurity we are still bound to feed our neighbors in need.

Each Action is meant to be led by one or more organizations which are encouraged to invite others to the table to plan their direction and activity on the recommended Action. The included considerations and other details are meant to guide thinking, but actual implementation decisions will be driven by the partners around the table. Their expertise, capacity, and needs must drive the scope and development of each Action. By developing and owning a workplan for their Action, each organization or group will better understand their activity, work to build effective group relationships, and tailor the Action to their own abilities. By leaving Action details to each group in this way, a **flexible, inclusive Plan is created that can adapt within Actions while still building progress around the key Strategies and Indicators.**

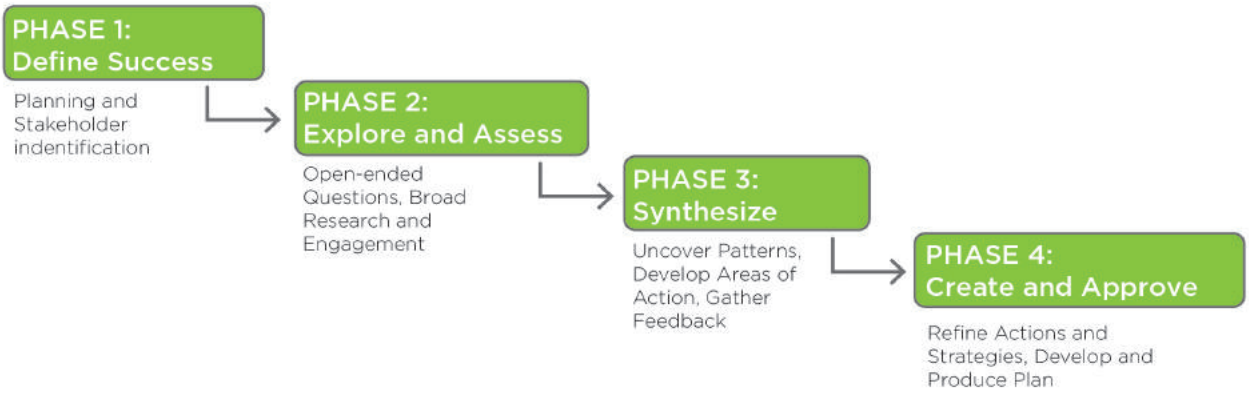
To build and maintain momentum around the Actions, key coordinating roles are outlined for CAFN's Food Access Circle and for a proposed Food Security Coordinator for Wake County. This new **Coordinator position would act as a single point "Air Traffic Controller"** of the many County-led food security activities, policies, and communications to magnify the impact of County food security policy goals. These two points of contact (Food Access Circle and Food Security Coordinator) will work together to track overall progress on Actions and Indicators, coordinate and convene partners where direct facilitation is needed, and form a community-to-government link to align efforts throughout Wake County.

It is important, of course, to remember that no amount of smart planning can predict all outcomes in such a challenging area as food security, or guarantee a hunger-free County. In response, this **Plan is built to evolve, with evaluation and revision every three years to accommodate lessons learned and new ideas in the field.** Any progress towards food security also rests on the dedication of Wake County partners to solve these problems. Many tireless organizations and individuals have been fighting this cause for decades - this Plan invites many more to the work.

Now, as Wake County passes 1 million people, can we pull together the needed commitment and energy to work together and create food access for all? This Plan lays out a path towards that vision.

Our Process and Principles

4-PHASE PLANNING PROCESS



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- **Think big**
- **Focus on pragmatic actions**
- **Create inclusive, just, and equitable solutions**
- **Engage the community and reflect the community's voice**
- **Celebrate and strengthen existing bright spots**
- **New catalytic initiatives should complement existing efforts**

In creating this Plan, a whole-systems approach to food security was adopted. This approach allowed a measured look at the overall context of food security in order to uncover new models for resilience and flexibility. This kind of approach often pulls resources and organizations together in unexpected solutions to solve big, chronic problems like food insecurity, hunger, and poverty.

Within this big-picture systems approach, the project followed a linear process that began with open-ended data gathering; moved to synthesizing data and looking for patterns; refined the synthesized ideas into actionable recommendations; and finally led to developing the strategic framework to drive action, measure progress, and build participation. This process allowed the Plan to keep an eye on the big picture of food security while also including detailed recommendations for partnerships, policies, and activities.

The Plan

VISION

A food secure Wake County, where ALL people have physical, social, and economic access to safe, nutritious, culturally appropriate, and affordable food.

APPROACH

Building a culture of connections and nourishment

FIVE STRATEGIES

STRATEGY 1 Ensure Food Access

STRATEGY 2 Communicate and Educate

STRATEGY 3 Develop Sustainable Food Supply

STRATEGY 4 Build Economic Opportunity

STRATEGY 5 Leading through Networks

MEASURING SUCCESS: KEY INDICATORS

- Meal Gap
- Community Participation
- County-Based Food Supply
- Food Job Index
- Organizational Connections

FIVE STRATEGIES

STRATEGY 1 Ensure Food Access

FAST START ACTIONS

- Expand school pantries in Wake County Schools
- Expand Universal Breakfast in the Classroom
- Expand summer meal program
- Breakfast in Classroom study and Program Guide

LONGER GROWING ACTIONS

- Affordable mobile market programs
- Community-scale nutrition hubs
- Study and improve food bank and food pantry supply chain
- Expand food and meal delivery to low-income residents, especially seniors
- County-wide database of food pantries

STRATEGY 2 Communicate and Educate

FAST START ACTIONS

- Expand nutrition and gardening class offerings
- Support strong volunteer networks
- Centralize food resource data into Wake Network of Care online app

LONGER GROWING ACTIONS

- "Granny's Garden" program to connect seniors and youth
- Establish a coordinator for school learning gardens
- Build foundations for a shared community kitchen network
- Include food systems and agriculture in Dix Park Master Plan
- Mixed media marketing campaign with emphasis on seniors' needs
- Food Security medical intake questions

STRATEGY 3 Develop Sustainable Food Supply

FAST START ACTIONS

- Community gardens at food bank and food pantry sites
- Education program around food donation (liability, food safety, tax incentives, etc.)

LONGER GROWING ACTIONS

- Community garden programs at all municipalities
- Local Food Hub
- Wake County incubates new farmers by making farmland accessible
- Client Choice at food pantries
- Local tax incentives for gardens and gardeners
- County compost program
- Urban agriculture in affordable or senior housing developments

STRATEGY 4 Build Economic Opportunity

FAST START ACTIONS

- Build resources and champions for grocery cooperatives
- Reduce barriers to food assistance application process

LONGER GROWING ACTIONS

- Job training in urban agriculture
- More options for SNAP redemption
- Education programs on food and household budgeting
- Foodservice job training and placement
- Voluntary living wage certification for businesses
- Shared food processing center

STRATEGY 5 Leading through Networks

FAST START ACTIONS

- Capital Area Food Network coordinates this Plan
- County-based Food Security Coordinator
- Local governments and school system sign on to this Plan

LONGER GROWING ACTIONS

- Grocery stores become nutrition and food security hubs
- Expand leadership role of faith community
- Explore opportunities to support youth food leadership

KEY ACTIONS

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

In each Strategy Area, Other Recommendations have been developed for future consideration and can be found in the Action Manual.

On Food Security in Wake County

Food security means that all of us have the food we need. First, it means that no one goes hungry, but it goes further to say that diets are nutritious, that no one's next meal is in doubt, and that children, seniors, and everyone in between has food no matter their circumstances.

In more precise terms:

Food security exists when everyone has physical, social, and economic access to safe, nutritious, culturally appropriate, and affordable food.

Food is a basic human need and right. Food security ensures that nutritious, safe, affordable, and culturally appropriate food is consistently available to all residents of a defined area. Food security also promotes equity, inclusivity, and flexibility within an ever changing system and is vitally important for promoting efficient and effective use of food resources to achieve positive health, socioeconomic, cultural, and environmental outcomes.[3]

When food security is lacking, a host of societal issues emerge. In the United States, diet-related diseases such as diabetes and obesity have reached epidemic proportions in recent years. Over-consumption of affordable and accessible high-fat and high-sugar content foods, inability to access fresh fruits and vegetables, lack of food preparation knowledge, and lack of physical activity are just a few of the factors that have been associated with these health crises.

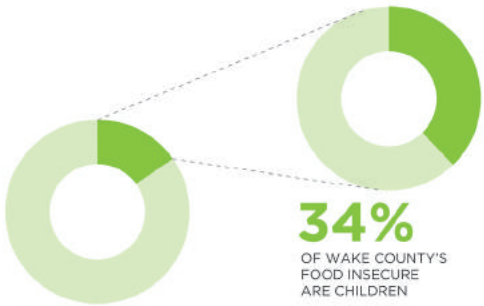
Food security serves a key element in not only solving public health problems, but in building community resiliency and bolstering local economies and entire food systems. That is, food security is not only an end in itself; it is actually a driver of public health, community resiliency, local economic growth, and food system health.

Currently not everyone in Wake County has the food they need.

3 FAO.org

In 2014,

131,800 Wake County residents, or 13.8% of the County, were food insecure.
That's 1 in 7 Wake County residents.



Nearly **1 in 5 children** in Wake County, or 44,681 children, are food insecure.

They don't know where their next meal is coming from.

Source: 2014 Feeding America

With a rapidly growing population and an urgent need to plan for a sustainable future, now is the time to develop comprehensive food security action.

Wake County is home to over 1 million people, and is the second-fastest growing county in the United States, at a 14% growth rate. Any problems left unaddressed now will only expand with the growing population. Now is the time to ensure that all current and future Wake County residents have access to nutritious, safe, and affordable food.

The 131,000 food insecure people in Wake County are neighbors, co-workers, classmates, friends, and community members. People experiencing food insecurity are as diverse as Wake County itself. The County spans rural to very dense urban areas, and includes many different cultures and municipal identities. No one-size-fits-all approach could address the complex, interwoven, and diverse causes of food insecurity in Wake County.

How to Use This Plan: 7 Steps

From the start, this Plan was designed with the belief that everyone in Wake County has a role to play in increasing food security. Beyond the 24 Lead organizations, and the more than 120 Existing and Potential Partners listed, this Plan has a place for you. Your role may be big or small, but the important piece is getting started and staying connected. The Action Manual gives everyone that place to start.

1. Find yourself in this Plan.

The Action Manual contains a Stakeholder Guide that outlines how different groups in Wake County can see themselves getting involved, and suggests key Actions for each. Find the categories that describe you.

2. Flip through the Action Manual.

Look for ideas that are natural fits for you and your work. Find your place to jump in, and get started now! The problems are urgent. There are Actions that we can all start today.

3. Build new partnerships and connections.

The Actions all include suggestions on partnerships to get this started, but they are only a place to start. There are many more potential partners than would fit. Consider how you can extend your reach by bringing in new partners, or unexpected collaborators.

4. Consider the idea of "nourishment."

Your work can help nourish people, communities, or yourself. There are physical, economic, emotional, and spiritual aspects to this concept. Look for Actions that help you build nourishment into your work.

5. Start small . . . or go big!

Every group has their own right level of action. For some, the first baby steps are a big accomplishment. For others with experience and capacity, ambition and game-changing big ideas are the next natural step.

6. Measure progress.

Whether you manage a community garden, teach cooking skills, or write guides for school breakfast, track your progress. Each Action included here has suggestions on what to measure.

7. Stay connected.

For listings of resources, look to Wake Network of Care's website and app.[4] For tracking progress on this Plan or finding help getting started, contact the Capital Area Food Network. For County information, check in with Cooperative Extension. But most importantly, build your own active partnerships around shared Actions.

4 wakenetworkofcare.org


5
WHICH ACTIONS ARE MOST IMPORTANT FOR OUR FOOD SECURITY PLAN?

Use the Manual and its tools to guide your work in achieving food security. Use it to invite others to your efforts, and use it to find new directions for your work.

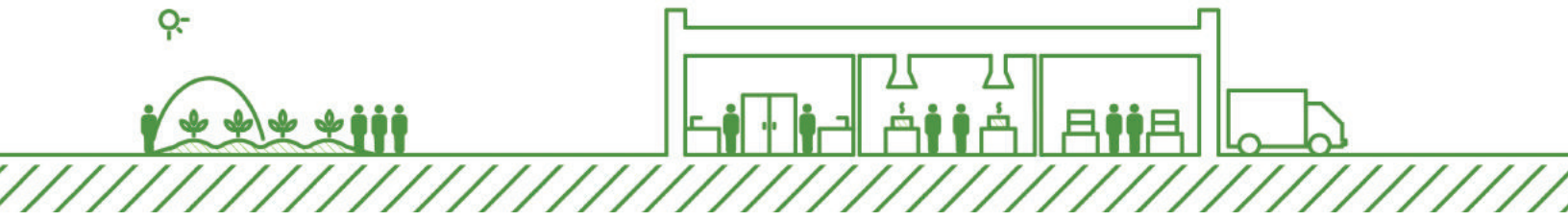
The pages of this Action Manual contain an ambitious plan for the urgent food security needs in Wake County. While ambitious as a whole, each action is realistic and pragmatic, drawing on the collective resources of Wake County through small and large multi-sector actions. This Manual includes the detail needed to steer diverse stakeholders' first steps towards energetic, collaborative solutions. Food insecurity and hunger are multifaceted, chronic problems that will only be solved when we, as an entire County, decide to solve them. Small or large, we all have a part of the solution to contribute.

The Action Manual opens with a Stakeholder Guide to help you identify your role.

A description follows of the Plan's three-year action and planning cycle. We have three years to run this Plan before it will be evaluated and updated for another three years. The body of the Action Manual are 41 Actions that support the five strategies. Each Action is made tangible by enough detail and suggested direction to get started, and one reflects the Approach of this Plan: Build a culture of connections and nourishment.

Finally, a number of resources are included to help facilitate Actions by government, organizations and businesses, and community members, and also by the coordinators of the Plan itself.

2. Action Manual



"If we did all the things we are capable of, we would literally astound ourselves."

- Thomas A. Edison

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Stakeholder Guide:

Finding Your Place in This Plan

Many stakeholder groups are identified in this Plan and appear as either lead or partner organizations for each recommended action. The information below is meant to guide you into the Action Manual - it proposes potential roles and relevant actions for all stakeholders positioned to increase food security. Each of these roles and actions was crafted to engage community members and other stakeholders in building a culture of connections and nourishment in Wake County. The table below explains how to find your place to start.

People experiencing food insecurity	Engaging individuals and families experiencing food insecurity as active participants will be critical to the success of this Plan. In addition to receiving nourishment, community members with first hand experience of hunger should be asked to provide input on all food security initiatives, planning, and policy development.

STAKEHOLDER GROUPS	POTENTIAL ROLES	RELEVANT ACTIONS
Community members	This Plan encourages civic engagement in all aspects of the food system, from home gardening and neighborhood food initiatives to policymaking. Community involvement builds self-reliance and resilience to address food insecurity. This group intersects with all other groups, so community members can tap into any of the recommended actions.	1.5, 1.8, 2.4, 3.1, 3.3, 4.1, 4.3
Student and youth	This Plan encourages civic engagement in all levels of the food system, from home gardening and neighborhood food initiatives to policymaking. Community involvement builds self-reliance and resilience to address food insecurity. This group intersects with all other groups, so community members can tap into any of the recommended actions.	1.1, 2.2, 2.4, 2.5, 4.3, 4.5, 5.6
Seniors and older adults	This Plan includes initiatives to improve food access and quality of life for older adults. This group includes recipients of meal delivery programs as well as participants in food initiatives at senior centers. Older adults are also asked to share knowledge of the food system with younger stakeholders, such as through Granny's Gardens.	1.8, 2.2, 2.4, 2.8
School systems and educators	In this Plan, school systems and educators play a critical role in addressing childhood hunger through school pantries, gardens, and food programs. School systems are also asked to collaborate with local government to maximize federal food dollars. Educators can inspire youth participation in local food projects and policy making.	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 2.5, 5.2

STAKEHOLDER GROUPS	POTENTIAL ROLES	RELEVANT ACTIONS
Local government (County or Municipal)	Recognizing the leadership provided by County government and municipalities, this Plan identifies actions which would benefit from public investments and have the greatest food security impact. Local government is encouraged to build connections with schools, food producers, distributors, businesses, policy makers, and others.	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.6, 1.8, 2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8, 2.9, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, 3.8, 3.9, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.7, 4.8, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.6
Nonprofit community	This Plan celebrates and builds upon current food initiatives led by nonprofits. Given their direct interactions with community members, this group is positioned to implement and communicate many of the actions. Nonprofits are invited to partner with other groups to facilitate sharing of resources and reduce duplication of services.	1.1, 1.3, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 2.9, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.9, 4.1, 4.2, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 5.4, 5.6
Healthcare system	This Plan recognizes the critical role of the healthcare system in community health and food security. Healthcare providers can facilitate community-clinical linkages such as collecting food security data on medical intake forms, prescribing fresh food, providing nutrition education, and offering health services through mobile markets.	1.3, 1.5, 1.6, 1.9, 2.1, 2.7, 2.9, 3.4, 4.5
Food producers, distributors, and processors	This Plan fosters connections between farms, institutions, restaurants, and other food producers, processors, and distributors. Actions are aimed at encouraging new food growers and businesses, improving efficiency in aggregation and distribution, sharing resources and infrastructure, and supporting local economic development.	1.1, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9, 2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 2.6, 2.7, 3.1, 3.2, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.6, 4.8, 5.4
Business community	This Plan recommends private investments, partnerships, and leadership opportunities for the business community to support food security and improve efficiency in the food system. Business leaders are also asked to commit to paying their employees a living wage and contribute corporate sponsorships for food security initiatives.	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8, 3.1, 3.2, 3.5, 3.7, 3.8, 3.9, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.6
Faith community	This Plan recognizes the leadership of the faith-based community in many food security initiatives, including soup kitchens and food pantries. It hopes to spark new ideas to improve or expand upon these initiatives and encourages new partnerships and resource sharing between faith-based organizations, nonprofits, and local government.	11.3, 1.5, 1.9, 2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 2.6, 3.1, 3.3, 3.6, 4.5, 4.6, 5.5
Policy makers, advocacy groups, and academia	This Plan elevates policy changes and food security best practices which have been successful in Wake County and/or other communities. Policy makers, advocacy groups, and academic institutions are asked to lead research and sharing of best practices, social innovation challenges, and policy changes to support food security.	1.3, 1.5, 1.9, 2.1, 2.6, 3.1, 3.6, 4.5, 4.6, 5.5

The Plan's Three Year Cycle

This Plan begins a cycle of planning, implementation, and evaluation which will take place every three years to guide food security action in Wake County. This short planning cycle was proposed for several reasons. Fast population growth in Wake County and evolving partnerships may naturally lead to modification of the recommended actions. Constant discoveries in food security best practices may either encourage a shift in focus or introduce solutions unknown to the team in 2017. Additionally, it is expected that a three-year window to achieve results will inspire a sense of urgency and motivation to address food insecurity.

Therefore, the actions included in this Manual are designed to be feasible to complete within three years or less. Not guaranteed, of course, but feasible. Not all actions will develop as imagined, and surprises will come up, but each action, if begun with urgency, should bring positive outcomes within three years. In 2020, progress on each action will be measured against that action's suggested indicators. Revisions to the Plan will be made as needed in 2020 to guide the actions of the next three-year cycle.

CAFN's Food Access Circle will lead and coordinate overall progress and participation in the Plan in conjunction with Wake County Food Security Coordinator. The group will measure baselines for each Key Indicator, create a system for ongoing data collection and storage, and plan for the three-year Plan review in 2020. Action 5.3 describes this mechanism of coordination.



This Plan proposes a repeating three-year cycle of action and adjustment to allow for new knowledge and changng conditions, and to create a sense of urgency.

STRATEGY 1 Ensure Food Access

STRATEGY 2 Communicate and Educate

STRATEGY 3 Develop Sustainable Food Supply

STRATEGY 4 Build Economic Opportunity

STRATEGY 5 Leading through Networks

Five Strategies and Supporting Actions

The five strategy areas included in this Plan represent a comprehensive, Wake County-specific approach to building food security. They reflect community priorities and the landscape of resources and needs in Wake County.

Each strategy will be advanced through a number of recommended Actions including programs, policies, and activities to build food security. All of the Actions listed are feasible, though not guaranteed, to be completed within three years, they all have measurable outcomes. Each Action is described with a standard set of data, providing justification for the action, likely first steps, and key considerations.

The data included in each action description is meant as a guide for decision-making, and not as an obligation or fixed route for the listed partners. It is imperative that the partners in each action take time to establish their own collective plan, using the information here as a starting point. In each action there are many things still to figure out.

Fast Start Actions are those that are either already underway or will be very quick to get up to speed. These may need some additional resources, but generally don't need extensive study or planning to get underway.

Longer Growing Actions may need more up-front planning or convening before measurable outcomes are seen. In some cases either a Lead Partner or significant resources will need to be identified.

Both **Fast Start Actions** and **Longer Growing Actions** shared key factors to make them the highest priority actions. These factors included: presence of key partners, measurable outcomes, high community interest, and strong ability to support connections and nourishment.

The list of **Other Recommendations** include actions from the preliminary Phase 2 action list that were, for various reasons, identified as having a lower priority, lower immediate impact, or lower initial feasibility. These actions are still listed, however, because they would have food security impact if implemented, and a change in conditions or emergence of a motivated champion for these actions may provide the opportunity to move them forward.

COMMONLY USED ABBREVIATIONS

CAFN	Capital Area Food Network
CEFS	Center for Environmental Farming Systems
CFSA	Carolina Farm Stewardship Association
FBCENC	Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina
IFFS	Inter-Faith Food Shuttle
NCDEQ	North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality
SNAP	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
UNC-DCRP	University of North Carolina Department of City and Regional Planning
WCHS	Wake County Human Services
WCPSS	Wake County Public School System
WIC	Women, Infants, and Children supplemental nutrition program



STRATEGY 1 | STRATEGY 2 | STRATEGY 3 | STRATEGY 4 | STRATEGY 5

Ensure Food Access

OBJECTIVE	INDICATOR
Access to nutritious, affordable food for all people and all areas of Wake County	**Meal Gap:** The number of meals needed by individuals and families, which they are either unable to purchase themselves or do not receive from food assistance programs.

FAST START ACTIONS

1.1 Expand school pantries in Wake County Schools

1.2 Expand Universal Breakfast in the Classroom

1.3 Expand Summer Meal Program

1.4 Breakfast in the Classroom study and Program Guide

LONGER GROWING ACTIONS

1.5 Affordable mobile market programs

1.6 Community-scale nutrition hubs

1.7 Study and improve food bank and food pantry supply chain

1.8 Expand food and meal delivery to low-income residents, especially seniors

1.9 County-wide database of food pantries

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS*

1.10 Develop fresh food prescription program

1.11 Pilot Universal School Lunch Program

1.12 After-school meals with federal funding

1.13 Healthy Corner Store Pilot Initiatives

1.14 Coordinate food pantry donation guide and app

1.15 Expand food pantries at senior centers

1.16 Expand food pantries at colleges and universities

*NOTE: The "Other Recommendations" are listed here for reference to spark potential future efforts — they have not been developed in detail elsewhere in the Plan.

1 Ensure Food Access

ACTION 1.1
EXPAND SCHOOL PANTRIES IN WAKE COUNTY SCHOOLS

ACTION DESCRIPTION

Open additional school-based food pantries in Wake County schools. These food pantries serve students and their families, and can be organized and managed in various ways.

LEAD ORGANIZATION

Wake County

EXISTING AND POTENTIAL PARTNERS

FBCENC, IFFS, school principals, school social workers, student-led food organizations, Wake County Food Security Working Group

MEASURABLE INDICATOR

» Number of middle and high schools with school pantries

ANTICIPATED COSTS

» Start Up Cost for a New School Pantry: Approximately $3,000
» Annual Cost for a School Pantry: Approximately $2,250

TIMEFRAME

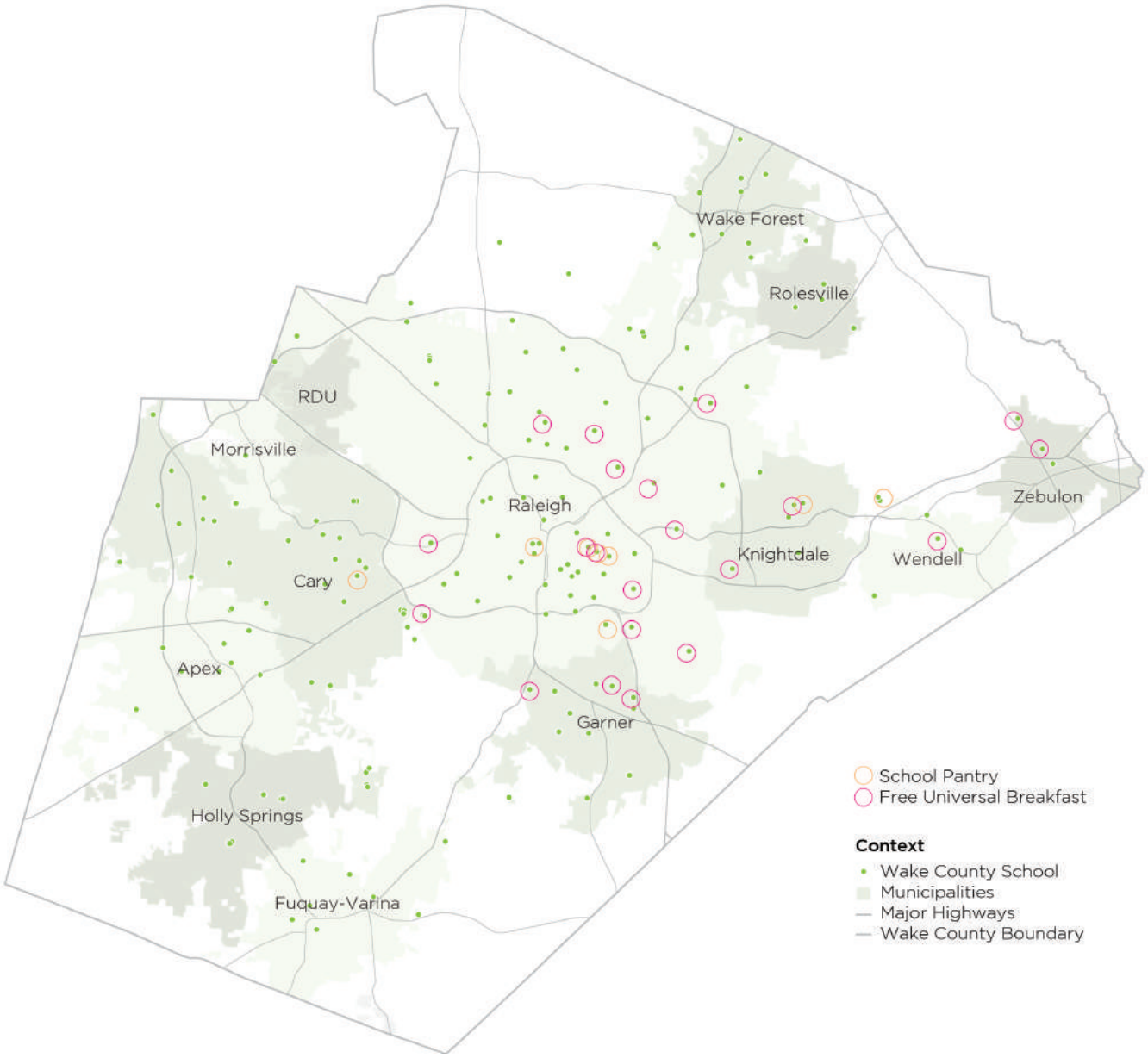
» 2017: Open five new pantries
» Review policy objectives and adjust targets annually

RATIONALE

School pantries are flexible, cost-effective, and responsive to changing student and family needs. Willing and capable community partners exist to implement expansion, and as of Spring 2017 at least six schools are operating pantries. School pantries provide effective student and family outreach opportunities for school social workers.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

» School pantries are part of a larger policy to establish dedicated food resources in schools, and should be considered in the context of other food resources such as universal breakfast and backpack buddies.
» Key school personnel to engage when seeking new sites include the Principal, Assistant Principal, and school social worker or counselor
» Wake County school pantry policy does not currently call for open public access (only students and their families). This prohibition, however, is based on complex factors and may deserve future reconsideration.
» Student organizations and clubs should be encouraged to help manage school food pantries.



Wake County Schools with School Pantries or Free Universal Breakfast, 2017

As of Spring 2017, Wake County Public School System has at least six schools with school pantries and 25 schools that serve free universal breakfast. Understanding and building policy for these and other school-based programs have been the focus of the Wake County Food Security Working Group.

Source: Wake County Public School System

1 Ensure Food Access

ACTION 1.2
EXPAND UNIVERSAL BREAKFAST IN THE CLASSROOM

ACTION DESCRIPTION
Increase the number of schools offering standardized breakfast in the classroom as part of Wake County's 25-school Free Universal Breakfast Program.

LEAD ORGANIZATION
WCPSS Child Nutrition Services

EXISTING AND POTENTIAL PARTNERS
Individual school administrators and custodial staff, NC Justice Center, No Kid Hungry, Wake County Food Security Working Group

MEASURABLE INDICATOR
» Percentage of Free and Reduced Price Lunch eligible students eating breakfast

ANTICIPATED COSTS
» Costs will include new transport and serving equipment for each school converting to universal breakfast in the classroom.
» Other costs may occur depending on the school, the percentage of free and reduced price lunch students at that school, and the percentage who participate in universal breakfast.

TIMEFRAME
» 2017: Convert six universal breakfast schools to a standardized breakfast in the classroom model
» Evaluate results, set new targets, and expand breakfast in the classroom to additional pilot program schools in subsequent years

RATIONALE
Universal breakfast in the classroom is a best practice for the Free Universal Breakfast in Schools Program, which supports significant growth in breakfast participation, with up to 90% breakfast participation. Effective universal breakfast programs result in higher attendance, better classroom behavior, and higher academic performance. 25 Wake County schools are offering universal breakfast in a pilot program, but only two currently use a breakfast in the classroom approach. Refining this pilot program to include more breakfast in the classroom schools will allow refinement of the model before additional schools are encouraged to implement universal breakfast.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS
» Expand program to schools with willing administrators.
» Work with custodial staff and other support staff to buy into goals and benefits of the program.
» Use each school experience as a learning opportunity to further refine the program.
» Build demonstrated success of pilot before expanding universal breakfast to new schools.
» Explore potential grant funding for qualifying schools, that has been identified by the NC Justice Center.

1 Ensure Food Access

ACTION 1.3
EXPAND SUMMER MEAL PROGRAM

ACTION DESCRIPTION 1
Partner with municipalities to improve program access.

ACTION DESCRIPTION 2
Increase the number of "Open Sites" in Wake County.

LEAD ORGANIZATIONS
North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, WCHS

EXISTING AND POTENTIAL PARTNERS
Alice Aycock Poe Center, CAFN, faith community, FBCENC, municipal leaders, No Kid Hungry, Triangle Food Truck organization, Wake County Food Security Working Group, WCPSS, Wake Cooperative Extension, Youth Thrive

MEASURABLE INDICATORS
» Number of meals served in eligible communities
» Number of partnering municipalities
» Number of open sites in Summer Meal Program

ANTICIPATED COSTS
» Staff time
» Marketing and promotion
» Expansion of site-based partner costs

TIMEFRAME
» 2017: Convene municipal leaders and stakeholders to begin planning municipal approaches and convene target community stakeholders to begin developing new open sites
» Evaluate and expand in subsequent years

RATIONALE 1
In 2014, nearly $9 million dollars in federal food assistance was left uncaptured by the summer nutrition programs in Wake County. Efforts in 2015 and 2016 increased summer meal participation, but a large summer meal gap still exists. Providing meals to students during the summer helps prevent poor developmental progress and educational gaps which can result from childhood hunger. The dedicated staff resource of a four-year VISTA position will strengthen the capacity of this program to expand. Additionally, the Wake County Human Services Board has developed momentum that should be expanded through existing collaborations around its Public Health Committee.

RATIONALE 2
Increasing the number of open sites will increase accessibility to meals for eligible children throughout the summer months while school is out, and will build on the important efforts underway.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS
» Incremental expansion of municipal partnering approach will allow targeted, intensive growth in a controlled fashion.
» Best practices for open sites should be explored, including offering activities in addition to meals, mobile solutions to bring food where children live, and inclusion of community partners.
» Current organizational model should be continued, with energetic participation from many organizations, County departments, and state-level agencies.

1 Ensure Food Access

ACTION 1.4
BREAKFAST IN CLASSROOM STUDY AND PROGRAM GUIDE

ACTION DESCRIPTION
Analyze barriers to implementing breakfast in the classroom, develop solutions, and create a how-to program guide for launching breakfast in the classroom programs.

LEAD ORGANIZATION
WCPSS Child Nutrition Services

EXISTING AND POTENTIAL PARTNERS
CAFN, NCSU Sociology, UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health, Wake Cooperative Extension, Wake County Food Security Working Group

MEASURABLE INDICATOR
» Program Guide

ANTICIPATED COSTS
» Staff time to oversee project
» Printing and distribution costs, or can be distributed online

TIMEFRAME
» 2017: Identify Research Intern in Spring/Summer
» 2017: Complete project by December

RATIONALE
For some school administrators interested in breakfast in the classroom, all that is needed may be a clear written guide to encourage and empower them to launch this program. The current Child Nutrition Director has experience developing such guides, but her staff is missing the capacity to take this on. Through community partnerships, and with the CNS Director's oversight, it is expected that student or volunteer time could be contributed as a "Research Intern" to create this guide.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS
» Create a guide that is simple, easy-to-use, and can be written over a few months.
» Leverage the experience and knowledge of CNS Director to offer invaluable learning opportunities to a student or volunteer Research Intern.

1 Ensure Food Access

ACTION 1.5
AFFORDABLE MOBILE MARKET PROGRAMS

ACTION DESCRIPTION
Establish regular mobile retail markets set up directly in Wake County's vulnerable communities to sell fresh produce, other food, and/or household supplies.

CONVENING ORGANIZATION *
CAFN Food Access Circle

EXISTING AND POTENTIAL PARTNERS
Eastern Wake County food pantries or other organizations, Fertile Ground Food Cooperative, Grocers on Wheels, hospitals and other healthcare providers, IFFS, local food producers and distributors, social entrepreneurs, WCHS

MEASURABLE INDICATORS
» Number of mobile markets and routes
» Number of participating local food producers and distributors
» Number of customers

ANTICIPATED COSTS
» Planning time for partners
» Cost of vehicle(s), refrigeration, staffing, inventory, other supplies, and promotion for the mobile market

TIMEFRAME
» 2018: Launch pilot mobile markets in Southeast Raleigh, Eastern (e.g., Zebulon, Knightdale), and Southern (e.g., Garner, Holly Springs, Fuquay-Varina) Wake County
» 2020: Expand to two other routes/ communities

RATIONALE
Mobile retail markets may be particularly beneficial in urban and rural food deserts for those with limited transportation or grocery store access. Over 100,000 Wake County residents live in a USDA-classified food desert. Mobile markets are efficient and cost effective in relation to brick and mortar stores, as they can reach multiple communities/routes and offer hours which are convenient for community members. Mobile markets which bring fruits and vegetables directly from growers, accept SNAP/EBT, offer fresh food promotions, or offer a sliding fee scale can provide a more accessible and affordable food source for customers.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS
» Churches, community-based nonprofits, community centers, and YMCAs were noted by focus group participants as convenient locations for a mobile market. Convenient times mentioned were weekday and weekend mornings. Participants were concerned about produce quality declining later in the day.
» Consider engaging community members in growing and selling food for the market to build community capacity and self-reliance.
» Partnering with medical centers and other healthcare providers to offer fresh food prescriptions, nutrition education, or other health services through a mobile market can further improve health and food security.[1]



* The role of convening organizations is to pull partners together, facilitate a planning conversation, and organize partners to identify and take on next steps. In the Action Resource section of this Plan, a sample convener's tool is provided to get things going.

1 http://foodshuttle.org/we-feed/mobile-markets/

1 Ensure Food Access

ACTION 1.6
COMMUNITY-SCALE NUTRITION HUBS

ACTION DESCRIPTION

Launch pilot program of nutrition hubs built around existing neighborhood food sites in Southeast Raleigh; evaluate pilot projects; replicate model in areas of need across the County.

LEAD ORGANIZATIONS

Community Food Lab, Raleigh Food Corridor

EXISTING AND POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Advocates for Health in Action, Alliance Medical Ministry, CEFS, Exploris School, Fertile Ground Food Cooperative, IFFS, Jamie Kirk Hahn Foundation, Passage Home, Raleigh Planning Department, Shaw University

MEASURABLE INDICATORS

» Number of food and nutrition projects/ programs available at the hub sites
» Number of referrals between hub sites
» Number of clients served across the hub sites

ANTICIPATED COSTS

» Staff time to oversee project
» Coordinate hub site implementation and evaluation
» Develop communication tools
» Costs for printing of promotional materials

TIMEFRAME

» 2018: Complete pilot project in Southeast Raleigh
» 2020: Replicate in two other communities

RATIONALE

Co-location of multiple food projects and education, along with other community and health services and entrepreneurial development can reduce barriers to food access and increase opportunities for individual and community resilience. Existing momentum in the Raleigh Food Corridor project will allow a quick start and development of a replicable model. Nutrition hubs were a recommended food security initiative in the 2015 Wake County Food Insecurity Policy Report. Coordination of programs across the hub sites should reduce duplication of services and maximize resources.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

» Resources, staffing, and time to commit to the project may vary across hub sites.
» Ongoing staffing would be needed to ensure that the list of services/ programs available across the hub sites is accurate and revised as needed.
» Additional future sites could include grocery cooperatives such as Fertile Ground Food Cooperative.

1 Ensure Food Access

ACTION 1.7
STUDY AND IMPROVE FOOD BANK AND FOOD PANTRY SUPPLY CHAIN

ACTION DESCRIPTION
Gap analysis of Wake County's food bank and food pantry logistics infrastructure, followed by a collaborative development plan to increase the capability of food pantries to provide fresh, local, nutritious food to those in need.

LEAD ORGANIZATIONS
FBCENC, IFFS

EXISTING AND POTENTIAL PARTNERS
CEFS, NCSU College of Design, UNC-DCRP

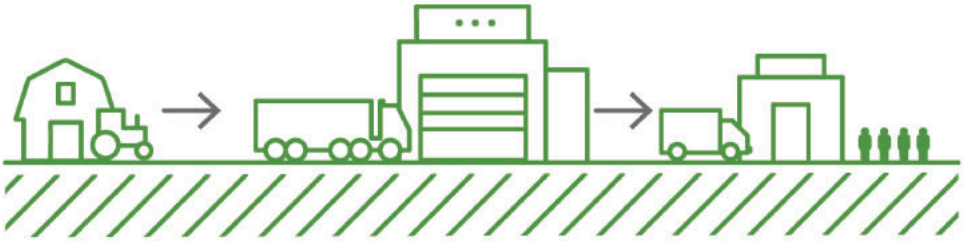
MEASURABLE INDICATORS
» Completed gap analysis report with detailed recommendations
» Development Plan to guide new investments and partnerships

ANTICIPATED COSTS
» Comprehensive gap analysis and report could range from $12,000 to $18,000.
» Partnering with NCSU student research projects could offset analysis costs.
» Development costs to be determined

TIMEFRAME
» 2018: Complete gap analysis by December
» 2019: Complete Development Plan by May

RATIONALE
Some of the biggest challenges reported by food pantries relate to transportation of food and the ability to store refrigerated foods on site. Many food pantries lack adequate storage space to maintain quantities of fresh produce and meats for distribution. More consistent drivers and refrigerated trucks would allow greater coordination. Improved food pantry logistics could reduce food waste, support more nutritious food pantry distributions and individual health, and reduce gaps in service to Wake County's hungry.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS
» Gap analysis should focus on food secure people as the primary goal. A human-centered design approach will help identify the fundamental food needs of people in Wake County, and prepare partners to solve these human needs through infrastructural recommendations.
» Infrastructural solutions should be approached creatively, looking to the entire food system of Wake County for potential distribution and storage opportunities.
» The \Development Plan should be informed by gap analysis and recommendations, and describe diverse avenues for potential funding.



1 Ensure Food Access

ACTION 1.8
EXPAND FOOD AND MEAL DELIVERY TO LOW-INCOME RESIDENTS, ESPECIALLY SENIORS

ACTION DESCRIPTION
Convene experts to develop plan to expand food and meal delivery.

LEAD ORGANIZATIONS
CAFN, Food Runners Collaborative, Meals on Wheels

EXISTING AND POTENTIAL PARTNERS
Faith community, FBCENC, Fertile Ground Food Cooperative, Grocers On Wheels, IFFS, Papa Spuds, Produce Box, Resources for Seniors, USDA Rural Development, U.S. Economic Development Administration, Wake County

MEASURABLE INDICATORS
» Multi-partner strategy and action plan to expand food and meal delivery
» Meal gap[2]

ANTICIPATED COSTS
» Contributed time, potential need for facilitation and technical assistance

TIMEFRAME
» 2018: Expect multiple planning meetings and workshops to occur in late 2017 and start of year
» 2018: Develop action plan by Summer

RATIONALE
The greatest population growth in Wake County is occurring among people over age 65. Poverty increases as people age, presenting a large and unaddressed food security challenge. Programs like Meals on Wheels and SNAP do not have enough resources to serve all older adults, so there is a wide and growing gap in senior coverage. Low income residents with limited accessibility to grocery stores or limited physical mobility may also benefit from meal delivery programs. As meal delivery volume increases, the need for local processing will increase as well, and the opportunity arises to create larger scale local economic development out of this need.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS
» A number of Wake County businesses currently offer home delivery of fresh food. Can their experience and models be leveraged?
» What would be needed to scale up Meals on Wheels?
» Explore hybrid business models that use market-rate services to support free or reduced price services for those in need.
» Food and meal delivery enterprise can be seen as a component in a larger county or regional economic development initiative, and creative planning could use food delivery as a driver for larger capital projects to develop the local food system.
» Fertile Ground Food Cooperative should be considered as a future entrepreneurial partner for food preparation.

2 http://sonomahungerindex.com

1 Ensure Food Access

ACTION 1.9
COUNTY-WIDE DATABASE OF FOOD PANTRIES

ACTION DESCRIPTION
Gather partners to finalize a comprehensive listing of food pantries in Wake County; Create collaborative communication and distribution strategy to share and utilize completed list.

LEAD ORGANIZATIONS
CAFN Food Access Circle, WCHS

EXISTING AND POTENTIAL PARTNERS
Faith community, FBCENC, IFFS, Wake Network of Care

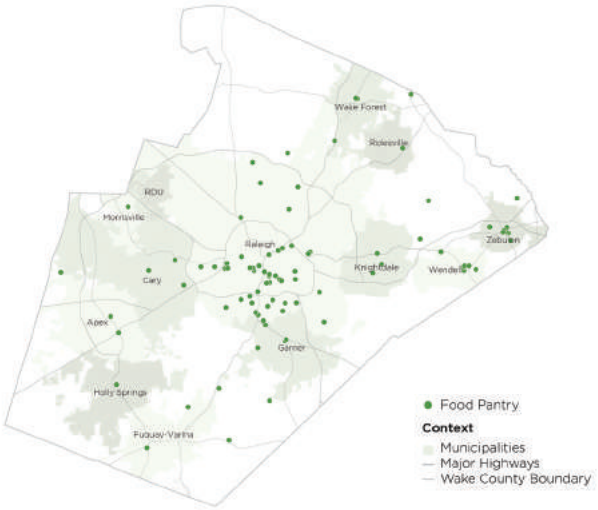
MEASURABLE INDICATOR
» Comprehensive and updated database of food pantries available for public and partners' use

ANTICIPATED COSTS
» Planning time among partners

TIMEFRAME
» 2017: Provide update on status of database development to partners, and outline potential areas of need by Summer
» 2018: Complete data collection by Spring

RATIONALE
The Wake Network of Care (http://wake.nc.networkofcare.org) is already hosting a partial database of food pantries, and welcomes partners in finalizing a comprehensive data collection effort and launching it to reach the most people for the greatest positive impact. A comprehensive food pantry database can be shared through the Network of Care as well as with many other referral agencies and partners. This action will expand food pantry visibility and increase access to information, helping those in need reach food pantries more effectively.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS
» This database should be built to match existing Network of Care database .
» An effective database will include a method for regular updates of food pantry information.



Wake County Food Pantries (count = 102)
Wake County has an extensive collection of food pantries, but their overall accessibility and delivery of service varies widely. There is currently no central site to find common information on all pantries.

Source: Wake County Long Range Planning Division, Nov. 2016



STRATEGY 1 | **STRATEGY 2** | STRATEGY 3 | STRATEGY 4 | STRATEGY 5

Communicate and Educate

OBJECTIVE	INDICATOR
Increase food knowledge, awareness of food issues, and engagement in food security solutions	**Community Participation:** The number of participants in food education programs and the number of volunteers participating in food programs

FAST START ACTIONS

2.1 Expand nutrition and gardening class offerings

2.2 Support strong volunteer networks

2.3 Centralize food resource data into Wake Network of Care online app

LONGER GROWING ACTIONS

2.4 "Granny's Garden" program to connect seniors and youth

2.5 Establish school learning gardens

2.6 Build foundations for a shared community kitchen network

2.7 Include food systems and agriculture in Dix Park Master Plan

2.8 Mixed media marketing campaign with emphasis on seniors' needs

2.9 Food security medical intake questions

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS*

2.10 Social innovation challenges to solve food insecurity

2.11 Placemaking to build food awareness and social fabric

2.12 Neighborhood-based community food conversations

*NOTE: The "Other Recommendations" are listed here for reference to spark potential future efforts — they have not been developed in detail elsewhere in the Plan.

2 Communicate and Educate

ACTION 2.1
EXPAND NUTRITION AND GARDENING CLASS OFFERINGS

ACTION DESCRIPTION

Survey all food pantries and begin offering nutrition and gardening classes (multiple session) and/or demonstrations (short, single session) at interested sites.

LEAD ORGANIZATIONS

Wake Cooperative Extension, WCHS

EXISTING AND POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Alice Aycock Poe Center, Alliance Medical Ministry, faith community (e.g., North Carolina Council of Churches, NC Interfaith Power & Light Sacred Foodscapes), FBCENC, Fertile Ground Food Cooperative, food pantries, IFFS, Piedmont Picnic Project, Vital Link Community Center

MEASURABLE INDICATORS

» Number of nutrition and gardening classes and demonstrations offered
» Number of nutrition and gardening class participants below 200% poverty (highest risk of food insecurity)

ANTICIPATED COSTS

» Staff time to distribute and analyze survey
» Staff time to coordinate and lead expanded classes
» Educational support materials

RATIONALE

Limited research in Wake County shows high interest in expanded food education programs at food pantries, and also shows high interest in nutrition and gardening education as solutions for food insecurity. Current class models by Alliance Medical Ministry and IFFS, combining gardening and cooking, are showing successful outcomes and may be ready for expansion. Coordinating cooking and garden education efforts with Wake Cooperative Extension and WCHS will help avoid duplication or service gaps, and allow collaborative expansion for best use of resources.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

» A collaborative approach to mapping classes will be important for creating a comprehensive list.
» A collaborative approach will also be crucial in identifying ways multiple organizations can contribute.
» Combine gardening demonstrations with community garden installations at interested food pantry sites.

TIMEFRAME

» 2017: Survey interested food pantries for possible nutrition and garden classes or demonstrations
» 2018: Begin new classes or demonstrations at interested food pantry sites, based on available expansion budget or other resources

2 Communicate and Educate

ACTION 2.2
SUPPORT STRONG VOLUNTEER NETWORKS

ACTION DESCRIPTION

Establish a central online resource for food security volunteer opportunities, and launch a creative social marketing campaign to increase participation. Think "Meet-Up" for food volunteer opportunities.

LEAD ORGANIZATION

Wake Cooperative Extension

EXISTING AND POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Activate Good, CAFN Relationships Circle, Extension & Community Association, Extension Master Gardener Volunteers, faith community, Farm Bureau, FBCENC, IFFS, institutions of higher education, student groups, Triangle United Way, The Well Fed Community Garden, Youth Thrive, other non-profits

MEASURABLE INDICATOR

» Number of volunteers participating in food security programs and activities

ANTICIPATED COSTS

» Time of partners in planning
» Central system development costs
» Marketing and outreach costs

TIMEFRAME

2017: Convene partners
2018: Launch central system or resource
2019: Begin social media campaign

RATIONALE

Volunteering is an effective way to increase the capacity of food security initiatives and raise awareness about issues of food security. Volunteers are essential for community gardens, food banks, food pantries, food drives, meal delivery, school gardens, edible landscaping, collective impact such as CAFN, entrepreneurial mentorship, faith community involvement, and youth programs. Current volunteer networks can be linked through a central system to allow Wake County residents interested in helping end hunger or creating food access to find the right volunteer fit and participate directly in building food security. Once a central system is built, a social marketing campaign will drive traffic to the site.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

» A central volunteer system should not replace individual organizations' volunteer efforts - it should help bring more volunteers to all participating organizations.
» The central system could be included in the Strategy 2 action of building an online app.
» Tracking food security volunteers is essential and tracking volunteer counts should be integrated into the central system or these counts should be gathered from partner organizations.



Volunteers at an Inter-Faith Food Shuttle urban ag workshop

2 Communicate and Educate

ACTION 2.3
CENTRALIZE FOOD RESOURCE DATA INTO WAKE NETWORK OF CARE ONLINE APP

ACTION DESCRIPTION

All food security organizations should explore the capabilities of the Wake Network of Care app (http://wake.nc.networkofcare.org), and work with partners to collect and upload comprehensive listings for food security resources.

LEAD ORGANIZATIONS

Alliance Behavioral Healthcare, CAFN Food Access Circle

EXISTING AND POTENTIAL PARTNERS

All food security organizations, United Way, Wake Network of Care, Youth Thrive

MEASURABLE INDICATORS

» Number of food security resource types listed on site
» Number of food security resources listed on site
» Site traffic to food-related resources

ANTICIPATED COSTS

» Partner time to coordinate and upload data collection

TIMEFRAME

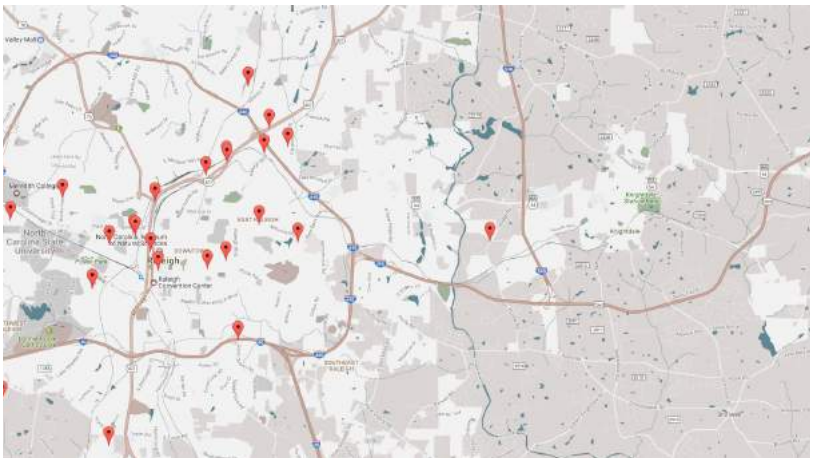
» 2017: Set initial goals for partner data collection
» 2018: Complete initial data collection, and begin next levels of data collection and uploading

RATIONALE

The Wake Network of Care is an established resource for Wake County community and social services, and is not being utilized fully for food security efforts. The site has multiple applications and strong support through Alliance Behavioral Healthcare and its site administrator. By moving more resource data to the site and encouraging use of the site by partners and community members, increased resource connectivity and access should result.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

» Coordinate all data uploads with other mapped resources such as Youth Thrive.
» Building awareness among community members about the app will be critical to success. Effective promotional strategies noted by community members include outreach through word of mouth/social networks, social media, and traditional flyers.
» Include app in any broad food security marketing and communication
» Regular updates of data will be critical to long-term impact of the app, and should be included in app strategy and development.



Screenshot of mapped food resources in Wake County from wake.nc.networkofcare.org

2 Communicate and Educate

ACTION 2.4
"GRANNY'S GARDENS" PROGRAM TO CONNECT SENIORS AND YOUTH

ACTION DESCRIPTION
Design and launch an intergenerational garden and community service program that combines physical activity, garden education, youth community service, and fresh food access.

LEAD ORGANIZATION
To be determined

EXISTING AND POTENTIAL PARTNERS
El Pueblo, Extension & Community Association, faith community, Food Ark, GOLD Coalition, Growing Youth Food Security Leaders, IFFS, NCSU Sociology, Piedmont Picnic Project, Resources for Seniors, Wake Cooperative Extension, WCHS, Wake municipalities, Youth Thrive

MEASURABLE INDICATORS
» Number of active sites
» Number of participants
» Pounds of food grown

ANTICIPATED COSTS
» Planning time for partners
» $2,000-$5,000 to install a new garden
» Annual maintenance and program costs

TIMEFRAME
» 2018: Establish a pilot garden and program
» Manage and evaluate pilot for two growing seasons before expanding

RATIONALE
Gardening allows grandparents and older adults the chance to pass on skills, cultural traditions, and knowledge. Youth bring energy and enthusiasm for learning. Intergenerational programs have proven benefits for young and old, and gardening supports physical activity and fresh food access for all participants.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS
» The program should start as a pilot, to allow best practices to emerge through a small-scale initial phase.
» Existing senior and youth programs should be included as partners, so that the garden program as a connector is the only new thing.
» Consider connecting to garden actions in affordable housing developments (Strategy 4).
» Garden sites should be carefully selected for accessibility, water and sun access, and proximity to other activity centers.

2 Communicate and Educate

ACTION 2.5
ESTABLISH A COORDINATOR FOR SCHOOL LEARNING GARDENS

ACTION DESCRIPTION

Develop a School Garden Coordinator Position to support edible learning gardens at Wake County Schools.

LEAD ORGANIZATIONS

Wake County, WCPSS

EXISTING AND POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Advocates for Health in Action (AHA), non-profit community, PTA, school administrators, Wake Cooperative Extension

MEASURABLE INDICATORS

» Creation of a School Garden Coordinator Position
» Percent of Wake County schools with learning gardens
» Number of teachers actively using learning gardens

ANTICIPATED COSTS

» Partner planning time
» Cost of School Garden Coordinator position

TIMEFRAME

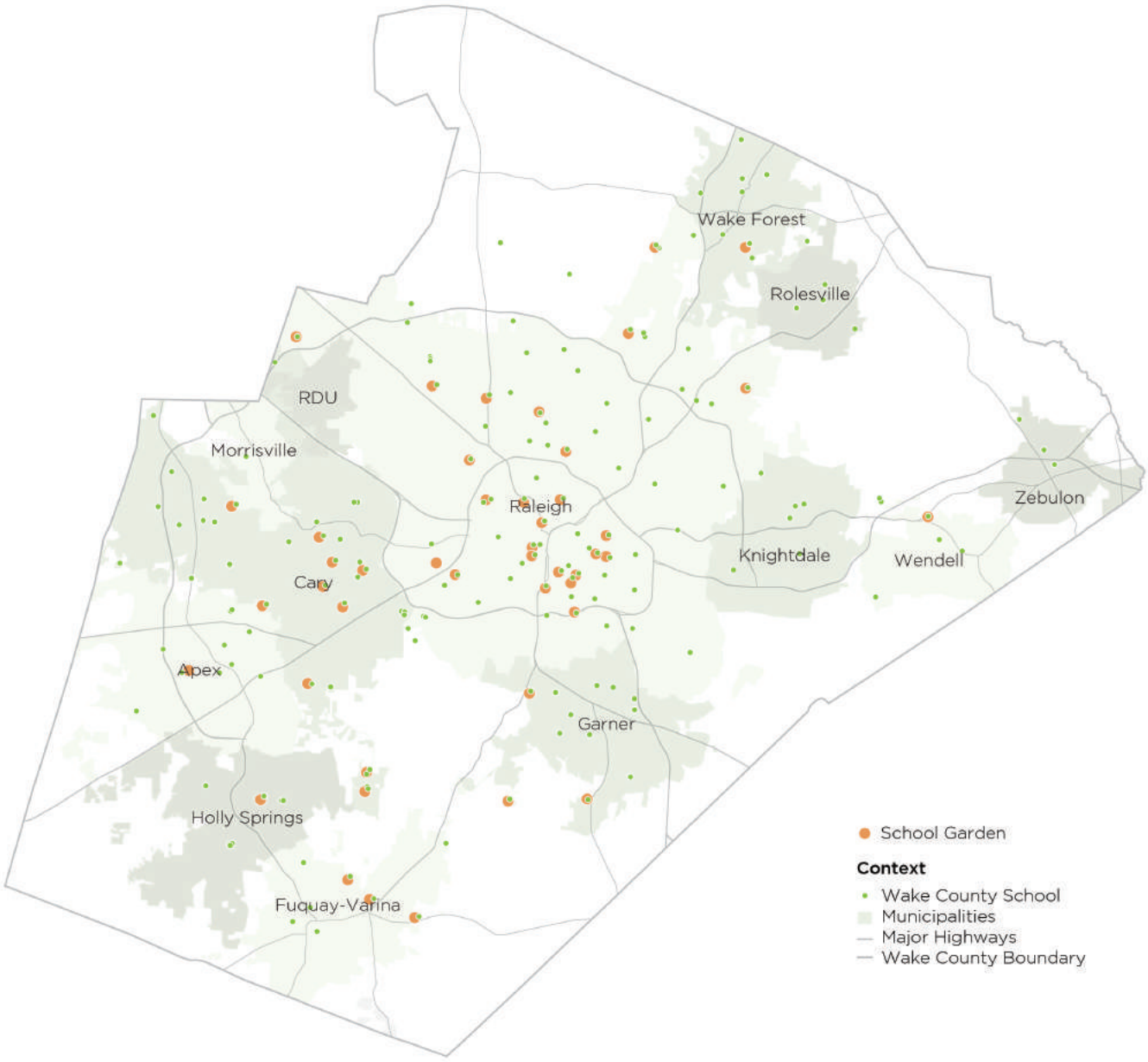
» 2017: Convene to plan the creation of Coordinator position
» 2018: Establish School Garden Coordinator position

RATIONALE

A School Garden Coordinator position will be increasingly important as the number of active school gardens increases, and as the desire to share resources, training, and data grows. Over 40 Wake County schools already have learning gardens, but dedicated coordination will be essential for schools to effectively utilize and maintain gardens to increase physical activity for students, increase food knowledge and healthy eating habits, and expose children to new fruits and vegetables. Many existing teacher resources could be coordinated to support seamless lesson plans in the garden, and many community and partner resources could be leveraged for garden installation, maintenance, and support.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

» Partners should consider a joint position for Coordinator designed to leverage all school, community, and partner resources towards creation of a system of well-maintained school learning gardens.
» With effective coordination, Wake Cooperative Extension has the capacity to assist on developing school garden volunteer mentors, providing resources and training targeted to school staff and volunteers, and building and maintaining a network of school gardens.
» Advocates for Health in Action hosts an annual “Dig In” conference with workshops on starting and managing gardens, including specifics about edible school gardens; created a school garden guide now used by WCPSS as a resource for teachers and parents wanting to start school gardens; and hosts a wide variety of community/child care/school garden resources on its website.
» Successful edible learning gardens are often collaborations between many partners, such as school administrators, teachers, staff, parents, non-profit organizations, and community members.
» Creating and coordinating a dedicated team of teachers at a school, trained in garden-based curriculum and able to act as mentors, supports long-term success of gardens.



Wake County School Gardens (count = 47)

Diverse school gardens are active all over the County, but no formal coordination or centralized support exists yet.

Source: Wake County Public School System and Advocates for Health in Action, Feb 2017

2 Communicate and Educate

ACTION 2.6
BUILD FOUNDATION FOR A SHARED COMMUNITY KITCHEN NETWORK

ACTION DESCRIPTION

Assess interest and demand for kitchen space, map potential shared kitchens in Wake County, and develop best practices for shared commercial kitchens in Wake County.

LEAD ORGANIZATION

Wake County

EXISTING AND POTENTIAL PARTNERS

CAFN, faith community, IFFS, local entrepreneurship hubs and incubators, Passage Home, Triangle Food Makers, Wake County Environmental Services

MEASURABLE INDICATOR

» Report that assesses existing kitchens, demand, best practices, and next steps

ANTICIPATED COSTS

» Cost of survey and research
» Planning time of partners

TIMEFRAME

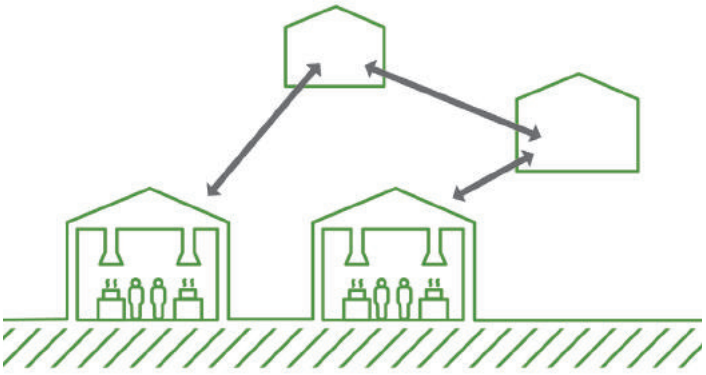
» 2018: Complete and share report by end of year

RATIONALE

Many commercial kitchens located in restaurants, community centers, non-profit organizations, or churches are only used for a portion of the week. Underutilized hours can be offered or rented to other groups needing kitchen space. Shared kitchens can support food business start-ups, non-profit meal preparation, the Summer Nutrition Program, and cooking and nutrition classes at a much lower cost than building new kitchen space.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

» A collaborative dialogue among all interested groups will offer the best chance of developing impactful next steps.
» Utilizing Wake Environmental Services' existing kitchen data as well as their understanding of health and food safety requirements will avoid duplication of effort and result in important partnerships.



A network of shared kitchens allows greater access, shared resources, and flexibility in meeting community needs.

2 Communicate and Educate

ACTION 2.7
INCLUDE FOOD SYSTEMS AND AGRICULTURE IN DIX PARK MASTER PLAN

ACTION DESCRIPTION

Include exploration of food systems research, community food projects, and agriculture in the Dix Park master planning process.

LEAD ORGANIZATION

Dix Park Advisory Committee

EXISTING AND POTENTIAL PARTNERS

CAFN, CEFS, Community Food Lab, Dix Park Executive Committee, Dix Park Master Plan Team, FBCENC, health and food system foundations, IFFS, NC Department of Agriculture, Raleigh Parks, NCSU, USDA, Wake Cooperative Extension, Wake Tech

MEASURABLE INDICATOR

» The final Dix Park Master Plan includes food and agriculture programming

ANTICIPATED COSTS

» Time spent participating in planning process

TIMEFRAME

» 2017-2019: Participate in planning

RATIONALE

Dix Park's agricultural history, visibility, large size, proximity to the NC State Farmers Market, and access to regional transportation systems make it an exciting location for a regional agriculture and food center. Significant food and agriculture projects will attract diverse new partners and resources, create the foundation for wellness initiatives, engage and energize diverse communities, and demonstrate sustainable technologies and landscapes.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

» Dialogue should begin immediately to identify how food partners can have a place at the planning table.
» Flexibility is most important: food partners should express ideas about outcomes and food security vision, and allow these to be integrated into the park's design process and overall mix of elements, instead of advocating for a fixed set of spaces or activities.
» Ideas should be ambitious and innovative. This is the time to think big.
» Food solutions in the Master Plan should take opportunities to address sustainable food security for surrounding communities, Raleigh, Wake County, and the region.



Dorothea Dix Park

Source: http://www.newsobserver.com/entertainment/arts-culture/article56085665.html

2 Communicate and Educate

ACTION 2.8
MIXED MEDIA MARKETING CAMPAIGN WITH EMPHASIS ON SENIORS' NEEDS

ACTION DESCRIPTION

Establish a flexible marketing campaign to raise awareness, increase utilization of services, and motivate residents to help solve food security problems.

LEAD ORGANIZATION

To be determined

EXISTING AND POTENTIAL PARTNERS

CAFN Communications Circle, Meals on Wheels, Resources for Seniors, Wake Cooperative Extension, Wake County Communications Office, WCHS

MEASURABLE INDICATOR

» To be determined based on campaign design

ANTICIPATED COSTS

» To be determined based on campaign design

TIMEFRAME

» 2017: Create brand by end of year
» 2018: Begin active marketing by start of year

RATIONALE

The issues of food insecurity are not widely known in Wake County, yet many organizations, local government agencies, and community members can be change makers towards food access for all. Bringing attention to this multi-faceted problem will open new opportunities for partnerships, investments, and innovation. Increasing visibility of new and existing programs will increase their reach and impact, and build greater return on investment.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

» Leverage the marketing and communication resources of Wake County.
» Create a single campaign brand and message that can be used for a variety of different initiatives or goals over time, and through multiple media channels.
» Future Wake County Food Security Coordinator should help direct this campaign.

2 Communicate and Educate

ACTION 2.9
FOOD SECURITY MEDICAL INTAKE QUESTIONS

ACTION DESCRIPTION
Add a standard list of food security related questions to medical intake forms. Collect, centralize, and use data to drive policy decisions and resource development.

CONVENING ORGANIZATION *
WCHS

EXISTING AND POTENTIAL PARTNERS
Alliance Medical Ministry, local hospitals, United Health Care, United Way, Wake County Medical Society Community Health Foundation

MEASURABLE INDICATOR
» Number of clinics collecting standard food security data on questionnaires

ANTICIPATED COSTS
» Staff time at clinics to collect and upload data from questions
» Staff time for central partner to analyze and utilize data

TIMEFRAME
» 2017: Convene partners to develop approach, list of questions, and strategy for collecting and using data
» 2020: The questions will be in place, and data will be sent to a central point for analysis

RATIONALE
Medical intake forms provide targeted statistical access to the population of Wake County, and this approach can help develop accurate data on food security needs across the County. Partners are already piloting these questions, and multiple organizations are interested in further developing this model.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS
» Include a state-level partner to build opportunity for replication to other counties.
» Explore County resources and collaborations, looking for opportunities to align existing policy initiatives with new data collection and management.
» Consider questions that trigger actions such as connecting food insecure seniors to meal delivery services or fresh food prescription programs.

* The role of convening organizations is to pull partners together, facilitate a planning conversation, and organize partners to identify and take on next steps. In the Action Resource section of this Plan, a sample convener's tool is provided to get things going.

STRATEGY 1 | STRATEGY 2 | STRATEGY 3 | STRATEGY 4 | STRATEGY 5

Develop Sustainable Food Supply

OBJECTIVE	INDICATOR
Strengthen food production capacity of Wake County farms and communities, and make efficient use of all available food	**County-Based Food Supply:** The amount of food grown and distributed in Wake County and the amount of food recovered and distributed in Wake County.

FAST START ACTIONS

3.1 Community gardens at food bank and food pantry sites

3.2 Education programs around food donation (liability, food safety, tax incentives, etc.)

LONGER GROWING ACTIONS

3.3 Community garden programs in all municipalities

3.4 Local food hub

3.5 Wake County incubates new farmers by making farmland accessible

3.6 Client choice at food pantries

3.7 Local tax incentives for gardens and gardeners

3.8 County compost program

3.9 Urban agriculture in affordable or senior housing developments

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS*

3.10 Online app to facilitate food recovery

3.11 Expand home gardening

3.12 Increase awareness of climate resilient agriculture

3.13 Incorporate compost into County farms' soil management practices

3.14 Coordinated food recovery between school system and local entities redistributed to areas of food insecurity (i.e. Greensboro Out of the Garden Project)

*NOTE: The "Other Recommendations" are listed here for reference to spark potential future efforts — they have not been developed in detail elsewhere in the Plan.

3 Develop Sustainable Food Supply

ACTION 3.1
COMMUNITY GARDENS AT FOOD BANK AND FOOD PANTRY SITES

ACTION DESCRIPTION
Establish community gardens at food distribution sites to grow fresh food directly for food recipients.

LEAD ORGANIZATIONS
FBCENC, IFFS

EXISTING AND POTENTIAL PARTNERS
Advocates for Health in Action, CAFN Food Access Circle, Extension Master Gardener Volunteers, faith community, municipal community garden programs, Plant A Row For the Hungry, Wake Cooperative Extension, WCHS

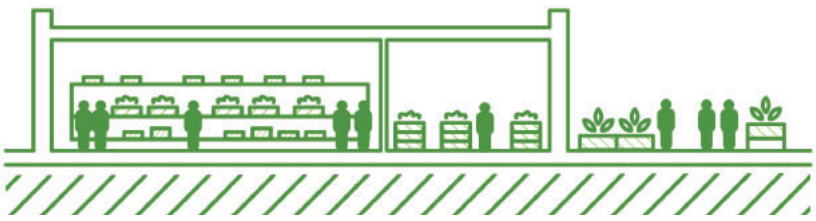
MEASURABLE INDICATORS
» Number of new community gardens at food distribution sites
» Pounds of food grown and distributed
» Number of volunteers in community gardens

ANTICIPATED COSTS
» Planning and installation time, $1,000 - $5,000 to install a garden
» Staff or volunteer time for ongoing coordination

TIMEFRAME
» 2018: Establish two new community gardens
» 2020: Establish two additional community gardens

RATIONALE
On-site community gardens at food banks and pantries can provide an additional source of healthy, local produce to include in client shares. These community gardens can also provide an opportunity to gather participants around a specific organizational mission, provide nutrition or gardening education, beautify a community space, and/or teach job skills.[3] Costs for sourcing and transporting produce to these sites would be reduced.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS
» It should be noted that these community gardens will provide a small proportion of the typical food pantry's annual need, and that the real benefits are in fresh food access and community-building.
» A successful initiative will include community outreach, small initial grants, and access to technical assistance.
» Locate gardens in visible places to raise awareness and increase participation.
» Garden sites should be relatively flat, have water access and good sunlight.
» Develop and share tools to foster self-sustaining and self-governing gardens.
» There are many different models, sizes, and shapes of community gardens. Individual approaches and solutions should be encouraged, including more technically-advanced hydroponics or vertical growing systems.



3 https://communitygarden.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/CGMgtmtToolkit.pdf

3 Develop Sustainable Food Supply

ACTION 3.2
EDUCATION PROGRAM AROUND FOOD DONATION (LIABILITY, FOOD SAFETY, TAX INCENTIVES, ETC.)

ACTION DESCRIPTION

Establish program to provide clarity for donor businesses and institutions, and for recipient organizations, on regulatory and logistical avenues for food donation in Wake County.

LEAD ORGANIZATIONS

FBCENC, IFFS, Wake County Environmental Health

EXISTING AND POTENTIAL PARTNERS

CAFN, NCDEQ, NCSU Food Safety, Wake County, Wake County Environmental Health

MEASURABLE INDICATOR

» Pounds of food recovered for Wake County distribution

ANTICIPATED COSTS

» Planning time of partners
» Cost of producing an education and training guide

TIMEFRAME

» 2018: Create an education and training guide by Spring
» 2018: Begin outreach and education by Summer

RATIONALE

According to reFED.com, the US spends $218 billion a year growing, processing, transporting, and disposing of food that is never eaten. Much of this wasted food, here in Wake County, could be rescued and steered to people in need, making Wake County's food system and economic system more resilient. Many food businesses often face the problem of excess food without clear answers on how to prevent food waste. Education will empower businesses to establish food donation practices to create a cost-effective, decentralized food rescue movement. A guide to be shared with food businesses that standardizes documentation, procedures, and best practices will create a common donation framework for donors and recipients.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

» Recipient organizations for donated food must be part of the program and in position to scale up as donations grow.
» Food donation training of food business employees may be part of standard employee onboarding to avoid the challenge posed by high turnover rates.
» Government can provide clarity on the Good Samaritan Act as part of training or the guide.
» Donation education and training should include donors, recipients, and local health inspectors.
» Harvard Food Law and Policy Clinic produces material to support much of this action.

3 Develop Sustainable Food Supply

ACTION 3.3
COMMUNITY GARDEN PROGRAMS IN ALL MUNICIPALITIES

ACTION DESCRIPTION
Each municipality establishes a policy to promote community gardening and support collection and sharing of certain garden data.

LEAD ORGANIZATIONS
Wake Cooperative Extension, Wake municipalities

EXISTING AND POTENTIAL PARTNERS
Advocates for Health in Action, CAFN, faith community, NC Community Garden Partners, Wake County Soil and Water Conservation District, WCHS Regional Networks

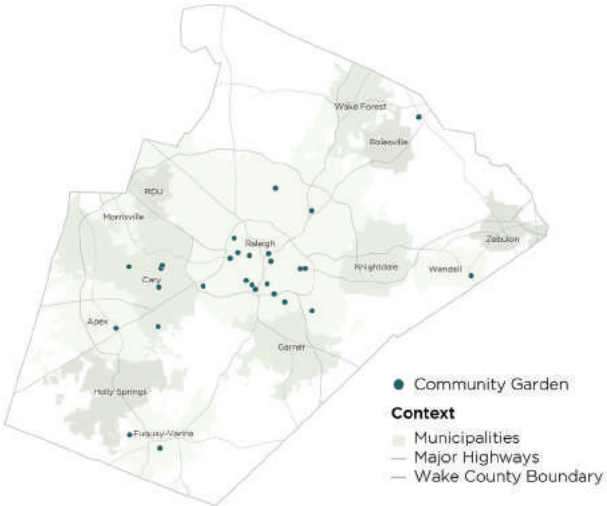
MEASURABLE INDICATORS
» Number of community gardens
» Pounds of food grown and distributed in Wake County

ANTICIPATED COSTS
» Time spent advocating for municipal action
» Costs for each program will vary based on program design

TIMEFRAME
» 2017: Each municipality explores establishing a community garden policy by end of year
» 2018: All engaged municipalities launch a community garden promotion program by end of year

RATIONALE
Community gardening has been shown to contribute a wide range of health, civic, economic, and food access benefits for its members and for the broader community. There are many types of successful community gardens and many types of municipal support. By encouraging each municipality to develop a community garden policy that best meets its needs, Wake County as a whole will benefit by having more community gardens and gardeners, and each municipality will be able to find its own way to support the effort.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS
» Municipal programs can promote community gardens in multiple ways, from offering land or services to a garden organization, to operating gardens at parks, or offering garden education.
» Municipal programs can be a wide range of sizes, from a single garden to a large system of gardens.
» A garden program should have a single point of contact, an easy-to-find web page, and a clear set of promotional policies that actively support new and existing community gardens in the municipality.
» County garden planners should consider a target per capita number of community gardens.



Wake County Community Gardens (count = 32)

Source: Advocates for Health in Action, Nov 2016

3 Develop Sustainable Food Supply

ACTION 3.4
LOCAL FOOD HUB

ACTION DESCRIPTION
Launch a new local food aggregation and distribution center (food hub) to connect small and medium-sized local farms to institutions, restaurants, and other distributors.

LEAD ORGANIZATION
To be determined

EXISTING AND POTENTIAL PARTNERS
CAFN Farm Advocacy Circle, community development corporations, Farm Bureau, local health care providers, Wake Cooperative Extension, Wake County Economic Development, Wake County Soil and Water Conservation District, Wake Smart Start Farm to Childcare Program

MEASURABLE INDICATORS
» Launch of food hub (if feasibility is demonstrated)
» Pounds of food grown and distributed in Wake County

ANTICIPATED COSTS
» Feasibility study
» Project planning and project development
» Once operational, the food hub should be designed to be financially self-sustaining within 2-3 years.

TIMEFRAME
» 2017: County leaders commit to exploring food hub feasibility
» 2018: Feasibility study complete
» 2019-2020: Open food hub if study recommends moving ahead

RATIONALE
Residents of Wake County spend $151 million on food each week.[4] Currently, less than 0.1% of those food dollars are spent directly on Wake County produce.[5] A new food hub could close this dramatic gap by opening Wake County market opportunities for local farms, facilitating new food business start-ups, and leveraging the massive Wake County food spending to support local economic development. Expertise, interest, and markets exist within the County for a new food hub, as well as support for local food system development in Raleigh's Comprehensive Plan. Well-documented food hub models and best practices are available, shared through the National Good Food Network.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS
» Begin with a feasibility study to identify agricultural areas ready for growth in the County and Region, market development needed to build farm profitability, and costs needed to establish a food hub.
» Look to existing local food sourcing programs such as Farm to Childcare and Farm to School for initial food purchasing volume.
» Study alternative models such as a shared use food hub or a cross-docking facility to allow a simpler project development that avoids creation of a new County-owned food hub operator enterprise .
» Consider combining new food hub in single facility or economic cluster with shared food processing facility, commissary kitchen space, meal preparation and delivery, or other local food and economic development infrastructure.



Packing Food at Bull City Cool, Durham

4 http://www.gallup.com/poll/156416/americans-spend-151-week-food-high-income-180.aspx
5 https://cefs.ncsu.edu/resources/wake-county/

3 Develop Sustainable Food Supply

ACTION 3.5
WAKE COUNTY INCUBATES NEW FARMERS BY MAKING FARMLAND ACCESSIBLE

ACTION DESCRIPTION
Wake County begins new farmer support efforts by identifying farmland to make available for new or emerging small-scale farmers interested in growing food for Wake County markets.

LEAD ORGANIZATION
Wake County

EXISTING AND POTENTIAL PARTNERS
Advocates for Health in Action, CAFN Farm Advocacy Circle, City of Oaks Foundation, CFSA, Good Hope Farm in Cary, Jamie Kirk Hahn Foundation, local farm community, local landowners, Triangle Land Conservancy, Wake Cooperative Extension, Wake Soil and Water Conservation District, Wake Tech

MEASURABLE INDICATORS
» Number of farmers matched to land in this program
» Number of farms in this program
» Number of acres of farmland in production for Wake County markets

ANTICIPATED COSTS
» Staff time in planning, structuring of agreements, and recruiting farmers
» Capital costs for any land upfits to support farming
» Ongoing program coordination

TIMEFRAME
» 2019: Place first farmers on land by Spring

RATIONALE
As the county population grows and pressure on open space increases, Wake County is in danger of losing farmland, farmers, and the local economic benefit brought by local food production. Recent plans and studies describe the need for more farmland protection and local food market development in Wake County (including Wake Agricultural Economic Development Plan, Triangle Farms for Food Plan, City of Raleigh Comprehensive Plan). A land matching program fills a critical step in supporting (or incubating) new farmers: access to affordable land for a farm business.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS
» Project should be explored as a public-private collaboration to leverage diverse resources.
» Land could be County-owned, privately held in conservation easement, or individually owned.
» Other incubator farm activities such as mentorship, training resources, or shared equipment should be explored to complement land program.
» This action may take the form of a simple land matching program for new farmers, in which case it should be linked to a formal incubator farm program in Wake County.

3 Develop Sustainable Food Supply

ACTION 3.6
CLIENT CHOICE AT FOOD PANTRIES

ACTION DESCRIPTION

Existing food pantries shift to a client choice model where clients choose items based on their own dietary and health needs, preferences, abilities, and circumstances rather than being given a pre-packed box of food.

LEAD ORGANIZATIONS

FBCENC, IFFS

EXISTING AND POTENTIAL PARTNERS

All food pantries, local food pantries including Dorcas Ministry and Urban Ministry as models, WCHS

MEASURABLE INDICATORS

» Number of client choice food pantries
» Client satisfaction with pantry shopping experience

ANTICIPATED COSTS

» Staff/volunteer time for reorganizing food pantry
» Potential increase in food sourcing time for pantry to keep diverse stock on hand

TIMEFRAME

» 2017: Client Choice is shared as best practice with all FBCENC and IFFS partners
» 2019: Three food pantries convert to client choice operations, for a total of five in Wake County

RATIONALE

Client choice pantries can prevent 50% of food waste and, therefore, extend the capacity of the food bank and pantry system.[6] Some client choice models have been shown to reduce pantry operating costs. Additionally, when clients are able to select their own food, they experience a greater sense of dignity and can practice food budgeting skills.[7]

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

» Existing pantries with limited capacity may face significant barriers in planning for this shift in approach. Support and technical assistance will be needed to encourage pantries in this direction.
» Grants may be needed to support transitions for smaller pantries.
» Client choice pantries can be managed in several different ways depending on pantry capacity (physical space, staffing, time, and types of food distributed).[8,9]
» Local food banks may explore various incentives or targets for partner food pantries in implementing client choice.

6 https://www.endhungerinamerica.org/publications/charity-food-programs-that-can-end-hunger-in-america/chapter-nine-reduce-waste-and-humiliation-let-clients-assemble-their-own-food-boxes/
7 http://site.foodshare.org/site/DocServer/Making_the_Switch_to_Client_Choice.pdf?docID=6081
8 https://www.endhungerinamerica.org/publications/charity-food-programs-that-can-end-hunger-in-america/chapter-nine-reduce-waste-and-humiliation-let-clients-assemble-their-own-food-boxes/
9 http://site.foodshare.org/site/DocServer/Making_the_Switch_to_Client_Choice.pdf?docID=6081

3 Develop Sustainable Food Supply

ACTION 3.7
LOCAL TAX INCENTIVES FOR GARDENS AND GARDENERS

ACTION DESCRIPTION
Host a policy discussion and develop recommendations for local tax or other incentives for home and community gardens.

CONVENING ORGANIZATION *
CAFN

EXISTING AND POTENTIAL PARTNERS
Community organizations, Fertile Ground Food Cooperative, local gardening organizations, local government/policy makers, municipalities, Triangle Area Gardeners and Homesteaders MeetUp group

MEASURABLE INDICATORS
» Number of partners gathered for discussion of potential for incentives
» Development of goals and action steps towards garden incentives

ANTICIPATED COSTS
» Planning time for partners
» Cost of program or action steps to be determined

TIMEFRAME
» 2017: Host policy discussion
» 2019: Implement garden incentive policy

RATIONALE
Effective incentives for home and community gardening will encourage an increase in the number of gardens and gardeners in Wake County. Gardens are shown to increase community engagement, improve fresh food access and consumption, and beautify community spaces. Gardens in many forms also support local food systems as described in the City of Raleigh Comprehensive Plan.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS
» Home gardening may be incentivized through sales or income tax breaks.[10] Community gardens and urban agriculture may be incentivized through property tax breaks or providing public land or vacant lots for food production.[11,12]
» Consider adding stipulations that landowners must commit to using the land for a food growing purpose for a set period of time[13]
» Consider allowing community members without a yard or other space to grow food to deduct the rental fee for a community garden plot in their income taxes[14]
» "Garden" may need to be redefined to include non-traditional food growing methods such as container gardening, hydroponics, or other methods.

* The role of convening organizations is to pull partners together, facilitate a planning conversation, and organize partners to identify and take on next steps. In the Action Resource section of this Plan, a sample convener's tool is provided to get things going.

10 http://www.alternet.org/story/81769/plant_a_garden%2C_get_a_tax_break
11 http://www.nbcsandiego.com/news/local/Tax-Incentives-for-Community-Gardens--370590351.html
12 http://www.ncsl.org/research/agriculture-and-rural-development/urban-agriculture-state-legislation.aspx
13 http://www.nbcsandiego.com/news/local/Tax-Incentives-for-Community-Gardens--370590351.html
14 http://www.alternet.org/story/81769/plant_a_garden%2C_get_a_tax_break

3 Develop Sustainable Food Supply

ACTION 3.8
COUNTY COMPOST PROGRAM

ACTION DESCRIPTION

Develop a county compost program that scales up existing infrastructure to take incremental steps towards a comprehensive organics collection and compost program.

CONVENING ORGANIZATION *

CAFN Food Recovery Circle

EXISTING AND POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Brooks Contractor, CompostNow, FoodFWD, large food waste generators, municipalities in Wake, McGill Compost, NC Composting Council, NCDEQ, Wake County Solid Waste

MEASURABLE INDICATORS

» Pounds of food waste composted
» Development of incremental plan that leads towards County-wide organic waste collection

ANTICIPATED COSTS

» Planning time for partners
» Incremental increases in collection fees for food waste producers

TIMEFRAME

» 2018: County program to scale up commercial food waste collection begins
» 2019: Plan developed for County-wide organic waste collection
» 2020: Municipal pilot of curbside organic waste collection in at least one municipality

RATIONALE

Wake County produces 107,000 tons of food waste per year. This waste is a drag on our food economy, shortens the life of landfills, and contributes to greenhouse gas emissions. By closing the loop and capturing food waste to create compost, jobs can be created at a rate of 1 per 550 tons per year, according to reFED.com. Existing infrastructure can be utilized to quickly scale up compost collection. Existing facilities are ready to accept significantly more material from Wake County. Local expertise is capable of supporting a smart, incremental program, and this action also supports Comprehensive Plan policy from the City of Raleigh.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

» Large companies are already moving towards food waste reduction goals, and a Wake County program should leverage this momentum.
» First steps should continue the food waste reduction efforts of large commercial food waste generators as a way to quickly ramp up collection and begin to build economies of scale.
» Consider incentivizing large scale waste producers as early adopters, using grants or cost share programs.
» Geographic clusters of compost collection routes are most efficient - target dense areas of food waste generators.
» Residential food waste collection should occur at the municipal level, perhaps as a pilot program.
» Consider adopting the EPA/USDA targets for a 50% food waste reduction by 2030.

* The role of convening organizations is to pull partners together, facilitate a planning conversation, and organize partners to identify and take on next steps. In the Action Resource section of this Plan, a sample convener's tool is provided to get things going.

3 Develop Sustainable Food Supply

ACTION 3.9
URBAN AGRICULTURE IN AFFORDABLE OR SENIOR HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS

ACTION DESCRIPTION

Revise Wake County's affordable housing tax credit scoring criteria for 2018 to include additional bonus points for developments that include community gardens, home gardens, or market gardens. Once enacted, promote this change to local housing developers and leaders, and advocate for gardens and diverse edible landscapes in existing housing developments.

CONVENING ORGANIZATION *

CAFN Regulatory Policy Circle

EXISTING AND POTENTIAL PARTNERS

County leaders, FBCENC, housing residents, IFFS, local community organizations, local horticultural students, local housing authorities, Wake Cooperative Extension, WCHS

MEASURABLE INDICATORS

» Change to Wake County's affordable housing tax credit scoring criteria
» Number of edible food growing spaces in affordable or senior housing developments

ANTICIPATED COSTS

» Planning time
» Staff time in developing new criteria language
» Promotional and outreach materials, outreach time by partners
» Variable installation costs

TIMEFRAME

» 2017: Scoring criteria change to be made for 2018 RFP release
» 2018: Begin promoting edible projects to housing community

RATIONALE

Locating food growing and harvesting opportunities in affordable or senior housing developments can add important fresh food sources to the diets of those on fixed incomes, and provide healthful physical exercise and social interactions that strengthen community and quality of life. Edible gardens and landscaping can be seamlessly integrated into new housing developments during the planning phase and implemented as the community takes shape. These edible spaces can also be adapted to suit nearly any existing housing development and should be encouraged as a community amenity. Market gardens are small commercial growing spaces that can add income opportunities for micro-entrepreneurs.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

» Introduce idea of changing scoring criteria to a County leader who can act as champion and partner in exploring this change.
» Language in the scoring criteria change can be developed using partners as resources.
» A variety of gardens should be promoted including home gardens, community gardens, and small-scale commercial growing called market gardens.
» Edible landscaping, where edible trees and shrubs are incorporated into a traditional landscape, should be encouraged in existing developments to build community engagement, a seasonal fresh fruit source, and diverse insect and bird habitat.
» Student and other volunteer groups can provide assistance in designing and installing gardens and edible landscapes.
» Garden and landscape maintenance and operational plans should be considered before installation.

* The role of convening organizations is to pull partners together, facilitate a planning conversation, and organize partners to identify and take on next steps. In the Action Resource section of this Plan, a sample convener's tool is provided to get things going.


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STRATEGY 1 | STRATEGY 2 | STRATEGY 3 | **STRATEGY 4** | STRATEGY 5

Build Economic Opportunity

OBJECTIVE	INDICATOR
All Wake County residents have financial resources to provide food for themselves and their families	**Food Job Index:** A single number to indicate the health of food system employment and wages in Wake County and related to a measure of livability such as the living wage.

FAST START ACTIONS

4.1 Build resources and champions for grocery cooperatives

4.2 Reduce barriers to food assistance application process

LONGER GROWING ACTIONS

4.3 Job training in urban agriculture

4.4 More options for SNAP redemption

4.5 Education programs on food and household budgeting

4.6 Foodservice job training and placement

4.7 Voluntary living wage certification for businesses

4.8 Shared food processing center

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

4.9 Local food purchasing targets for area government and schools

4.10 Understanding the whole costs of living for Wake County residents

4.11 County-wide living wage ordinance

4.12 For-profit model of senior meal delivery (align with Meals on Wheels)

4.13 Community kitchens in affordable and transitional housing development

*NOTE: The "Other Recommendations" are listed here for reference to spark potential future efforts — they have not been developed in detail elsewhere in the Plan.

4 Build Economic Opportunity

ACTION 4.1
BUILD RESOURCES AND CHAMPIONS FOR GROCERY COOPERATIVES

ACTION DESCRIPTION

Gather community partners, public resources, and private sponsorships around grocery cooperatives in Wake County, including the emerging Fertile Ground Food Cooperative of Southeast Raleigh.

LEAD ORGANIZATION

Fertile Ground Food Cooperative

EXISTING AND POTENTIAL PARTNERS

A. Philip Randolph Food Pantry, CAFN, Carolina Common Enterprise, City of Raleigh, community members, Fund for Democratic Communities, Grocers on Wheels, local business community, Southeast Raleigh Assembly, Vital Link Community Center, Wake County, Wake Cooperative Extension, WCHS

MEASURABLE INDICATORS

» Number of co-op members
» Capital raised towards store development

ANTICIPATED COSTS

» Time spent by leaders and partners to organize around grocery cooperatives
» Anticipated Fertile Ground capital costs

TIMEFRAME

» 2017: Partner dialogue and collaboration increases around Fertile Ground
» 2020: Fertile Ground opens

RATIONALE

Grocery cooperatives represent an extraordinary opportunity to build resilient communities through economic and civic engagement. They support local economic development, healthy food access, sense of place, and community vitality. Cooperative groceries often become community hubs, incorporate shared kitchens or food hubs, and spur development of spin-off local food enterprises. Cooperative businesses in general should be encouraged, and Fertile Ground is in a unique phase of development where new resources will have significant impact and far faster returns than developing new ventures.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

» Partner networks can contribute by helping recruit co-op members or by contributing to capital fundraising.
» Local governments should work with Fertile Ground to recognize and support the potential community and County-wide economic, social, and health impacts of locating a grocery cooperative in Southeast Raleigh.
» Renaissance Community Cooperative of Greensboro offers a timely case study for comparison.



Example of a Cooperative Grocery

4 Build Economic Opportunity

ACTION 4.2
REDUCE BARRIERS TO FOOD ASSISTANCE APPLICATION PROCESS

ACTION DESCRIPTION
Develop outreach plan including adding locations directly in communities where seniors, families, non-English speakers and others can easily apply for food and social benefit programs.

LEAD ORGANIZATION
WCHS

EXISTING AND POTENTIAL PARTNERS
Community organizations, FBCENC and other hunger relief organizations, social service agencies

MEASURABLE INDICATORS
» Percent of people eligible for SNAP, WIC, and other food assistance programs enrolled
» Amount of federal food dollars captured by Wake County

ANTICIPATED COSTS
» Costs for outreach strategies although State SNAP agencies can receive 50% reimbursement from the Federal Government for administrative costs of outreach projects[17]

TIMEFRAME
» 2017: Convene partners to develop outreach plan
» 2020: Implement additional best practice outreach strategies

RATIONALE
Currently, community members can apply for food assistance (SNAP, formerly called food stamps) online through NC ePass, by mail, or in person at four WCHS locations.[15] Additional access points directly in communities will reduce barriers to the food assistance application process, resulting in more federal spending brought to Wake County to feed people. Only 78% of eligible Wake residents are currently enrolled in SNAP (formerly called food stamps), suggesting that over $50 million in SNAP spending is missed annually that could fight food insecurity and add to the local food economy. Additionally, children in SNAP-enrolled families are automatically eligible for free and reduced price school lunch.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS
» Focus group participants noted that the SNAP verification process is lengthy and that more education is needed to improve understanding of qualification requirements. Neighborhood locations such as libraries and community centers would provide easier access for enrollment.
» Immigrants, older adults, and the working poor are under-enrolled in SNAP and may not be aware that they are eligible, particularly due to their citizenship or employment status.
» Outreach is a best practice for improving food assistance enrollment. Strategies include offering extended office hours, childcare, and shorter applications, reducing waiting times and the need for repeat visits to the SNAP office, taking applications at locations such as food banks or grocery stores, and having community groups pre-screen applicants.[16]

15 http://www.wakegov.com/humanservices/social/food/Pages/default.aspx
16 https://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/sites/default/files/resources/Community%20Partner%20Outreach%20Toolkit%20Complete.pdf
17 https://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/sites/default/files/resources/Community%20Partner%20Outreach%20Toolkit%20Complete.pdf

4 Build Economic Opportunity

ACTION 4.3
JOB TRAINING IN URBAN AGRICULTURE

ACTION DESCRIPTION
Develop task force and action plan to share best practices, coordinate current urban agriculture job training programs across Wake County, and expand urban agriculture job training opportunities.

CONVENING ORGANIZATION *
CAFN Farm Advocacy Circle

EXISTING AND POTENTIAL PARTNERS
4-H, Capital Area Workforce Development/NC Works, CFSA, Future Farmers of America, IFFS, Justice Served NC, Inc., LaunchRALEIGH, local urban agriculture operators, local youth organizations, Longview High School Agriculture Program, Passage Home, Southeast Raleigh Assembly, Urban Ag Collective, Wake Cooperative Extension, Wake County Soil and Water Conservation District, Wake Tech

MEASURABLE INDICATORS
» Creation of action plan to align efforts around urban agriculture job training
» Number of people engaged in urban agriculture job training programs

ANTICIPATED COSTS
» Planning time for partners

TIMEFRAME
» 2018: Develop task force
» End of 2018: Create action plan by end of 2018

RATIONALE
Several local urban agriculture projects and training opportunities exist, but are not well coordinated. Urban agriculture can create employment and skill-building opportunities directly in low resource communities, generate income for participants, and provide a local food source for the community.[18] In the longer term, job training in urban agriculture can contribute to alleviating poverty, ensuring food security, and building the green economy. Additionally, urban agriculture job training supports policy goals in the City of Raleigh Comprehensive Plan.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS
» Urban agriculture job training programs may include training about land acquisition, food production and distribution, environmental stewardship, business management, and marketing.[19]
» Consider targeting specific vulnerable populations for job training programs such as ex-offenders and veterans.
» Consider providing participants with access to land and equipment, such as through an incubator or training farm.



The CropBox vertical growing system

* The role of convening organizations is to pull partners together, facilitate a planning conversation, and organize partners to identify and take on next steps. In the Action Resource section of this Plan, a sample convener's tool is provided to get things going.

18 http://foodshuttle.org/we-teach/agriculture-training-programs/
19 https://www.carolinafarmstewards.org/farmer-in-training-program/

4 Build Economic Opportunity

ACTION 4.4
MORE OPTIONS FOR SNAP REDEMPTION

ACTION DESCRIPTION
Plan and launch additional redemption options for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits.

LEAD ORGANIZATION
WCHS

EXISTING AND POTENTIAL PARTNERS
Food producers/distributors (CSAs, farmers' markets, online grocers, etc.)

MEASURABLE INDICATORS
» Number of SNAP redemption sites available in Wake County
» SNAP dollars redeemed

ANTICIPATED COSTS
» Cost of point-of-sale systems at new SNAP/EBT redemption sites
» Costs for developing new guidance and promotional materials

TIMEFRAME
» 2020: Add two additional SNAP redemption options

RATIONALE
In FY2017, 81% of SNAP benefits in the United States were redeemed at supermarkets and superstores.[20] Offering additional options for SNAP redemption such as the use of benefits for CSAs, home delivery, prepared foods, online grocers, and farmers' markets may reduce food access barriers for recipients and help recipients to make more informed and cost efficient purchases. Even though most Wake County residents visit a grocery store weekly, alternative SNAP redemption options may steer greater resources to local farmers, and provide more convenient purchase options for busy, working poor families.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS
» New toolkits/guidance would need to be developed to explain new redemption options to recipients and participating agencies.
» Methods for tracking SNAP usage and compliance may need to be modified/added.
» Consider results and lessons learned from USDA Food and Nutrition Service's online SNAP redemption pilot[21]
» Usage and/or the benefits of different redemption options may vary across different communities.

20 https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/snap/2016-SNAP-Retailer-Management-Year-End-Summary.pdf
21 http://www.fmi.org/blog/view/fmi-blog/2016/08/18/online-redemption-of-snap-benefits-to-be-piloted

4 Build Economic Opportunity

ACTION 4.5
EDUCATION PROGRAMS ON FOOD AND HOUSEHOLD BUDGETING

ACTION DESCRIPTION
Increase participation in education programs offered across Wake County about food and household budgeting.

LEAD ORGANIZATION
Wake Cooperative Extension - Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) and The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Education (SNAP-Ed)

EXISTING AND POTENTIAL PARTNERS
4-H, Alice Aycock Poe Center, faith community, Faithful Families Program, FBCENC, food pantries, Growing Food Security Leaders, Habitat for Humanity, IFFS (Cooking Matters), NCDHHS, NC Justice Center, Passage Home, Triangle Family Services, WCHS, Wake Tech

MEASURABLE INDICATORS
» Number of food and household budgeting education classes offered across Wake County
» Number of participants in food and household budgeting education programs
» Pre and post surveys of knowledge gained by participants

ANTICIPATED COSTS
» Coordination costs for expanded programs
» Development and printing of educational materials

RATIONALE
Education programs related to food and household budgeting such as Cooking Matters and SNAP-Ed help families to maximize their resources, select nutritious foods, and learn cooking skills - all factors that drive food security. Developing a food budget and planning meals has been shown to help low-income families prepare more nutritious meals, and ultimately to address hunger.[22]

KEY CONSIDERATIONS
» Once current programs are assessed, work with new partners at the table to identify next steps for collaborative expansion.
» Convenient locations for participants should be considered, including public libraries, Park and Recreation facilities, faith-based organizations, and regional centers.
» Transportation may be a challenge; shuttle service could be helpful.
» Connect broader financial literacy resources where possible, to help participants build greater household financial stability. See http://cfed.org/policy/policy_issues/ for financial areas to consider.

TIMEFRAME
» 2017: Convene partners to assess current programs and classes offered across the County
» 2018: Develop a plan and targets for expansion

22 https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/snap/2016-SNAP-Retailer-Management-Year-End-Summary.pdf

4 Build Economic Opportunity

ACTION 4.6
FOODSERVICE JOB TRAINING AND PLACEMENT

ACTION DESCRIPTION
Assess and coordinate existing foodservice and culinary training programs with employment focused non-profits, at-risk populations, and large foodservice employers to increase qualified foodservice job placements.

LEAD ORGANIZATION
To be determined

EXISTING AND POTENTIAL PARTNERS
Capital Area Workforce Board, Community non-profits, Fertile Ground Food Cooperative, IFFS, NC Justice Center, Raleigh Chamber of Commerce, StepUp Ministry, Wake Tech

MEASURABLE INDICATORS
» Asset map and database of foodservice related job training and placement resources in Wake County
» Increased number of foodservice job placements

ANTICIPATED COSTS
» Staff time to coordinate asset map and database
» Staff time for planning meetings

TIMEFRAME
» 2017: Convene partners
» 2018: Develop asset map and database of resources
» 2018: Set policy targets and supporting actions

RATIONALE
Many foodservice employment positions can be performed by individuals without advanced degrees or specialized training, making foodservice an important avenue for veterans, re-entering ex-offenders, and many others with employment challenges. With nearly 10% of Wake County's workforce already engaged in food-related jobs, this is a large sector that could be leveraged to employ many of Wake County's vulnerable residents, if support systems and key training programs could scale up and coordinate to increase opportunities.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS
» This action will see the highest return on investment by aligning resources and goals among partners, raising awareness, and scaling up established models.
» Database of job training and placement resources can be uploaded to Wake Network of Care.
» Emerging resources and momentum in local food and food security should be intentionally connected with socially-oriented job training and placement to open new avenues for jobs in these energetic sectors.
» Fertile Ground Food Cooperative should be considered as a future employing partner.
» Explore food industry partnerships and development of career pathways.

4 Build Economic Opportunity

ACTION 4.7
VOLUNTARY LIVING WAGE CERTIFICATION FOR BUSINESSES

ACTION DESCRIPTION
Explore voluntary living wage certification program for businesses and non-profit organizations in Wake County.

CONVENING ORGANIZATION *
NC Justice Center Workers' Rights Project

EXISTING AND POTENTIAL PARTNERS
Businesses and nonprofit organizations, municipalities, NC Rural Center, Wake County

MEASURABLE INDICATOR
» Number of organizations in Wake County certified to be paying their employees a living wage

ANTICIPATED COSTS
» 1.0 FTE for Coordinator to manage the program
» Costs for promoting participating businesses
» Increased labor costs for participating employers

TIMEFRAME
» 2019: Launch voluntary living wage certification program (or, if state law is changed to allow local wage ordinances, consider a County-wide living wage ordinance)

RATIONALE
A living wage certification program would encourage employers across Wake County to pay their employees a living wage. This would lead to increased wages, reduced reliance on public or private assistance, decreased income inequality, and greater income for food purchasing, and would allow a movement towards a living wage using community action instead of local ordinance (currently prohibited under state law). Participating businesses may experience reduced turnover and attract new customers and community support.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS
» Need to identify anchor organization to lead and manage this initiative once it is planned.
» Consider Durham County living wage model which is tied to the federal poverty level, updated each year, and applies to full and part-time employees[23] and Just Economics Living Wage Employer Certification Program in Western North Carolina.
» Consider developing an application process, database of participating businesses, strategies for recognizing/promoting participating businesses, and plan for regularly monitoring business compliance.[24]
» Limitations may exist for private sector employers to participate in the program.[25]

* The role of convening organizations is to pull partners together, facilitate a planning conversation, and organize partners to identify and take on next steps. In the Action Resource section of this Plan, a sample convener's tool is provided to get things going.

23 http://www.durhamlivingwage.org/what
24 http://www.durhamlivingwage.org/why_become_certified
25 http://crossroads.newsworks.org/index.php/local/keystone-crossroads/89823-ideas-worth-stealing-encouraging-employers-to-pay-living-wages-with-a-carrot-not-a-stick

4 Build Economic Opportunity

ACTION 4.8
SHARED FOOD PROCESSING CENTER

ACTION DESCRIPTION
Feasibility study to assess the need, opportunity, scope, structure, and partners in a shared food processing facility to connect local farm produce to new markets.

LEAD ORGANIZATION
To be determined

EXISTING AND POTENTIAL PARTNERS
Advocates for Health in Action (AHA), farm advocacy organizations, LaunchRALEIGH, local community development corporations or other non-profit developers, local economic development offices, NCDA, USDA, Wake Cooperative Extension, Wake Soil & Water Conservation District

MEASURABLE INDICATORS
» Identification of Lead Organization
» Completion of a feasibility study

ANTICIPATED COSTS
» Feasibility study costs may vary, but $8,000 - $20,000 should provide enough study to support project decision making.

TIMEFRAME
» 2017: Begin dialogue among potential partners
» 2019: Complete feasibility study

RATIONALE
There is currently no shared food processing space in Wake County available to farmers, start-up entrepreneurs, or others looking to process local food at small or medium commercial scales. A shared facility could support new business development and expansion by lowering start-up capital needed for new food businesses to grow. Local farms would also have the opportunity to add value to their own produce, boosting their bottom line.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS
» Thoughtful feasibility study, multi-partner commitments, and business plan are critical before moving forward with a project.
» Many different organizations could be a successful Lead Organization or partner.
» A shared food processing facility can build mutual benefit with other projects such as a food hub, a downtown revitalization strategy, or grocery cooperative.
» Sizes for successful projects, and types of equipment included, can vary widely. There is no one-size-fits-all approach.



Processing Kitchen at DC Central Kitchen

Source: https://www.flickr.com/photos/dccentralkitchen/

STRATEGY 1 STRATEGY 2 STRATEGY 3 STRATEGY 4 STRATEGY 5

Leading Through Networks

OBJECTIVE	INDICATOR
Increase capacity and information access of food security organizations and partners in Wake County	**Organizational Connections:** The number of organizations and interconnecting collectives taking on food security issues in Wake County.

FAST START ACTIONS

5.1 Capital Area Food Network coordinates this Plan

5.2 County-based Food Security Coordinator

5.3 Local governments and school system sign on to this Plan

LONGER GROWING ACTIONS

5.4 Grocery stores become nutrition and food security hubs

5.5 Expand leadership role of faith community

5.6 Explore opportunities to support youth food leadership

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

5.7 "Seats at the Table" for food security in County planning and health

5.8 Corporate sponsorships and partnerships

5.9 Use present use valuation tax revenue for food security initiatives

5.10 Share food policy best practices

*NOTE: The "Other Recommendations" are listed here for reference to spark potential future efforts — they have not been developed in detail elsewhere in the Plan.

5 Leading Through Networks

ACTION 5.1
CAPITAL AREA FOOD NETWORK COORDINATES THIS PLAN

ACTION DESCRIPTION

CAFN's Food Access Circle will lead and coordinate overall progress and participation in the Plan. The group will track indicators, evaluate the Plan in year 3, and release an updated Plan in 2020 to guide three more years of food security action.

LEAD ORGANIZATION

CAFN Food Access Circle

EXISTING AND POTENTIAL PARTNER

Wake County

MEASURABLE INDICATOR

» Five key indicators for this Plan, and release of new Plan in 2020

ANTICIPATED COSTS

» Staff time contributed by a VISTA position
» Time contributed by CAFN members » Resources to evaluate, update, and re-release Plan in 2020

TIMEFRAME

» 2017: Begin generating baseline indicators by end of year
» 2018 & 2019: Produce annual briefs on Plan progress in May
» 2020: Produce an updated Plan in May

RATIONALE

Coordination of the Plan will introduce more partners and resources to the Plan, and will allow effective assessment and evaluation of the Plan's goals and strategies. As the food council in Wake County, CAFN is structured to leverage collective impact for a vibrant food system and food security across the County. As co-developer of this Plan, CAFN is well positioned to convene partners, facilitate new actions by partners, and maintain an overall perspective on data and progress.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

» CAFN coordination efforts will focus on community and private sector efforts.
» Regular communication and coordination with a County point of contact (Food Security Coordinator) will foster effective collaborations between community and County food security activities.
» CAFN will need to measure baselines for each Key Indicator, create a system for ongoing data collection and storage, and begin planning for a three-year Plan review.
» A quarterly review meeting is recommended, where CAFN would present updates on all actions and indicators. A Progress Reporting tool (page 77) is provided as an Action Resource to support quarterly progress updates.

5 Leading Through Networks

ACTION 5.2
COUNTY-BASED FOOD SECURITY COORDINATOR

ACTION DESCRIPTION
Create a full-time, three-year position in Wake Cooperative Extension to support Wake County's efforts towards Food Security Plan goals. This position will act as a single-point "Air Traffic Controller" for County food security efforts and information, align County food security efforts with broader community momentum, and foster communication and collaboration throughout County government.

LEAD ORGANIZATION
Wake Cooperative Extension

EXISTING AND POTENTIAL PARTNERS
All County departments engaging in food security topics, CAFN

MEASURABLE INDICATOR
» Creation of Wake County Food Security Coordinator position

ANTICIPATED COSTS
» Full time salary, plus benefits and overhead

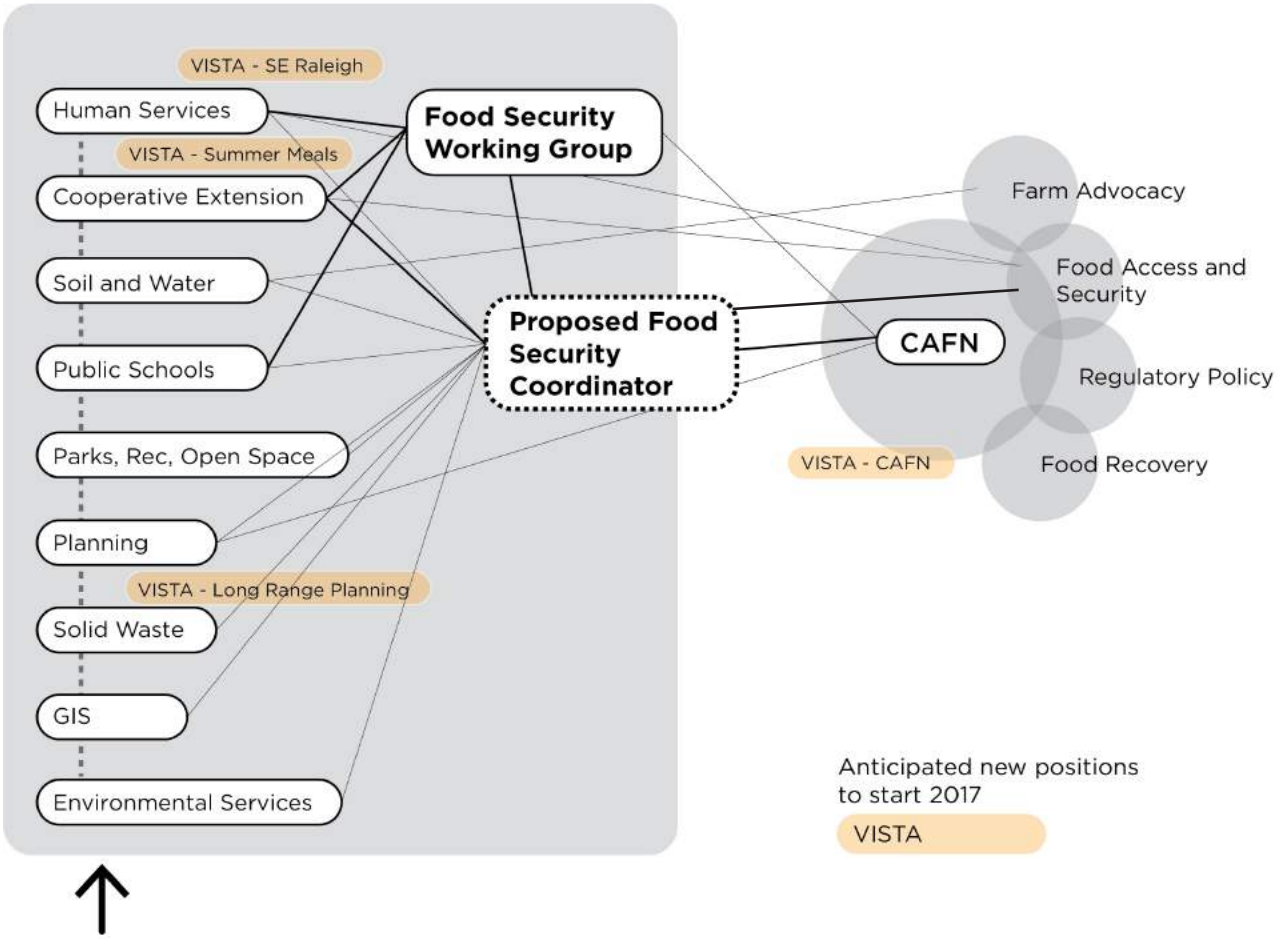
TIMEFRAME
» 2017: Propose this position for Wake County FY 2017-18 budget

RATIONALE
Coordination will help County resources be directed for the greatest food security impact, and will leverage private sector resource alignment. Food security efforts are happening in at least nine different County departments and divisions, and at most of the regional CACs. Currently, coordination among these efforts is not well developed. This position will support greater communication, coordination of data, visibility of programs, and collaboration, increasing the capacity and reach of all County food security efforts.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS
» This position is meant to enhance and increase the impact of work underway by County staff, not to duplicate or displace existing initiatives.
» This position will allow communication of the full picture of County efforts and strategic interests with CAFN, and will be able to communicate CAFN efforts to the County. This bridging will be essential in guiding effective strategy.
» As a three-year position, goals should include establishment of self-sustaining patterns of food security communication between CAFN and the County, and between County departments.

LOCATING A WAKE COUNTY FOOD SECURITY COORDINATOR

A Proposed Food Security Coordinator Opens New Capacity and Connections



WAKE COUNTY DEPARTMENTS AND DIVISIONS ENGAGED IN FOOD SECURITY INITIATIVES

5 Leading Through Networks

ACTION 5.3
LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND SCHOOL SYSTEM SIGN ON TO THIS PLAN

ACTION DESCRIPTION
This Plan is presented to County government, all Wake County municipalities, and to the WCPSS for review and endorsement.

LEAD ORGANIZATION
CAFN

EXISTING AND POTENTIAL PARTNER
Wake County Board of Commissioners, Wake County Food Security Working Group, Wake County Mayors' Group

MEASURABLE INDICATOR
» Endorsement by each governing body

ANTICIPATED COSTS
» Time contributed by CAFN

TIMEFRAME
» 2018: Present Plan to all Councils and School Board by January
» 2018: Receive endorsements by December

RATIONALE
Public endorsements of this Plan will be the first step in directing local public resources towards actions included in the Plan. Raising awareness among elected officials of food security as a critical community goal will allow more informed and coordinated local policy-making, and will increase opportunities for staff to move forward on food security actions included in this Plan.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS
» CAFN and the Wake County Food Security Working Group should determine specific desired outcomes and type of endorsement sought when presenting Plan to Councils and School Board.
» Endorsement of this Plan is voluntary, and should be opened not only to local government but also to any community groups or collectives involved in food security in Wake County.

5 Leading Through Networks

ACTION 5.4
GROCERY STORES BECOME NUTRITION AND FOOD SECURITY HUBS

ACTION DESCRIPTION
Develop a collaborative pilot program for grocery store-based food security initiatives.

LEAD ORGANIZATIONS
FBCENC, Food Lion, IFFS

EXISTING AND POTENTIAL PARTNERS
Fertile Ground Food Cooperative, Sav-a-Lot, Wake County Health Promotion

MEASURABLE INDICATORS
» Number of participating stores
» Others depending on specific initiatives that are recommended

ANTICIPATED COSTS
» Partner participation in creating a pilot plan; further costs to be determined

TIMEFRAME
» 2017: Convene Lead and Partner Organizations in Summer

RATIONALE
Nearly all Wake County residents report visiting a grocery store weekly, making these retail stores a valuable way to connect Wake County residents to direct services, promotion programs, or education to reduce food insecurity. In addition, adjustments to the shopping environment in grocery stores can have an impact on health due to subtle changes in shopping habits. A multi-partner planning process can determine effective strategies to pilot various efforts.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS
» New initiatives need to consider not only food security outcomes, but also the typical grocery store's standpoint and what factors will motivate their participation.
» Food pantries could be considered as either in-store additions or as neighbors in commercial centers.
» Potential initiatives to consider include fresh food promotions (double bucks), in-store healthy and/or local food promotional placement, food and nutrition education, SNAP/EBT enrollment, food pantry voucher or fresh food prescription fulfillment, cooking demonstrations, living wage for store employees, and free food delivery for eligible customers.
» Store participation at high rates may need to be incentivized through creative methods.

5 Leading Through Networks

ACTION 5.5
EXPAND LEADERSHIP ROLE OF FAITH COMMUNITY

ACTION DESCRIPTION

Invite and encourage congregations to actively develop and participate in outreach activities aimed at increasing food security within their local communities.

LEAD ORGANIZATION

North Carolina Council of Churches

EXISTING AND POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Eighteen denominations which are members of the North Carolina Council of Churches

MEASURABLE INDICATORS

» Number of congregations with food programs

» Creation of a shared guide or toolkit for new congregations

ANTICIPATED COSTS

» Initial costs will include time spent convening, planning, and communicating.

» New program start-up costs will vary widely, but many programs in which faith communities can be involved like food pantries, backpack buddies, soup kitchens, mobile markets, cooking and nutrition classes, and community gardens can be supported by their existing outreach ministries and member volunteers.

TIMEFRAME

» 2017: Convene partners to develop a strategy for launching a program in Wake County congregations in Fall

RATIONALE

Faith communities are an essential part of successful social movements and transformations. People of faith are called to care for their neighbors and especially the poor, the hungry, the disadvantaged, and the marginalized. Faith communities can be large sources of needed human and financial resources to address moral dilemmas like eliminating hunger.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

» New food programs should consider programs that educate and empower individuals alongside traditional food distribution projects, to build community resilience in addition to alleviating hunger.

» Work led by faith communities should intentionally connect, coordinate, and collaborate with efforts being led by other non-profit areas and by local government, to build greater collective impact on food security issues.

» Faith community efforts should incorporate needs assessments such as mapped areas of vulnerability in Wake County to guide outreach and partner recruitment toward areas of most concentrated need.

» Congregations are a natural place for people to meet, learn, grow, and sustain their own and the greater community, and congregations actively engaged in outreach of this kind become vibrant and healthy congregations.

5 Leading Through Networks

ACTION 5.6
EXPLORE OPPORTUNITIES TO SUPPORT YOUTH FOOD LEADERSHIP

ACTION DESCRIPTION
Hold a Youth Food Summit in Wake County to generate ideas and action steps that increase youth participation in local food projects, policy making, and planning.

CONVENING ORGANIZATION *
Youth Thrive

EXISTING AND POTENTIAL PARTNERS
4-H, Boys and Girls Club, CAFN, Communities in Schools of Wake County, El Pueblo, Food Ark, Future Farmers of America, Growing Youth Food Security Leaders, Haven House, Southeast Raleigh Assembly (SERA, Inc.), Wake Cooperative Extension, YMCA, Youth Empowered Solutions (YES)

MEASURABLE INDICATORS
» Numbers of youth engaged
» Development of action steps

ANTICIPATED COSTS
» Planning and hosting a Youth Food Summit

TIMEFRAME
» 2018: Youth Food Summit
» Timing of Youth Food Summit could coincide with promotion of Summer Meals Program planning or promotion.

RATIONALE
Multiple youth organizations are engaging with food systems and food security, but their food security efforts are neither well connected nor quite ready to result in broad food security impact. Supporting youth as change agents and leaders can leverage the ideas and energy of young people into innovative, unexpected, and effective solutions.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS
» Many youth-led and youth-supporting organizations exist in Wake County.
» Ensure that planning events are accessible to all youth participants.
» Use existing models to create leadership development opportunities in Summit planning.

* The role of convening organizations is to pull partners together, facilitate a planning conversation, and organize partners to identify and take on next steps. In the Action Resource section of this Plan, a sample convener's tool is provided to get things going.

Action Resources

ACTION RESOURCE 1:

EVALUATING KEY INDICATORS

Five Indicators were selected as high-level measures of progress towards Wake County's food security. Each one reflects multiple aspects of the Strategy it measures, allowing each Indicator to show progress based on multiple Actions. Together they create the first outline of a roadmap for food security, and as this three-year Plan develops, each Indicator will be built out with baselines and targets to support evaluation and refinement of the Plan.

The first step in developing each Indicator will be the creation of a baseline measurement and the setting of initial targets for change. These tasks should be coordinated by Wake Cooperative Extension and the Capital Area Food Network (CAFN. The Wake County Food Security Working Group should also provide input on targets for these will establish important policy milestones. Ideas on targets are offered for each Indicator, below.

It is recommended that CAFN reach out to area universities or other groups for opportunities to connect technical assistance providers or student projects with the creation, development, and maintenance of these Indicators.

To collect data for each Indicator, methods and tools should be developed, recorded, and saved to make data collection in following years efficient and straightforward.

1 http://sonomahungerindex.com

INDICATOR 1: MEAL GAP

WHAT IT IS

The Meal Gap is a count of how many meals were missed by low-income families.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

The Meal Gap shows how many people may be skipping meals, going to bed hungry, or missing key nutrition. The Meal Gap goes beyond just measuring food distribution, and combines a calculation of the food need in Wake County with the many efforts towards meeting that need. It provides a two directional measure for food security action.

HOW TO MEASURE

The Sonoma County Hunger Index,[1] which measures the meal gap, is recommended as a model to replicate in Wake County. The Sonoma County Hunger Index Presentation, in the Appendices, details the method for calculating the Meal Gap.

1. Calculate the total number of meals needed by low-income households
2. Subtract out the meals provided by food assistance programs, and subtract out meals that households are able to purchase themselves
3. The remaining meals needed is the Meal Gap

Data point	Availability	Notes
Meals needed by low-income households	Available	Use number of low-income households and the USDA Food Plan
Meals these households are able to purchase themselves	Available, needs to be extracted	Use consumer spending data (subtract out SNAP/WIC)
Meals provided by food assistance programs	Available, needs to be aggregated	Gather data from all food assistance programs, convert to meals

ACTIONS TO DRIVE CHANGE

Actions that reduce poverty by creating jobs or raising wages will shrink the Meal Gap. Additionally, actions that improve or increase a household's overall food budget will shrink the Meal Gap. Actions that increase food assistance programs' ability to provide food will shrink the Meal Gap, including SNAP and WIC, food banks and food pantries, and school and summer meal programs.

RECOMMENDED TIMELINE

Develop baseline by end of 2017.

INDICATOR 2: COMMUNITY FOOD PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

WHAT IT IS

This is a two-part Indicator:

1. Number of class participants in food education programs
2. Number of volunteers engaged in food security efforts

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

This Indicator tracks the reach of food and nutrition programming and volunteer engagement in the food system in Wake County. It will help to determine and target the need for additional outreach to both participants and volunteers. Food education programs can include nutrition, food and household budgeting, gardening education, or job training, and volunteer food programs can include food banks, pantries, gleaning, community garden, or meal delivery programs.

HOW TO MEASURE

This Indicator will require grassroots data collection and a smart collection strategy to align data across various food and nutrition programs. Begin by surveying the largest programs in each area, such as Wake County Human Services, Wake Cooperative Extension, and Inter-Faith Food Shuttle for class participation. Look to the Food Bank of Central and Eastern NC, Inter-Faith Food Shuttle, Meals on Wheels, and large food pantries to start collecting volunteer data. Work with partners to create simple reporting methods. Collecting data including ZIP code or demographic data will add collection effort but may add an important analytic opportunity to guide efforts towards target populations.

Data point	Availability	Notes
Class participants in food education programs	Available, needs to be gathered	Surveys and self-reporting are ideal, but will require good outreach
Volunteers in food security programs	Available, needs to be gathered	

ACTIONS TO DRIVE CHANGE

Actions that increase class offerings and number of participants will increase community participation. Actions that increase volunteer networking, create new projects that need volunteers, and attract volunteers to any part of the food system will increase community participation.

RECOMMENDED TIMELINE

Develop baseline by mid-2018.

INDICATOR 3: COUNTY-BASED FOOD SUPPLY

WHAT IT IS

This is a two-part Indicator:

1. Pounds of food grown and distributed in Wake County
2. Pounds of food rescued and distributed in Wake County

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

There is currently no mechanism to accurately quantify and target growth in local food production or recovery in Wake County. More County-based local food production will impact the local economy, support Wake's farm community, preserve open space, increase investment in regional food system infrastructure, and connect residents more closely with their food sources and nutritious food. More County-based food recovery will provide more food to the hungry, reduce landfill pressure, and decrease greenhouse gas emissions. These high-impact benefits drive this Indicator - although Wake County agriculture or food recovery efforts are not expected to meet Wake County's entire dietary needs.

HOW TO MEASURE

This Indicator will require a substantial amount of new data collection and should be approached from a collaborative standpoint. Partnering with the Center for Environmental Farming Systems is recommended from a data understanding standpoint, as well as with the NCSU College of Design from a system-mapping standpoint. Measurement standards and collection methods need to be created for this Indicator. A useful toolkit example is from the Farming Concrete project.[2] Tracking tools and an online system could be developed to allow food producers and food recovery organizations to submit this data directly to CAFN or Wake Cooperative Extension.

Data point	Availability	Notes
Food grown and Distributed in Wake	Needs to be created	Data from farms and gardens on food sold or donated
Food rescued and distributed in Wake	Needs to be created	Could be integrated into larger food recovery efforts, making data collection centralized

ACTIONS TO DRIVE CHANGE

Progress on this Indicator will be achieved by increasing the local markets for Wake County farms, supporting more locally-oriented market farms, and increasing production through community and home gardens. Progress will also be achieved by scaling up existing food recovery efforts and expanding the number of food sources ready to divert food waste to rescue programs.

RECOMMENDED TIMELINE

Develop baseline by end of 2019.

It may be necessary to develop this baseline incrementally, through a series of increasingly accurate prototypes before creating a whole-County measurement of all parts of the Indicator. Creativity and flexibility are recommended.

2 www.farmingconcrete.org

INDICATOR 4: FOOD JOB INDEX

WHAT IT IS

A combined measure of Wake County's food sector jobs and the average wages of those jobs.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Measuring the capacity of the local food economy and health of food system employment in Wake County will show the progress of building economic solutions through food system actions. Currently 10% of Wake's workforce is in the food sector, but these jobs only produce 5% of Wake County wages. Targeting change in this sector will capture a large segment of the workforce that is currently paid very little. Integrating measures of food and farming jobs specifically would encourage solutions for increasing the number and wages of food system jobs (this would include jobs in food production, aggregation, processing, marketing, and distribution and in many different locations).

HOW TO MEASURE

This Index is currently at the concept stage, to be created using existing available data. It is recommended that the Index be created in partnership with the NC Justice Center as a technical assistance partner. Once the Index is created, development of a baseline should follow relatively quickly using available data.

Data point	Availability	Notes
Number of food sector jobs in Wake County	Available	Source: Access NC. See Appendix "2015 Food Systems Occupation Data" for data to create 2015 baseline
Food sector jobs as a percentage of Wake's workforce	Available	
Average wages of food sector jobs in Wake County	Available	

ACTIONS TO DRIVE CHANGE

Actions that increase wages and increase the number of food sector jobs should result in improvements in this Indicator.

RECOMMENDED TIMELINE

Develop baseline by mid-2018.

INDICATOR 5: ORGANIZATIONAL CONNECTIONS

WHAT IT IS

This is a two-part Indicator:

1. Number of organizations collaborating on food security efforts
2. Number of interlinked collectives[3] working on food security efforts

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Wake County has many food security resources that are not well connected. Many different organizations have been identified in this Plan for current or potential food security work, but if they are not well-connected they may not see the greatest impact. Lasting collaborations among as many different organizations and collectives as possible will be critical to expanding the reach of current and proposed initiatives, as each of these organizations may provide access to their own target populations and will also be able to share resources and best practices.

HOW TO MEASURE

Data needs to be collected from multiple organizations using a survey to measure the number of interconnecting collectives taking on food security issues in Wake County and the number of organizations or entities engaged

3 A "Collective" is used to mean a formal group of organizations that are coordinated around shared goals and undertake action together.

in these issues. Information about the collectives such as number and types of partners/sectors engaged, best practices shared, resources leveraged, and geographic locations and target populations represented in the collective may be used to reflect the strength and reach of the collective(s). Input data into social network mapping software to visualize the networks. Ask organizations to complete a brief annual survey about their involvement in food security actions and the status of their collaborations with other organizations.

Data point	Availability	Notes
Number of collectives involved in food security efforts in Wake	Needs to be gathered	Develop a simple survey to distribute to all food security organizations. Extend reach of survey using a 'snowball' method from known organizations outward.
Number of connections between these collectives	Needs to be gathered	
Number of organizations doing food security work in Wake County	Needs to be gathered	
Number of connections between these organizations	Needs to be gathered	

ACTIONS TO DRIVE CHANGE

Actions that foster diverse collaboration and long-term alignment of organizations will increase the progress of this Indicator. Existing collectives that purposefully link to other collectives will also grow this Indicator.

RECOMMENDED TIMELINE

Develop baseline by end of 2018.

ACTION RESOURCE 2:

CONVENER'S PLANNING TOOL

A lead or convening organization is proposed for each fast start and longer growing action in the Plan. In some cases this organization may already be working with the suggested partner organizations, while in other cases they may be beginning a new partnership. The following tool can be used to launch a first meeting and initiate progress towards each action.

LOGISTICS CHECKLIST

ENGAGE PARTNERS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

- ☐ Initiate communication with identified potential partner organizations and other diverse community organizations and stakeholders. Invite them to an initial leadership meeting.
- ☐ Identify other stakeholders who may contribute to the conversation through other engagement methods (e.g., interviews, surveys, public feedback forums, focus groups, working groups, informed via email updates, etc.)
- ☐ Consider anyone else who may be missing from the conversation. Invite them to participate and resolve any barriers which may prevent them from participating (e.g., transportation, meeting time, etc.)

PLAN FOR THE FIRST MEETING(S)

- ☐ Schedule meeting at a time which is convenient for all partners - consider scheduling tools like www.doodle.com
- ☐ Secure meeting space - select a location which is convenient for all partners or consider rotating meeting locations across different parts of the County
- ☐ Develop agenda for the first meeting including the purpose of the meeting, topics to be discussed, and outcomes/priorities. Send out in advance of the meeting.
- ☐ Assign roles for the meeting - facilitator, note taker, etc.
- ☐ Bring copies of each action sheet (from this Plan) to use as a first step for discussion
- ☐ Set-up meeting space - consider accessibility, need for a call-in option, food/drink, translation, childcare, etc.

MEETING FOLLOW-UP

- ☐ Before leaving the meeting, determine *who* will do *what* by *when* (using ACTION PLAN)
- ☐ Shortly after the meeting, send out meeting minutes, action items, and next meeting date
- ☐ Report outcomes to CAFN

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

Each partner's assets, resources, and stake in the action/motivation for participation

Expectations for participation, ground rules, roles, and responsibilities

Decision-making processes within the partnership/coalition

Preferred internal communication strategies (email, in-person meetings, file sharing programs like Google Drive and Dropbox)

External communication strategies (website, social media, press releases, etc.)

Ongoing meeting schedule, including selecting the next meeting time

ACTION PLAN

Develop a shared action plan using each action sheet (from this Plan) as a starting point. Below are potential sections to include.

» Action
» Measurable Indicator (from this Plan)
» Activity
» Timeline
» Organizational/Person(s) Responsible
» Resources Needed
» Indicators for Measuring Success

ACTION RESOURCE 3:

FUNDING AND RESOURCES

This Plan includes an ambitious number of recommended actions involving many different partners and sectors. These actions are considered to be feasible, yet are not guaranteed, to be implemented by 2020. The following funding and resource channels are presented as possibilities to help kickstart food security action in Wake County.

ALIGNED RESOURCES AND LEVERAGED ASSETS

Sharing resources and securing new funding sources will help to achieve Plan goals and ensure long-term sustainability. Mapping each partner's assets and sharing best practices will help to maximize resources and effort. Coordination and communication is vital to developing these resources.

GRANTS: GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE FUNDERS

» Federal grants (e.g., CDC; USDA Community Food Projects, Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive, and Farmers Market and Local Food Promotion grant programs, etc.)
» National funders (e.g., Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Kresge Foundation, etc.)
» NC Health and Human Services grants
» State and local funders (e.g., NC Community Foundation, Burt's Bees Foundation, BCBSNC, City of Raleigh Community Enhancement Program, etc.)
» For more about grants and financial resources, consider The Community Toolbox[1]

IMPACT INVESTMENT

These are investments made to generate positive, measurable social or environmental outcomes as well as a financial return. Companies, organizations, and funds with social or environmental missions are targets for impact investing. Many impact investments support job creation or small business development. Any of the Plan's actions that combine business activity with social impact could match with impact investors.

PAYMENT OF DEFERRED AGRICULTURAL USE TAX

As demonstrated in Cabarrus County, a fund can be established to receive all of the payments of deferred taxes when land is moved out of agricultural use. When a property is in agricultural use, taxes are assessed at a low rate based on Present Use Value. However, when a property is sold or stops its agricultural use, it not only reverts to full-rate tax payments, it also must pay the past three years of deferred full-rate property tax. This payment for past years is the "deferred tax" payment. In Wake County in 2016, over $2 million of deferred taxes were paid to Wake County. In Cabarrus County, this deferred tax is collected in an account reserved for local food system projects such as an incubator farm or processing facilities. In Wake County, county leaders could establish a dedicated account for these deferred payments and earmark it for local food or farm projects, thus creating a significant funding source to invest in new food system projects with revenue collected from the loss of agricultural land. Triangle Land Conservancy has been championing this concept as a way to fund agricultural land conservation.

1 http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/finances/grants-and-financial-resources

PROGRAM RELATED INVESTMENT

Foundations may offer long-term, low-interest loans to projects that align with their mission priorities. Program Related Investments (PRIs) are a way for foundations to stretch their financial capacity while building community wealth and social capacity. Larger capital projects such as food hubs or shared processing kitchens may look to foundation PRI's as part of diverse funding strategies.

PUBLIC DOLLARS

Federal, state, and local dollars should be used to implement recommended actions. Millions of public dollars in federal food assistance (e.g., SNAP, WIC, school meals) are currently uncaptured by Wake County. Enrolling more people in these programs will help to maximize federal food dollars for food security initiatives and benefit the local food economy. Public dollars may also be sought from the state legislature or city council.

PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

» HOSPITAL COMMUNITY BENEFIT PROGRAMS
» SOCIAL IMPACT BONDS (SIBs): SIBs are contracts between financiers (individuals, investment banks, private foundations, etc.) with the public sector in which a commitment is made to fund proven public health and social interventions. An intermediary organization manages the investment which ideally results in improved social outcomes and public sector savings.[2] SIBs have been implemented in South Carolina and other parts of the U.S. and may be a model to support Wake County food security initiatives.

SELF-SUSTAINING ENTERPRISES

Nonprofit initiatives can be designed around profit-generating business activities as a strategy to provide sustainable revenue for the nonprofit. In this way a non-profit can diversify funding sources, in particular minimizing reliance on grants. Food businesses such as aggregation and distribution, urban agriculture, food processing, composting, and other food business enterprises may also be seen as sustainable solutions with applications in many of the Plan's recommended actions.

OTHER SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGIES

» Adopt and institutionalize programs and policies: documenting policy, systems, and environmental changes will help them to become standard of practice and ensure their future implementation (e.g., adopt a policy for breakfast in the classroom or client choice at a food pantry which will remain in place even after staff or priorities may change)
» Encourage community ownership of actions: identify community leaders who can carry programs and initiatives into the future regardless of funding availability
» Consider The Community Toolbox[3] and Tom Wolff and Associates[4] for more sustainability strategies

2 https://ced.sog.unc.edu/3-things-you-should-know-about-social-impact-bonds/

3 http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/sustain/long-term-sustainability/
4 http://www.tomwolff.com/resources/cb_sustainability.pdf

ACTION RESOURCE 4:

PROCESS REPORT MATRIX

As noted in Action 5.1, the Capital Area Food Network (CAFN) will be responsible for measuring overall progress towards implementation of this Plan. This will be a significant undertaking given the number of actions, organizations, and other stakeholders involved across the County.

The Progress Reporting Matrix below is proposed to track progress towards each of the recommended actions and facilitate ongoing communication between CAFN and lead or convening organizations. This Matrix should be available in an easily editable format, which allows for multiple editors such as Google Sheets. On a quarterly (or more frequent) basis, CAFN could ask each lead or convening organization to input or submit the following information. CAFN and other stakeholders would be able to view the status of all strategies/actions in one matrix.

As needed, other columns could be added such as: key partners, current funding/budget, target populations/communities, total population served, community engagement strategies, and measurable impacts.

PROGRESS REPORTING MATRIX TEMPLATE

STRATEGY: (Example: Ensure Food Access)

ACTION	LEAD OR CONVENING ORGANIZATION OR CONTACT PERSON	STATUS (not started, in progress, or completed)	KEY PROGRESS/ BENCHMARKS	DATA SUBMITTED TO CAFN (type of data and date submitted)	NOTES (such as challenges, needs, next steps)
1.1 - Expand school pantries in Wake County Schools					
1.2 - Expand Universal Breakfast in the Classroom					
1.3 - Expand summer meal program					

ACTION RESOURCE 5:

USING MAPS TO GUIDE ACTION

By mapping the social and economic factors associated with food insecurity, a view of Wake County emerges showing the most intense areas of poverty and economic need. By utilizing map resources as one element in Action decision-making, partners can consider targeting specific communities in need.

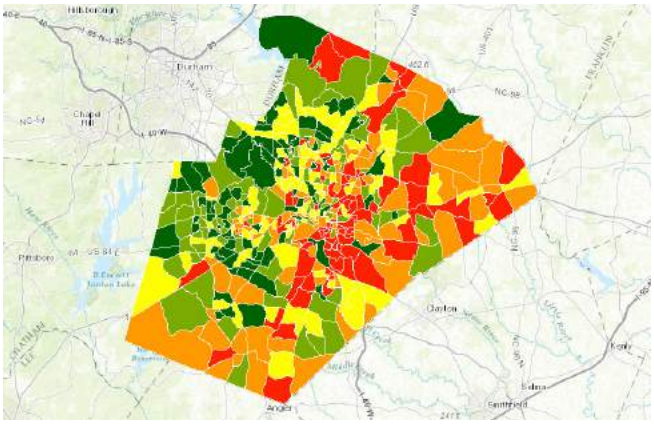
Recently, Wake County Long Range Planning has created a **"Social Equity Atlas"** that includes two indexes that map multiple factors associated with a community's economic vulnerability or health: Community Vulnerability and Economic Health. Each index can be found on the Social Equity Atlas, along with maps of each.

Partners should assess how their Actions relate to either the most at-risk communities (Community Vulnerability) or to those communities just at the edge of poverty (Economic Health), and use the online maps to guide placement of new services or programs.

WAKE COUNTY SOCIAL EQUITY ATLAS

http://www.wakegov.com/planning/maps/socialequity/Pages/default.aspx

Community Vulnerability



Based on census block groups, this is a map of the most socio-economically at-risk areas of the County. Red areas are most at-risk.

"The Wake County Community Vulnerabilities Index contains the following socioeconomic and demographic variables:

Unemployment: Defined as the county population age 16 and over who are unemployed in the civilian labor force;

Age Dependency: The population under the age of 18 and over the age of 64 combined;

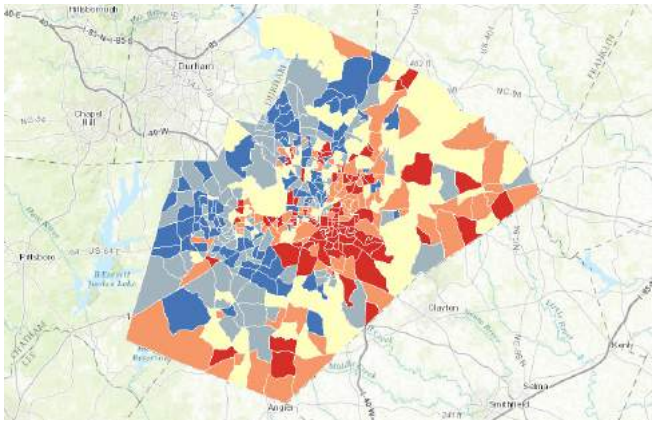
Low Educational Attainment: The population of ages 25 and over who have less than a high school diploma;

Housing Vacancy: The total number of vacant or unoccupied housing units in a block group; and

Below Poverty Level: The population living below the federal poverty threshold in Wake County."

- text from the Social Equity Atlas

Economic Health



Also based on census block groups, this map indicates areas of the County where higher concentrations of those just at the edge of poverty live. Red areas score highest, with the most markers for community poverty.

"The Wake County Community Assessment for Economic Health contains the following socioeconomic and demographic variables:

Median Household Income: The median household income in the past 12 months

Food Stamps: Measured as a percentage of households in each block group

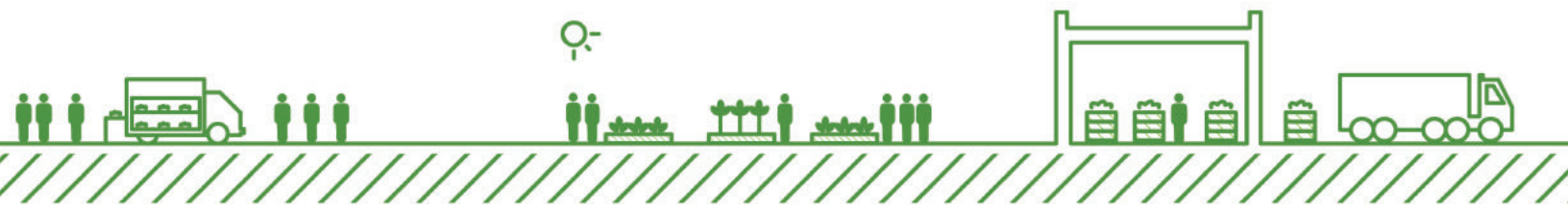
Rent as greater than 30% of Income: Gross rent as a percentage of household income

Home Mortgage as greater than 30% of Income: Mortgage status by owner cost as a percentage of household income

Persons living between 100%–200% of Federal Poverty Level: Ratio of income to poverty level for whom poverty status is determined between 100 and 200 percent."

- text from the Social Equity Atlas

3. Planning Context, Process, and Findings



"When you are trying to move mountains, you want and need people on your side who want to move them with you."

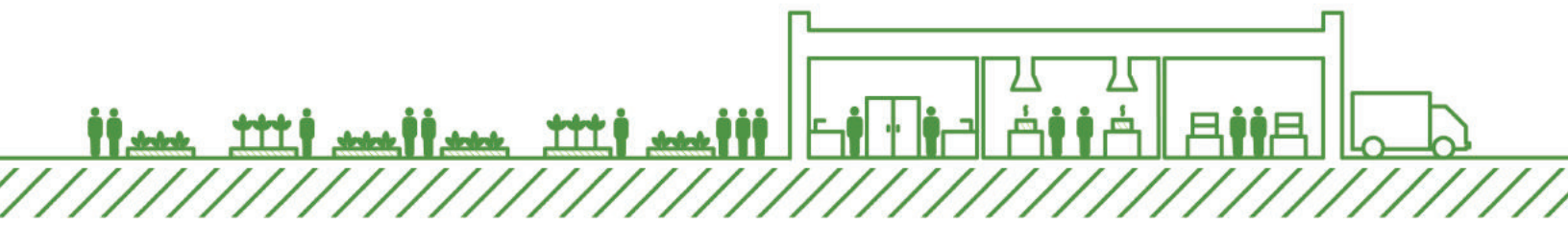
- Jamie Oliver

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Engagement Methods 91

Ten Key Findings 94



Context of Food Security Planning in Wake County

FOOD SECURITY CONTEXT

This Plan belongs to a growing movement towards food security in Wake County. Many organizations and partners have been working to end hunger, build food access, and support a vibrant local food system in Wake County. Listing all of them is a virtually impossible task. The chart on the facing page shows the food security organizations identified through the research and engagement phases of this planning process - but it is not meant to be complete. The dynamic nature of community-based food security projects, coupled with the sheer size of Wake County, make it difficult to track all efforts in a centralized manner further emphasizing the need for increased coordination efforts.

The Actions recommended, in whole, create stronger coordination by building upon existing efforts in strategic ways. This Plan's ambitious approach is possible because of the strength of existing efforts and the foundation they represent for greater impact. Below, a selection of important food security efforts in Wake County are presented individually. This list certainly leaves out important work, and is meant simply to illustrate a few of the key foundations that support this Plan.

COORDINATION AND SYSTEM-BUILDING EFFORTS

Wake County Food Security Working Group

Convened in 2015, this Group has been instrumental in improving coordination and policy targets for school-based programs such as Free Universal Breakfast, Breakfast in the Classroom, school pantries, and backpack distribution programs. Their leadership also resulted in their collaboration with the Capital Area Food Network that resulted in the creation of this Plan. The multi-departmental nature of this Group has allowed critical intra-County coordination as well as forward-thinking investments. This Group is primarily listed in the Plan in Actions related to school programs and overall food security coordination efforts, to allow it to maintain its valuable momentum in these key areas.

Wake County Human Services

Human Services works directly, on a day-to-day basis, with the most vulnerable in Wake County's communities. Directing the management and delivery of numerous food efforts, from SNAP and WIC support to nutrition demonstrations and farmers market initiatives, Human Services is a bedrock contributor to Wake County's food security. As a result, they are included as partners in many recommended actions, where they are asked to continue, expand, or initiate efforts that draw on their expertise, capacity, or ability to deliver information or services directly to those in need.

Food Assets and Partner Map

Based on our Phase 2 research, these organizations are currently involved in food security efforts in Wake County. Not meant as a comprehensive listing of assets, it offers a cross-section of existing efforts and expertise areas.

● Provides food services, or other resources directly to Wake County residents



Summer Food Service Collaboration

When low income students are out of school for the summer, they can miss up to 10 meals per week, putting an increased seasonal burden on their families - thus the "summer meal gap." A collaboration between NC Department of Public Instruction and the Wake County Human Services Board, this vibrant multi-partner initiative is breaking new ground to fill the summer meal gap. Working from evidence-based models, this multi-partner initiative is developing Wake County-specific tactics to support existing meal sponsors and sites, create new sites to better reach children in need, and extend their collaborative reach to enlist new champions and promotional opportunities.

Regional Community Advisory Committees

Wake County's network of Community Advisory Committees (CACs) are each addressing food security in different ways, and represent in some ways a grassroots development of food security energy within the County framework. Working with the County's Regional Centers, these groups are building momentum around a wide range of food initiatives, often in collaboration with established community partners such as food pantries, churches, or community gardens. The partners involved in CAC efforts, while hard to categorize, will be important resources many recommended Actions that require local knowledge or partners in different parts of the County.

The Food Bank and Food Pantry System

Between the two Feeding America affiliated food banks operating in Wake County - the Food Bank of Central and Eastern NC and Inter-Faith Food Shuttle - nearly 10 million pounds of food was distributed to over 100 Wake County food pantries in 2016. This system of food banks and food pantries works to keep up with direct hunger needs while actively exploring innovative ways to address the root causes of food insecurity. This system includes numerous points of contact for Wake residents, deep expertise in food logistics and innovation, and established methods for engaging community support. Especially for the food insecure working poor, who aren't able to qualify for SNAP or WIC, food pantries offer one of the only reliable sources of food to help get through hardship. Food pantries exist in the community, in schools, and in institutions of higher learning such as Wake Tech and NCSU.

Capital Area Food Network (CAFN)

Launched in 2015, CAFN is a food council for Wake County. It is a community-led initiative to create a vibrant food system for Wake County. One of CAFN's Action Circles, the Food Access and Security Circle, has played a leading role in the 2016 Food Security Summit and in the creation of this Plan and will continue to lead community-based coordination efforts through the Plan's recommendations. Other circles include Farm Advocacy, Food Recovery, Regulatory Policy, Communications, and Relationships. CAFN activities include assessing the food system, convening and connecting partners, educating, and recommending good food policy. The roles recommended for CAFN in this Plan are directly supported by and matched to its existing activity areas.

Wake Network of Care

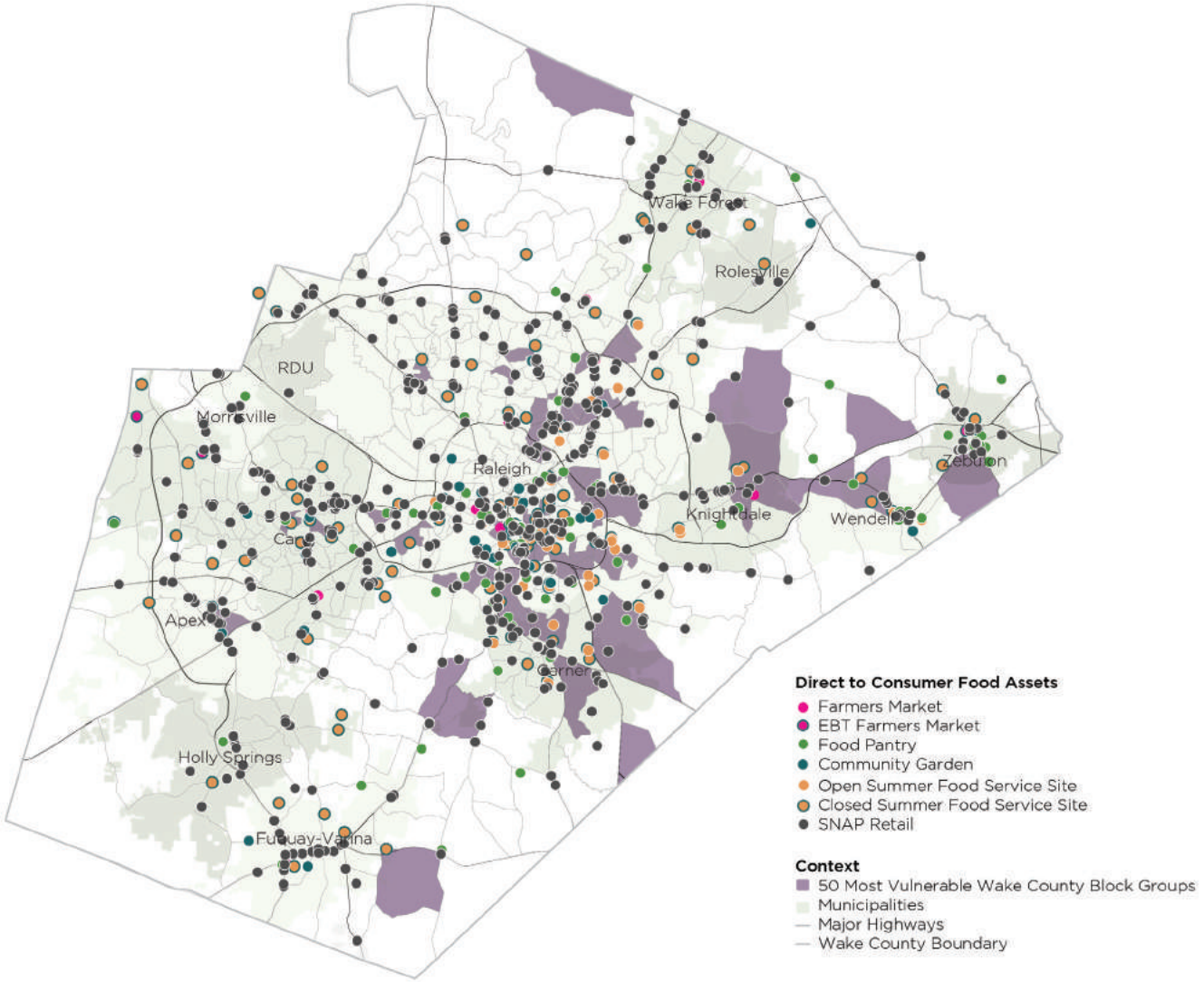
While not a direct food security initiative, this new online app could be a key resource for sharing resources, making referrals, and building visibility of food security resources. It should be viewed, along with the parallel resource databases YouthThrive, NC4Vets, and Resources for Seniors, as a critical existing platform to build a rich database of food security listings.

Direct-to-Consumer Food Resources, and Areas with Highest Community Vulnerability in Wake County

This map offers a comprehensive picture of where consumer food resources - any place where a community member might access food - are located in the County. By combining these points with the most vulnerable census block groups, one can begin to see how some areas of need are well served, and others are less so.

Our method of identifying block groups as most vulnerable used the Community Vulnerability Index of the Wake County Social Equity Atlas, and extracted only the 50 lowest-scoring of Wake's 455 block groups. These 50 groups were used to clearly highlight the areas of most need.

See page 78 for an explanation of the Social Equity Atlas.



THREE EXAMPLES OF BRIGHT SPOTS THAT REVEAL COORDINATION GAPS

School Gardens

Learning gardens at Wake County schools are increasing in number, primarily through grassroots organizing or individual school leadership. Each garden is built upon a unique combination of school and teacher resources, community and parent involvement, student enthusiasm, or local sponsors. At last count, 47 schools had gardens of some sort, but because gardens are not centrally promoted or managed, firm numbers on gardens, student engagement, or outcomes are not yet available. In response to the growing number of gardens, a school garden network is emerging that may be positioned to share best practices, advocate for centralized support, and build resources needed for the long-term success of each garden. Coordination and support for this emerging network would foster more garden development, greater teacher engagement, and better viability for each garden. See Action2.5

Community Gardens

Wake County is home to at least 32 community gardens that vary in size, type, and ownership. These are primarily grassroots projects, without the support of centralized or public promotion or coordination systems (with some exceptions such as in Cary's town-sponsored community gardens). This grassroots collection of gardens includes significant gardening knowledge and organizing energy, which could be developed into a more formalized network of best practices and data-collection to inform targeted policy objectives around these important projects. While Wake County currently offers one community garden per 31,000 residents, some community garden best practices call for as many as one garden per 1,000 residents. The first step in determining the right target number of gardens for Wake County will be developing a stronger understanding of existing community garden contributions, that can be gathered through municipal community garden programs and the involvement of food banks and food pantries. See Actions 3.1, 3.3, 3.7, 3.9

County Departments and Divisions

Currently, at least nine County departments and divisions are engaged in some kind of food security work, including mapping and demographic analysis, new farmer development, food recovery conversations, school breakfast programs, or gardening education. This represents significant effort to build food security. It reflects the County's commitment to holistic community well-being in the face of growth and change. As these important efforts continue and expand in individual departments, their ultimate return on investment will grow to the extent that they can share knowledge, develop joint policy priorities, and align limited County resources around common objectives. In short, coordination of these efforts will break silos and increase impact. The Wake County Food Security Working Group has demonstrated the effectiveness of this approach within school-based programs. The recommended Action of creating a Food Security Coordinator, an "Air Traffic Controller," is designed to leverage existing County activity into focused directions and greater lasting change. See Actions 2.8, 5.2

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RECENT FOOD SECURITY MILESTONES

Below are important milestones that have prepared the ground for this planning process, and created the conditions to support this Plan's success.

2012: Voices Into Action kicked off. In early 2012, this USDA-funded grant project launched in Southeast Raleigh (the project also included efforts in Harnett and Lee Counties) to connect research, community partnerships, food access, and places to be active. This multi-year project established important baselines in asset and resource mapping, community engagement, and household-level food insecurity knowledge in Southeast Raleigh. Project partners include NCSU, NC A&T University, NC Cooperative Extension, and EFNEP. Project investigators participated in this comprehensive planning process.

2015: Wake County Food Security Working Group convened. Led by Commissioner Calabria, this group of County, school, and municipal leaders launched to better understand and address food insecurity among Wake County youth. The Group has helped lead policy changes related to youth food insecurity, and provided County oversight for this Plan's development.

2015: *Food Insecurity among Children and Families in Wake County* report issued. Developed by the Wake County Food Security Working Group, this report provided a high-level summary and recommendations for youth-focused food security in Wake County. Many of the seven recommendations in that report informed County-wide policy decisions over the past two years and the approaches in this Plan.

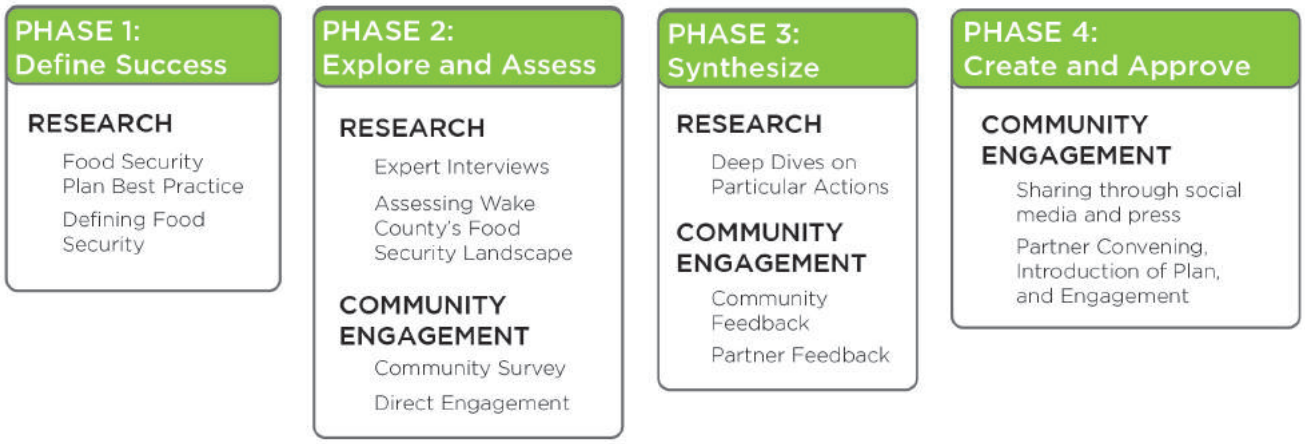
2015: Capital Area Food Network (CAFN) launched. A community-based food council for Wake County, this organization established food access as a critical area of engagement in order to support a vibrant local food system. CAFN's Food Access Circle functions by convening, supporting, and promoting activities that provide access to local, healthy, and affordable food for people experiencing the food insecurity.

2015: A Whole Measures data collection conducted for Wake County's food system. CAFN completed a multi-indicator analysis of Wake County's food system using the six indicator areas of the Whole Measures Framework, including many data points related to food security. This helped inform some of the Key Indicators in this Plan.

2016: Food Security Summit held. With support from Wake County, CAFN hosted the "Moving Beyond Hunger" summit, attended by over 120 people, with keynote presentations by Mark Winne and Shorlette Ammons. A report on the Summit was produced that helped set the stage for this comprehensive planning process.

RESEARCH AND ENGAGEMENT IN THE PLANNING PROCESS

Engagement tactics were designed phase-by-phase to raise awareness, build participation, support eventual community buy-in, and gather direct community input to support a Plan that accurately reflects the community.



Research Methods

PURPOSE OF RESEARCH	Understand the landscape of food insecurity and food access resources in Wake County
APPROACH	Develop a comprehensive food security plan using a broad research perspective, allowing for discovery throughout the process and incorporation of data and findings from many different sources. The research was designed to be rapid and open-ended, combining broad survey activities as well as deeper investigation, and including general food security research with place-specific Wake County exploration.
PROCESS	1. Gather information on whole food system from multiple sources 2. Review and process data, uncovering food access patterns such as bright spots or gaps 3. Identify and pursue follow-up questions 4. Combine findings from multiple research sources to shape the initial strategic areas of action

1. EXISTING DATA AND REPORTS

Study included initial analysis of Wake County demographic and food insecurity data, various reports on elements of Wake County's food system and food security efforts, and other food security plans as precedent research.

2. SPATIAL DATA

Working with Wake County Long Range Planning, GIS datasets were collected to describe the spatial distribution of food security assets, and vulnerable communities.

3. FOOD DISTRIBUTION DATA

Data was collected through partners at Inter-Faith Food Shuttle and the Food Bank of Central and Eastern NC to show the number and locations of partner food pantries for these two food banks serving Wake County, as well as their= total food distribution from these food banks to partner food pantries.

4. SCHOOL RESOURCE DATA

NC DPI shared school data describing participation in the Free and Reduced Price Lunch program, with detailed data on lunch and breakfast participation.

5. FOOD RESOURCES AND ASSETS

(reference page 92)

Gathered through numerous sources, the project team developed an extensive list of food resources including community gardens, school gardens, food pantries, school-based food pantries, SNAP-participating food stores, grocery stores, farmers markets, summer nutrition sites, backpack buddies programs, and universal school breakfast.

6. MUNICIPAL POLICY REVIEW

The City of Raleigh shared a summary of all points where municipal plans and ordinances referenced food system or food security issues. This list supported development of Action rationale. A more complete review of municipal food policy across Wake County is suggested as a next step to identify policy gaps and opportunities to share model language and best practice.

7. TOPIC INTERVIEWS WITH FOOD EXPERTS

30 interviews were conducted with practitioners and researchers in various sectors of the food system between November 2016 and January 2017. These sessions produced in-depth knowledge on a wide range of food security issues and allowed collection of qualitative data as well as actionable food security ideas.

» Initial interview subjects were chosen who could contribute food system knowledge to a list of food security topic areas pre-defined by the team.
» Secondary interviews were held with other experts as additional knowledge gaps were uncovered.
» Interviews lasted 90 to 120 minutes.
» Interviews collected responses on food access barriers, metrics, best practices for solutions, and areas for attention in Wake County.
» Interview results were processed into narrative summaries that contributed one layer of the Phase 2 findings used to reveal patterns and gaps in Wake County food security. Interview results also provided specific information that helped generate or refine Action recommendations.

Interviews Mapped by Strategies

30 expert interviews were conducted in Phase 2 and ranged across our Strategies as shown in the charts below.

		STRATEGY 1: **Ensure Food Access**	STRATEGY 2: **Communicate and Educate**	STRATEGY 3: **Develop Sustainable Food Supply**	STRATEGY 4: **Build Economic Opportunity**	STRATEGY 5: **Leading through Networks**
INTERVIEWEES	**ORGANIZATIONS**					
Vielka Gabriel	Middle Class Express		X		X	X
Maureen Berner	UNC Chapel Hill School of Government	X			X	X
Peter Morris & Lisa Williams	Urban Ministries of Wake County	X	X			
Paula De Lucca	WCPSS Child Nutrition	X			X	
Darlene Johnson	WCPSS	X	X			
Stan Holt & Irene Godinez	UnitedWay Triangle	X	X			X
Jorge Montezuma	NCDEQ			X		
Terry Foley	Catholic Parish Outreach	X				
Gideon Adams	FBCENC	X	X			X
Carl Sigel	NC Interfaith Power and Light	X	X	X		
Lou Anne Crumpler, Tamara Baker, Helen Roberts, & Gina Tripicchio	No Kid Hungry	X			X	
Darrow Isaacman-Vanderwertz	Self Help				X	
Lorelei Jones	Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program	X	X			

		STRATEGY 1: **Ensure Food Access**	STRATEGY 2: **Communicate and Educate**	STRATEGY 3: **Develop Sustainable Food Supply**	STRATEGY 4: **Build Economic Opportunity**	STRATEGY 5: **Leading through Networks**
INTERVIEWEES	**ORGANIZATIONS**					
Elizabeth Scott	WCHS	X			X	X
Robin Rennells	YouthThrive					X
Alan Winstead	Meals On Wheels	X			X	
Jill Bullard, Jill Brown, & Katie Murray	Inter-Faith Food Shuttle	X	X	X		X
Sarah Wiener	U.S. Forest Service SERCH			X		
Richard Fitzgerald	Raleigh Rescue Mission	X			X	X
Kia Baker	Southeast Raleigh Promise	X	X			
Cynthia Ervin	NC Department of Public Instruction	X			X	
Margaret Raynor	WCHS Advisory Board	X			X	
Andrew Ullom	AC Restaurants	X	X		X	
Shana Overdorf	Partnerships to End Homelessness	X			X	X
Sarah Bowen	Voices Into Action	X	X			
Kelly Smith & Lauren Horning	Freshpoint	X		X	X	
Ann Godwin, Ruth Sutherland, & Carol Mitchell	Wake Cooperative Extension		X			

Engagement Methods

PURPOSE	Gather perspectives and ideas so that Wake County's communities are reflected in the food security plan, expand opportunities for effective relationships between community members and food security organizations, and validate food security research findings
APPROACH	Use multiple engagement methods to reach diverse audiences through different phases of planning. Community engagements were designed to produce valuable community insight and feedback and to reach as many Wake County residents as possible. Phase 2 activities included more open-ended questions about experiences and ideas, while Phase 3 activities solicited feedback on preliminary solutions to refine the emerging Strategies.
PROCESS	1. Work with partners to develop outreach and engagement strategy 2. Conduct engagement activities and gather data 3. Analyze data and use findings to inform and refine Action recommendations

1. COMMUNITY SURVEY: PHASE 2

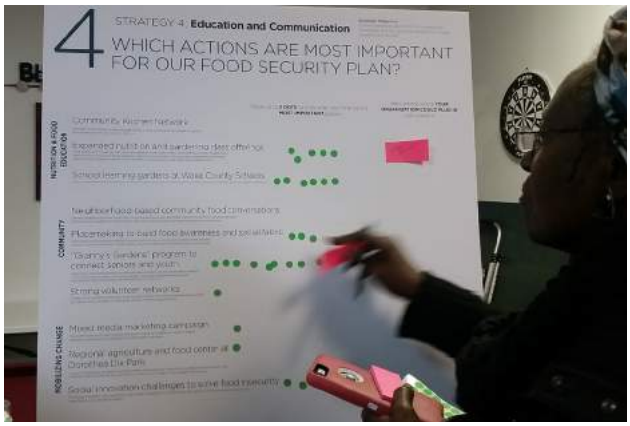
Surveys were distributed online and in-person throughout the County to engage as many different populations and stakeholder groups as possible. Online surveys, designed using SurveyMonkey, were distributed through Wake County media channels, Capital Area Food Network social media, and promotion by a range of partners. In-person surveys targeted locations likely to reach lower-income residents such as food pantry or county resource center waiting areas, or charitable food distribution sites. This informal targeting was designed to weight our survey responses with a greater proportion of those who may have experienced food insecurity first-hand. Because our survey intentions included idea gathering to inform Action recommendations, inclusion of lower-income respondents was seen as a strategy for reflecting the experiences of those experiencing food insecurity.

The survey was designed to be simple, short, easy to complete, and included combined closed- and open-ended questions. The surveys were available in both English and Spanish in both in-person and online formats.

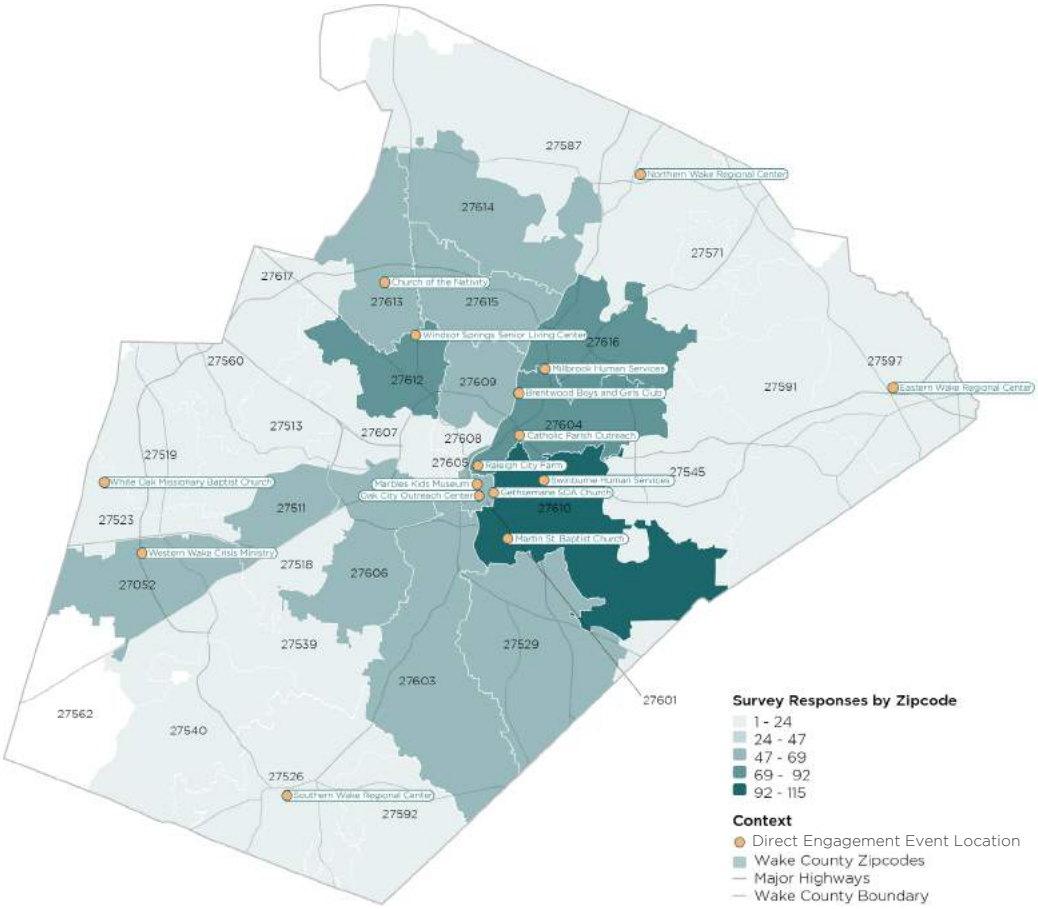
2. DIRECT ENGAGEMENT: PHASE 2

Direct engagement with people about topics of food security took place at existing partner events between December 2016 and January 2017. Sixteen of these "piggyback" events took place at locations such as community events, food pantries, or county resource centers. Goals of these pop-up engagements included building a broader understand of Wake County's food security landscape, raising awareness around the issue of food security, and gathering community ideas for creating food security in Wake County.

The geographic locations of direct engagement events were selected strategically to try and connect with all geographic areas of the County.



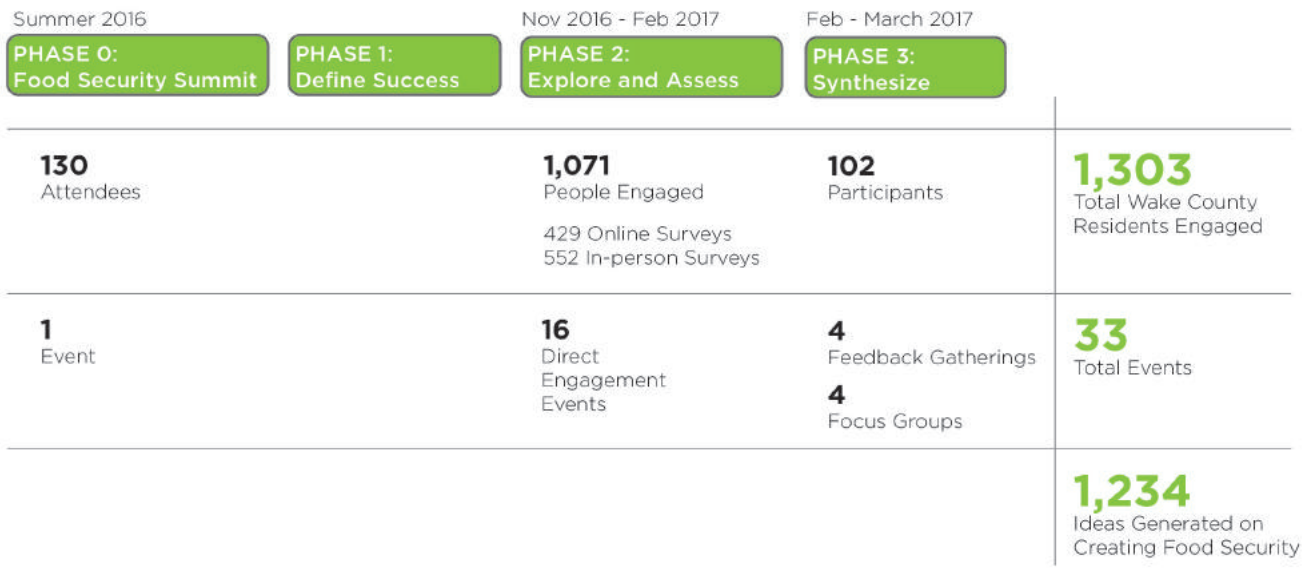




Phase 2 Engagement Map

The map above shows the geographic distribution of community survey responses (shown by ZIP code, with darker colors representing higher counts) and locations of in-person direct engagement events.

Breakdown of Engagement Results



3. FEEDBACK GATHERINGS: PHASE 3

Four public feedback gatherings were held during Phase 3 to share progress on the Plan, build buy-in around the planning process, and solicit public feedback on the preliminary actions developed in Phase 2. These sessions were announced publicly, and also targeted those involved in food initiatives or actively working on food security.

68 participants attended these sessions, heard planning updates, engaged in group dialogue, and provided feedback on all five strategy areas that make up the Plan. The gatherings were located in different parts of the County and were organized with diverse host partners in order to engage the broadest cross-section of the County.

4. FEEDBACK SURVEY: PHASE 3

An online survey was created and distributed to all partners as an opportunity to contribute feedback if they were unable to participate in one of the four feedback sessions. This SurveyMonkey survey received 8 responses during our Phase 3 collection period.

5. FOCUS GROUPS: PHASE 3

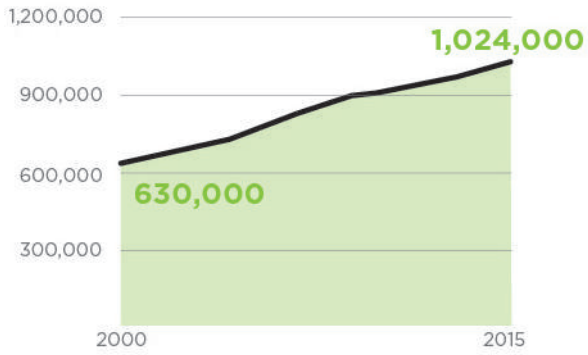
Four focus groups were held to gather further insight to inform Actions. One group gathered food waste experts to advise on Action recommendations related to food rescue, food recovery, and composting. A second group gathered a diverse set of food system professionals to brainstorm how grocery stores can best support food security within a culture of connections and nourishment. A third group, held in Knightdale, gathered food pantry volunteers to discuss issues specific to their experience. The last group, held in Southeast Raleigh, brought community members together to discuss how the recommended Actions would best support their communities.

Ten Key Findings

1. A RAPIDLY GROWING POPULATION MULTIPLIES THE COSTS OF FOOD INSECURITY

With over 1 million residents, Wake County is the second fastest growing county in the nation.

If food insecurity rates hold steady as the population grows, the number of food insecure residents will grow as well. One could assume that the food bank and food pantry system would need to add at least 1.1 million pounds of food - nearly 1 million meals - to their annual distribution by 2020. And combined with an estimated 49% higher health care cost for food insecure individuals[1] and youth impacts such as behavior problems, health issues, and reading losses by food insecure schoolchildren,[2] the burden of food insecurity will continue to impact Wake County as it grows unless food insecurity rates are brought down.



WAKE COUNTY POPULATION GROWTH
Sources: US Census, Wake County Trends and Outlook

2. THE SENIOR MEAL GAP: AGING IS AN ENORMOUS ISSUE

In 2014, there were 109,000 people over age 65 in Wake County. In 2034, this number will jump to 270,000, representing the largest - by far - expected growth in one segment of Wake County's population. Coupled with the fact that poverty increases as people age, this presents a massive food security challenge that is not being adequately addressed. Meals on Wheels, as one example, only provides meals to 2,600 unique individuals through the course of a year. In another example, Community Helpers of Knightdale is able to deliver a limited number of food boxes to homes, but does not have storage capacity to scale up or kitchen access to deliver meals to the growing senior population.

At the national level, the USDA reported that 3.6 million older Americans receive SNAP benefits, but millions more eligible seniors are not participating in this important program,[3] because they may not know it exists or know how to apply. In Wake County, these gaps in service and SNAP participation must be addressed if our seniors are to all enjoy healthy, independent lives.

AGES	2014	2034	% CHANGE 2014 - 2034
TOTAL	985,310	1,386,658	40.7%
0-17	246,737	278,502	12.9%
18-44	388,857	498,924	28.3%
45-59	204,046	278,142	36.3%
60+	145,670	331,090	**127.3%**
65+	98,729	247,999	**151.2%**
85+	10,690	31,472	**194.4%**

WAKE COUNTY AGING PROFILE
Source: NC Office of State Budget and Management

1 http://www.urban.org/urban-wire/how-food-insecurity-adding-our-health-care-costs
2 http://new.every1graduates.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Food-Insecurity-Two-Pager.pdf
3 http://www.frac.org/blog/frac-move-lessons-national-senior-center-conference

3. CHILDHOOD FOOD INSECURITY IS A COMPLEX CHALLENGE

1 in 5 youth struggle with hunger, and children are among those who suffer most from food insecurity. Effects of childhood hunger, including poor developmental progress and educational gaps, can last a lifetime.

Not surprisingly, no silver bullet programs exist to solve this. These problems can only be addressed by creating an integrated fabric of support for children, families, and schools. Existing resources include school, summer, childcare, and after-school meals. New investments in innovation and targeted initiatives can help overcome barriers and leverage existing resources into a coordinated, effective support system for childhood nutrition.

Among existing programs, data shows that eating breakfast has a significant positive benefit over a child's lifetime,[4] and models such as Universal Breakfast are being piloted in Wake County to explore ways to close the school meal gap. Similarly, the nutritional and developmental benefits of summer nutrition programs and food programs for weekends and school breaks are supported by solid evidence, and have found momentum in Wake County without yet reaching widespread implementation and impact.

4. FOOD INSECURITY IS NOT EVENLY SPREAD IN WAKE COUNTY

Our Wake County community survey data shows that food insecurity does not occur exclusively at low income levels, and other studies have shown the same pattern. Of course, the risk of food insecurity declines as household income increases, but researchers caution that poverty and food insecurity are not synonymous.[5] Many poor households are not food insecure, while many households with incomes above the poverty line struggle with food insecurity.

In our Wake County planning, this leads to two observations. First, is that food security solutions must address different situations of food insecurity at different income levels. A SNAP solution will not work for those earning too much. Second, a poverty map of Wake County may not neatly identify food insecurity hot spots. More complex understandings of urban and rural conditions, availability of resources, and other community factors are needed to generate smart local solutions for all parts of Wake County. In response, our Plan does not prescribe simplified place-based actions. Instead, it fosters greater communication and connectivity to help bring more resources to local groups capable of guiding local solutions and recommends a diverse set of Actions to address food insecurity across a range of socio-economic circumstances.



NUMBER OF WAKE COUNTY CHILDREN ELIGIBLE FOR **FREE AND REDUCED PRICE LUNCHES** IN WAKE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS, 2016

Source: NC Department of Public Instruction

4 https://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/school-breakfast/benefits-school-breakfast

5 Gunderson, Craig, Elaine Waxman, Emily Engelhard, Amy Satoh and Namrita Chawla. Map the Meal Gap 2013. Technical Brief. http://feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/hunger-studies/map-the-meal-gap.aspx

5. POVERTY AND FOOD INSECURITY MAY NOT BE SYNONYMOUS, BUT THEY ARE LINKED

Even though Finding #4 points out that poverty and food insecurity are not synonymous, and that one can exist without the other, there is still a strong association between these two issues. The connection between poverty and food insecurity is supported by research that cites food insecurity as a measure of poverty.[6]

This connection seems to be naturally understood by Wake County survey respondents. When asked how to solve the problem of food insecurity, the number one survey[7] response received, by a large margin, was that higher income was the best solution to solve food insecurity.

This finding points to a simple public awareness: increasing wages and increasing opportunities for living wage employment are important to the public in building food security. In response to this, and supported by research, a comprehensive approach to food security must address income and employment in addition to more direct food access issues.

6. INTEGRATED CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF FOOD INSECURITY: LEARNING FROM THE EXPERIENCE OF FOOD INSECURITY

Within a household, many interrelated factors contribute to food insecurity. A household-level view of food insecurity offers valuable insight into the connected challenges of dealing with income challenges and food access barriers. This perspective illuminates the fact that food security initiatives must address multiple issues.

Recent research in Southeast Raleigh, led by NCSU sociologists, helps explain the integrated causes of food insecurity through detailed interviews, providing a valuable human perspective. As one example for consideration: a mother of three in Southeast Raleigh earns $3,300 per year, takes classes at Wake Tech, and doesn't own a car. Travel to a grocery store is prohibitive, so she goes only once a month. Given these facts, it is easy to see that providing fresh food for her family is nearly impossible, and that it is not dependent on any single factor.

This and other first-person accounts are included in the Appendix as part of Voices Into Action's five-year study of food insecurity and poverty in Wake County.





6 https://www.sog.unc.edu/sites/www.sog.unc.edu/files/reports/2016-03-31%2020151227%20Documenting%20Poverty%202016-final.pdf

7 "Phase 2 Survey" of 981 Wake County residents. Survey conducted from November 2016 to January 2017. We received 429 online responses and 552 paper responses. The paper surveys were administered in-person at locations such as county resource centers, food pantries, and other places where food insecurity was likely to be high. See Appendix for survey details.

7. FOOD SECURITY RESOURCES ARE NOT WELL COORDINATED IN WAKE COUNTY

Results from in-depth interviews and community surveys revealed the importance of connecting and aligning resources, increasing visibility of services and programs, and establishing centralized systems or collective impact initiatives around shared targets and common goals.

As shown in the Food Security Asset Landscape, Wake County is home to many organizations and programs working to solve these problems, but they are not well linked.

A 2015 report on Wake County food insecurity found that "the myriad organizations (providing emergency food services) all work independently. A collaborative effort could coordinate existing services throughout the County and measure the combined efficacy of all efforts; this in turn would help to establish best practices, identify gaps in service, and inform future efforts."[8]

8. MORE FEDERAL FOOD DOLLARS NEED TO BE CAPTURED

In 2014, nearly $9 million dollars in federal food assistance was left uncaptured by summer nutrition programs in Wake County. In Wake County Public Schools in September of 2016, only 64% of eligible children ate federally-reimbursed free and reduced price (FRP) lunch, and only 33% participated in federally reimbursable breakfast. Looking at school lunch alone, assuming that half of FRP students are receiving free meals and that September's data is accurate for the whole year, $6.6 million of annual food purchases to feed low-income children in Wake County is left uncaptured.

SNAP, formerly called Food Stamps, is another underutilized federal food program. Only 78% of those eligible actually enroll in SNAP, and the 22% of missed SNAP spending could help fight food insecurity and also add revenue to the local food economy. When SNAP-eligible residents don't enroll in these benefit programs, federal spending is missed that could be helping feed people in Wake County.



64%

OF CHILDREN ENROLLED IN FREE AND REDUCED LUNCH ACTUALLY EAT LUNCH



78%

OF THOSE ELIGIBLE FOR SNAP IN WAKE COUNTY ARE ENROLLED

8 Food Insecurity among Children and Families in Wake County. July 29, 2015

9. ENOUGH FOOD EXISTS FOR EVERYONE, BUT IT IS NOT DISTRIBUTED EFFECTIVELY AND TOO MUCH GOES TO THE LANDFILL

A standard figure is that 40% of our food is wasted at some point between the farm and our kitchens. The cost of this waste is shared by everyone. Edible waste could be rescued to add significant volume to the food bank and food pantry system. Food recovery challenges could spark ideas for innovative enterprise solutions. Compost and food recovery solutions could help add vitally important jobs to counter the income and employment gap that drives food insecurity.

WAKE COUNTY'S ANNUAL FOOD WASTE IS

107,000 TONS

WHICH IS EQUIVALENT TO

18 GROCERY BAGS OF FOOD THROWN OUT BY EVERYONE PER YEAR, OR 214 LBS OF FOOD PER PERSON GOING STRAIGHT TO THE DUMP

Source: NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources, 2012

10. NEARLY EVERYONE GOES TO THE GROCERY STORE

According to national surveys, most households do the majority of their food shopping at supermarkets or supercenters.[9] Instead of asking about food shopping, our survey just asked Wake County residents how often they visited a grocery store, and our survey findings[10] showed that 92% of Wake County respondents visit a grocery store at least once per week. This statistic includes 539 out of 981 respondents who reported an annual household income below the 200% poverty level.

While our survey does not claim statistical significance, this finding suggests that grocery stores are visited regularly by nearly everyone. If food security policymakers were looking for a well-trafficked central location to reach a wide cross-section of Wake County residents, grocery stores could serve that purpose, and through the right initiative become one-stop locations to connect people with nutritious food, education, and social service resources.



92%

OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS REPORTED VISITING A GROCERY STORE AT LEAST ONCE PER WEEK

9 https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/eib138/eib138_errata.pdf?v=42636
10 "Phase 2 Survey"

4. Appendices



"This healthy eating stuff, it's here to stay, and we now have everything we need to seize the opportunity and give all our kids the healthy futures they so richly deserve."

-Michelle Obama

The following materials are included for review and download in the online folder here: Website.here.com

Food Insecurity among Children and Families in Wake County, 2015

Follow-up Report: Moving Beyond Hunger Summit, 2015

Whole Measures Food System Data Collection, completed 2015

Voices Into Action Project Resources: Community Food Assets and "Lived Experiences of Food Insecurity in Wake County"

Results of Community Survey, Winter 2016-17

Wake County Food Security and Food Resources Maps

Datasets collected through this Plan

City of Raleigh Food Policy Audit

How to Calculate the Meal Gap: Sonoma County Example

Wake County Agricultural Economic Development Plan

Triangle Farms for Food: Strategy and Action Plan



WAKE COUNTY
NORTH CAROLINA

WAKE COUNTY
PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

NC State University
A&T State University
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EXTENSION
Empowering People · Providing Solutions

