

County & Cooperative Extension Partnerships to Further Food Resilience in NC

A Multi-County Panel

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Introduction & Appreciation

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Outline

1. Introduction
2. Guilford & Role of Extension in Food Systems
3. Durham County Farm Campus Program
4. Nash County Farmers Market Program
5. Wake County Tangelo Program
6. Long Term Food Security
7. Question & Answer

NC Cooperative Extension

- N.C. Cooperative Extension partners with communities to deliver education and technology that enrich the lives, land and economy of North Carolina.
- We improve the lives of North Carolinians and grow our state.

Fostering Resilience



Guilford County



Guilford County: Food Security Development

- Foundations

- Grassroots community activity
- Community voiced need: less isolation, more collaboration
- Staff with previous experience in food security work
- Alignment with ARPA goals and priority populations

- Focus

- Breaking barriers and building trust



Guilford County: Food Security Development

Program Goals:

1. Create opportunities for connection and collaboration
2. Foster a culture of data sharing
3. Create a countywide food security plan



Guilford County: Building Community Capacity

- Organizational structure
 - Onboarding staff
 - Advisory Council
- Increasing Collaboration
 - Grant writing workshop
 - Bringing farmers and faith leaders together
- Data Systems
 - FUSE Corps Fellow (Oct '23)
 - Collaboration with Public Health



Guilford County: Next Steps

- Increasing collaboration
 - Community input sessions
 - Experiential walk about
 - Equity in the Food System training
- Fostering a system for sharing data
 - Partnership with FUSE Corps for data-focused fellowship
 - Collaboration with other county departments (Public Health, Emergency Management, etc.)
- Development of county-wide food security plan
 - Define who is working within food system and opportunities for collaboration
 - Tracking progress towards short, intermediate, and long-term goals
 - Share successes so far and priorities for the future



Durham County



Cooperative Extension

Feasibility Study of Durham County “Farm Campus”

This project is being supported, in whole or in part, by federal award number NR223A750001G046 awarded to Durham County, North Carolina by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production Planning Grant.



Cooperative Extension

Background

- High food insecurity (short- and long-term)
- Aging food producers
- Significant inequities in the food system
- Largely vertically integrated, industrialized food system focused on profit that can result in:
 - Unsustainable environmental and agricultural practices
 - Poor working conditions and unfair labor practices
 - Limited capacity to pivot in response to crisis

Purpose

- Launch the next generation of farmers by increasing access to land, infrastructure, knowledge, and markets for new and beginning farmers
- Foster racial equity and development of generational wealth by centering Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) and other marginalized communities

Main Features to Explore



- Incubator farm
- Post-harvest food education facility
- Commissary/shared kitchen space & meeting space
- Healing garden

Incubator Farm

- Large site
- Train new, beginner, aspiring food producers on small, urban-scale, and innovative sustainable agriculture techniques
- Prioritizing BIPOC, young adults, femme identifying genders, veterans, immigrants/refugees, formerly justice-involved people, and low-income people
- Shared farming equipment & tools
- Education & demonstration projects
- Business development





Post-Harvest Food Education

- Aggregation space
- Cold storage
- Processing
- Marketing & direct-to-consumer sales



Commissary/Shared Kitchen & Meeting Space

- Multiple commercial kitchen spaces
- Culinary teaching kitchen
- Classroom and meeting space
- Indoor, controlled-environment agriculture





Healing Garden

- Culinary and medicinal herbs & flowers
- Reconnecting with the land
- Therapeutic Horticulture
- Open to all community

Nash County



Nash County Farmers Market and CSA Program



- Owned and Operated by Nash County
- NC Cooperative Extension, Nash County Center is entrusted with the management and operations of the market
- Full Time Farmers Market Manager
 - Market Runs April - Dec every Saturday
 - May - July - Tuesday Market
 - Manage, Coordinate & Distribution of CSA Boxes (Community Supported Agriculture)
 - Obtain Grants and Sponsorships for Events and support AG Advocacy (Over \$500,00 in 2022)

CSA: Community Supported Agriculture

- What is CSA?
- Grant Funded 2021 - 2024
- Target Audience: Seniors
- Upper Coastal Plains Council of Governments Grant
- Produced & Delivered over 18,000 boxes to Seniors in Nash, Edgecombe, Halifax, Northampton and Wilson



SNAP/EBT Dollars at the Market



Attention

Fresh Buck tokens expire May 13th.
New Double Buck tokens will
replace them. Double SNAP/EBT
still offered at the Market



SNAP/EBT tokens will not expire

Total Amount of SNAP/EBT and Fresh Buck Benefits Spent by Market Customers

- July to December 2019 - \$1,017
- April to December 2020 - \$27,688
- April to December 2021 - \$50,754
- April to December 2022 - \$41,733
- April to June 2023 - \$10,066

Agriculture Economic Boost

- Small Agriculture Business Growth
- Development of Local Food Economy
- Increase in younger generation farmers
- CSA Box Program has helped farmers expand and diversify their products
- Vendor increase at markets - more pop-up markets to meet the demand of people wanting locally grown products
- Farmers Market brings tourism dollars



Fresh, Local and Delicious

Increase Food Access



Food Insecurity in Nash County

- Many areas of Nash County are food deserts
- Transportation to the Market is difficult for the underserved population
- Cost of food produce locally can cost more than the same items in chain grocery stores

Nash County Farmers Market Providing Solutions to Food Insecurity

- CSA Boxes for seniors and others in the community
- Refrigerator Truck to help with delivery of food
- Market will begin a CSA box program other than the Senior Box Program for pick up at the market/expand current CSA Program
- Continue to seek funds to increase SNAP/EBT for customers
- Working with local cities and towns to help create pop-up market events
- Creating a Value Added Approved Kitchen for Vendors

Wake County

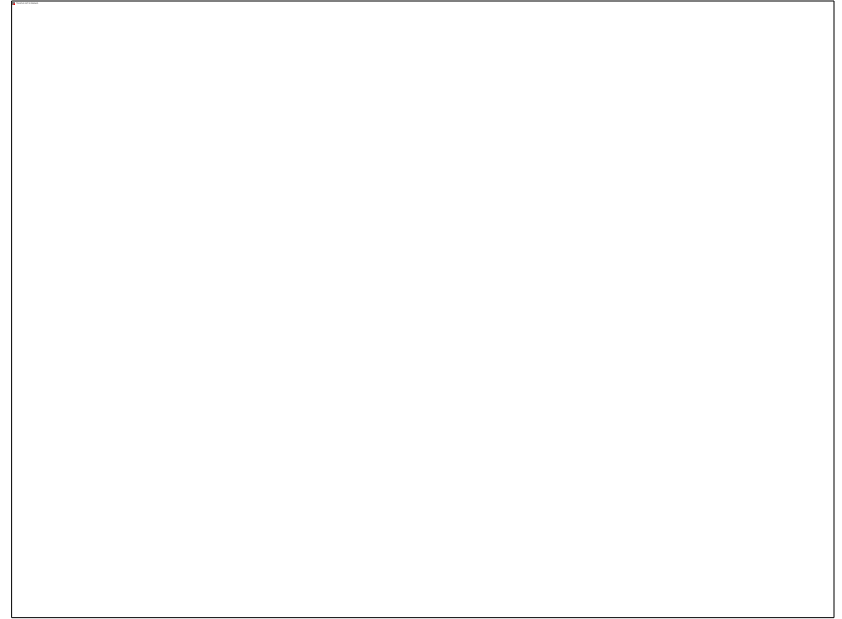


Wake County NC - Food Plan 2023 & Tangelo Case Studies

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Wake County Community Food Systems Team Priorities

- **Food Access**
- **Local Food Economy**
- **Farmland Preservation & Farmer Support**
- **Nutrition Education**
- **Partner Capacity Building**



Covid 19 and our Food System

Supply chain shortfalls

Chronic diet related illnesses & higher Covid19 complications and/or death rates

Heavily reliant on unsustainable volunteer systems

Increased desire for institutional sourcing of fresh, local produce & diversifying markets

Emergence of new tools & innovations to address food access



Wake County 2023 Food Security Plan Update

Healthy Farms & Gardens

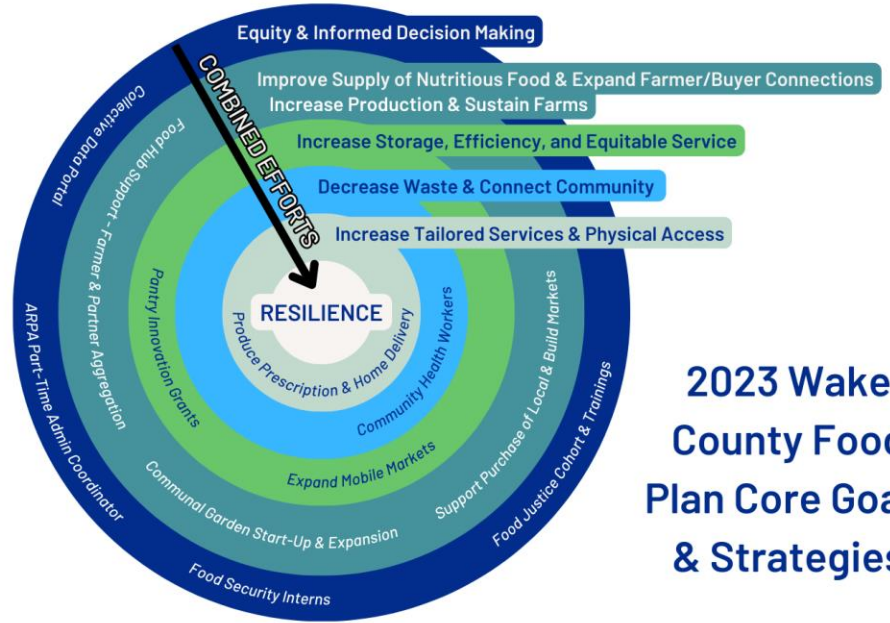
- Increase sales & preserve Farmland
- Increase production

Healthy Markets & Distribution Systems

- More locally sourced products
- Build capacity of existing program partners

Healthy Citizens

- Improved access
- Strong engagement
- Integrated services



**2023 Wake
County Food
Plan Core Goals
& Strategies**

Wake County Case Study - TANGELO

Improve **health** & reduce **health care costs**

Increase **access** for transportation limited residents

Support **farmers** by purchasing local

Track **health improvements** & share **helpful resources**

Streamline **service delivery** models

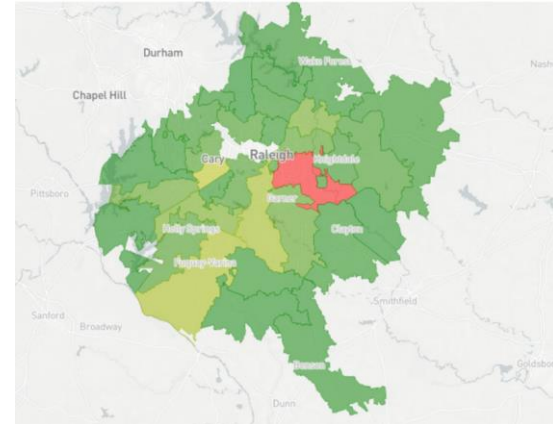


Tangelo Mobile Grocery Delivery App Pilot

2023 NACO Award Winner

500 Clients twice per month produce delivery for 6 months

- 76% redemption rate - 385 families
- \$158,750 invested in local produce
- 50,484 pounds of delivered to the doorstep
- 21% average dietary improvement
- 49% of population saw reduction in BMI
- \$571,710.00 in Health Care Savings



Tying it all Together: A Web of Impact

Building a sustainable, more equitable, regional food system supports our ability to be resilient to climate change and other disasters, which supports long-term food security for all in NC.

Additionally, “Secure access to food can produce wide ranging positive impacts, including:

- Economic growth and job creation
- Poverty reduction
- Trade opportunities
- Increased global security and stability
- Improved health and healthcare.”

USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture



Q & A

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