

Healthy Communities Strategy

Healthy Food Access in Community Venues

Strategy Purpose

Improving access to healthy foods is an important component to improving overall public health. Across North Carolina, areas with high levels of poverty and limited financial resources often have high levels of food insecurity, which often leads to worse health outcomes for residents in these areas. Key settings for achieving expanded access to healthy foods include non-retail community venues, such as farmers' markets, farm stands, food pantries, mobile markets, pop-up markets, and Community Supported Agriculture programs. This strategy focuses on increasing the number of these non-retail community venues that begin offering healthy foods, and/or increasing the number of existing non-retail community venues that enhance or expand the services they provide to enable greater access to healthy foods.



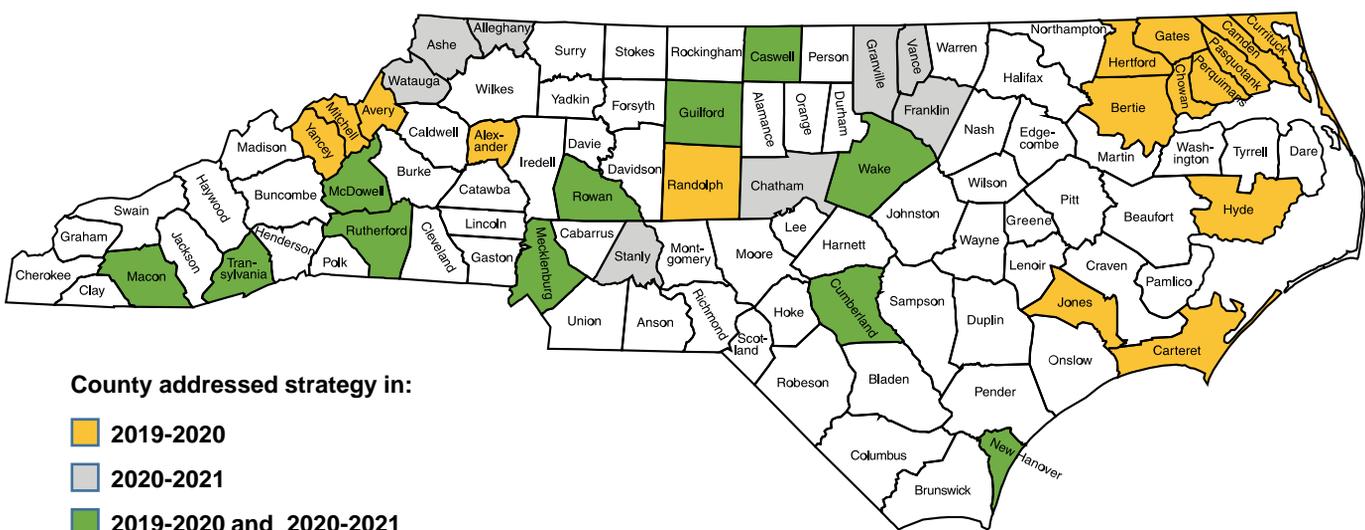
How can community venues expand healthy food access?

Local Health Departments (LHDs) addressing this strategy can work with community venues to expand healthy food access. For this strategy, LHDs work with:

- Farmers' Markets
 - Farm Stands
 - Food Pantries
 - Mobile Markets
 - Pop-Up Markets, and
 - Community Supported Agriculture Programs
- Ways these venues can enhance healthy food access may include:*
- Beginning to offer SNAP benefits
 - Increasing the number of vendors at a venue
 - Adopting a Fruit and Vegetable Incentive Program
 - Increasing the number of locations a venue serves
 - Expanding hours of operation, and/or
 - Increasing access to transportation to the venue.

Strategy Participation

In total, 22 District or Local Health Departments covering 35 counties worked on this strategy from June 2019 to March 2021.



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Statewide Results

Since June 2019, LHDs addressing this strategy have worked with **14** new community venues to begin providing access to healthy foods, and **28** community venues already providing access to healthy foods to enhance their access. Among the existing venues who enhanced access to healthy foods:



5 expanded hours of operation



10 increased the number of produce vendors at the venue



2 adopted a Fruit and Vegetable Incentive Program



9 began accepting SNAP

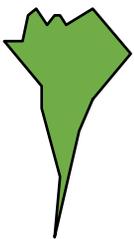


3 increased access to transportation to the venue



8 increased the number of locations the venue serves

Local Spotlight:



In partnership with Feast Down East Local Motive Mobile Farmers Market (FDE), New Hanover County Public Health's (NHCPH) Healthy Communities team promoted and expanded access to healthy food options for residents of New Hanover County. FDE mobile market sites sell locally sourced foods grown and raised from over 30 local farmers through the Feast Down East Food Hub in Burgaw, NC.

NHCPH helped to develop promotional materials for FDE as they grew their footprint in the county. Originally starting with 10 sites located at the City of Wilmington Housing Authority complexes, NHCPH assisted FDE as they expanded by two more sites, with three more in the works. NCHPH also assisted FDE by surveying their patrons on the type of produce they want offered at their sites, which is key to sustaining expanded healthy food access.

NHCPH distributed recipe cards and market location schedules for where and when the various market sites would be open, in addition to developing a digital media campaign to educate the community on this amazing resource. They also worked in concert with FDE as they adopted a fruit and vegetable incentive program, called "Fresh Bucks" for SNAP recipients, through which SNAP recipients receive a dollar-for-dollar match for benefits redeemed at the Mobile Farmers Market, for up to a total of \$20 in Fresh Bucks. Despite real challenges presented by Covid-19, including delays in expansion of new planned sites, NHCPH continued its close work with FDE to print and distribute food safety information, promote Covid testing to customers, and plan for expansion of new mobile market sites in 2021 and 2022.

