

# MCDOWELL COUNTY

## Community Food Snapshot



NORTH CAROLINA		MCDOWELL	
Population	10,383,620	Population	45,507
People of color	29%	People of color	9%
# of farms	46,418	# of farms	333
Acres of farmland	8,430,522	Acres of farmland	22,997

**HEALTHY PEOPLE**

Population eating 5 servings of fruit & vegetables per day

**17%, 2017, region**

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18%, NC

Black population with diabetes

**43%, 2013, NC**

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17%, white population

Residents without health insurance

**12%, 2016**

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12%, NC

**VIBRANT FARMS & GARDENS**

Farms with direct-to-consumer sales

**15%, 2017**

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9%, NC

Young farmers - < 35 years old

**8.2%, 2017**

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7.5%, NC

Black, indigenous, people of color producers

**6%, 2017**

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94%, white producers

**EQUITY**

Children that are food insecure

**22%, 2017**

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20%, NC

Black population with low access to a store

**0.15%, 2015**

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4%, white population

Households receiving SNAP benefits

**20%, 2012-2016**

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14%, NC

**STRONG COMMUNITIES**

Voter turnout (general election)

**69%, 2016**

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69%, NC

Local workforce employed outside of county

**55%, 2015**

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61%, NC

Black population with Bachelor's degree

**17%, 2017**

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43%, white population

**THRIVING ECONOMIES**

Value of agricultural products sold

**\$24.6 million, 2017**

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\$12.9 billion, NC

% change in loans to small businesses

**-73%, 2005-2015**

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-61%, rural counties

Renters with unaffordable rent

**38%, 2013-2017**

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49%, NC

**RESILIENT ECOSYSTEMS**

Farms practicing no or reduced tillage

**14%, 2017**

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21%, NC

Average farm size

**69 acres, 2017**

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182 acres, NC

Air pollution particulate matter

**9 µg/m<sup>3</sup>, 2012**

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12, air quality standard

Metrics are organized by the six Whole Measures of a Community-based Food System, compared to state level or demographic data in the same year, and based on input from North Carolina food councils. These metrics are connected to a systemic approach to building an equitable food system.



# COMMUNITY FOOD SNAPSHOTS



Our ability to lead a healthy, productive life is determined by many factors, many connected to the food we grow and eat.

We use the six Whole Measures of Community-based Food Systems to guide a broad understanding of a food environment and outreach to potential stakeholders. These measures highlight the values we want to see in our food system such as: Equity, Resilient Ecosystems, Vibrant Farms & Gardens, Thriving Economies, Strong Communities, and Healthy People.

This Community Food Snapshot is designed to encourage conversation and connections through a county's food environment. Multiple partners and perspectives are important to learn, innovate, and make a difference. These data points are not the whole story, just a starting place to ask more questions and drive better understanding. This data spurs conversation to explore underlying barriers and opportunities for collaboration.

## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Talk with your county partners already collecting data, and ask about their priorities. (ie, County Health Department Community Health Assessments, Agriculture Preservation Board, School Systems)
- Ask your county commissioners what they are doing to promote healthy eating and to support farmers.
- Join your local food council to inspire connection and collective action that improves healthy food opportunities.

## BENEFITS OF MULTI-STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

*“After teaching people about healthy eating, you can’t send them back into a food desert.’ The benefit of the food council, she says, is that it helps “look at things on a systems level.”*

- Alyssa Mouton: Health Education Supervisor, Community Health Education, Gaston County Department of Health & Human Services

*“It was eye-opening for me to learn about the obstacles for local farmers to sell directly to schools.”*

- Penny Rich: Chair, Board of County Commissioners, Orange County, NC

*When talking about partnership and joint funding for her position, Joni says “It’s how communities should work. I feel like I’m supported by my whole community.”*

- Joni Torres: Community Garden Technician, Cooperative Extension

**Data sources:** Feeding America; Food Research & Action Center; NC State Institute for Emerging Issues, ReConnect Initiative; NC Division of Health, NC Justice Center, Budget & Tax Center; NC Rural Center; NC State Board of Elections; Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s County Health Rankings; US Census Bureau; USDA Census of Agriculture; USDA Economic Research Service; USDA Economic Research Service