



Memorandum

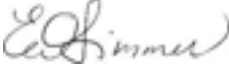
Date: January 25, 2024

To: The Honorable Thomas C. Alexander
President of the Senate

The Honorable Harvey S. Peeler, Jr.
Chair, Senate Finance Committee

The Honorable G. Murrell Smith, Jr.
Speaker of the House of Representatives

The Honorable Bruce W. Bannister
Chair, House Ways and Means Committee

From: Edward Simmer, MD, Director 
SC Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC)
Chair, Food Security Council

Subject: **Proviso 34.70 Food Security Council Report to the General Assembly**

It has been an honor to serve the people of South Carolina as chair of the Food Security Council (FSC). The council, which is scheduled to sunset on Jan. 31, 2024, was comprised of dedicated members from eight state agencies that play a role in reducing hunger across our great state. Together, as members of the council, we worked diligently over the past six months to determine causes of food insecurity, identify existing programs and gaps in those programs, propose solutions, and collaboratively address the pressing issue of food insecurity affecting our state. This report is a product of that work and provides a comprehensive evaluation of the current state of food security in South Carolina and core council findings and recommendations to improve food security for consideration by the General Assembly.

Despite the commendable efforts of state agencies, private organizations, and individual South Carolinians, South Carolina continues to grapple with the highest rate of hunger in the country.



Today, **15% of South Carolinians face low food security**, meaning they do not have enough healthy food. The available food is often not very good, lacking fruit and vegetables. Meanwhile, **7% of South Carolinians have very low food security**, meaning they do not have enough food and go hungry. Sadly, this includes many children.

The following provides a summary of the FSC's work in meeting the requirements of Proviso 34.70 of the 2023-2024 Appropriations Act.

State Agency Programs Addressing Food Insecurity

The FSC identified and examined twenty-nine existing programs that aim to improve South Carolinians' access to food. The FSC member agencies work toward this goal by administering programs that offer prepared foods or other food products; monthly monetary benefits; and education on nutrition, physical activity, and meal budgeting. Additionally, many agencies already collaborate and coordinate with each other to deliver these services.

Identified Gaps in Existing Programs and Services

Through extensive research, stakeholder feedback, and thorough discussions, the FSC has identified critical gaps in programs and services that contribute to this emergent situation. These gaps can be described in three categories:

1. Access to healthy food:

- **Food deserts:** Some areas of South Carolina, especially rural places, lack access to healthy food options. Often in our smaller communities the only retail food establishments are dollar stores and convenience stores, which often do not sell healthy foods, such as fruit and vegetables.
- **Transportation:** Many people in South Carolina struggle to get reliable transportation, making it hard to get healthy food.
- **Limited Program Coverage:** Many of the state's current programs do not reach enough places in the state.

2. Cost:

- **Low income:** More and more people in South Carolina cannot afford healthy food.
- **Benefit Accessibility Issues:** Some eligible people do not know they can get benefits or how to apply. Also, some who struggle to afford food are not eligible for benefits.

3. Lack of Coordination:

- Despite good efforts, there needs to be better coordination between private organizations, local government, and state agencies. Some initiatives overlap or do not efficiently fill gaps.

Council Recommendations for Consideration

The FSC has diligently proposed a set of comprehensive recommendations aimed at tackling these identified gaps and challenges. An overview of the council's recommendations is outlined below.

Access:

- **Fund "Change SC" Program Expansion:** The program is currently in the pilot phase. The recommendation is to fund statewide implementation. This program aims to amplify the

work of existing food hubs and aggregators. Its goal is to provide healthy food to people in food deserts and educate them to make informed decisions.

- **Increase Promotion and Awareness of Summer Program Food Service (Summer Break Café):** Through various measures implemented by the S.C. Department of Education, this recommendation aims to increase the number of sponsors and open sites that provide meal service to school children during the summer months.
- **Address Challenges Facing Food Donation:** Enhance state laws related to liability protection and increase education and resources on donation liability protection and where and how to donate excess food.
- **Expand Community Garden Programs:** In collaboration with a number of local and regional stakeholders, this recommendation focuses on providing necessary resources through DHEC's local health departments and Clemson Extension's county offices to encourage communities to establish and maintain their own gardens.
- **Increase Availability of Fresh Produce in Variety/Convenience Stores** This recommendation is a request to create legislation to implement incentives, such as tax credits, for stores located in food deserts. The tax credits could be contingent on stocking a certain percentage of fresh produce and other nutritious foods and require store participation in the WIC and SNAP programs.
- **Create Centralized Food Resource Map:** This recommendation would create a food map containing food distribution centers, food pantries, and food banks, farmers' markets, roadside markets, and community-supported agriculture, as well as other food-related information. An existing online map already includes some of this information, but it can be improved. The recommendation seeks to establish clear agency ownership, foster ongoing coordination and information sharing among multiple agencies, and ensure the inclusion of as many sites as possible.
- **Promote Participation in the WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP):** This recommendation supports funding to promote farmer participation in the Women, Infant and Children (WIC) FMNP program in the communities in the state most in need. The campaign would educate farmers on the benefits of the program and why their participation matters.
- **Identify and implement strategies to remove physical barriers to accessing healthy foods:** This recommendation supports funding to implement state and local level strategies that address barriers to accessing nutritious food, such as lack of reliable transportation, geographic issues, and physical/mobility constraints.

Cost

- **Explore Potential of "No-Wrong" Door Application and/or Eligibility System:** This recommendation explores the potential of creating a "no-wrong" door application and/or eligibility system to streamline access to public programs and services, including those focused on food security, eliminating redundant paperwork and reducing administrative burdens for individuals seeking assistance.
- **Expand Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program:** This recommendation is to support funding to increase the voucher amount for seniors.
- **Increase Gross Income Limit for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance (SNAP) Benefits:** This recommendation seeks to raise the gross income limit to 150 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) to significantly increase the number of South Carolina residents potentially eligible for federal assistance.

- **Allow Qualifying Persons with a Drug Felony Conviction to be Eligible to Receive SNAP Benefits:** South Carolina is the only state that has not passed legislation to modify or lift this ban. Supporting access to SNAP benefits for those with felony drug convictions is an investment in rehabilitation, reducing the likelihood of recidivism, and associated costs of incarceration.
- **Implement and Fund Summer EBT Program in Summer 2025:** The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023 ended the Pandemic EBT (P-EBT) program and authorized the Summer EBT program, a new (permanent) state option beginning in 2024. However, the new law provides funding for only 50% of any administrative expenses associated with Summer EBT. State agencies involved in Summer EBT would need to request additional funds in the state budget to cover the remaining 50%, which likely can't be funded and implemented until Summer 2025. Adopting this program would help reduce food insecurity across SC.

Coordination

- **Create or Invest in Statewide Organization to Implement FSC Findings and Recommendations:** As the FSC will dissolve in January, this recommendation seeks to provide funding for a statewide organization, such as the SC Food Policy Council, to continue implementing and measuring the effectiveness of the recommendations from the FSC report and identifying additional opportunities to reduce food insecurity.
- **Establish Statewide Web-based Care Coordination Referral System:** This recommendation is aimed at streamlining access to essential services, including those focused on food insecurity, which has the potential to improve the overall health and well-being of South Carolinians, resulting in a more productive workforce and reduced strain on public resources.
- **Increase Coordination between SNAP and WIC:** This recommendation aims to enhance collaborate between DSS and DHEC to identify and implement strategies, such as targeted marketing and outreach activities, data sharing, and streamlining the application process to maximize the number of eligible families enrolled in WIC.

These recommendations, which the council developed based on research findings, stakeholder insights, and a review of existing programs are intended to guide positive change, and improve food security in our state. They are explained in greater detail in our report. All recommendations and the report were approved unanimously by the council for submission to the General Assembly.

I am grateful to the following members of the council as well as those within our communities for their willingness to share their valuable insights and take part in this important study of food insecurity within our state.

- Dr. Rhea Bentley – South Carolina State University, Public Service Activities
- Virgie Chambers – South Carolina Department of Education
- Amber Gillum – South Carolina Department of Social Services
- Rowan Goodrich – South Carolina Department on Aging
- Dr. Tarana Khan – Clemson University, Public Service Activities
- Dr. Kevin Wessinger – South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
- Bentley White – South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control
- Chris Whitmire – South Carolina Department of Agriculture

I am also appreciative of the General Assembly for the opportunity to submit our findings and recommendations to you. Thank you for your attention to this critical matter, and we are happy to

answer any additional questions you may have. Please reach out to me at (803) 898-0124 or via email at simmered@dhec.sc.gov. We look forward to working with you to ensure every South Carolinian is food secure.



**SOUTH CAROLINA
FOOD SECURITY COUNCIL
REPORT**

JANUARY 31, 2024

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The South Carolina Food Security Council (FSC), through proviso 34.70 of the 2023-2024 Appropriations Act, has examined the state of current services provided to South Carolinians of all ages and has developed recommendations for service improvements for the South Carolina General Assembly's consideration. These enhancements aim to provide expanded opportunities for South Carolinians from infancy to senior populations to achieve food and nutrition security and, in turn, achieve healthier life outcomes.

Throughout the development process, the FSC received input from state agencies represented on the Council and other stakeholders with a vested interest in improving food and nutrition security in the state. Working within the limits of agency and program capacity, recommendations were drafted that focus on improving the following high-level topics.



Investments in food and nutrition programming



Collaboration, communication, and coordination between state agencies, stakeholders, and local communities



Education about, and access to, healthy and nutritious food options



The state's capacity to address existing gaps in service

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



The Food Security Council's success depended on the expertise, contribution, and collaboration of several people dedicated to strengthening South Carolina's food policies and programs. The following individuals and groups provided invaluable support and knowledge throughout the meeting and report development process.

COUNCIL

Dr. Rhea Bentley
Virgie Chambers
Amber Gillum
Rowan Goodrich
Dr. Tarana Khan
Dr. Kevin Wessinger
Bentley White
Chris Whitmire

South Carolina State University – Public Service Activities
South Carolina Department of Education
South Carolina Department of Social Services
South Carolina Department on Aging
Clemson University – Public Service Activities
South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC)
South Carolina Department of Agriculture

Dr. Edward Simmer* *Chairman, DHEC Agency Director*

**Non-voting member*

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(Provided by DHEC)

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Kayla David
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Cassandra Harris
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PRESENTERS

South Carolina Food Policy Council
South Carolina State Nutrition Action Coalition
DHEC
Clemson University Extension
Pick 42 Foundation

KEY TERMS



Throughout this document, the following terms may be used to describe the current services provided and recommendations for improving food and nutrition security.

High food security¹	No reported indications of food-access problems or limitations.
Marginal food security¹	One or two reported indications of food-access problems or limitations – typically of anxiety over food sufficiency or shortage of food in the house. Little or no indication of changes in diets or food intake.
Low food security¹	Reports of reduced quality, variety, or desirability of diet. Little or no indication of reduced food intake.
Very low food security¹	Reports of multiple indications of disrupted eating patterns and reduced food intake, of one or more household members due to lack of money and other resources for food.
Nutrition security²	All Americans have consistent and equitable access to healthy, safe, affordable foods essential to optimal health and well-being.
Food desert³	Areas where people have limited access to a variety of healthy and affordable food.
Food swamp⁴	Areas with a high density of establishments selling high-calorie fast food and junk food, relative to healthier food options.

INTRODUCTION



Food insecurity⁵, which is the lack of consistent access to enough food for every person in a household to live an active, healthy life, is an ongoing health issue in the United States. South Carolina is not exempt from this problem, as the state has experienced a significant increase in food insecurity over the past decade.⁶ To better manage this growing issue, the Food Security Council (FSC) was established through proviso 34.70 of the 2023-2024 Appropriations Act to identify the programs currently available to South Carolinians of all ages that help address food security, evaluate opportunities to improve existing services and to identify gaps and barriers in providing those services, and make recommendations to improve food security in the state to the General Assembly.

PROVISO

Proviso 34.70 of the 2023-2024 Appropriations Act⁷ states that the FSC is created and housed in the Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) with the purpose of:

1. examining all state agency programs that address food insecurity in the state by providing monetary benefits or meal services that cover infants through senior citizens;
2. identifying gaps in service, particularly for the most vulnerable populations; and
3. making recommendations on improvements to services and additional programs that can address the gaps in services.

Administrative services and support are provided by DHEC. The FSC shall provide a report to the President of the Senate, Speaker of the House of Representatives, Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, and Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee. Upon submission of the report, the FSC is dissolved.

COUNCIL SCOPE + OVERVIEW

The FSC met eight times from August 2023 to January 2024. The following timeline and roadmap show the general FSC process and action items. Public notices were posted to the public and news outlets for each meeting. Meetings were available for viewing via Microsoft Teams. A website was also developed (scdhec.gov/fsc), which provides an overview of the FSC’s purpose, members, and meeting agendas, minutes, and presentations and other materials.



August 2023

COUNCIL CONVENED + GOALS ESTABLISHED

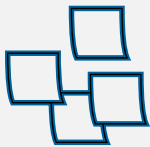
The FSC was convened, and members reviewed the proviso requirements. A plan was made for establishing the goals of the FSC and determining the best path forward. A proposed timeline and roadmap for key deliverables was developed.



September 2023

STAKEHOLDER INPUT RECEIVED

The FSC invited a number of stakeholders to participate in each meeting, and gave them the opportunity to present on their initiatives related to improving food security. This information was used to help inform and develop draft recommendations.



October-November 2023

KEY DELIVERABLES DRAFTED + DISCUSSED

Throughout the fall, the FSC inventoried each agency’s current food-related program offerings to determine gaps in services and areas of improvement. Based on these findings, the FSC discussed and formed initial draft recommendations.



December 2023-January 2024

RECOMMENDATIONS + REPORT FINALIZED

Using information presented and collected, the FSC drafted final recommendations for each Council member to vote on for inclusion in the final report. The FSC also voted on the content of the final report for submission to the General Assembly.

STAKEHOLDER + PUBLIC INPUT

During the first few months of meetings, several stakeholder groups were encouraged to present information on their efforts to improve food security in South Carolina and participate in the meeting discussions. These stakeholders also provided the FSC with their recommendations for improvements, which the FSC considered as part of their initial recommendation discussions. Upon voting on the final draft recommendations, the FSC posted the approved recommendations on the FSC website and commenced a public comment period on December 21, 2023, to receive feedback from interested parties. The FSC received twenty-four comments from six parties by the January 2, 2024, close of the comment period. A copy of all comments received is in Attachment A on page 67. Where appropriate, comments have been condensed for readability and length.

FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS + REPORT

To fulfill the requirements of the proviso, the FSC members individually put forth recommendations on improving services and expanding and supporting initiatives to reduce the impacts of food insecurity on South Carolinians. Each member who proposed recommendations presented them at the December 19, 2023, meeting; the FSC then received written public comment and voted as a body at the January 4, 2024, meeting on which recommendations to approve as final for inclusion in this report to the General Assembly. These recommendations are discussed in detail beginning on page 36.

KEY FINDINGS



South Carolina is one of a handful of states with the highest prevalence of food insecurity and has **the highest prevalence in the nation for very low food security**.⁶ Specific conditions reported by households that are considered food insecure include:

- | Worrying about food running out
- | Buying food that does not last
- | Inability to afford balanced meals
- | Decreasing the size of meals or skipping meals
- | Eating less than they believe they should
- | Having been hungry but unable to eat
- | Losing weight
- | Going without eating for an entire day

While many programs and initiatives work well within their means and limits, challenges and barriers still exist that prevent significant and positive change from being implemented and sustained. This section details the current state of food insecurity in South Carolina, and what state agency programs are currently offering to help citizens become more food secure.

SNAPSHOT OF FOOD SECURITY IN SOUTH CAROLINA AND THE SOUTH

On October 25, 2023, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) released its report *Household Food Security in the United States in 2022*. First published in 1995 and annually thereafter, this report gathers data from survey responses that ask households about their food security, food expenditures, and the use of federal food and nutrition assistance programs. For this report, food insecurity is a combination of low and very low food security data.

Nationally, the United States saw an increase in the prevalence of food insecurity from 2021 to 2022; South Carolina was one of six states that saw a significant increase in food insecurity prevalence from the years 2017-2019 to 2020-2022.⁶



South Carolina also experienced the most significant increase in very low food security in the nation.



Mirroring these numbers, Feeding America's *The State of Senior Hunger in 2021* report shows that South Carolina is one of the top ten states in high overall food insecurity (10.4%) and very low food security (4.6%) for older adults.⁸

While this USDA report does not examine or account for the causes of why food insecurity rates increased, the USDA does note that things such as average wages, the cost of housing, unemployment, and state policies that affect access to federal and state assistance programs.

The Southern and Southeastern regions of the United States also tend to see the highest rates of food insecurity, which contribute to higher risks of chronic diseases and cancer in these locations. This is consistent with findings that show food deserts and food swamps are the most prevalent in these regions. One study found that those who live in food swamps have 77 percent increased odds of high obesity-related cancer mortality.⁹

AGENCY PROGRAMS

The following information provides an overview of the current food security-related programs administered by South Carolina state agencies.

SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT ON AGING

Agency Purpose: The South Carolina Department on Aging (SCDOA) enhances the quality of life for seniors in South Carolina. The SCDOA works with ten regional Area Agencies on Aging and a network of local organizations to develop and manage services that help seniors remain independent in their homes and in their communities.

Goals of Food Programs: Nutrition services are authorized under Title III-C of the Older Americans Act. Designed to promote the general health and well-being of older individuals, the services are intended to reduce hunger, food insecurity, and malnutrition of older adults; promote socialization of older individuals; and promote the health and well-being of older people by assisting them in gaining access to nutrition and other disease prevention and health promotion services and to delay the onset of adverse health conditions resulting from poor nutritional health or sedentary behavior.

Food Programs Offered:

GROUP/CONGREGATE DINING

Group dining programs are located at community nutrition sites and in senior centers across South Carolina. In addition to serving healthy meals, the program presents opportunities for social engagement, information on healthy aging, and meaningful volunteer roles.

Benefit Type

- › Prepared Food
- › Nutrition Education

Who is Eligible?

- › Anyone 60+ years old, regardless of income
- › Spouses who accompany eligible participant
- › Persons with disabilities who live with eligible participant
- › Volunteers who provide service during meal hours

Number of Meals Served

501,418 (FY23)

Counties Served

Statewide

Funding Amount by Source

<i>State</i>	<i>Federal</i>	<i>Nutrition Services Incentive Program</i>
\$1,221,968	\$3,131,932	\$386,778

HOME-DELIVERED MEALS

The home-delivered meals program provides nutritious meals and nutrition education to those who are home-bound. Participant contributions are welcome, but not required. The social contact of meal delivery may be the only contact a person has and also serves as a safety check.

Benefit Type

- › Prepared Food
 - › Nutrition Education
-

Who is Eligible?

- › Anyone 60+ years old, regardless of income
 - › Spouses who accompany eligible participant
 - › Persons with disabilities who live with eligible participant
-

Number of Meals Served

1,942,612 (FY23)

Counties Served

Statewide

Funding Amount by Source

<i>State</i>	<i>Federal</i>	<i>Nutrition Services Incentive Program</i>
\$4,597,143	\$10,144,942	\$1,234,503

SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Agency Purpose: The South Carolina Department of Agriculture (SCDA) promotes and nurtures the growth and development of South Carolina's agriculture industry and its related businesses while assuring the safety and security of the buying public.

Goals of Food Programs: The SCDA oversees several state and federal food programs that distribute healthy food to underserved populations. These food programs create opportunities for farmers to provide the necessary food products for distribution while developing and sustaining in-state markets for agricultural products. These programs also support and strengthen the rural communities that are the backbone of the state's agriculture industry.

Food Programs Offered:

THE EMERGENCY FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (TEFAP)

The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) is a federal program that helps supplement the diets of low-income Americans, including elderly people, by providing them with emergency food assistance at no cost. Through TEFAP, the USDA purchases a variety of nutritious, high-quality USDA Foods, and makes those foods available to state distributing agencies. The SCDA disburses funds to food banks who purchase 100% American-grown USDA foods.

Benefit Type

- › Food Products
- › Prepared Food

Who is Eligible?

- › *Public or Private Nonprofit Organizations*
 - ›› If distribute food for home use, must determine household eligibility by applying State income standards
 - ›› If provide prepared meals, must demonstrate they serve predominantly low-income persons
- › *Households*
 - ›› Participation in TANF, SNAP, or SSI
 - ›› If not participating in Federal assistance program, income must not exceed 150% of poverty income guidelines
- › *Recipients of Prepared Meals*
 - ›› Considered to be low-income and not subject to means test

Current Participants Served

475,000 (FY23)

Counties ServedStatewide

Funding Amount by Source

<i>State</i>	<i>Federal</i>
None	\$8,500,000*

**Approximately \$7.1 million was spent on food and \$1.4 million on administrative costs of food banks.*

THE EMERGENCY FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (TEFAP) REACH AND RESILIENCY*

This program expands TEFAP's reach into remote, rural, tribal, and/or low-income areas that may be underserved. Funds are used to increase capacity and expand reach by improving infrastructure. SCDA reimburses food banks for funds spent on eligible expenses. Funds are used to purchase infrastructure such as refrigerators, freezers, forklifts, storage, etc. **This program is set to end in 2025.**

Benefit Type

- › Food Distribution Infrastructure
-

Who is Eligible?

- › Approved food bank or food pantry currently participating in TEFAP
-

Current Participants Served

4 Food Banks and associated food pantries

Counties ServedBarnwell, Allendale, Bamberg, Edgefield, McCormick, Aiken, Dillon, Marlboro, Lee, Orangeburg, Clarendon, Marion, Williamsburg, Colleton, Hampton, Georgetown, Jasper, Horry, Union, Greenwood, Cherokee, Abbeville, Oconee, Pickens, Chesterfield, Darlington, Newberry, Sumter, Berkeley, Dorchester, Anderson, and Spartanburg

Funding Amount by Source

<i>State</i>	<i>Federal</i>
None	\$1,800,000 (FY23-25)

**This program does not directly provide monetary benefits or meal services as described in Proviso 34.70 but does help facilitate the provision of meal services.*

COMMODITY SUPPLEMENTAL FOOD PROGRAM (CSFP)*

This program works to improve the health of low-income persons at least 60 years of age by supplementing their diets with nutritious USDA Foods. USDA distributes both food and administrative funds to participating states to operate CSFP.

Benefit Type

- › Food Product

Who is Eligible?

- › Anyone 60+ years old
- › Must reside in South Carolina.
- › Must have household income at or below 130% of poverty income guidelines

Current Participants Served

99,074 (FY23)

Counties Served

Clarendon, Darlington, Dillon, Fairfield, Florence, Greenville, Kershaw, Laurens, Lee, Lexington, Marion, Marlboro, Orangeburg, Richland, Sumter, Beaufort, Berkley, Charleston, Colleton, Dorchester, Georgetown, Horry, Williamsburg, Anderson, Greenwood, Lancaster, Pickens, Spartanburg, and York

Funding Amount by Source

<i>State</i>	<i>Federal</i>
None	\$570,000

**Funding is for administrative costs only; food is provided directly from the USDA. In FY23, the USDA provided 99,074 food boxes with a total estimated value of \$3.5 million.*

COMMODITY CREDIT CORPORATION ELIGIBLE RECIPIENT AGENCY OPERATIONAL FUNDS (CCC ERA OPERATIONAL FUNDS)

This program provides temporary, additional support to the TEFAP program and operates in the same manner as TEFAP. **This program is set to end September 30, 2024.**

Benefit Type

- › Food Product
- › Prepared Food

Who is Eligible?

- › *Public or Private Nonprofit Organizations*
 - ›› If distribute food for home use, must determine household eligibility by applying State income standards

 - ›› If provide prepared meals, must demonstrate they serve predominantly low-income persons

- › *Households*
 - ›› Participation in TANF, SNAP, or SSI

 - ›› If not participating in Federal assistance program, income must not exceed 150% of poverty income guidelines

- › *Recipients of Prepared Meals*
 - ›› Considered to be low-income and not subject to means test

Current Participants Served

TBD (Program initiated in 2023)

Counties Served

Statewide

Funding Amount by Source

<i>State</i>	<i>Federal</i>
None	\$12,000,000*

* Approximately \$11.5 million was spent on food and \$500,000 on administrative costs of food banks.

LOCAL FOOD FOR SCHOOL GRANT

Administered by the USDA to help states deal with the challenges of supply chain disruptions brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic by funding for schools to purchase local foods. This program targets small and historically underserved farmers in an effort to strengthen the local food supply chain. The SCDA works with the SCDE to provide funds to school districts to purchase food from an approved aggregator. The aggregator purchases foods from small, local farms, which helps those farms equip themselves to serve larger scale customers. **The program is set to end February 29, 2024.**

Benefit Type

- › Food Product

Who is Eligible?

- › Children 18 and younger enrolled in school
- › School must be a School Food Authority and participate in NSLP

Current Participants Served

800,000 across 96 School Food Authorities

Counties Served

Statewide

Funding Amount by Source

State	Federal
None	\$3,100,000* (FY23-24)

**Eighty percent of funding is spent on food purchases and 20% on operational costs for aggregators.*

LOCAL FOOD PURCHASE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (LFPA)

This program maintains and improves food supply chain resiliency and supports local, regional, and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers by buying local foods and distributing them to underserved communities. SCDA disburses funds to approved aggregators throughout the state, which purchase foods from target producers and distribute to target populations. **This program is set to end June 30, 2025.**

Benefit Type

- › Food Product

Who is Eligible?

- › No eligibility requirements for recipients
- › Majority of food must be purchased from “socially disadvantaged” producers, as defined by the USDA
- › Aggregators must distribute food in underserved communities

Current Participants Served

15 Aggregators

Counties Served

Abbeville, Aiken, Allendale, Bamberg, Barnwell, Cherokee, Clarendon, Colleton, Dillon, Edgefield, Georgetown, Greenwood, Hampton, Horry, Jasper, Lee, Marion, Marlboro, McCormick, Oconee, Orangeburg, Pickens, Union, and Williamsburg

Funding Amount by Source

<i>State</i>	<i>Federal</i>
None	\$11,700,000 (FY23-25)

CHANGESC PILOT PROGRAM*

In conjunction with DHEC, this pilot program seeks to raise awareness of food deserts, food insecurity issues, and related health effects, while increasing demand and access to healthy, locally grown fruits and vegetables. The program is being conducted in partnership with Eat Local Pee Dee, a food aggregator operating under the LFPA Program in Marion, Marlboro, Dillon, and Williamsburg counties. The project focuses on boosting infrastructure to raise the level of food distribution in the target area, applying marketing strategies to boost awareness of distribution activities, connecting aggregators with local farmers, and educating residents on how to prepare fresh foods and the benefits of healthy eating. Baseline research is underway with post-pilot research to be conducted to measure successes. If successful, the SCDA and DHEC plan to expand ChangeSC to help address existing food deserts throughout the state.

Benefit Type

- › Food Product
 - › Nutrition Education
-

Who is Eligible?

- › No eligibility requirements for recipients

 - › Aggregators to target food deserts and underserved communities
-

Current Participants Served

19,000 families over 3 months

Counties Served

Dillon, Marion, Marlboro, and Williamsburg

Funding Amount by Source

<i>State</i>	<i>Federal</i>
\$320,000	None
<i>DHEC - \$200,000</i>	
<i>SCDA - \$120,000</i>	

**The majority of food distributed during the pilot program is purchased with LFPA funds in accordance with the rules of the LFPA program.*

SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Agency Purpose: The South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) provides leadership and support so that all public education students graduate prepared for success.

Goals of Food Programs: The SCDE Office of Health and Nutrition provides support, training, and oversight to School Food Authorities or SFAs (public, charter, and private schools, and residential childcare institutions) in administering child nutrition programs that support student health and wellness for optimum academic achievement. Programs and activities include school lunch and breakfast programs, summer food programs, and other activities such as Farm to School and Fresh Fruit and Vegetable programs. The Office of Health and Nutrition also manages the distribution of \$30 million of USDA Foods to SFAs to aid in providing nutritious meals to school children in South Carolina.

Food Programs Offered:

NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM

The National School Lunch Program (NSLP) is a Federally assisted meal program operating in public and nonprofit private schools and residential childcare institutions. It provides nutritionally balanced, low-cost or no-cost lunches to children each school day. Participating school districts and independent schools receive cash subsidies and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Foods for each reimbursable meal served. Institutions must serve lunches that meet Federal meal pattern requirements and offer the lunches at a free or reduced price to eligible children.

Benefit Type

- › Monetary

Who is Eligible?

- › Children who are enrolled in SNAP or other certain Federal assistance programs
- › Children identified as homeless, migrant, runaway, or being fostered.
- › Children in Federally funded Head Start or comparable state-funded pre-kindergarten program
- › Children who live in families with incomes at or below 130% of the poverty level (free meals); children who live in families with incomes between 130% and 185% of the poverty level (reduced-price meals)

Current Participants Served

74.4 million lunches served (FY23)

Counties Served

Statewide

Funding Amount by Source*

<i>State</i>	<i>Federal</i>	<i>Other</i>
\$104,800	\$262,000,000	\$3,391,000

**The \$262 million are reimbursements to School Food Authorities. The USDA also provides \$3.8 million for state-level administrative activities and requires State match-funding of \$104,800. School Districts are required to provide \$3,391,000 match-funding.*

NATIONAL SCHOOL BREAKFAST PROGRAM

The School Breakfast Program (SBP) provides reimbursement to states to operate nonprofit breakfast programs in schools and residential childcare institutions. School districts and independent schools that participate in the SBP must serve breakfast meals meeting the Federal nutrition requirements. Participating institutions receive cash subsidies from the USDA for each reimbursable meal served.

Benefit Type

- › Monetary
-

Who is Eligible?

- › Children who are enrolled in SNAP or other certain Federal assistance programs
 - › Children identified as homeless, migrant, runaway, or being fostered
 - › Children in Federally funded Head Start or comparable state-funded pre-kindergarten program
 - › Children who live in families with incomes at or below 130% of the poverty level (free meals); children who live in families with incomes between 130% and 185% of the poverty level (reduced-price meals)
-

Current Participants Served

42.8 million breakfasts served (FY23)

Counties Served

Statewide

Funding Amount by Source*

<i>State</i>	<i>Federal</i>	<i>Other</i>
None	\$95,000,000	\$1,900,000

**The \$95 million are reimbursements to School Food Authorities. Other funds are a two-year breakfast grant to support School Districts' efforts to implement evidence-based service models, such as breakfast in the classroom, grab-and-go, and breakfast after the bell.*

FARM TO SCHOOL PROGRAM

This program connects K-12 schools with regional or local farms in order to serve healthy meals using locally produced foods. Activities may vary from community to community depending on demographics. The main goals of the program are to meet the diverse needs of school nutrition programs in an efficient manner; support regional and local farmers and strengthen local food systems; and provide support for health and nutrition education.

Benefit Type

- › Prepared Food
- › Nutrition Education
 - ›› *School Garden Educational Assistance*
 - ›› *Junior Chef Competition*

Who is Eligible?

- › All School Food Authority program directors

- › SC Farmers

- › SC Produce Distributors

- › Educators and Students

- › Community Organizations

Current Participants Served

128 School Nutrition Programs
75 Stakeholders and Partners
20 School Gardens
16 Junior Chef High School Students (FY23)

Counties Served

Statewide

Funding Amount by Source

<i>State</i>	<i>Federal</i>
None	\$1,027,899

FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES PROGRAM

The Fresh Fruit and Vegetables Program (FFVP) provides all children in participating schools with a variety of free fresh fruits and vegetables throughout the school day. It is an effective and creative way of introducing fresh fruits and vegetables as healthy snack options. The FFVP also encourages the education of families and partnerships with

members of the community as an overall way of increasing the health and wellness of both students and those in the community in which they live.

Benefit Type

- › Prepared Food
- › Nutrition Education

Who is Eligible?

- › Only elementary schools may participate
- › The school must also take part in the National School Lunch Program
- › The school must have 50% or more of its students eligible for free and/or reduced-price meals

Current Participants Served

83,193 Students
195 Schools
(FY23)

Counties Served

Statewide

Funding Amount by Source

<i>State</i>	<i>Federal</i>
None	\$4,186,024

SPECIAL MILK PROGRAM*

The Special Milk Program (SMP) provides milk to children in schools and childcare institutions. The program reimburses schools for the milk they serve. Schools in the National School Lunch or School Breakfast Programs may also participate in the Special Milk Program to provide milk to children in half-day pre-kindergarten and kindergarten programs where children do not have access to the school meal programs.

Benefit Type

- › Food Product
- › Monetary

Who is Eligible?

- › Only schools who do not participate in other Child Nutrition Programs
- › If the school does participate in other Child Nutrition Programs, the school can only offer milk to pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students
- › The students must come from families who meet the income guidelines for free meals

Current Participants Served

None

Counties Served

None

Funding Amount by Source*State*

None

Federal

None

**There are no School Food Authorities currently participating in this program.*

SUMMER BREAK CAFÉ (SUMMER FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM)

The Summer Break Café (or Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)) is Federally funded by the USDA. The USDA reimburses program operators who serve no-cost, healthy meals and snacks to children and teens. Meals are served at summer sites in low-income communities, where sponsors often also offer enrichment activities, or – in approved rural communities facing access issues – may be provided via grab-and-go or delivery.

Benefit Type

- › Prepared Food
- › Monetary

Who is Eligible?

- › Children 18 and younger

- › Adults over the age of 18 who have a mental or physical disability

Current Participants Served

1,045,728 Meals Served

741 Meal Sites

(FY23)

Counties Served

Statewide

Funding Amount by Source**State*

None

Federal

\$5,200,000

** The \$5.2 million are reimbursements to sponsors/School Food Authorities.*

SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL

Agency Purpose: The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) is charged with promoting and protecting the health of the public and the environment in South Carolina. DHEC works to ensure South Carolinians have the access, resources, and information they need to improve the environment in which they live, make decisions that improve their health, and have access to the highest quality healthcare.

Goals of Food Programs: DHEC is committed to ensuring equal access to nutritious food, implementing educational initiatives to promote healthy eating habits, and executing targeted obesity prevention programs, all contributing to the overarching goal of enhancing public health in South Carolina. The Department's comprehensive approach underscores its commitment to fostering well-being and nutrition security across the state. Specifically, initiatives like the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program are designed to ensure vulnerable populations receive essential nutritional support, focusing on pregnant women, infants, and young children. DHEC's commitment extends to SNAP-Ed, aiming to provide evidence-based nutrition education to SNAP recipients and promote healthier food choices within budget constraints. The agency actively engages in obesity prevention through nutrition and physical activity initiatives, fostering healthier lifestyles within communities. Simultaneously, DHEC's food waste program works toward reducing food waste across the state, contributing to sustainability goals. Additionally, DHEC and Clemson University's development of a statewide food access map serves to help individuals, families, and organizations easily locate food resources in every county in the state.

Food Programs Offered:

WOMEN, INFANTS, AND CHILDREN (WIC) NUTRITION PROGRAM

WIC's mission is to safeguard the health of low-income women, infants, and children up to age five who are at nutritional risk. WIC provides nutritious foods to supplement diets, information on healthy eating, breastfeeding promotion and support, and referrals to health care services free of charge to South Carolina families who qualify.

Benefit Type

- › Monetary
- › Nutrition Education
- › Referrals

Who is Eligible?

- › Pregnant women, new mothers, and breastfeeding mothers
- › Children under 5 years old
- › Fathers, grandparents, and other caregivers of children under the age of 5

- › Foster children under the age of 5 and foster teens who are pregnant
- › Individuals or family members on Medicaid, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

Current Participants Served

96,363 (September 2023)

Counties Served

Statewide

Funding Amount by Source

<i>State</i>	<i>Federal*</i>
None	\$96,642,618

**Federal funding includes the Breastfeeding Peer Counselor grant, Modernization grant, and WIC Nutrition Services and Administration funds.*

FARMERS MARKET NUTRITION PROGRAM (FMNP)

Eligible WIC participants are issued FMNP benefits in addition to their regular WIC benefits. These benefits can be used to buy eligible foods from farmers, farmers markets, or roadside stands that have been approved by DHEC to accept FMNP benefits. The goal is to increase participants' consumption of healthy local produce and expand awareness of and sales at farmers markets.

Benefit Type

- › Monetary

Who is Eligible?

- › Women, or children ages 1 to 5 years old, who are enrolled in WIC

Current Participants Served

4,284

Counties Served

Anderson, Beaufort, Charleston, Chester, Clarendon, Horry, Darlington, Dorchester, Florence, Greenville, Hampton, Jasper, Orangeburg, Richland, and Spartanburg

Funding Amount by Source

<i>State</i>	<i>Federal</i>	<i>Other</i>
None	\$187,415	\$29,773

SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM EDUCATION (SNAP-ED)

This program focuses on improving the likelihood that persons eligible for SNAP will make nutritious food choices within a limited budget and improve their overall health. SNAP-Ed implements programs and promotes health promotion activities to help the SNAP-Ed households establish healthy eating habits and a physically active lifestyle, and helps SNAP-Ed households at risk for nutrition-related chronic diseases prevent or postpone the onset of disease by making healthier food choices and increasing physical activity.

Benefit Type

- › Nutrition Education
- › Physical Activity
- › Promotion

- › Policy, Systems and Environmental Change Initiatives

Who is Eligible?

- › SNAP recipients (or those eligible for SNAP)

- › Individuals who qualify for other federally means-tested programs

Current Participants Served

2,631 Direct Education
59,530 Indirect Activities
(FY23)

Counties Served

Bamberg, Calhoun, Dillon, Darlington, Dorchester, Lee, Lancaster, Chester, Fairfield, Kershaw, Florence, Marion, York, Lexington, Orangeburg, Newberry, Saluda, Williamsburg, Sumter, Richland, and Hampton

Funding Amount by Source*

<i>State</i>	<i>Federal</i>
None	\$1,338,516

**Funding changes year to year based on grant needs, though funding is generally stable.*

STATE NUTRITION ACTION COALITION (SNAC)

In conjunction with leadership provided by DHEC, this program brings together all USDA lead agencies and nonprofit organizations who provide food benefits, nutrition education, and obesity prevention services to better inform potential participants of available services.

Benefit Type

- › Nutrition Education

Who is Eligible?

- › Intended for Food and Nutrition Services' nutrition program directors

Current Participants Served

Current data not available

Counties Served

Statewide

Funding Amount by Source

SNAC is not funded directly, but grants are used as needed, or SNAP-Ed funds may be used.

DON'T WASTE FOOD SC

Don't Waste Food SC (DWFSC) is a collaborative outreach campaign that brings together public and private stakeholders to raise awareness of and encourage action about the problem of wasted food. This program aims to motivate every South Carolinian to do their part – with a particular focus on individual households, as that is where the majority of wasted food is generated. DWFSC offers information and educational materials (print, electronic, social media, in-person), technical assistance, and networking connections. They will also soon relaunch their Ambassador program, which is a training program to equip and empower individuals to instruct their communities on the basics of food waste prevention.

Benefit Type

- › Food Waste Outreach and Education

Who is Eligible?

- › All South Carolinians

Current Participants Served

10,000 Outreach Materials

Counties Served

Statewide

Funding Amount by Source

Since this program is housed within the Office of Solid Waste Reduction and Recycling, the program is funded by Advanced Recycling Fees, per the S.C. Solid Waste Policy & Management Act of 1991.

SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

Agency Purpose: The South Carolina Department of Social Services (DSS) promotes the safety, permanency, and well-being of children and vulnerable adults, helping individuals achieve stability and strengthening families.

Goals of Food Programs: The six food assistance programs administered by DSS provide a variety of services to eligible South Carolinians, from monetary assistance to meals to education and outreach. The programs listed in this section are designed to help low-income individuals feed themselves and their families, increase access to nutritious foods, and promote healthy eating habits.

Food Programs Offered:

SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SNAP)

SNAP (formerly known as “food stamps”) provides financial assistance to low-income families to supplement their grocery budget so they can afford nutritious food essential to health and well-being.

Benefit Type

- › Monetary*
 - ›› Monthly benefit amount based on household size, income, and other factors
 - ›› Benefits may only be used to purchase food items authorized by USDA/FNS

Who is Eligible†?

- › *Income*
 - ›› Household income at or below 130% of the federal poverty level (FPL). Households with elderly (60+ years old) or disabled individuals are subject to a net income limit of 100% FPL.
- › *Resources*
 - ›› Households may have up to \$2,750 in countable resources (or up to \$4,250 for households with a member who is elderly or disabled).
- › *Citizenship*
 - ›› Must be U.S. citizens or non-citizens with a qualifying immigration status.

Current Participants Served
640,955 (FY23 monthly average)

Counties Served
Statewide

Funding Amount by Source

<i>State</i>	<i>Federal^o</i>
\$28,000,000	\$28,000,000

**SNAP policy is based on federal regulations and states have limited flexibility with respect to program operations. †In FY23, DSS distributed an average of \$113.4 billion in SNAP benefits each month. Benefits are 100% federally funded and are not in DSS' operational budget.*

^oUSDA/FNS reimburses states for allowable administrative/operational costs at 50% match rate.

SENIOR FARMERS MARKET NUTRITION PROGRAM (SFMNP)

The Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) is 100% federally funded and provides vouchers for individuals aged 60 and older to obtain fresh fruits and vegetables from participating farmers markets and other vendors. The standard SFMNP benefit amount is \$25, distributed in five \$5 vouchers.

Benefit Type

Monetary

Who is Eligible?

Anyone 60+ years old who has an annual income of \$25,142 or less (185% FPL). The income limit for a two-person household is \$33,874.

Current Participants Served

24,680 (Voucher booklets distributed FY23)

Counties Served

Statewide

Funding Amount by Source

<i>State</i>	<i>Federal*</i>
None	\$746,530

**South Carolina's allocation for federal FY23 includes \$671,877 for vouchers and \$74,653 in administrative funds.*

HEALTHY BUCKS

The Healthy Bucks Program, authorized under a proviso in the 2013-14 Appropriations Act, provides coupons allowing SNAP recipients to obtain additional fresh fruits and vegetables when purchasing fresh produce at farmers markets or other participating vendors with SNAP benefits. The benefit provides for \$15 in Healthy Bucks tokens to purchase additional fresh fruits and vegetables.

Benefit Type

- › Monetary

Who is Eligible?

- › SNAP recipients who purchase at least \$5 worth of fruits and vegetables at a participating Healthy Bucks vendor using their EBT card.

Current Participants Served

31,788 (as of October 2023)

Counties Served*

32 Counties with 55 active markets/vendors

Funding Amount by Source[†]

State	Federal
\$5,000,000	None

**For a current listing of active vendors in each county, visit dss.sc.gov.*

†The original proviso directed DSS to utilize all funds received in the prior and current fiscal years from the USDA as a bonus for reducing the error rate in processing SNAP applications to fund the [Healthy Bucks] program. DSS received \$1,892,369 in high performance bonuses for FFY 2012, which was set aside for the Healthy Bucks program. This serves as the sole funding source until July 1, 2024, when DSS will receive \$5 million in non-recurring state funds to maintain and expand the program.

CHILD AND ADULT FOOD PROGRAM (CACFP)

The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) is a federal program that gives meal reimbursements to childcare centers, adult day care centers, childcare homes, emergency shelters and afterschool programs for serving nutritious meals and snacks. Programs enrolled in CACFP may provide up to three meal services (breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks) at no charge to families.

Benefit Type

- › Monetary

Who is Eligible?

- › Children ages 12 and under
- › Migrant children ages 15 and younger
- › Persons with disabilities regardless of age enrolled in non-residential childcare centers or childcare homes

- › Children up to age 18 in afterschool programs and emergency shelters
Adults who are functionally impaired or over age 60 and receiving care in a non residential, licensed adult day care center
- › Eligible organizations include non-profits, public (governmental) and some for-profit entities.*
 - ›› Organizations must demonstrate through an application process that they can meet federal performance standards.

Current Participants Served

16.9 million meals provided (FY23)

Counties Served

Statewide

Funding Amount by Source

State

\$5,000,000

Federal[†]

None

** Total number of participating facilities in federal fiscal year 2023 = 1,258 (871 childcare and Head Start facilities, 76 adult care facilities, 310 afterschool programs, and one emergency shelter).*

†South Carolina's allocation for federal fiscal year 2023 includes \$33,030,145 in meal reimbursements and \$2,100,436 in administrative funds. Estimate as of November 15, 2023. Final reimbursement numbers are subject to change until July 2024.

SNAP OUTREACH

The USDA provides funding for state SNAP agencies to conduct outreach activities to low-income households, informing them about the availability, eligibility requirements, application procedures, and the benefits of SNAP. Outreach funds may also be used for application assistance activities.

Benefit Type

- › Awareness and Education
- › Application Assistance

Who is Eligible?

- › Implementing Agencies
 - ›› SC Thrive
 - ›› Benefits Data Trust
 - ›› Clemson Community Care
 - ›› Foothills Family Resources
 - ›› Holy Ground Church
 - ›› Hub City Farmer's Market

- ›› Senior Solutions

Current Participants Served

269,326

Counties Served

Statewide

Funding Amount by Source

State

\$1,353,209

*Federal**

\$1,353,209

**USDA reimburses states for allowable program costs at a 50% match rate. As of November 20, 2023, total program expenditures for federal fiscal year 2023 totaled \$2,706,418.*

SNAP EDUCATION (SNAP-ED)

SNAP-Ed provides federal funding for states to implement evidence-based programs that promote healthy food choices, obesity prevention, and physical activity. In addition to direct education, SNAP-Ed funds may be used to support policy, systems, and environmental changes; coalition building; and social marketing/awareness campaigns.

Benefit Type

- › Nutrition Education
-

Who is Eligible?

- › *Implementing Agencies*
 - » SC Department of Health and Environmental Control
 - » Clemson University Youth Learning Institute
 - » Lowcountry Food Bank
 - » University of South Carolina Arnold School of Public Health
 - » South Carolina State University 1890 Research Extension
-

Current Participants Served

21,631 Direct Education

1,946,832 Indirect Activities

Counties Served

Statewide

Funding Amount by Source

State

None

*Federal**

\$5,783,071

**South Carolina's allocation for FY23.*

SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Agency Purpose: The South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) aims to be boldly innovative in improving the health and quality of life for all South Carolinians. DHHS administers South Carolina’s Medicaid program, which is a grant-in-aid program by which the federal and state governments share the cost of providing medical care for needy persons who have low income.

Goals of Food Programs: Working with other state agencies and Medicaid’s Managed Care Organizations (MCOs), DHHS aims to provide support that will help expand and improve South Carolinians’ access to nutritious and healthy foods.

Food Programs Offered: DHHS does not directly administer any food-related programs. The MCOs are responsible for implementing and maintaining these programs, which DHHS strongly encourages. Some programs and initiatives from the MCOs include:

- Administering the SC Fresh Food for Families voucher program for specific communities and residents.
- Providing home-delivered meals for fourteen days for certain populations, such as those who have tested positive for COVID and post-partum women.
- Incentivizing completion of wellness activities with fresh food boxes.
- Donating hydroponic gardening system to a local middle school.
- Entering agreements with vendors to administer Meals for Moms to aid maternal and child wellbeing and food insecurity.

CLEMSON UNIVERSITY PUBLIC SERVICE ACTIVITIES

Agency Purpose: Clemson University Public Service Activities (Clemson PSA) programs develop and deliver impartial science-based information in five areas that align with the national land-grant university system and touch the life for every South Carolinian. Those areas are: agrisystems productivity and profitability, economic and community development, environmental conservation, food safety and nutrition, and youth development and families.

Goals of Food Programs: The goal of Clemson University Extension Service's Food Safety, Nutrition & Health Programs is to promote healthy lifestyle behavior through educational programs in different sectors: diet quality, physical activity, food security, food resource management, food safety and system, and overall quality of life through wellness. The objectives are to build partnerships and alliances; conduct local and county-level assessments and research to demonstrate the impact of nutrition, food safety, and health extension programming; promote funders' support; and transfer science-based healthy lifestyle information to adults and youth residents of South Carolina.

Food Programs Offered:

EXPANDED FOOD AND NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM & RURAL HEALTH AND NUTRITION PROGRAM

The purpose of the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) is to assist limited-resource audiences in acquiring the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and changed behavior necessary for a nutritionally sound diet for personal development and also for the development and well-being of the family. EFNEP delivers nutrition education in four core areas: diet quality and physical activity, food resource management, food security, and food safety. The Rural Health and Nutrition team provides chronic disease prevention and self-management programs, as well as policy, systems, and environmental approaches, which includes food access and food security initiatives.

Benefit Type

- › Nutrition Education

Who is Eligible?

- › *EFNEP Adult Program*
 - ›› Parents or other adult caregivers with limited financial resources are primarily responsible for selecting, purchasing, and preparing food for the children in the household. Limited resource pregnant women or teens are also eligible.
- › *EFNEP Youth Program*
 - ›› Children and youth from kindergarten through grade 12

- › *Rural Health Program*
 - ›› General public

Current Participants Served*EFNEP*

512 Families
3,558 Youth

Rural Health

6,000 Direct Education
30,000 Food Distribution

Counties Served*EFNEP*

18 Counties

Rural Health

Statewide

Funding Amount by Source

Data not available at this time.

SOUTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY PUBLIC SERVICE ACTIVITIES

Agency Purpose: South Carolina State University Public Service Activities (SCSU PSA) promotes an organized research and extension system that incorporates stakeholders' input into the design, implementation, and evaluation of programs, activities, and services that address quality of life issues by providing research-based solutions for South Carolinians.

Goals of Food Programs: Implement strategies or interventions, among other health promotion efforts, to help target audiences establish healthy eating habits, improve nutrition-related behaviors, and have a physically active lifestyle to help prevent or postpone chronic diseases.

Food Programs Offered:

THE EXPANDED FOOD AND NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM

The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) is the nation's first nutrition education program for low-income populations. The program's efforts are to reduce nutrition insecurity of low-income families and youth.

Benefit Type

- › Nutrition Education

Who is Eligible?

- › Limited resource youth ages 0 to 18
- › Adults with children ages 0 to 18

Current Participants Served

700

Regions Served

Santee, Wateree, Charleston, Midlands, Upstate, and Low Country

Funding Amount by Source

<i>State</i>	<i>Federal*</i>
None	\$135,092

**From the National Institute of Food and Agriculture*

SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM EDUCATION (SNAP-ED)

The SNAP-Ed program addresses food and nutrition security to improve nutrition and prevent or reduce diet-related chronic diseases, including obesity, among SNAP recipients.

Benefit Type

- › Nutrition Education
-

Who is Eligible?

- › Anyone receiving SNAP benefits
-

Current Participants Served

Program being established

Counties Served

Chesterfield, Marlboro

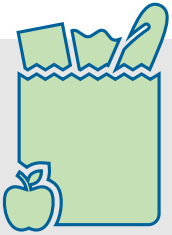
Funding Amount by Source

<i>State</i>	<i>Federal*</i>
None	\$302,622.90

**From Food and Nutrition Services.*

GAPS IN SERVICES

Based on the above inventory of programs and meeting discussions, the FSC identified the following themes in gaps in services to South Carolina citizens.



ACCESS

FOOD DESERTS + FOOD SWAMPS

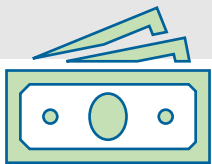
Many areas of South Carolina, especially rural areas, lack access to healthy food choices. In smaller communities, often the only retail establishments are dollar stores and convenience stores, which do not typically offer healthy foods, and create food swamps.

TRANSPORTATION

Lack of reliable transportation and barriers to accessing public transit systems contribute to South Carolinians' difficulty in accessing healthy foods.

LIMITED COVERAGE

Some existing programs, as seen above, often cover limited counties of the state, leaving significant areas without access to services.



COST

INCOME

An increasing number of South Carolinians do not have sufficient funding to afford healthy food.

AVAILABLE BENEFITS

Some South Carolinians who are eligible for benefits are not aware they are eligible or do not know how to apply. In addition, some citizens who are not able to afford food are currently not eligible for benefits.



COORDINATION

Although there are many private organizations, local governments, and state agencies that are doing outstanding work around food security, these efforts are often poorly coordinated and, at times, overlap or do not fill gaps as well as possible.

RECOMMENDATIONS

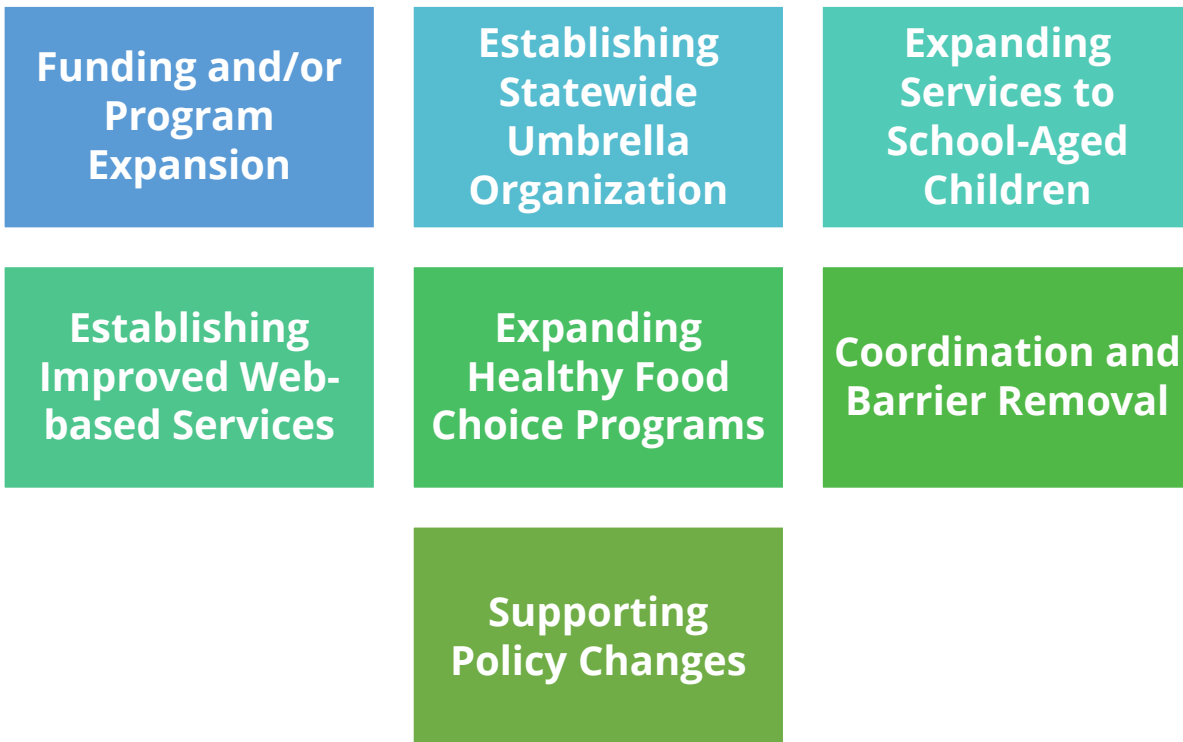


The FSC developed the following sixteen recommendations after listening to stakeholders, researching initiatives and actions in other states, and consulting with each FSC member’s agency leadership. Overall, the FSC determined that to increase food security for all South Carolinians, the following areas of concern should be improved:

1. investment in food and nutrition programming;
2. collaboration, communication, and coordination between state agencies, stakeholders, and local communities;
3. education about, and access to, healthy and nutritious food options; and
4. the state’s capacity to address existing gaps in services.

*Please note, the Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) will become two separate agencies on July 1, 2024. If recommendations that list DHEC as a lead agency, partner, or stakeholder are implemented on or after July 1, DHEC will mean the Department of Public Health.

SNAPSHOT OF RECOMMENDATIONS



Recommendation #1 – Fund ChangeSC program expansion.

Current Status/Description:

ChangeSC is a three-month pilot program operating in the Pee Dee and funded by the South Carolina Department of Agriculture (SCDA) and South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC).

Is legislation required?

No

Is additional funding required?

Yes

Population(s) affected:

All residents,
with a focus on those
living in food deserts

By the Numbers:

A recent USDA study ranks South Carolina #1 in the nation in rates of “very low food security,” their most extreme category, and #5 in overall food insecurity. Of those surveyed, 15% lack reliable access to sufficient affordable, nutritious food. USDA research also shows 80% of SC counties have food deserts. SCDA research shows 94% of South Carolinians understand eating fresh, healthy foods is important for their health, but the biggest barriers are price (60%) and availability (27%).

Justification:

Gathering around the table is a South Carolina tradition. But even with more than 25,000 farmers and 4.7 million acres of farmland, over a million people in the Palmetto State live in food deserts without access to fresh produce. For many, this leads to unhealthy eating habits, chronic diseases, and shorter life spans. ChangeSC is committed to creating generational change by forging vital connections between local farmers and residents leading to healthier and sustainable dietary practices.

Developed in partnership with SCDA and DHEC, ChangeSC is currently serving areas of the Pee Dee through Pick 42 Foundation’s Eat Local Pee Dee Program.

The program aims to raise awareness of food deserts, food insecurity issues, and related health effects, while increasing demand and access to healthy, locally grown fruits and vegetables.

Program Goals:

- Boosting infrastructure to raise the level of food access and distribution from local farmers to community members in the target area.
- Applying marketing strategies to both raise awareness of distribution activities within the target area, while also raising awareness of food insecurity issues statewide.

- Increasing demand for healthy foods by educating residents on the benefits of healthy eating and how to prepare fresh, healthy foods.
- Conducting baseline research and post-pilot research to measure successes.

SCDA is requesting funding from the General Assembly to expand the program statewide. The SCDA will amplify the work of existing food hubs and aggregators throughout the state to not only provide healthy foods to food deserts but change attitudes and behaviors of the people living within them.

We believe this approach of simultaneously boosting supply and demand for healthy foods is the recipe for generational change. Not only will this improve the lives of our fellow South Carolinians, but also help our economy by opening agricultural markets to underserved communities.

Challenges:

Funding to expand and sustain the program is the primary challenge. SCDA and DHEC are currently working cooperatively on the pilot project, creative assets are developed, and other stakeholders are primed for expansion.

Stakeholders:

- Department of Agriculture
- Department on Aging
- Department of Health and Environmental Control
- Farmers
- Food Distributors

Recommendation #2 – Local communities and stakeholders must work collaboratively with the South Carolina Department of Education to increase promotion and awareness of Summer Program Food Service (Summer Break Café) opportunities, which can lead to additional viable sponsors and accessible sites for the program.

Current Status/Description:

During Summer 2023, South Carolina had 46 Summer Break Café (Summer Food Service Program) sponsors that served meals at 741 sites across the state. We need to increase the number of administratively and financially viable non-School Food Authority (SFA) sponsors and accessible meal sites so that we can serve more meals to children in all areas of the state. Currently, we do not have enough sponsors in every county to establish sites in needed areas. A sponsor and their sites are approved by SCDE to provide meals that meet the USDA meal pattern and then are reimbursed with USDA federal funding. Additionally, we need to address barriers, such as transportation, that prevent children from getting to food sites during the summer. The state has an obligation to ensure adequate statewide accessibility and local promotion making the community aware of the program.

Is legislation required?

No

Is additional funding required?

Maybe

Population(s) affected:

Children

By the Numbers:

In 2023, South Carolina had a total of 46 sponsors that served 1.4 million meals at 741 sites across the state. There has been a decrease in the number of sponsors and sites over the past several years, particularly since COVID.

- In 2022, there were 47 sponsors with approximately 800 sites that served approximately 1.5 million meals.
- In 2021, there were 54 sponsors with approximately 1,000 sites that served approximately 20.6 million meals.
- In 2020, there were 66 sponsors with approximately 1,000 sites that served approximately 19.2 million meals.
- In 2019, there were 78 sponsors with approximately 1,600 sites serving 2.5 million meals.

The School Food Authorities (SFAs) or school districts normally locate their sites at schools and often do not serve meals the entire summer. The Non-Profit sponsors tend to locate most of their sites in the community and serve from June to August. Traditionally, USDA guidelines require that meals be eaten on site in a congregate setting. During COVID, USDA allowed waivers to allow all sites to serve multiple meals, all meals to be taken off site, allowed meals

to be picked up by a guardian or parent, or allowed meals to be home delivered. Post-COVID, only rural sites can serve meals in the above-mentioned non-congregate manner, i.e., as though waivers were in place. Despite this flexibility in rural areas, staffing, price increases, and supply chain issues have continued to negatively impact the availability and number of meals, sponsors, and sites.

Justification:

The number of sponsors and sites needs to increase, particularly viable non-profit sponsors, so that more accessible sites can be in the community where children can be reached easily. SFA and Non-Profit Sponsors also need to work together more to better serve the children in their communities, such as producing ways to address the transportation barrier, adding more sites in their county without duplication of serving meals to children, and promoting ALL the sites that are available in their counties. All these things will help more families to be aware of the service and provide children with more accessibility to meals.

Further Explanation for Recommendation:

1. SCDE should dedicate a specific resource and/or staffing to develop or work with a company and sponsors/sites to develop a data snapshot to evaluate summer meals in the state currently. Geo-mapping can be used to determine sponsor/site location and need. This will provide exact data to inform where state and local efforts should be focused. This staffing/resources will also collaborate with the sponsors to show them how to access their local site and meal data to assist them with planning. Data and reports should be compiled related to all data requests at the end of each summer to help assess where SCDE is, the progress made, and how to keep efforts ongoing. Data would address:

- Who is sponsoring SFSP, NSLP or both?
- Are sponsors willing to take on more sites?
- Are there enough sites to serve the community? Are there sites that are underutilized? How many children participate in the Summer Nutrition Programs?
- How do the summer nutrition numbers compare to the number of children participating in free and reduced-price school meals during the school year?

2. SCDE will designate SFSP staff and funds to focus year-round on increasing program awareness through marketing and outreach and focus on new sponsor recruitment and onboarding new sponsors. SCDE will assist sponsors with marketing in their local communities and invest in more program marketing and outreach efforts at the state level.

3. Encourage sponsors to use mobile feeding sites, which consist of taking meals to the community (helps with transportation issues).

4. Apply for Excessive Heat/Advisory Waivers that allow non-congregate meal service for outdoor sites when there is a National Weather Advisory related to excessive heat.

5. Encourage SFAs to extend their dates of operations and to work/collaborate with non-profit sponsors in their community to increase the number of sites and the number of participants.

6. Encourage all sponsors to have as many open sites, rather than closed enrollment, as possible.

Challenges:

The challenges will be:

- getting all the stakeholders together to work on this issue in each one of the counties across the state. The Local Food Policy Council have already established some coalitions across the state that could assist with this work;
- staffing and funding; and
- collaborating with sponsors to increase the number of open sites rather than closed enrollment sites. (Closed enrollment means only specific children can attend the site.)

Stakeholders:

Lead state agency:

Department of Education

Other core stakeholders:

SFAs

Media

Local Government and Community Leaders and Organizations

Recommendation #3 – Create or invest in a statewide organization to facilitate implementation of the Food Security Council findings and recommendations.

Current Status/Description:

The Food Security Council is required to submit a report to the General Assembly by January 31, 2024, to include its findings and recommendations on the issues contained in Proviso 34.70. Upon submission of the report, the Council shall be dissolved. After this time, there will be no organization or agency monitoring progress towards adopting accepted recommendations from this report, or continuing to assess food security in SC and how best to improve it.

Is legislation required?

Yes

Is additional funding required?

Yes

Population(s) affected:

Children
Adults
Seniors

By the Numbers:

For 2020 to 2022, South Carolina has the fifth highest rate of food insecurity in the country, according to the USDA. For the same timeframe, South Carolina has the highest rate of very low food insecurity in the country.

Justification:

The Food Security Council was established pursuant to Proviso 34.70, which went into effect on July 1, 2024, and requires the Council to dissolve upon submission of its report to the General Assembly by January 31, 2024. The Food Security Council has been examining all state agency programs that address food insecurity in the State, identifying gaps in service, and making recommendations on improvements to services and additional programs that can address the gaps in services. This is a recommendation to create or invest in an existing statewide organization, such as the South Carolina Food Policy Council (SCFPC), to facilitate implementation of the Council's findings and recommendations provided for in the report to the General Assembly, and to continue to identify ways to reduce and eliminate food insecurity in South Carolina. The request includes funding for an FTE position within a statewide organization for a specified and limited timeframe. It is recommended that the FTE position function not only to implement the findings/recommendations of the Food Security Council, but also as the Executive Director of the SCFPC, an already existing multi-sector membership organization that currently addresses food access and food security issues in the state. The SCFPC has an 18-member Board of Directors and focuses on statewide issues, including all issues/recommendations identified by the Food Security Council.

Challenges:

Ensuring the statewide organization has a systematic, holistic approach to food security in South Carolina and is inclusive of necessary stakeholders.

Stakeholders:

All FSC member agencies

For-profit and non-profit food organizations

Recommendation #4 - Establish a statewide web-based care coordination referral system that addresses food insecurity, among other social determinants of health.

Current Status/Description:

The lack of a centralized, statewide system makes it difficult for providers to efficiently collaborate and share information regarding patients' social needs and circumstances. Consequently, the identification and targeted intervention for social determinants, such as housing instability, food insecurity, and transportation barriers, is challenging.

Is legislation required?

Maybe

Is additional funding required?

Yes

Population(s) affected:

Children
Adults
Seniors

Justification:

To address the root causes of social and complex needs of individuals of South Carolina, investment should be made in a web-based care coordination system (i.e. multi-directional referral system) to facilitate the coordination of care and address social determinants of health. The adoption of this system will address the social determinants related to increasing health care access and quality, economic stability, and education resources. Additionally, the system will identify gaps in service and support systems and facilitate policy level change at the local level. Clients will be seamlessly connected to programs and services that can address social needs (e.g. housing, food, medicine, transportation).

Multi-directional referral systems are a systematic approach to improve the efficiency of care coordination linking people and families to social and health resources. Without aligned systems and structures supportive of efficient connection to social and health needs, disparities will continue to perpetuate. Investment in a statewide web-based care coordination system with a long-standing history of working with non-profits, state government, social services, and health institutions to address holistic coordinated care is needed.

By streamlining access to essential services, the system has the potential to improve the overall health and well-being of the population, resulting in a more productive workforce and reduced strain on public resources. A healthier and more food-secure population also tends to drive economic growth through increased productivity and decreased healthcare costs.

Challenges:

Challenges may arise in terms of data security and privacy concerns, potential resistance to adopting new technologies, and the need for standardized processes that may not fully accommodate the unique requirements of all programs and services. In addition, it will be important to ensure as many service providers as possible utilize the system.

Stakeholders:

All FSC member agencies
Healthcare providers

Recommendation #5 - Address challenges facing food donation including liability protection and education.

Current Status/Description:

South Carolina has one of the highest rates of food insecurity in the nation, yet also produces a large amount of food waste. The challenges to combatting food waste through food donation include liability protection and lack of education. In addition to the federal Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Act, all 50 states have passed their own liability laws, some of which offer greater protection.

Is legislation required?

Yes

Is additional funding required?

Maybe

Population(s) affected:

Children
Adults
Seniors

By the Numbers:

It is estimated that 40% of food produced in the U.S. is wasted. Food is the number one thing that goes into South Carolina's landfills, making up about 24% of landfill waste.

Justification:

Food donation programs can help combat both food waste and food insecurity. The challenges facing food donation could potentially be tackled through changes in state law related to liability protection and increasing education and resources on donation liability protection.

Challenges:

Understanding the existing liability protection laws and what further liability protection may be needed in South Carolina.

Stakeholders:

State agencies (e.g., DHEC, SC Department of Agriculture, SC Department of Education, SC Department of Aging, and SC Department of Social Services), food bank organizations, pantries, shelters, and other food rescue organizations, and other community organizations.

Recommendation #6 – Expand community garden programs in the state.

Current Status/Description:

Community gardens have been increasingly recognized as valuable assets for promoting local food access, fostering community engagement, and addressing food security in the state. Community gardens have also been shown to be beneficial in reducing chronic risk factors for chronic diseases and cancer, through methods such as increasing intakes of nutrients and increasing physical activity.¹⁰ These spaces not only contribute to the availability of fresh, locally grown produce but also serve as hubs for education, social interaction, and sustainable agriculture practices.

Is legislation required?

No

Is additional funding required?

Maybe

Population(s) affected:

Children
Adults
Seniors

Justification:

Recognizing community gardens are local and community level projects, DHEC wants to work with partners, including Clemson University PSA, to help expand the state's community garden programs by providing necessary resources through DHEC's local health departments and Clemson Extension's county offices. DHEC health departments and Clemson Extension offices are located in each of the 46 counties. Local resources would help DHEC clients and their families, as well as the public at large, connect with community garden efforts.

Challenges:

Community gardens are a local initiative run by existing partnerships, so identifying the gaps where DHEC's health departments, in partnership with Clemson Extension, can be most effective will require significant collaboration with local groups.

Stakeholders:

DHEC, SC Department of Agriculture, Clemson University PSA, SC Department on Aging, SC State 1890 Research and Extension, other state agencies, and community-based organizations, such as Rural Resource Coalition, the network of Coalitions/Councils (Wholespire, Local Food Policy Councils, SC Office of Rural Health, and SC Rural Health Network), the SC Association for Economic Development, and WholeKid Foundation.

Recommendation #7 – Increase the availability of fresh produce at variety stores.

Current Status/Description:

Variety stores (including but not limited to dollar stores and “gas marts”) are the fastest growing food retailers in the country, particularly in rural areas. Food available at variety stores is typically lower in nutritional value and higher in calories. A small percentage of variety stores carries fresh produce. However, efforts by variety stores to expand fresh fruit and vegetable offerings are expanding nationwide. Even with some stores offering fresh produce, many of those do not meet the minimum nutrition requirements to be a vendor for the WIC program. Nationwide, there has been federal and state level legislation to incentivize grocery stores, corner stores, and variety stores in food deserts and to require them to stock certain percentages of fresh produce and other perishable foods.

Is legislation required?

Yes

Is additional funding required?

Maybe

Population(s) affected:

Children
Adults
Seniors

By the Numbers:

One of the largest variety store brands has over 18,000 stores nationwide and sells fresh produce in 16% of the locations.

Justification:

Variety stores are located throughout the state, particularly in rural areas. Many variety stores do not carry fresh produce. Of the stores that do sell fresh produce, many of them do not meet the requirements to be a WIC vendor. Multiple studies have shown that dollar stores and small food stores often have limited offerings and supplies of healthy food items, which are due to a number of factors, such as store location and size. In a specific study conducted in large cities in Minnesota, it was found that only 8% of gas marts and 0% of dollar stores offered fresh fruits and vegetables.¹¹

Legislation can address this issue by creating incentives such as tax credits for stores that locate in food deserts. The tax credits could be contingent on stocking a certain percentage of fresh produce and other nutritious foods, and require store participation in the WIC and SNAP programs.

Challenges:

Ensuring incentives align with industry business models, established operations, logistics (e.g., storage, refrigeration), and varying community demand.

Stakeholders:

All FSC member agencies

Retail food establishments and organizations

Recommendation #8 – Explore the potential of a “no wrong door” application and/or eligibility system to make it easier for the public to access public programs and services across agencies.

Current Status/Description:

Currently, there is only a limited statewide one-stop eligibility system in South Carolina. It is a one-stop portal that connects families and caregivers to public programs and services for children through age five, and also includes a common service application.

Is legislation required?

Yes

Is additional funding required?

Yes

Population(s) affected:

Children
Adults
Seniors

Justification:

Such a system would streamline access to public programs and services, eliminating redundant paperwork and reducing administrative burdens for individuals seeking assistance. This streamlined process enhances efficiency, saving time for both applicants and state agencies. This centralized approach allows for better coordination and data sharing among different programs, enabling the state to optimize resource allocation and identify gaps in service delivery. The enhanced efficiency and coordination facilitated by a one-stop eligibility system contributes to a more responsive and equitable public service infrastructure, ultimately benefiting the well-being and livelihoods of South Carolina residents.

Challenges:

Challenges may arise in terms of data security and privacy concerns, potential resistance to adopting new technologies, and the need for standardized processes that may not fully accommodate the unique requirements of all programs and services.

Stakeholders:

State agencies offering public programs and services with eligibility requirements.

Recommendation #9 – Allow qualifying persons with a drug felony conviction to be eligible to receive SNAP benefits in South Carolina.

Current Status/Description:

Federal law bans people with felony drug convictions from receiving SNAP benefits. The ban on SNAP benefits does not apply to convictions of any other felonies, including murder, rape, or other violent crimes. The federal law contains a provision allowing states to opt out of or modify the ban without any reduction in funding. South Carolina is the only state that has not enacted legislation to lift or modify the federal ban on SNAP benefits for felony drug convictions.

Is legislation required?

Yes

Is additional funding required?

Maybe

Population(s) affected:

Children
Adults
Seniors

By the Numbers:

Twenty-nine states have fully opted out of the lifetime ban. Twenty states have enacted a modified ban. One state (South Carolina) has maintained the lifetime ban.

Justification:

In South Carolina, a drug conviction is the only type of felony conviction that bans a person from being eligible for SNAP benefits. South Carolina is also the only state that has not passed legislation to modify or lift this ban. Supporting access to SNAP benefits for those with felony drug convictions is an investment in rehabilitation, reducing the likelihood of recidivism and associated costs of incarceration. Emphasizing the importance of personal responsibility and second chances, lifting or modifying this ban in South Carolina would encourage a more compassionate and pragmatic stance toward reintegration into society. By enabling individuals to access essential resources like nutrition assistance, they are empowered to become self-sufficient contributors to their communities.

Challenges:

Infrastructure to process additional benefits.

Stakeholders:

Lead state agency:

Department of Social Services

Recommendation #10 – Create a centralized food resource map for combating food insecurity.

Current Status/Description:

DHEC and Clemson University PSA partnered on the development of a statewide food pantry map, which Clemson maintains. DHEC maintains a food access map that includes the food pantry map layer, and also includes layers containing food deserts, roadside and farmers' markets, and permitted restaurants and grocery stores. Expanding this resource would help South Carolinians identify and access food resources.

Is legislation required?

Maybe

Is additional funding required?

Yes

Population(s) affected:

Children
Adults
Seniors

By the Numbers:

The food access map currently maintained by DHEC lists over 1,000 food resources statewide, including food pantries and food banks.

Justification:

Create a centralized statewide food resource map that would potentially include the following, among other considerations:

- Food distribution centers, food pantries, and food banks
- Farmers' markets, roadside markers, and community-supported agriculture (CSAs)
- WIC and SNAP vendors
- Community gardens and food cooperatives
- Transportation networks
- Food desert and food insecurity data
- Food and nutrition educational programs

The creation of a centralized food resource map could also be added to or combined with another recommendation.

Challenges:

The diverse and geographical nature of the state, which encompasses urban centers, rural areas, and various communities with distinct needs, makes accessing services more difficult. Coordinating and updating information from a wide array of sources, including local food banks, community organizations, and government agencies, requires a robust and dynamic data management system. Ensuring the accuracy and timeliness of information poses another challenge, as the availability of food resources may change frequently. An additional challenge

is addressing privacy concerns and standardizing data collection practices across diverse regions.

Stakeholders:

All FSC member agencies

For-profit and non-profit food organizations

Recommendation #11 – Promote farmers’ and farmers markets’ participation in the WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP).

Current Status/Description:

The WIC program offers vouchers through the FMNP that can be used to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables from farmers at markets or farm stands. These additional options can help increase redemption rates while also helping the farming community. Accessibility is a big challenge when there is a limited number of farmers markets participating in the FMNP and accepting WIC payments.

Is legislation required?

No

Is additional funding required?

Yes

Population(s) affected:

Children
Adults
Seniors

By the Numbers:

There are 374 farmers markets and roadside markets that offer fresh produce in the state. Twenty-three percent of those markets allow purchases by WIC participants.

Justification:

By facilitating direct connections between local farmers and WIC participants, WIC FMNP promotes access to fresh, locally sourced produce, fostering healthier dietary choices among vulnerable populations. The program not only supports farmers by expanding their customer base but also boosts local economies. Additionally, the emphasis on fresh, nutritious foods aligns with public health goals, combating the negative health outcomes associated with food insecurity. Overall, enhancing participation in the WIC FMNP for both farmers and consumers is a strategic and inclusive approach that not only stimulates local agriculture but also contributes to the broader fight against food insecurity by promoting nutritional well-being and community resilience.

One-time funding is needed to promote farmer participation in the WIC FMNP program in the communities in the state most at-need. The campaign would educate farmers on the benefits of the program and why their participation matters. There are 287 farmers markets in the state that do not accept WIC payment, which presents an opportunity to increase participation.

Challenges:

Identifying what the most at-need communities are and promoting farmers’ and farmers markets’ participation in those communities.

Stakeholders:

Department of Health and Environmental Control

Department of Agriculture

SC Association of Farmers Markets

Foundation for Community Impact and Health Equity

Farmers and WIC participants

Recommendation #12 – Expand the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program.

Current Status/Description:

The 100% federally funded Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) provides vouchers for individuals aged 60 and older to obtain fresh fruits and vegetables from participating farmers markets and other vendors.

In order to qualify, seniors must have an annual income of \$25,142 or less (185% FPL). The income limit for a two-person household is \$33,874.

The standard SFMNP benefit amount is \$25, distributed in five \$5 vouchers.

Is legislation required?

No

Is additional funding required?

Yes

Population(s) affected:

Seniors

By the Numbers:

While SFMNP has expanded to all 46 counties, South Carolina has never received enough federal funding to meet the need/demand, and every year the Department of Social Services (DSS) is forced to turn seniors away.

DSS received enough funds to distribute 24,680 SFMNP vouchers during the 2023 season. Over 2,600 seniors were waitlisted in 20 counties. Six counties had to cancel distribution events because there were no more vouchers available.

DSS received additional ARPA funds to increase the benefit to \$50 (five \$10 vouchers) for the 2023 season, however the Department does not have the federal funds to continue this benefit level.

Justification:

DSS requested \$1.1 million in recurring dollars in the 2024 budget to expand operation of the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program. These additional state funds will allow the Department to supplement the federal funding to serve approximately 10,000 additional seniors per year (35,000 total) and maintain a \$50 benefit level.

Challenges:

Some counties have struggled to provide adequate staffing to handle the demand and DSS has had to supplement their distribution events with agency staff. The Department's staffing resources are already stretched in this area, and additional resources at the state (Department on Aging) or local level may be necessary in future years.

Stakeholders:

Lead state agency:

Department of Social Services

Other core stakeholders:

Department on Aging

Farmers, Farmers Markets/Roadside Stands, and Mobile Markets

Senior Serving Organizations

Recommendation #13 – Increase the gross income limit for SNAP benefits.

Current Status/Description:

SNAP (formerly known as “food stamps”) provides financial assistance to low-income families to supplement their grocery budget so they can afford nutritious food essential to health and well-being.

This federal benefit is available for eligible households whose income is at or below 130% of the federal poverty level (FPL).

Is legislation required?

No

Is additional funding required?

Yes

Population(s) affected:

Children
Adults
Seniors

By the Numbers:

The federal rules give states the option to implement a Broad-Based Categorical Eligibility (BBCE) policy, allowing them to align SNAP asset and/or income limits with the TANF non-cash benefit program that confers categorical eligibility. BBCE households must also meet all other SNAP rules and have net incomes low enough to qualify for a SNAP benefit.

Forty-four states (including South Carolina) have elected to implement BBCE, and 37 states have chosen to increase the gross income limit, including three in the southeast region (Florida, Kentucky, and North Carolina).

Justification:

Raising the gross income limit to 150% FPL would significantly increase the number of South Carolina residents potentially eligible for federal assistance.

Challenges:

The Department of Social Services (DSS) committed to making this change prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, due to the pandemic and subsequent rise in food costs, the state continues to experience significantly higher SNAP application volumes compared to 2019 levels.

To date, the Department has managed to handle the increase in application volume without requesting additional positions. However, it is unlikely that DSS could absorb the additional workload impact from this change within current staffing levels. Federal law requires states to

process at least 95% of SNAP applications within 30 days. Failure to meet this standard may result in suspension or disallowance of a state's administrative funding for SNAP.

Stakeholders:

Lead state agency:

Department of Social Services

Recommendation #14 – Increase coordination between SNAP and WIC.

Current Status/Description:

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) is a nutrition program that provides health education, healthy foods, breastfeeding support, and other services free of charge to South Carolina families who qualify.

Is legislation required?

No

Is additional funding required?

No

Population(s) affected:

Children

Adults

By the Numbers:

WIC is available to South Carolina residents who are pregnant, breastfeeding, or have children under the age of five. Those who receive Medicaid, TANF, or SNAP already meet the income eligibility requirements.

Recent enrollment numbers in South Carolina suggest that not all of the families potentially eligible for WIC are applying for these benefits.

Justification:

Recommend DSS and DHEC collaborate to identify and implement strategies to maximize the number of eligible families enrolled in WIC. Potential items for the agencies to consider should include, at a minimum, targeted marketing and outreach activities, data sharing, and streamlining the application process.

Challenges:

It is likely that agency staff will be able to implement a number of strategies within the current funding levels. However, any large-scale efforts (such as a common application) would require additional funds and/or staff resources.

Stakeholders:

Lead state agencies:

Department of Social Services and Department of Health and Environmental Control

Other core stakeholders:

Local Health Departments

Hospitals/Healthcare Providers

Recommendation #15 - Identify strategies to remove physical barriers to accessing healthy foods.

Current Status/Description:

Food security is driven by two primary factors: adequate financial resources; and physical access to healthy, nutritious foods.

Federal and state programs such as SNAP, WIC, Farmers Market Nutrition Program, Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program, and Healthy Bucks, are available to help individuals and families increase their food-purchasing power. None of these programs, however, address issues related to physical access.

Is legislation required?

No

Is additional funding required?

Yes

Population(s) affected:

Children
Adults
Seniors

By the Numbers:

Significant numbers of South Carolina residents are unable to access healthy, nutritious foods on a regular basis due to barriers such as lack of reliable transportation, geographic issues, and physical/mobility constraints.

Justification:

The council recommends state funds be provided to implement state- and local-level strategies that address barriers and increase access to nutritious food essential to health and well-being. Strategies to be considered include:

- Grants to cover annual grocery delivery fees for older adults or those with a physical disability.
- Incentives for farmers to offer additional locations/venues for target populations to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables (e.g., senior centers).
- Grants for non-profit organizations to test/implement local strategies (e.g., transportation services).
- Grants/incentives to increase farmers' participation in state programs (i.e., Farmers Market Nutrition Program, Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program, Healthy Bucks, etc.).

Challenges:

Would likely require significant collaboration between several state agencies to maximize resources and prevent duplication of services.

Stakeholders:

Lead state agency:

Department of Social Services

Other core stakeholders:

Department of Health and Environmental Control

Department of Agriculture

Department on Aging

Community-based Organizations

Farmers, Farmers Markets/Roadside Stands, and Mobile Markets

Recommendation #16 – Recommend implementation and funding of Summer EBT program in Summer 2025.

Current Status/Description:

The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023 ended the Pandemic EBT (P-EBT) program and authorized the Summer EBT program, a new (permanent) state option that began in 2024. Eligible students would receive \$40 per month in Summer EBT benefits (\$120 per year per child).

Is legislation required?

No

Is additional funding required?

Yes

Population(s) affected:

Children

By the Numbers:

South Carolina was able to provide additional federal benefits to over 500,000 K-12 students through the P-EBT program.

P-EBT allowed states to use existing data systems to identify eligible students and automatically enroll them in P-EBT, which significantly reduced the administrative workload. Students qualified for P-EBT based on their eligibility for free or reduced-priced meals under the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), either through direct enrollment or attendance at a Certified Eligibility Provision (CEP) school. The South Carolina Department of Education was able to pull this information from the PowerSchool database and share it with DSS, who issued the benefits via P-EBT cards.

Summer EBT requires states to implement an application process for all potentially eligible K-12 students who are not directly certified (i.e., those individually enrolled in the NSLP during the previous school year, receiving SNAP, or in foster care). This would include students attending a CEP school, all other public and private schools, and homeschooled students. Eligibility for Summer EBT would be based on a student’s eligibility for free or reduced-price meals.

States are also required to establish procedures for eligible households to opt out of Summer EBT, as well as a fair hearings/appeals process for applicants and overpayment/claims procedures.

Justification:

Unlike P-EBT, which was 100% federally funded, the new law provides funding for only 50% of any administrative expenses associated with Summer EBT. This would include agency operating costs as well as changes to the state’s EBT contract.

The Department of Social Services anticipates the costs for Summer EBT to be considerably higher than for P-EBT. It is likely that any state agency involved in Summer EBT would need to request additional funds in the state budget to cover the remaining 50%.

Challenges:

States are required to submit a state plan by February 15, 2024. Given the lack of final federal guidance/regulations, it would be a significant challenge to implement Summer EBT for 2024. If funding is made available, it may be possible to design and implement a program as soon as 2025.

Stakeholders:

Lead state agencies:

Department of Social Services and Department of Education

Other core stakeholders:

School Districts

CONCLUSION



Food insecurity continues to be a challenge for South Carolinians, as evidenced by the studies and data referenced throughout this report. While a number of factors can contribute to an individual's level of food security, the FSC determined that the most significant barriers for citizens include access, costs, and coordination. While income is always a driving factor of what people can afford to eat, many South Carolinians, especially those in rural and/or low-income communities, not only lack access to stores and/or markets that offer nutritious food choices because they are not located nearby, but also lack transportation to shop at these stores. Additionally, people who are eligible for aid programs may not know they are eligible, or the programs may not yet be available in their location. Although state agencies and nonprofit organizations offer many services with what their resources and infrastructure allow, the lack of coordination amongst these entities often results in fragmented offerings to the communities they serve.

With these challenges and gaps in mind, the FSC developed both broad and specific recommendations covering local- to state-level implementation to improve South Carolinians' consistent access to healthy food choices. Recommendations including expanding existing programs to cover more counties, encouraging policy changes to increase populations served, boosting infrastructure of agencies and nonprofits, and establishing funding for a statewide organization to continue the work of the FSC aim to eliminate food insecurity.

WHY THIS REPORT MATTERS

No South Carolinian should go hungry, from infants to older adults. Eliminating food insecurity ensures all our citizens are appropriately and well nourished, while also improving quality of life and reducing the risk of chronic diseases and cancer. This is especially important for South Carolina's children, for whom food insecurity can have lifelong adverse effects. Supporting efforts such as implementing systems and policy changes, enhancing and promoting our rich agricultural heritage, and collaborating and coordinating with statewide and local community organizations is not only feasible but attainable.

SOURCES



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3. U.S. Department of Agriculture – Economic Research Service. Characteristics and Influential Factors of Food Deserts. https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/45014/30940_err140.pdf.
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11. Caspi, C.E., Pelletier, J.E., Harnack, L., Erickson, D.J., & Laska, M.N. (2016). Differences in healthy food supply and stocking practices between small grocery stores, gas-marts, pharmacies and dollar stores. *Public Health Nutrition*, 19(3), 540-547. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1368980015002724>

ATTACHMENT A – PUBLIC COMMENTS



Public Comments Received During the Public Comment Period December 21, 2023 – January 2, 2024

1. Name/Organization	Recommendation Nos.
Nikki Kelley, Wit Meets Grit	2, 3, 5, 8, and 12
<p>Comments:</p> <p>Recommendation Nos. 2 and 3 – I want to adamantly support recommendation #2 and #3 regarding South Carolina Food Policy Council (SCFPC) partnership and funding for this work. I served as a Board member on the SC Food Policy Council for nine years ending in 2021 when I transitioned to an advisor to the board.</p> <p>Over the course of the last decade I have watched the continued dedication and growth of the SCFPC into the incredible network it has become. This group has been dependent on the dedication and time of Board Members, Committee Chairs, and hundreds of Members at Large to commit their time and energy to organizing, educating, and building connections to address the challenges facing South Carolina's food system.</p> <p>Based on the meeting minutes, there was clearly a misunderstanding regarding the funding dedicated to the SCFPC and I can assure you this is an organization with no paid staff or administrative support. One of the core activities of the SCFPC is to support those organizations who support our mission and facilitate connections with our network. These partnerships have allowed us to increase the capacity of our members (such as the USC SNAP-ED team and my work under Wholespire for Growing Local SC) but to date the SCFPC has not provided financial support for staff and administrative costs. If provided funding, the SCFPC can strengthen and support the work of all of the agencies on the SC Food Security Council in driving forward the proposed recommendations.</p> <p>Through the 2023 strategic planning sessions facilitated by Burn and Nino Consulting (funded through Healthy Palmetto) it was noted that the SCFPC has reached critical mass and it was recommended that SCFPC secure dedicated staff. In order for the SCFPC to rise to the incredible challenges ahead, it must have the staffing necessary to strategically and consistently act as an intermediary, network weaver, and driver of action.</p> <p>Recommendation No. 5 – As someone who has been working in South Carolina's food system for 17 years, I can assure you that Recommendation #5 to Create or invest in a statewide organization to facilitate implementation of the Food Security Council findings and recommendations, should in fact invest in the SC Food Policy Council. With so much work to be done, there is no need to reinvent the wheel, especially with an existing organization with such a diverse (sector, culture, race, ethnicity, location etc) the Board of Directors and membership.</p> <p>Recommendation No. 8 – I want to fully support recommendation #8: Expand community garden programs in the state assuming that it will be done in partnership with the existing collaborations between Clemson's Community Gardening program with Amy Dabbs, Rural Resource Coalition with Ken Harvin, and the network of Coalitions/Councils (Wholespire, Local</p>	

Food Policy Councils, SC Office of Rural Health, and SC Rural Health Network). This work is burgeoning, in very high demand, and will need additional support.

Recommendation No. 12 – Recommendation #12 to create a centralized food resource map for combating food insecurity would come naturally in partnership with the SCFPC as their partners are preparing to update the SC Local Food System Roadmap under the SCDA's Resilient Food Infrastructure State Project.

2. Name/Organization

Recommendation Nos.

Kate Weschler

2 and 3

Comment:

I am a farmer, consultant, and consumer located in the midlands of South Carolina. Through a variety of ways, the South Carolina Food Policy Council has benefited my livelihood here, mostly through networking opportunities and information exchange. I am in support of any state funding + administrative assistance that the body has the opportunity to receive.

3. Name/Organization

Recommendation Nos.

Elise Ashby, RobinHood Group

1, 2, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14, 15, 17, and 18

Comment:

Recommendation No. 1 – This is a great idea (funding Change SC Program expansion), however also funding the SC Association of Farmers Markets will ensure local farmers and crafters have a local place to sell their produce and goods to create income generation and promote interest in agriculture for youth.

Recommendation No. 2 – A partnership is a great opportunity for the SC Food Security Council to have ‘boots on the ground’ via the SC Food Policy Council. At least quarterly or annual meetings and presentations at annual conventions.

Recommendation No. 8 – I suggest creating a ‘community/school garden coalition’ with SCACED, WholeKid Foundation, USDA/NRCS and local nonprofit organizations (like the RobinHood Group) that has installed community/school garden in communities.

Recommendation No. 9 – This recommendations conflicts with local farmers markets. The produce that will be in variety stores will not necessarily be fresh or local.

Recommendation No. 10 – Table and amend recommendation #10.

Recommendation No. 13 – WIC increases farmer participation and will get new moms to shop at local farmers markets. In Union County we had a ‘Community Baby Shower and the FoodShare Union County hub (operated by the RobinHood Group) gave each expecting mom a fresh produce box, the moms are now purchasing fresh produce boxes with SNAP and cash.

The farmers and the Farmers Market managers need to go through training to accept WIC.

Make sure ALL farmers and farmers markets in ALL counties can accept WIC. WIC has not always been available in all counties which is why the number of farmers is low.

Recommendation No. 14 – SFMNP the budget funding amount needs to be increased and increase the number of vouchers in each county. Union County, SC gets 400 vouchers to

distribute, there are 7,800 eligible seniors in Union County, SC. We always have a waitlist of over 500 seniors.

Recommendation No. 15 – There needs to be a minimum amount of at least \$50 in benefits. There are seniors, veterans and disabled people in Union County (and I’m sure in other counties) that get \$8 MONTHLY in SNAP benefits.

Recommendation No. 16 – YES!!!

Recommendation No. 17 – One consideration for this recommendation could be assisting with funding for local rule transportation services.

Recommendation No. 18 – YES!!!

4. Name/Organization	Recommendation No.
Nakeyra Harris	General Comment

Comment:
 Good morning! I, Nakeyra Harris a member of South Carolina Food Policy Council are in full support of all of the recommendations listed on Proviso 34.70 of the 2023-2024 Appropriations Act. I am recommending that our current South Carolina Food Policy Council become the agency in charge for improving food and nutrition security in South Carolina.

5. Name/Organization	Recommendation Nos.
Amy Teixeira Weaver	2, 3, 5, and General Comment

Comment:
 Thank you for the opportunity to provide public comments on the draft recommendations on improving food and nutrition security in South Carolina, pursuant to Proviso 34.70 of the 2023-2024 Appropriations Act.

I am in support of all of the proposed recommendations and have comments on recommendation number 2, 3, and 5. I listened to the meeting on December 19, and there was confusion about whether or not the SC Food Policy Council receives funding from the University of South Carolina SNAP-Ed program. As a member of the University of South Carolina SNAP-Ed team, I know first hand that the University of South Carolina SNAP-Ed does not provide administrative or programmatic funding to the SC Food Policy Council (SCFPC). USC SNAP-Ed provides funding to seven local food policy councils to accelerate their development and expand their capacity to identify and advance policy, systems, and environmental change strategies for improving healthy food access and ensuring food equity. USC SNAP-Ed dedicates some staff time to advancing policy, systems, and environmental change strategies through efforts related to the Food is Medicine SC, Planning & Transportation, and Strengthening Nutrition Assistance Programs Committees of the SCFPC. The SCFPC does not have any funding and has an all-volunteer board for over 300 members across the state. I would recommend providing staff and programmatic funding to the SCFPC and in response to recommendation #5, I would suggest investing in the SCFPC instead of a new statewide organization.

I am in support of all the other recommendations as these are important steps in addressing food insecurity in our state. Again, thank you for the work of the council to date and for the opportunity to provide feedback.

6. Name/Organization	Recommendation Nos.
Jennifer Calabria, Pacolet Milliken	3 and 5
<p>Comment:</p> <p>Recommendation No. 3 – The SC Food Policy Council (SCFPC) currently has over 300 members working to build an equitable, accessible, and economically diverse, local food system in SC by promoting multi-sectoral collaboration, community-based programming, and policy change. SCFPC is currently doing much with very little financial support. Providing administrative and programmatic financial support for the SCFPC would significantly advance the production and consumption of healthy foods across the state. The SC Food Policy Council needs to be fully funded.</p> <p>Recommendation No. 5 – There is no need to create another statewide food security organization especially when the SC Food Policy Council (SCFPC) currently is already doing the work. The network and systems in place through the SC Food Policy Council would be of great benefit for implementing recommendations and programs. The SCFPC’s existing infrastructure would allow for results to be realized quickly. Please do not create another organization; please invest in the SC Food Policy Council.</p>	

ATTACHMENT B – MEETING MATERIALS



**Council Meeting Agendas, Minutes, and Presentations
(In order of meeting date)**

Food Security Council

August 31, 2023

9:00am

Agenda

I.	Welcome	Dr. Edward Simmer
II.	Introductions	All
III.	Vision	Senator Thomas Alexander
IV.	Purpose and proviso review	All
V.	Proposed timeline	All
VI.	Meeting schedule and next steps	All

https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess125_2023-2024/appropriations2023/tap1b.htm#s34

34.70. (DHEC: Food Security Council) (A) For Fiscal Year 2023-24, there is created the Food Security Council to be housed in the Department of Health and Environmental Control. The purpose of the Council shall be to:

(1) examine all state agency programs that address food insecurity in the State by providing monetary benefits or meal services that cover infants through senior citizens;

(2) identify gaps in service, particularly for the most vulnerable populations;
and

(3) make recommendations on improvements to services and additional programs that can address the gaps in services.

(B) The Council shall be composed of one member representing each agency and appointed by the agency's director as follows:

(1) the Department on Aging;

(2) the Department of Agriculture;

(3) the Department of Education;

(4) the Department of Health and Environmental Control;

(5) the Department of Social Services;

(6) the Department of Health and Human Services;

(7) Clemson University PSA; and

(8) South Carolina State PSA.

(C) Any administrative services or support for the Council shall be provided by the Department of Health and Environmental Control.

(D) The Council shall provide a report to the President of the Senate, the

Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, and the Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee on its findings and recommendations on the issues contained in this provision by January 31, 2024. Upon submission of the report, the Council shall be dissolved.

34.71. (DHEC: Innovative Reusable Byproduct Pilot Program) Of the funds appropriated to the Department of Health and Environmental Control, the department shall create the Innovative Reusable Byproduct Pilot Program. The purpose of the program is to determine whether innovations in manufacturing, food production, timber, and other similar industries regulated by the department can provide new opportunities to use byproduct which would otherwise require management as solid waste. The program shall not apply to: (1) hazardous waste; (2) infectious waste; (3) radioactive waste; or (4) refuse as defined and regulated pursuant to the South Carolina Mining Act.

Interested parties may apply to be considered for participation in the pilot program, but no more than five applicants can be selected for participation at any one time. The terms and conditions for participation by the projects selected by the department shall be set forth in a written agreement which shall provide, at a minimum, that a selected project must cease to operate if it is having a significant adverse impact on the environment.

The department shall submit a report on the program to the General Assembly no later than June 30, 2024. This report shall include any legislative recommendations to provide for the use of reusable byproducts.



Food Security Council

August 31, 2023

South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control

Healthy People. **Healthy Communities.**

Agenda

- Welcome
- Introductions
- Vision
- Purpose + Proviso Review
- Proposed Timeline
- Next Steps



South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control
Healthy People. Healthy Communities.

Welcome

Edward Simmer, MD, MPH, DFAPA
Director, DHEC

Introductions

**Department on
Aging**

**Department of
Agriculture**

**Department of
Education**

**Department of
Health and
Environmental
Control**

**Department of
Social Services**

**Department of
Health and Human
Services**

**Clemson University
Public Service and
Agriculture (PSA)**

**SC State University
Public Service
Activities (PSA)**



South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control
Healthy People. Healthy Communities.

Vision

The Honorable Thomas C. Alexander
President of the South Carolina Senate

Purpose + Proviso Review

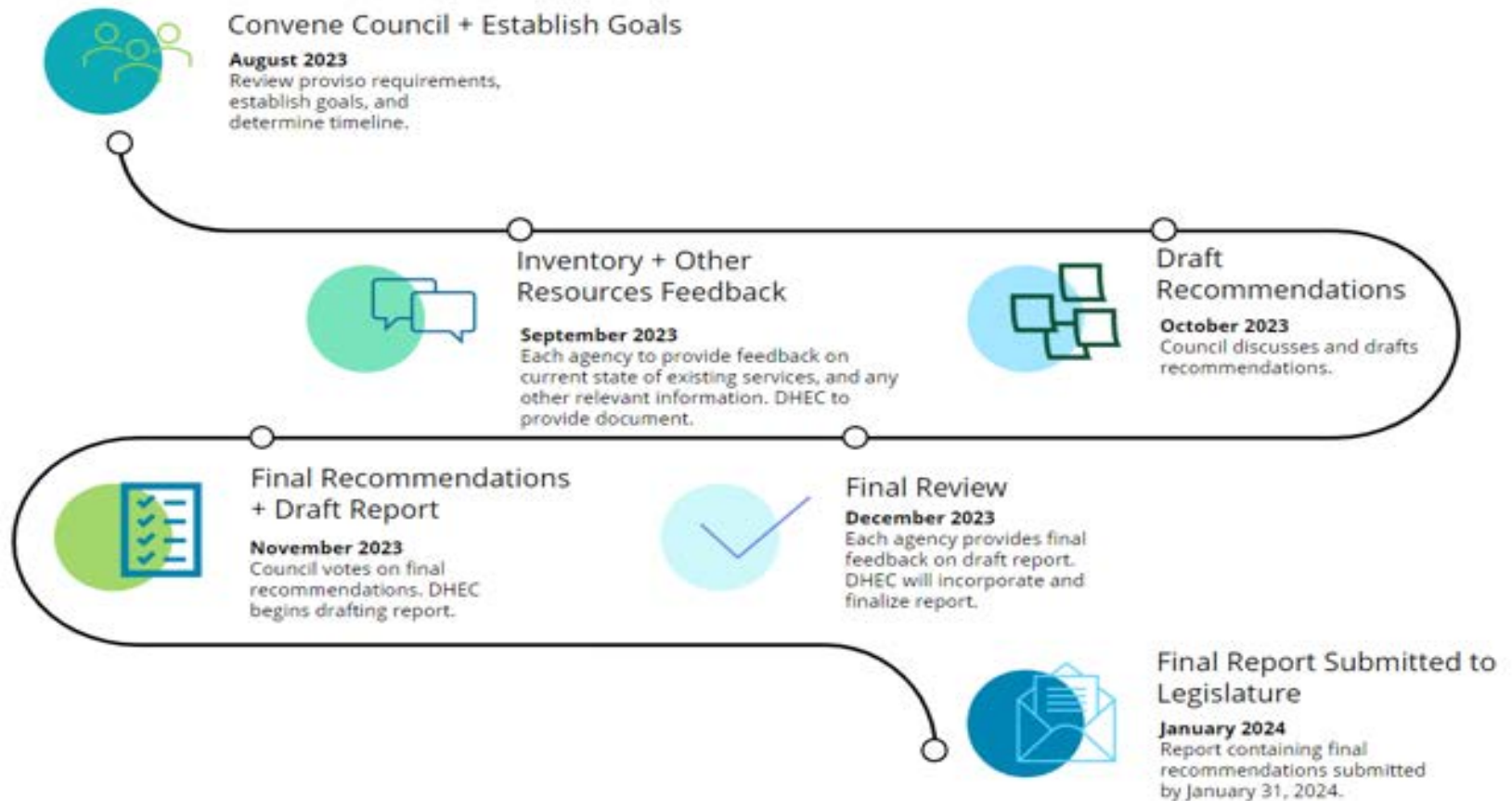
As established in Proviso 34.70 of H.4300, the Council shall:

- Examine state agency programs addressing food insecurity in SC through monetary benefits or meal services covering infants through senior citizens.
- Identify gaps in service, especially for most vulnerable populations; and
- Make recommendations on improvements to existing services and additional programs.

Proviso deliverable:

- Report of recommendations submitted to legislature by January 31, 2024.

Proposed Timeline





Next Steps

Following meeting – DHEC to share agency inventory for review and feedback

September 20th – inventory feedback and other relevant information and resources due to DHEC

September 25th-29th – proposed next meeting



South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control
Healthy People. Healthy Communities.

CONTACT US

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(803) 898-3338

Stay Connected



Meeting of Food Security Council August 31, 2023

9:00am SC DHEC Boardroom 2600 Bull St.

- | | | |
|------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| I. | Welcome | Dr. Edward Simmer |
| II. | Introductions | All |
| III. | Vision | Senator Thomas Alexander |

Remarks: Thanked participants for attendance. Goals of the council include an understanding of where food products and monetary benefits for food are being provided in the state, would like to eliminate any duplications across agencies, and use this group to engage stakeholders to compare what is being done across the state. The report should also highlight what is going well. The hope is for actionable items to come from report.

- | | | |
|-----|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| IV. | Purpose and proviso review | All, facilitated by Dr. Simmer |
|-----|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|

- Reviewed goals of the proviso.

34.70. (DHEC: Food Security Council)

(A) For Fiscal Year 2023-24, there is created the Food Security Council to be housed in the Department of Health and Environmental Control. The purpose of the Council shall be to:

- (1) examine all state agency programs that address food insecurity in the State by providing monetary benefits or meal services that cover infants through senior citizens;
- (2) identify gaps in service, particularly for the most vulnerable populations; and
- (3) make recommendations on improvements to services and additional programs that can address the gaps in services.

(D) The Council shall provide a report to the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, and the Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee on its findings and recommendations on the issues contained in this provision by January 31, 2024. Upon submission of the report, the Council shall be dissolved.

- Initial research has started to explore what other states are doing, and drafting an inventory of what state agencies are currently doing.

- | | | |
|----|---|-----|
| V. | Slide presentation, discussion, next steps | All |
|----|---|-----|

Slides were presented and group discussion included the following items:

- What activities are agency's currently doing related to food security, results, numbers served, meals delivered etc. This information will be used to determine where the gaps are.
- Identify regulations that might be prohibitive to getting food to people? Funding?
- Scope? Should nutritional education be a part of this? Focus on food and funding?
- What level of detail should report include? Hope is for broad covering of data on food insecurity.

- What role should fiscal impact/reporting play in recommendations?
- Look at barriers that contribute to food insecurity.
- All ideas are on the table, bring anything.

Follow-up items:

- End of month (September 25th-29th) is the target for next meeting
- Draft inventory and meeting minutes to go out by Tuesday (9/5)
- Include Department of Transportation for future discussion since transportation is often identified as a barrier for food security.
- Create common working definition for food insecurity
- Send in research, presentations, and current agency activities by September 20th for consideration at next meeting.

Primary Contacts:

Coordinator - Britt Bugey- bugueyBM@dhec.sc.gov

Researcher - Kayla Anderson David- davidka@dhec.sc.gov

Food Security Council

September 28th 2023

9:00am

Agenda

9:00-9:10	I. Welcome	Dr. Edward Simmer
	II. Definition of Food Security	All
9:10-9:25	III. Clemson Extension, Rural Health and Nutrition	Weatherly Thomas and Michelle Altman
9:25-9:30	IV. Clemson/DHEC Statewide Food Map	DHEC
9:30-10:00	V. SC Food Policy Council	Allisa Duncan, Vice Chair
10:00-10:15	VI. SC State Nutrition Action Coalition	Kate Gerweck
10:15-10:30	VII. Proviso 1.68 (Student Meals)	All
	VIII. Next steps	All

1.68. (SDE: Student Meals) For the current fiscal year, all school districts shall identify students in poverty according to the provisions in Proviso 1.3 of this act and increase access to free school meals for these students. School districts shall use the criteria to directly certify pupils eligible for free and reduced-price school meals to the extent permitted under federal law. The local board of trustees of a district in which all schools are eligible to receive the free federal reimbursement rate for all reimbursable school breakfasts and lunches served, pursuant to the Community Eligibility Provision in Section 1759(a) of Title 42 of the United States Code, shall adopt a resolution indicating participation. If a district is unable to participate, the local board of trustees shall adopt a resolution stating that it is unable to participate in CEP and demonstrate the reasons why. The resolution shall be published on a public meeting agenda concurrently with the proposed district budget as an action item and shall be approved by a majority of the board. School districts shall ensure that the parents or guardians of students eligible for free and reduced lunch receive the necessary applications and instructions and upon request are provided with assistance in completing the paperwork. Schools shall not publicly identify a student who is unable to pay for a meal for any reason. Communications from the district

regarding any meal debt owed must only be directed to the parent or guardian and may be sent home through the student.



Food Security Council

September 28, 2023

South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control

Healthy People. Healthy Communities.

Agenda

- Welcome
- Progress Update
- Definition Discussion
- Presentations + Discussion
- Additional Proviso
- Next Steps

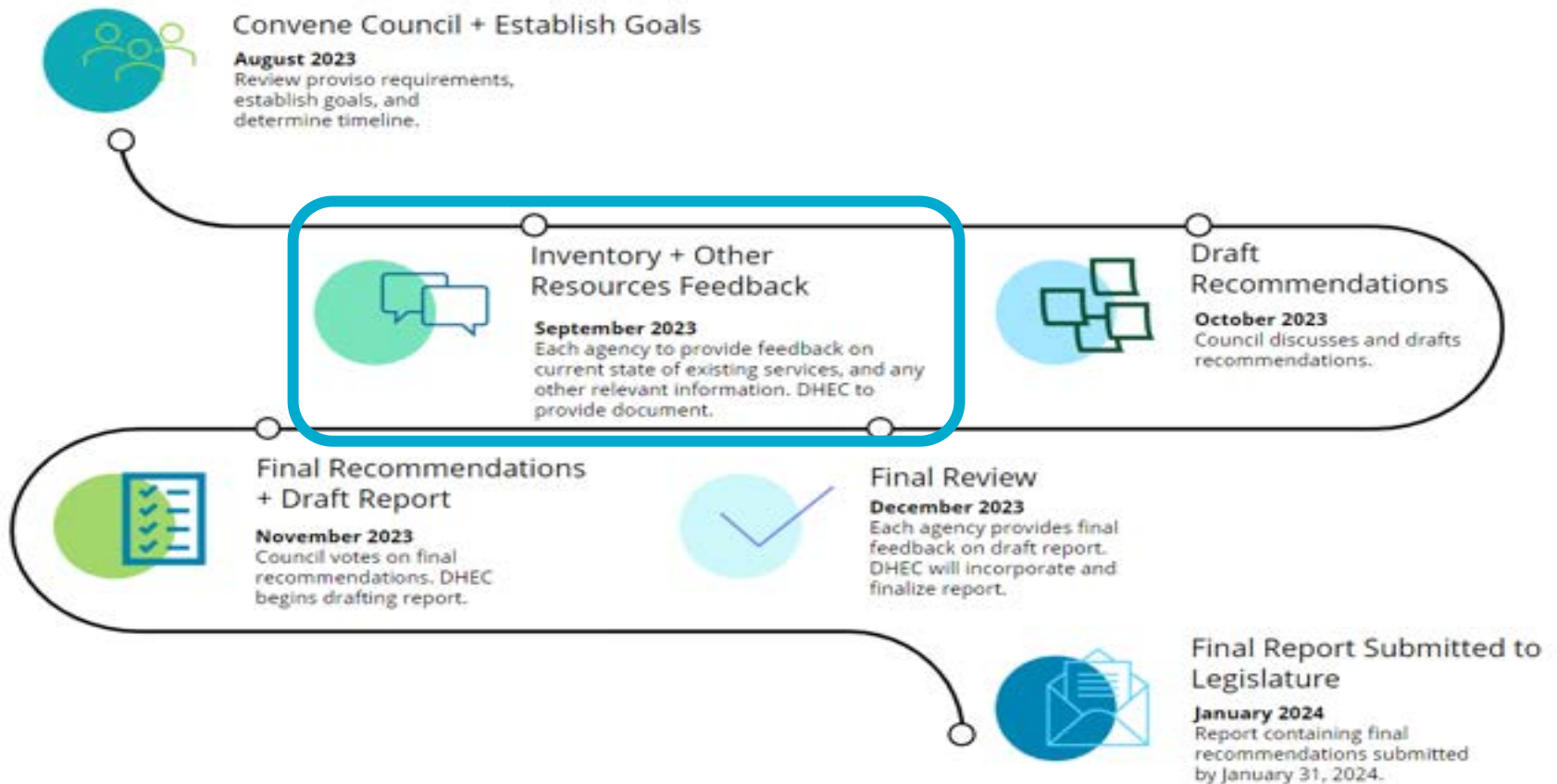


South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control
Healthy People. Healthy Communities.

Welcome

Edward Simmer, MD, MPH, DFAPA
Director, DHEC

Progress Update



Definitions

Food Security	Nutrition Security
<p>High Food Security¹ – no reported indications of food-access problems or limitations.</p>	<p>Nutrition Security¹ – All Americans have consistent and equitable access to healthy, safe, affordable foods essential to optimal health and well-being.</p>
<p>Marginal Food Security¹ – One or two reported indications – typically of anxiety over food sufficiency or shortage of food in the house. Little or no indication of changes in diets or food intake.</p>	<p>Food and Nutrition Security² – Having reliable access to enough high-quality food to avoid hunger and stay healthy. Improving access to nutritious food supports overall health, reduces chronic diseases, and helps people avoid unnecessary health care.</p>
<p>Low Food Security¹ – Reports of reduced quality, variety, or desirability of diet. Little or no indication of reduced food intake.</p>	
<p>Very Low Food Security¹ – Reports of multiple indications of disrupted eating patterns and reduced food intake.</p>	

¹ <https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-u-s/definitions-of-food-security/>

² <https://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/healthequity/sdoh-and-chronic-disease/nccdphp-and-social-determinants-of-health/food-and-nutrition-security>

Presentations

- **Clemson Extension** – Weatherly Thomas + Michelle Altman
- **Clemson/DHEC Statewide Food Map** – Keisha Long (DHEC)
- **SC Food Policy Council** – Allisa Duncan
- **SC State Nutrition Action Coalition** – Kate Gerweck

Additional Proviso

Proviso 1.68 of H.4300 – Student Meals (Department of Education):

- School districts to conduct updated analysis to identify students in poverty
- Increase access to free school meals for identified students
- Local board of trustees of district in which all schools are eligible to receive free federal reimbursement rate for all reimbursable breakfasts and lunches shall adopt resolution indicating participation
 - If district unable to participate because of financial hardship, resolution shall be adopted demonstrating that hardship
- School districts to ensure parents or guardians of eligible students receive necessary applications and instructions and receive assistance with completing paperwork upon request.
- Schools shall not publicly identify or penalize students who are unable to pay for meals or accrue meal debt.

Discussion

- Are there any follow-up questions for today's presenters?
- What does a draft report and recommendations look like?
- What additional information is needed?
- How can we best support Council members?
- How would the Council like to move forward?

Next Steps

Next meeting -

- October 16th-20th
- Inventory completion
- Be prepared to discuss gaps + provide recommendations to address those gaps



South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control
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CONTACT US

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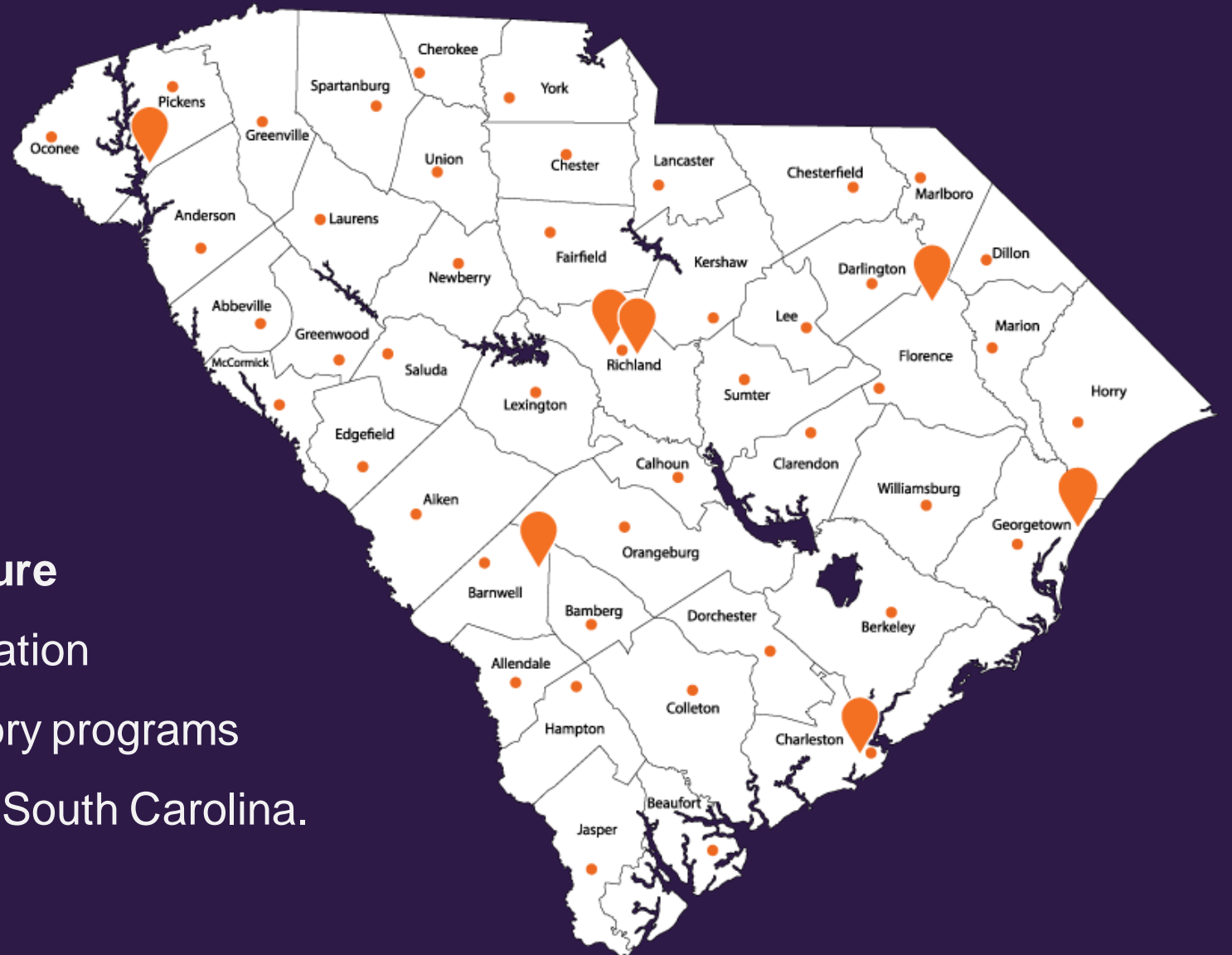
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION
College of Agriculture, Forestry and Life Sciences

RURAL HEALTH & NUTRITION PROGRAM TEAM

Food Systems Work

WEATHERLY THOMAS

Healthy Food Access Coordinator



Clemson Public Service and Agriculture
delivers impartial, science-based information
through research, outreach and regulatory programs
designed to improve the quality of life in South Carolina.

Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service

Division of Health and Youth

★ Extension Rural Health and Nutrition ★

Expanded Food and Nutrition Program

4-H and Youth Development

FFA and Agriculture Education

Food Systems and Safety

Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources

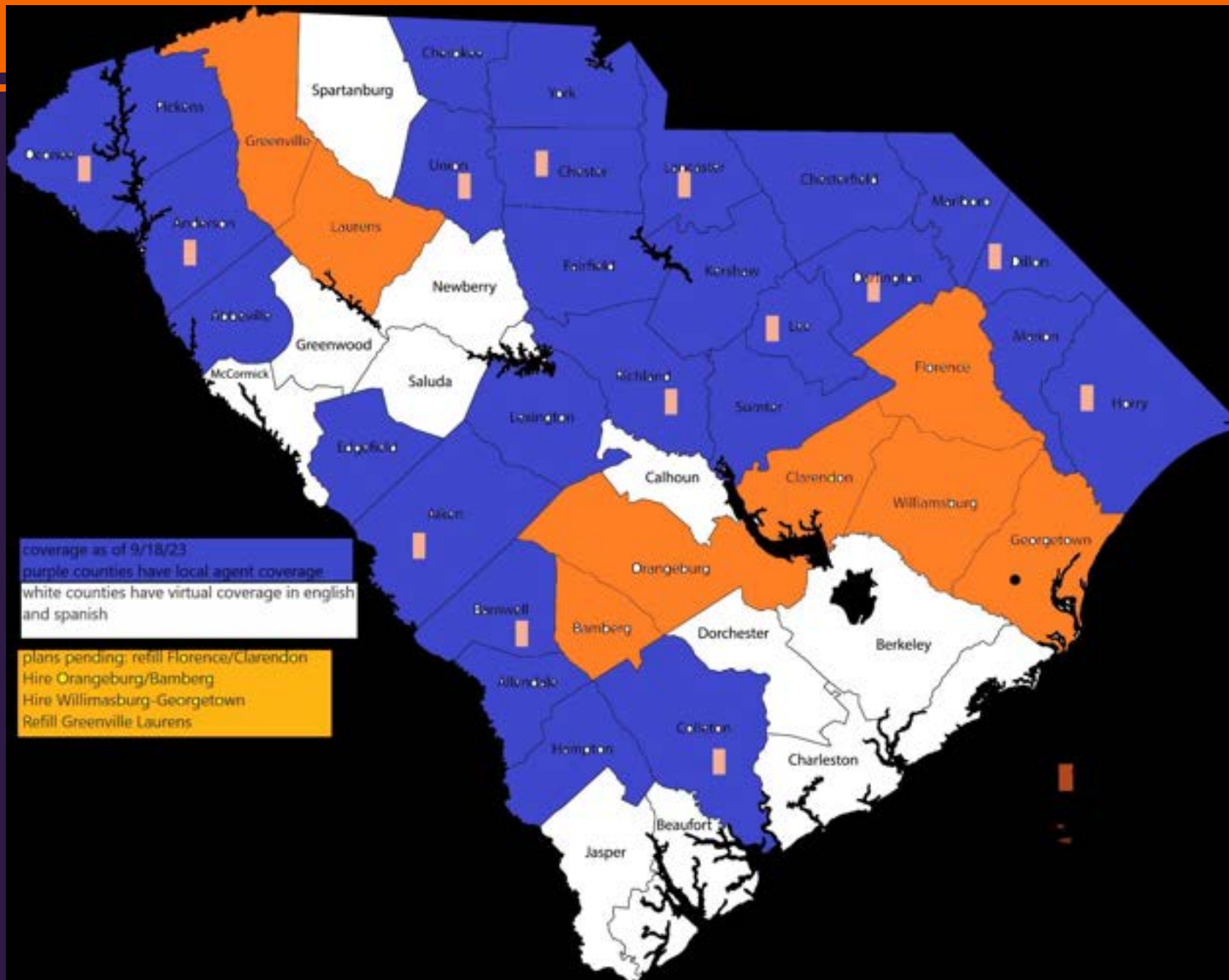
Forestry and Water Resources

Livestock and Forages

Agronomy

Horticulture

Agri-Business



Policy, Systems, and Environmental Change Approaches

Focus shifts to community level influence from traditional program delivery.

What Agents do: coalition meetings, advocacy groups, action committees, surveys, community assessments, council presentations, strategy meetings, capacity building, volunteer training, collaborations, connections.

Outcomes: Community gardens, food pantries, farmers markets > more healthy food choices available in the community; EBT and Healthy Bucks acceptance > increased purchase power for healthy foods; park renovations, cross walk installations, greenways, open use policy > increased walkability/physical activity; water bottle refill station in place of soda machines > decrease in sugar consumption; clinical MOUs for reciprocal referrals > increased knowledge and access to services.

Sustainable New Food Access Points





1st and 2nd Faith-based groups qualified to accept SNAP/EBT in South Carolina – Mt. Calvary Missionary Baptist - Lee & Huspuh Missionary Baptist - Hampton

Feeding 100+ families twice a month since 2020, equating to over 300,000 lbs of produce.



Extension provides training to pantries and stores on food safety, produce marketing, storage and distribution.

More fresh produce is available in rural areas for purchase regardless of SNAP/EBT acceptance.

Mobile Community-Use Market Trailers

Community input drives decisions/outreach

Marion County Community Garden Distributions





Lee County School District Food Distribution

Produce boxes sent home with students, faculty, and staff.



Wade Hampton High School JAG Program

Operates food pantry and farmers market for community members.

Growing Community Gardens

Britton's Neck Community Garden



Sellers Community Garden





Broad Street Community Garden -- Mullins

The Pick 42 Foundation and the City of Mullins have expanded to 5 gardens.



Front Street Garden -- Mullins

Community buy-in for success and sustainability.

School Garden Installation & Expansion



School Gardens with Community Use



Coalitions, Councils, Churches

**MARION COUNTY FOOD POLICY
COUNCIL INFORMATION SESSION**

APRIL 9TH **MACK T HINES HEALTH & ENRICHMENT CENTER** **12PM - 2PM**
LUNCH WILL BE SERVED

Featuring Special Guest Speakers

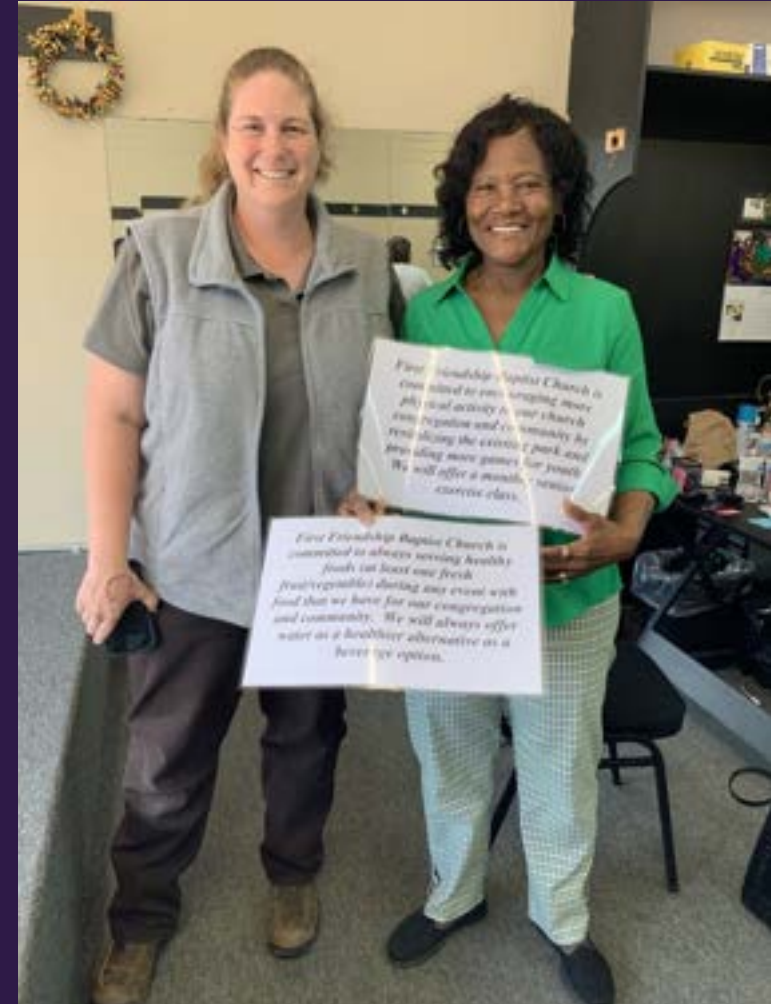


FEATURING A LIVE FRESH FOOD DEMONSTRATION BY CHEF VENOLIA JORDAN

FOOD HARVESTED FROM COMMUNITY GARDEN



WEATHERLY THOMAS, RURAL HEALTH & NUTRITION COUNTY AGENT CLEMSON COOPERATIVE EXTENSION - MARION COUNTY



Working Together Equals Success

USDA awards \$438K to Pick 42 Foundation

Miko Pickett, Chair, SC Food Policy Council



Weatherly Thomas
Healthy Food Access Coordinator
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(803) 738-5937

QUESTIONS?
THANK YOU!



Food Access Map

Keisha D. Long

Environmental Justice Coordinator

Office of Environmental Affairs

South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control

Healthy People. **Healthy Communities.**

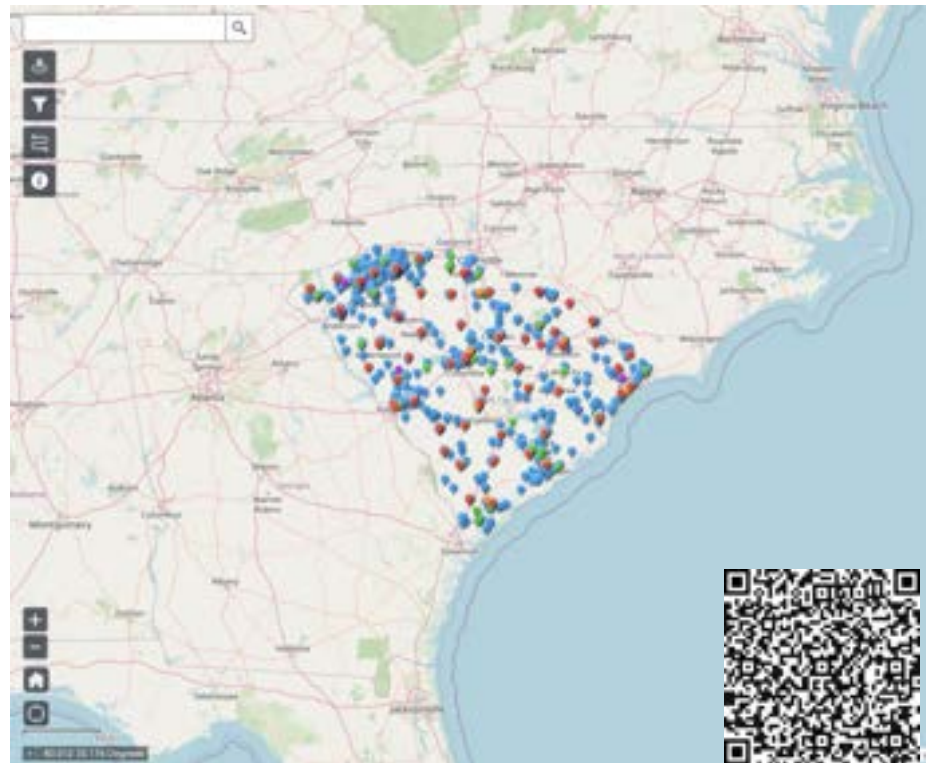


“Ensuring families have access to healthy food is a critical component of disaster response.”

Leslie Hossfeld, dean of the College of Behavioral, Social and Health Sciences (CBSHS)

Features & Functionality

- Search by location
- Filter options
- Get directions
- Zoom in/out
- User-friendly
- Accessible on mobile or desktop devices



Data Collection

- Collaboration with organizations such as United Way, 10 at the Top, Lowcountry food bank and Harvest Hope food bank
- 900+ food resources across SC mapped
- Data was verification

Anticipated Outcomes

- Increased food access and food security
- A healthcare resource
- A research tool
- Increased resiliency



United Way Assistance

Another tool for finding assistance in your local South Carolina community:

call '211'

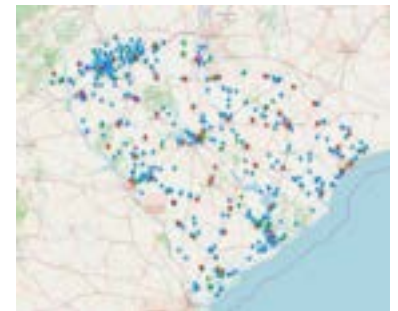
or

text 'Help' to '211-211'



Explore the SC Food Access Map

<https://www.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=67040ade1263477eb9159efod86fcfee>



Maintenance

New or existing organizations can
contact

foodaccessmap@clemson.edu

with updated information

Improvements

- Expand map site locations
- Dashboard metrics, Automation
- Specialized URL for easy map recall (e.g. www.scfoodaccess.net)
- Improve user experience:
 - Bilingual capabilities
 - Screen reader
 - Print and export capabilities
 - Color legend for location pins
- Increased marketing of this resource
- Connect to other initiatives (e.g., DHEC Don't Waste Food SC)



Keisha D. Long
Environmental Justice Coordinator
Office of Environmental Affairs
2600 Bull Street
Columbia, SC 29201
803-898-0774
803-312-1469
longkd@dhec.sc.gov



SC FOOD POLICY COUNCIL

Presentation for the Food Security Council
September 28, 2023

What is a food policy council?

- A community-based or government-supported organization that influences local and regional food systems.
- A coalition that aims to create a more inclusive, sustainable, and resilient food system that benefits the well-being of the community and the environment.
- The main goals are to develop, recommend, and implement policies and practices to promote a more sustainable, equitable, and healthy food system.

Mission

The mission of the South Carolina Food Policy Council is to build an equitable, accessible, and economically diverse, local food system in South Carolina by promoting multi-sectoral collaboration, community-based programming, and policy change.

History

Key events

March 2005: Volunteers formed a steering committee to explore creating a statewide food policy council affiliated with the SC Department of Agriculture

March 2006: Held first official meeting

Annual convenings in some years

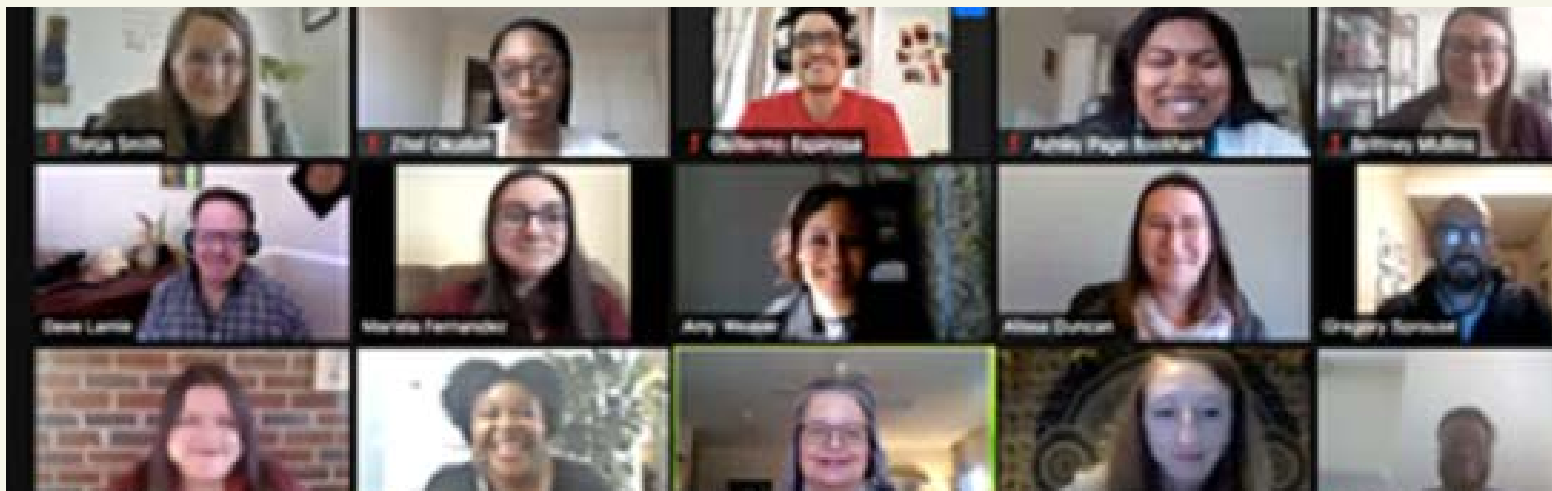
- Growing Food and Opportunities in South Carolina
- Future of Food Safety: Healthy People, Smart Business

Worked closely with the SC Community Loan Fund on their SC Food Access Task Force

November 2020: Expanded to General Membership

July 2021: Began developing committee structure

July 2022 - July 2023: Strategic Planning & Food Equity Policy Platform development



BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Miko Pickett, Chair



Alissa Duncan, Vice Chair



Dr. Florence Anoruo



Jesse Blom



Michael Brown



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Meg Stanley*



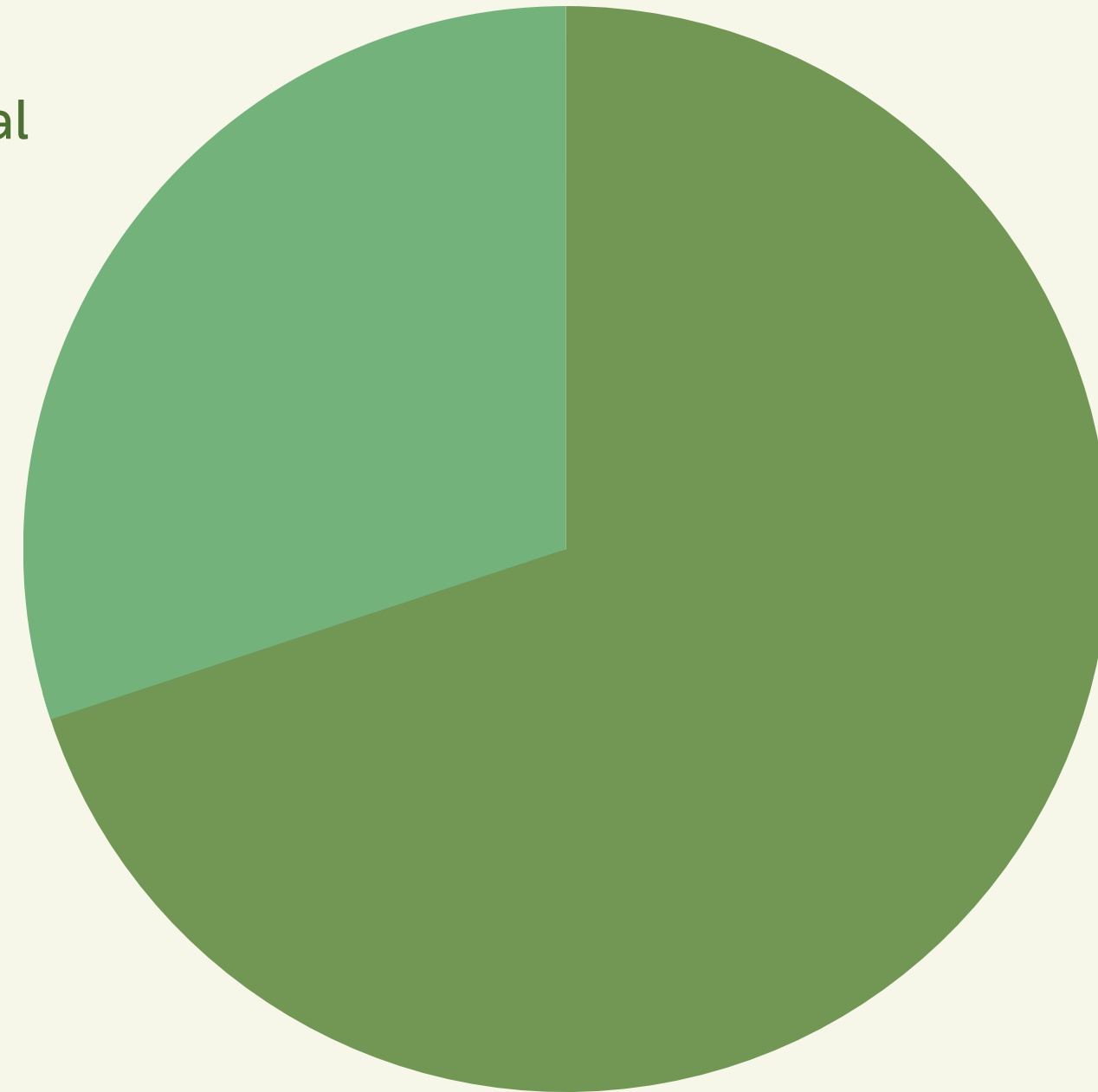
Weatherly Thomas

*non-voting members

Membership

Total = 369 members

Organizational
111



Individual
258

SECTORS

Advocacy

Anti-hunger emergency food

College/university/community

college

Community

Economic development

Elementary/secondary education

Faith-based organization

Farms and farm workers

Food processing/distribution

Food production

Food retail

Food waste/disposal

Food workers

Fundraising/development

Health care

Natural resources and

environment

Nutrition education

Philanthropy

Public health

Social justice

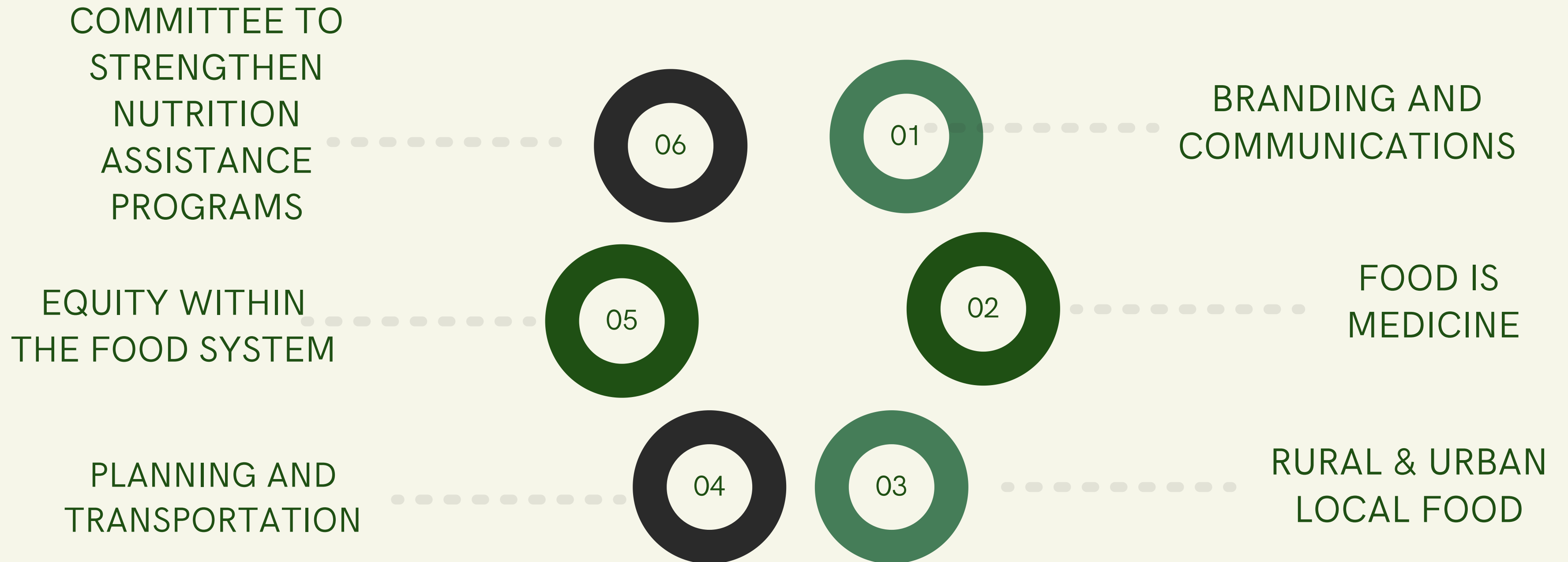
Rural health

Transportation

Other

COMMITTEES

Committees were formed based on what members think are the most pressing issues related to food in SC to address. One goal of having committees is to collectively develop a robust state-level food equity policy platform. In addition to committee meetings, all members are invited to a quarterly virtual collective meeting.

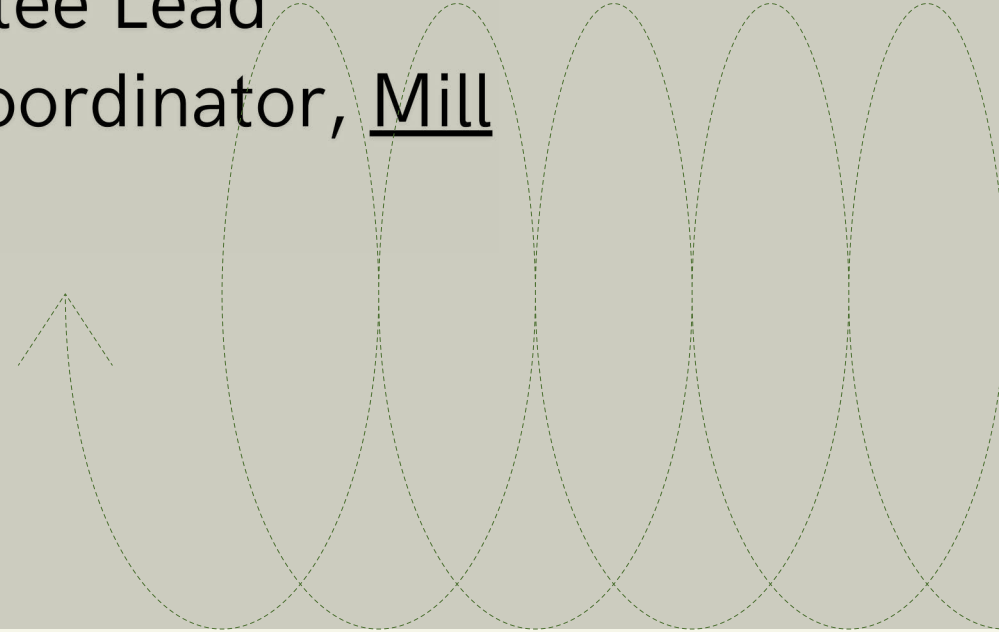


cate@millcommunity.org

STRENGTHENING NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS (CSNAP)

This committee works on nutrition program advocacy and policy change bringing together advocates, users/community members and state administrators.

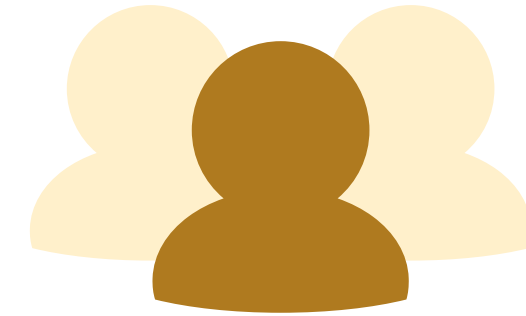
Cate Tedford, Committee Lead
FoodShare Program Coordinator, Mill Village Farms



FOOD IS MEDICINE

Aims to 1) improve the coordination among organizations working to advance healthy food access within health care settings and 2) identify and facilitate the adoption of state-level food is medicine (FiM) policy and system changes.

Amy Weaver, Committee Lead
teixeira@mailbox.sc.edu



5 subcommittees

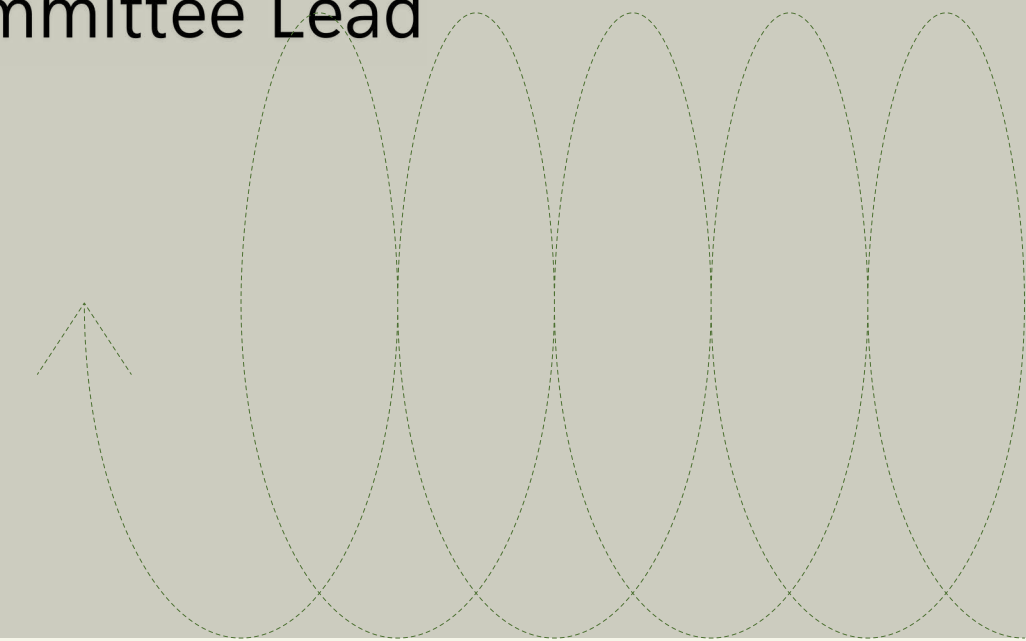
- Food Insecurity Screenings & Referrals
- FiM Map
- Nutrition Education for Health Professionals
- Produce Prescription Community of Practice
- Research & Evaluation

gsprouse@centralmidlands.org

PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION

The committee is centered around the intersection of public health with planning and transportation. The committee will focus on both food access and physical activity.

Gregory Sprouse, Committee Lead



Strategic Planning & Policy Platform

- Updated Mission
- Created a 3-5 year plan
 - Seeking funding for an Executive Director and paid staff
- Policy Priorities
 - Healthy Food in Public Schools
 - Food Access in Food Pantries
 - Racial Equity in Funding and Advocacy
 - Food Sovereignty
 - Support for and Partnership with Farmers and Distributors
 - SNAP Utilization and Advocacy
 - Transportation as a Key Driver to Food Security
 - Healthy Food Retail Options as a Key Driver to Food Security

Leveraged Resources

- Technical assistance provided by USC SNAP-Ed on policy, systems, and environmental change approaches needed to increase access to healthy eating and active living opportunities. Funding and technical assistance provided to local food policy councils.
- Growing Local SC initiative created with the receipt of a USDA Regional Food Systems Partnership Grant to strengthen the relationships focused on getting food from farms and gardens to the table across South Carolina.
- BlueCross BlueShield Foundation funding to conduct a food is medicine landscape assessment to identify policies and practices needed to scale food is medicine strategies state-wide (funding provided to USC to conduct the assessment).
- Healthy Palmetto funding to participate in strategic planning and develop a food equity policy platform. Funding also to create a Health and Planning Toolkit addendum.

LOCAL FOOD POLICY COUNCIL DEVELOPMENT AND EXPANSION

- Work with local organizations to create and expand local food policy councils
- Focus on:
 - Conducting a community food assessment
 - Engage people experience food insecurity and inequities in the work of the council
 - Engage representatives from a wide-range of sectors in the work of the councils
 - Collectively identify priority policy, system, and environmental change strategies
 - Work with partners to advance and sustain the strategies

Local Food Policy Councils

Funding Sources: USC SNAP-Ed*,
No Kid Hungry*, and each
organization's own funding sources

- Greenville Food Security Coalition
- Lakelands Food and Hunger Alliance
(Greenwood)
- Mullins Food Policy Council (Marion)
- Oconee Food Policy Council
- Tri-county Food Policy Council (Bamberg,
Calhoun, Orangeburg)
- West Columbia Cayce Food Policy Coalition
(Lexington)
- York County Food Policy Council
- Columbia Food Policy Committee (*not
funded by these sources)
- Spartanburg Food System Coalition (*not
funded by these sources)

Connections with Partners

Monthly convenings are held to ensure coordination and an understanding of other aligned local level work.

1

Wholespire

2

SC Office of Rural
Health

3

Clemson Extension

Policy recommendations

PROPOSED

These preliminary policy recommendations were developed via SC Food Policy Council committee conversations and analysis and policy priorities identified through the strategic planning process that included conducting interviews with a wide-range of partners and hosting community listening sessions around the state with people most impacted by food inequities.

Expanding Program Eligibility & Enrollment

- Participate in Summer EBT.
- Provide universal school meals.
- Increase gross income limit for SNAP.
- Repeal the drug felon ban on SNAP and TANF.
- Invest in strengthening the technology infrastructure behind Healthy Bucks, as well as staffing to increase capacity for technical assistance and outreach to new and existing vendors.
- Explore opportunities to streamline applications and enrollment processes across nutrition and other assistance programs.

Expanding Program Eligibility & Enrollment

- Expand the use of data sharing and data matching with and between agencies as well as with third party organizations to enable nutrition assistance programs to employ targeted outreach directly to individuals who are enrolled in one program, and as a result, are likely eligible for other programs. This would significantly increase awareness and knowledge of eligibility.
- Pair targeted outreach resulting from data sharing and data matching with information about how to access services to increase participation among eligible individuals/households.
- Improve screening to identify individuals who are exempt from losing SNAP benefits under the Able-Bodied Adults without Dependents (ABAWD) rules. These individuals include veterans, former foster care youth, individuals experiencing homelessness, and those unable to work.
- Maximize federal waiver or matching fund opportunities that could expand eligibility or enrollment in nutrition assistance programs.

Food & Transportation

- Build and strengthen transportation infrastructure, especially in rural areas and paratransit services.
- Maximize federal matching fund opportunities.
- Provide vouchers for accessing transportation (e.g., public transit, ride-share, taxis) to get to food and places of employment in tandem with nutrition assistance program participation.

Food & Health Care

- Support the integration of nutrition assistance programs (SNAP, WIC, Senior Nutrition) in food is medicine programs and efforts.
- Leverage 2023 guidance from CMS to encourage produce prescriptions as an “in lieu of services” approach for managed care organizations.
- Provide funding for a food is medicine pilot program across the state, to include a full spectrum of supports and services related to priority health issues – chronic disease, pregnancy, child health, and behavioral health.
- Support health systems and managed care organizations in implementing screening and referral processes related to social drivers of health, particularly food and nutrition insecurity.
- Integrate food and nutrition insecurity screening and referral and food is medicine approaches into SCDHHS’ Quality Achievement Program and other quality strategies.
- Integrate food is medicine approaches into existing state collaboratives working to improve quality and advance health – specifically the Birth Outcomes Initiative and QTIP.

Food Retail/ Infrastructure

- Increase capacity of farmers markets to accept SNAP and Healthy Bucks.
- Incentive local food sourcing for school meals.
- Create a grocery store incentive structure.
- Incentivize retailers to connect with existing health care facilities where people are (reimbursement, development fees).
- Connect with smaller food retailers and dollar stores to have a minimum offering of fruits and vegetables.
- Provide direct capacity building funds to existing community-based organizations providing other services (e.g., childcare & healthcare) to offer healthy food options tailored to the community's unique assets and needs.

Capacity Building & General Recommendations

- Provide funding to support and bolster the capacity of the South Carolina Food Policy Council.
- Provide funding to continue the development and support of local food policy councils.
- Develop a coordinated, sustainable approach for tracking food and nutrition security data across the state.
- Ensure representation on this new council and its future efforts includes representation of people who have/had enrolled in food assistance programs and individuals/organizations from rural communities.

Questions

www.scfoodpolicy.org

scfoodpolicycouncil@gmail.com



South Carolina State Nutrition Action Coalition (SNAC)





History of SNAC

The United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service Regional Office was charged with establishing a new SNAC (or similar council) in States with a high obesity rate, to align nutrition and obesity prevention activities across programs.

What is SNAC?

SNAC is a collaboration of state agencies and nonprofits organizations that implement USDA programs. Together these organizations reach underserved people throughout their life span, from pregnancy through aging, providing food benefits, nutrition education and obesity prevention services and resources.

What is the Purpose of SNAC?

SNACs were established to maximize nutrition education efforts and improve coordination and cooperation among the state agencies, FNS nutrition assistance programs, public health agencies, and EFNEP. SNAC plans focus on one or more common goals, promote collaboration, and use integrated approaches to connect efforts and resources.

Overarching Goal

Implement collective approaches that positively impact the clients we serve based on pooled resources, knowledge, and activities.

Key Partners:

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) & Farm to Preschool Program (FtoP)- DSS

Clemson Extension Rural Health and Nutrition Programs- CU

Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)- SCDA

Expanded Food & Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP)- CU

The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)- SCDA

Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP)- SCDA

Farm To School Program (FtoS)- DOE

Feeding the Carolinas

FoodShare South Carolina Program- UofSC

Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP)- DOE

Healthy Bucks Program- DSS

SC School Wellness Policy (National Lunch, Breakfast, Special Milk Program)- DOE

Seniors Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP)- DSS/DOA

Senior Nutrition Programs- DOA

South Carolina State University 1890 Research & Extension- SNAP-Ed/EFNEP

Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)- DHEC

Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) Summer Break Cafe- DOE

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Outreach- DSS

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed), (CYLI, DHEC, LCFB, UofSC)- DSS



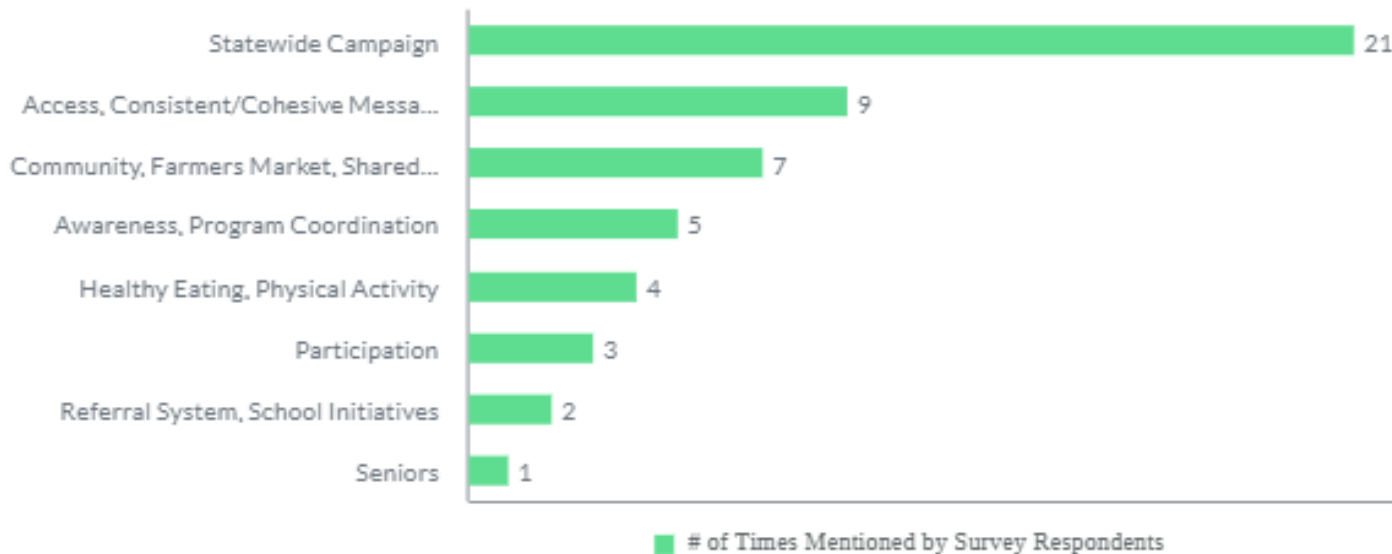
Key Recommendations

SC SNAC Assessment

- **August 2019 – September 2020** SC SNAC Assessment was conducted; 33 individual interviews and surveys were completed and evaluated.

Informants were asked: What type of obesity prevention initiatives would you recommend SC State Nutrition Action Coalition (SNAC) address in order to have the most significant impact on obesity in South Carolina (Figure 6)? Please see appendix B for more information on types of obesity-prevention initiatives.

Figure 6. *Key Recommendations for SNAC Initiatives*



SNAC Goals and supporting Initiatives

- SNAC Goals FY2023
 1. Coordinate the delivery of service among SNAC programs-
 - Developing a nutrition education internal referral system to reduce lapse in service for recipients
 - Identified current program connections
 - Future expansion for referral opportunities for recipients
 - “Mapping” web of influence amongst agencies/programs to identify gaps in service and opportunities for collaboration
 - Varying levels of collaboration and leveraging of funds/expertise/resources to maximize program impact
 - High degree of desire to collaborate and provide cohesive messaging

SNAC Goals and supporting Initiatives

- SNAC Goals FY2023 and project
 2. Focus on Food and Nutrition Security- *Increasing food access in underserved areas*
 - Continue promoting use of SC SNAC- Food and Nutrition Resource guide
 - Statewide 5210 campaign – launching Nov 2023
 - Broaden Partnerships- continue to coordinate efforts with hunger advocates to increase FNS program participation

SNAC Goals and supporting Initiatives



SOUTH CAROLINA SNAC
STATE NUTRITION ACTION COALITION

Food and Nutrition Programs

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)
scdhhs.com/programs/child-and-adult-care-food-program
 Reimburses child care centers, adult care centers, afterschool programs, emergency shelters, and child care homes which provides healthy meals and snacks that meet USDA nutritional guidelines.
 Contact: Mary A. Young, CACFP Director, mary.ayoung@scdhhs.sc.gov

Clemson Extension Rural Health and Nutrition Programs
clemson.edu/extension/health/index.html
 Provides free, educational programs focusing on chronic disease prevention and self-management with a strong focus on diabetes and hypertension. Virtual, in-person and hybrid delivery available.
 Contact: Rhonda Matthews, Rural Health Team Director, rhonda@cklemson.edu

Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)
agriculture.sc.gov/divisions/rural-affairs-economic-development/tetap-csfp
 Works to improve the health of low-income persons at least 60 years of age by supplementing their diets with nutritious USDA foods. USDA distributes both food and administrative funds to participating states and Indian Tribal Organizations to operate CSFP.
 Contact: Chris Doyle, Program Coordinator, TEFAP/CSFP/SFMNP, cdoyle@scdhhs.sc.gov

Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP)
clemson.edu/extension/efnep/index.html
 Aims to provide practical, hands-on nutrition education in four core areas: diet quality, physical activity, food resource management, food safety, and food security. The programs are delivered through local initiatives in the counties throughout the state.
 Contact: Tarana Khan, EFNEP Director, State Program Coordinator, taransk@clemson.edu

The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)
agriculture.sc.gov/divisions/rural-affairs-economic-development/tetap-csfp
 A federal program that helps supplement the diets of low-income Americans by providing them with emergency food assistance at no cost.
 Contact: Chris Doyle, Program Coordinator, TEFAP/CSFP/SFMNP, cdoyle@scdhhs.sc.gov

dhc
 Health | Health | Health | Health | Health

SNAC
 STATE NUTRITION ACTION COALITION

SC Programs Breakdown

Program Name	Food Delivery	Meal/ Snack on Site	Nutrition Education	Food Pick-Up	Benefits/ Incentives to Purchase Food	Eligibility
CACFP		✓	✓			All Ages
Clemson Extension Rural Health and Nutrition			✓			18+
CSFP				✓		60+
EFNEP			✓			5-18 years, pregnant teens, parents/primary care givers
TEFAP				✓		All Ages
FMNP (WIC)			✓		✓	1-4 years, pregnant, breastfeeding/postpartum women
Farm to Early Care and Education			✓			K-12 Students
Farm to School			✓			K-12 Students
FoodShare South Carolina	✓			✓		18+
FFVP		✓				Elementary School Students
Healthy Bucks			✓		✓	All Ages SNAP Recipients
School Wellness: NSLP, School Breakfast, & Special Milk Programs		✓				PreK-12 Students
SFMNP			✓		✓	60+
Senior Nutrition Program	✓	✓	✓			60+, spouse & individual with a disability in the residence
WIC			✓		✓	0-5 yrs. & pregnant, breastfeeding, postpartum women
SFSP		✓				18 or under
SNAP					✓	All Ages
SNAP Outreach						18+ Application Assistance
SNAP-Ed			✓			All Ages

CR-01223 6/22

SNAC Goals and supporting Initiatives

This initiative is an equal opportunity provider. This material was funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

5210

SOUTH CAROLINA



- 5** Eat 5 fruits and vegetables per day.
- 2** Limit recreational screen time to 2 hours or less per day.
- 1** Enjoy at least 1 hour of active play.
- 0** Drink 0 sugar-sweetened beverages.

LEVEL UP

to a healthier life with 5210 as your guide.

LEARN MORE AT 5210SC.COM

^ v 1 / 3 | + ↻ 🔍



South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control
Healthy People. **Healthy Communities.**

Connect With Me!

Genine Hodges
SNAP-Ed Program Manager
Office: 803-898-2040
Cell: 803-315-2347
Hodgesgd@dhec.sc.gov



Food Security Council

September 28th 2023

9:00am

Notes and Next Steps

I. Welcome Dr. Edward Simmer

II. Definition of Food Security All

-Review of definitions of food security and nutrition security as defined by the USDA and CDC

-Cost/Benefit of getting quality food to people as opposed to just food.

-Part of food Security should be access to quality foods.

III. Clemson Extension, Rural Health and Nutrition Weatherly Thomas and
Michelle Altman

-Clemson cooperative extension, rural health and nutrition is found under Division of Health and Youth. Almost every county in SC has local agent assigned to county office.

-Overview of what agents do. Outcome focused on actions.

-Extend SNAP/EBT benefits to food share points. Agents assist with set up and updating to allow for benefits. Provide training to pantries and stores on food safety.

-Provide trailers and assistance for food distribution and operation of food pantries.

-Make connections to build/maintain community gardens

-School gardens for educator program

-Interact with community, assisting with grants and policy for healthier church, etc.

ASK: keep supporting Clemson Extension

-How to determine who gets a food box? Think about what people will eat, how it will culturally reflect the people receiving the box? CE sent out postcards to let people know it is available.

IV. Clemson/DHEC Statewide Food Map Keisha Long

-EJ Strong, provides space for communities to come together to discuss disaster risk reduction, including food insecurity. A food access map was created out of this project. Initial map came out of need to have access during Covid shutdown. Clemson joined with DHEC to create a map with multiple search options and information on groups that are providing food bank services.

-Outcome, to increase food access and food security as well as using as a research tool to identify food deserts.

-Review of United Way help resource.

-Review of map resources

-How is this being promoted? There are links on DHEC website and on campus at Clemson. Looking for future improvements on availability to public.

V. SC Food Policy Council

Allisa Duncan, Vice Chair

-Michael Brown, Food policy council definition and mission, building a food system. History of FPC. Sectors that area affected by FPC. CSNAP. Food is medicine. Planning and transportation.

-Ashley Page, local food policy council development and expansion, connection with partners to ensure coordination and understanding of local work.

-Susan Frantz, Policy recommendations: expanding program eligibility and enrollment, food and transportation (access to ways to get to food).

-Zack King, Food and health care, integrating food is medicine into existing state collaboratives and nutrition programs. Food retail and infrastructure.

VI. SC State Nutrition Action Coalition

Kate Gerweck

-Genine Hodges, SNAP-ED program manager: history and purpose of SNAC, partnerships and key recommendations on what type of obesity prevention programs, goals for FY2023 bring awareness to clients about eligibility and access. Centralized access for clients. Increasing food access in underserved areas.

VII. Proviso 1.68 (Student Meals)

All

-Review proviso (included below)

VIII. Next steps

All

-Next meeting scheduled week of 16th-20th

-Continue to send in inventory items before the next meeting

-Please look at the discussion questions slide in the DHEC presentation and be ready to discuss these at the next meeting.

1.7668. (SDE: Student Meals) For the current fiscal year, all school districts shall **conduct an updated analysis** identify students in poverty according to the provisions in Proviso 1.3 of this act and increase access to free school meals for these students. School districts shall use the criteria to directly certify pupils eligible for free and reduced-price school meals to the extent permitted under federal law. The local board of trustees of a district in which all schools are eligible to receive the free federal reimbursement rate for all reimbursable school breakfasts and lunches served, pursuant to the Community Eligibility Provision in Section 1759(a) of Title 42 of the United States Code, shall adopt a resolution indicating participation. If a district is unable to participate **because participation causes a**

financial hardship, the local board of trustees shall adopt a resolution stating that it is unable to participate in CEP and demonstrate the ~~reasons why~~ **financial hardship**. The resolution shall be published on a public meeting agenda concurrently with the proposed district budget as an action item and shall be approved by a majority of the board. School districts shall ensure that the parents or guardians of students eligible for free and reduced lunch receive the necessary applications and instructions and upon request are provided with assistance in completing the paperwork. Schools shall not publicly identify **or penalize** a student who is unable to pay for a meal **or accrues meal debt** for any reason **including, but not limited to, denying meals, serving alternative meals, discarding meals after serving them to a student, requiring chores or work in exchange for meals, prohibiting participation in extracurricular activities, denying participation in graduation, withholding diplomas, or refusing transcript requests**. Communications from the district regarding any meal debt owed must only be directed to the parent or guardian and may be sent home through the student.

Food Security Council

October 20, 2023

1:00 p.m.

Agenda

1:00-1:10	Welcome + Progress Update	Dr. Edward Simmer
1:10-1:25	Change SC Pilot Project	Miko Pickett, Pick 42 Foundation
1:25-1:45	Council Matters: - Debrief from September Council Meeting - Voting + Report Governance - Information + Data Needs	Dr. Edward Simmer
1:45-2:50	Recommendations Discussion	All
2:50-3:00	Next Steps	All

Council Members:

Please be prepared to discuss your opinions and preferences on:

- How the final report should be structured
- What level of recommendations to include (broad vs. specific, legislation required or not)
- Your information and data needs
- Your desired level of participation in drafting the report
- The level of stakeholder input on draft recommendations
- The length of review time needed for final draft report



Food Security Council

October 20, 2023

South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control

Healthy People. Healthy Communities.

Agenda

- Welcome
- Progress Update
- Pilot Project Presentation
- Today's Focus
- Voting + Report Governance
- Discussion and Consensus
- Initial Recommendations Discussion
- Next Steps

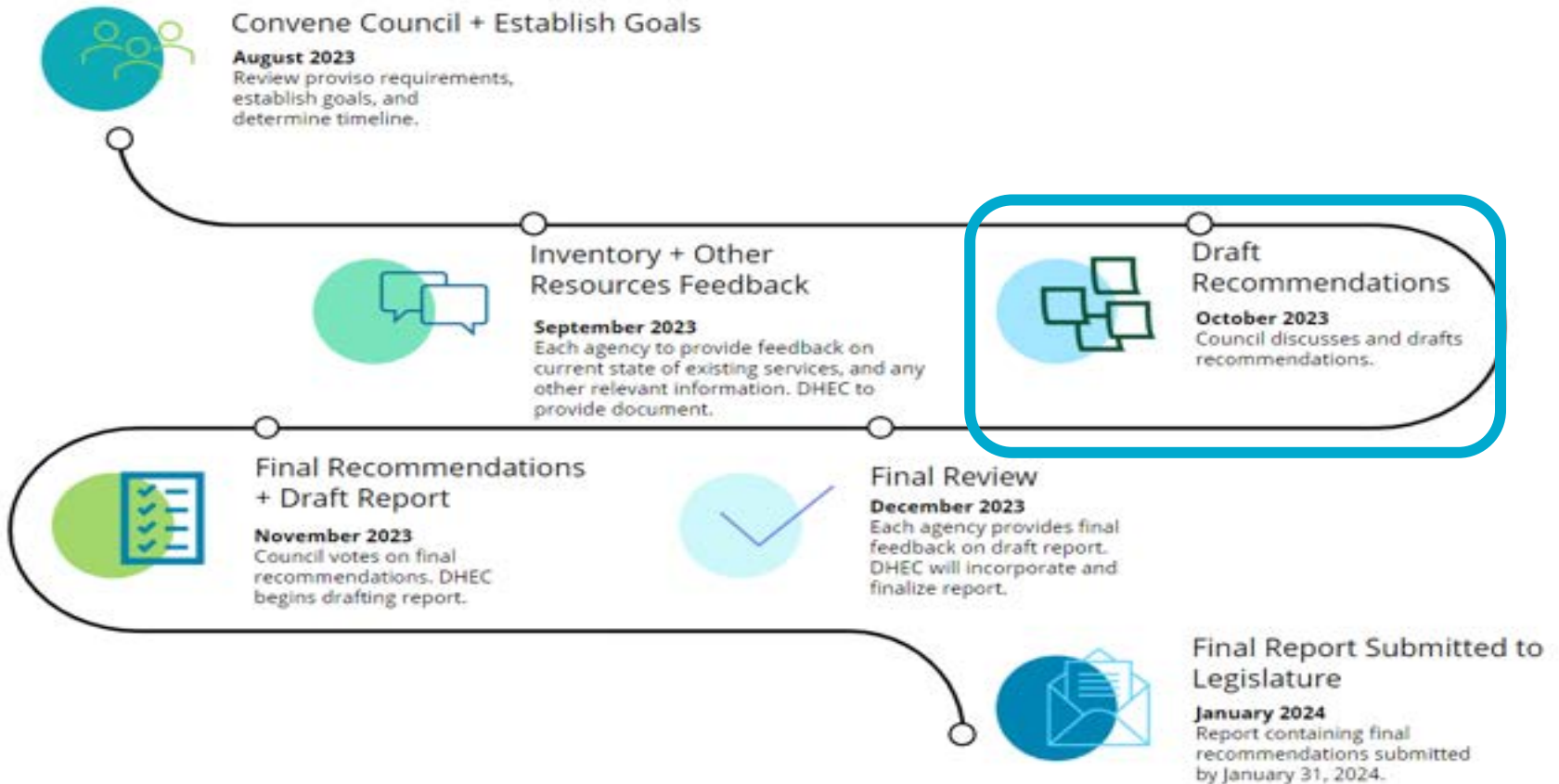


South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control
Healthy People. Healthy Communities.

Welcome

Edward Simmer, MD, MPH, DFAPA
Director, DHEC

Progress Update





Change SC Pilot Project

Miko Pickett

Executive Director, Pick 42 Foundation

Today's Focus

- Council Governance
- Reporting Structure
- Information, Data and Support Needs
- Our Path Forward

Council Members

- Dr. Rhea Bentley, SCSU PSA
- Virgie Chambers, Dept. of Education
- Amber Gillum, DSS
- Rowan Goodrich, Dept. on Aging
- Dr. Tarana Kahn, CU PSA
- Dr. Kevin Wessinger, DHHS
- Bentley White, DHEC
- Chris Whitmire, SCDA

Voting + Report Governance

- Council members listed in proviso vote on final recommendations
- Consensus is the goal, but may not be possible for all recommendations
 - Simple majority (51%) or 2/3
 - Justification opportunity provided for dissenting opinions
- Recommendations aligning with specific agency/agencies will write that recommendation
 - DHEC will compile all recommendations into report
- Publishing of draft recommendations and final report



Initial Recommendations

Recommendation	From
Participate in Summer EBT.	SC Food Policy Council
Provide Universal School Meals.	SC Food Policy Council
Increase gross income limit for SNAP.	SC Food Policy Council
Repeal drug felon ban on SNAP and TANF.	SC Food Policy Council
Invest in technology infrastructure, and assistance and support for Healthy Bucks.	SC Food Policy Council
Find opportunities to streamline applications and enrollment processes for nutrition and other assistance programs. Create internal referral system.	SC Food Policy Council/SNAC
Data sharing/matching between agencies and third-parties to target outreach for those who may be eligible for more than one program.	SC Food Policy Council
Also pair outreach above with providing more information about how to access services.	SC Food Policy Council
Improve screening to identify individuals who are exempt from losing SNAP benefits.	SC Food Policy Council
Maximize federal waiver and/or matching fund opportunities to expand eligibility or enrollment.	SC Food Policy Council

Discussion and Consensus

- What does a draft report and recommendations look like?
 - Report structure
 - Recommendation prioritization, specificity, legislation requirement
 - Drafting responsibilities
 - Public and stakeholder input
- What additional information is needed?
- How can we best support Council members?



Initial Recommendations

Programs	Transportation	Health Care	Food Infrastructure	Other
Summer EBT	Build/strengthen infrastructure (rural areas, paratransit services)	Support integration of nutrition assistance programs in Food is Medicine efforts	Incentivize farmers markets to accept SNAP and Healthy Bucks	Develop coordinated approach for tracking food and nutrition security data across state
Universal School Meals	Federal matching funds opportunities	Produce prescriptions	Incentivize local food sourcing for school meals	Map web of influence amongst agencies and programs
Increase SNAP gross income limit	Vouchers for accessing transportation	Funding for Food is Medicine pilot across state	Grocery store incentive structure	Direct capacity-building funds to community-based organizations
Repeal drug felon ban on SNAP and TANF		Support health systems in screening and referral processes	Connect retailers with existing health care facilities	Encourage use of community hub model
Increase Healthy Bucks support		Integrate screenings and referrals into DHHS' Quality Achievement Program	Minimum offering of fruits and vegetables in smaller food retailers and dollar stores	Provide funding to support capacity of SC Food Policy Council.
Streamline applications/internal referral system		Integrate Food is Medicine approaches into existing collaboratives (Birth Outcomes Initiative)		Provide funding to continue developing local food policy councils.
Data sharing and matching for outreach + access to services				
Improve screenings for individuals exempt from losing SNAP benefits				
Federal waivers and matching funds opportunities				

Next Steps

Proposed Path Forward:

- **October 30th-November 3rd:** Next Council meeting
 - Overview of other states' initiatives as applicable to draft recommendations
 - Vote on final recommendations and divide work
- **November 6th-17th:** Council members draft specific designated recommendations
- **November 20th:** Council members submit drafts to Brittany + Kayla; they will compile into draft report
- **November 27th-December 1st:** Next Council meeting
 - Finalize draft and any other outstanding items
- **December 4th-8th:** DHEC compiles final report
- **December 11th-15th:** DHEC sends final draft report to Council for review
- **January 8th-12th:** Final Council meeting to vote on approval of report for submission
- **January 31st:** DHEC submits report to legislature



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CHANGESC

RESEARCH

A recent SCDA survey shows **74% of South Carolinians** believe the Department should be educating residents on the health benefits of eating fresh, locally grown food.

Furthermore, 77% believe the Department should play a bigger role in helping underprivileged children access fresh, locally-grown food.

RESEARCH

The study shows 94% of rural South Carolinians understand that eating fresh, healthy fruits and veggies is somewhat to very important for their health, but the biggest barriers are price (60%) and availability (27%) in rural communities.

RESEARCH

More than 80% of South Carolina's counties have food deserts.

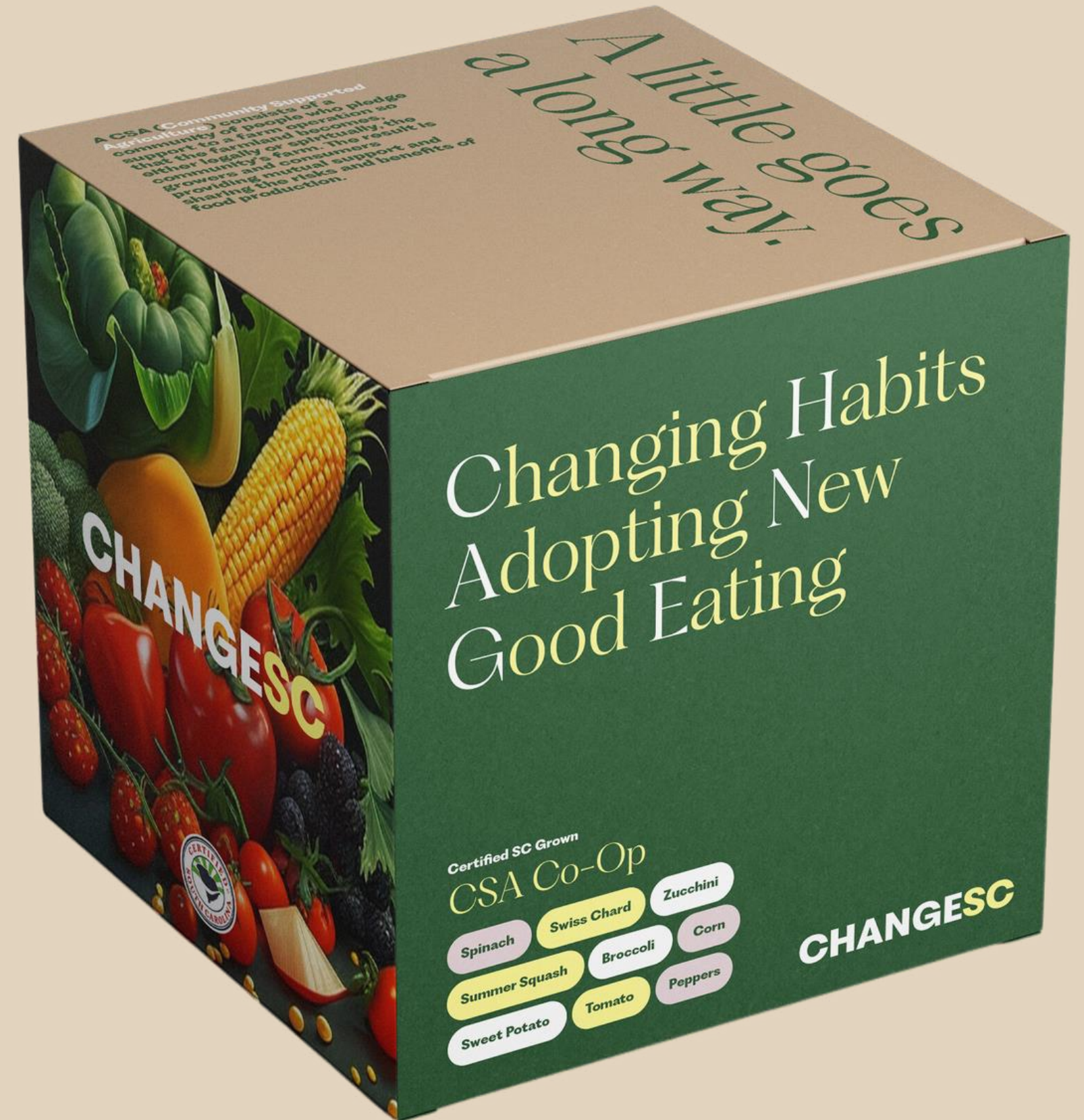
- Residents without means have limited access to fresh, healthy food.
- Poor eating habits lead to health problems, such as obesity and diabetes, that, if left untreated, can be deadly.
- Obesity-related health spending alone costs the state \$8.6 billion.

"If not us, who? If not now, when?"

CHANGESC

MISSION

Bring fresh, nutritious food directly to the doorsteps of these communities, teach people how to prepare it, and affect generational change in eating habits.





PILOT PROJECT – PEE DEE REGION

For our initial efforts, SCDA has identified four counties with high food insecurity rates in the Pee Dee region to launch the program.



PILOT PROJECT

- SCDA/DHEC joint project
- Partnering with local food hub and LFPA aggregator, Pick 42 Foundation
- Boost infrastructure to aid in food distribution
- Raise awareness of local distribution efforts and statewide food insecurity issues
- Increase demand for healthy foods by educating residents on access, preparation, and benefits of healthy eating
- Conduct pre- and post-pilot research to measure successes

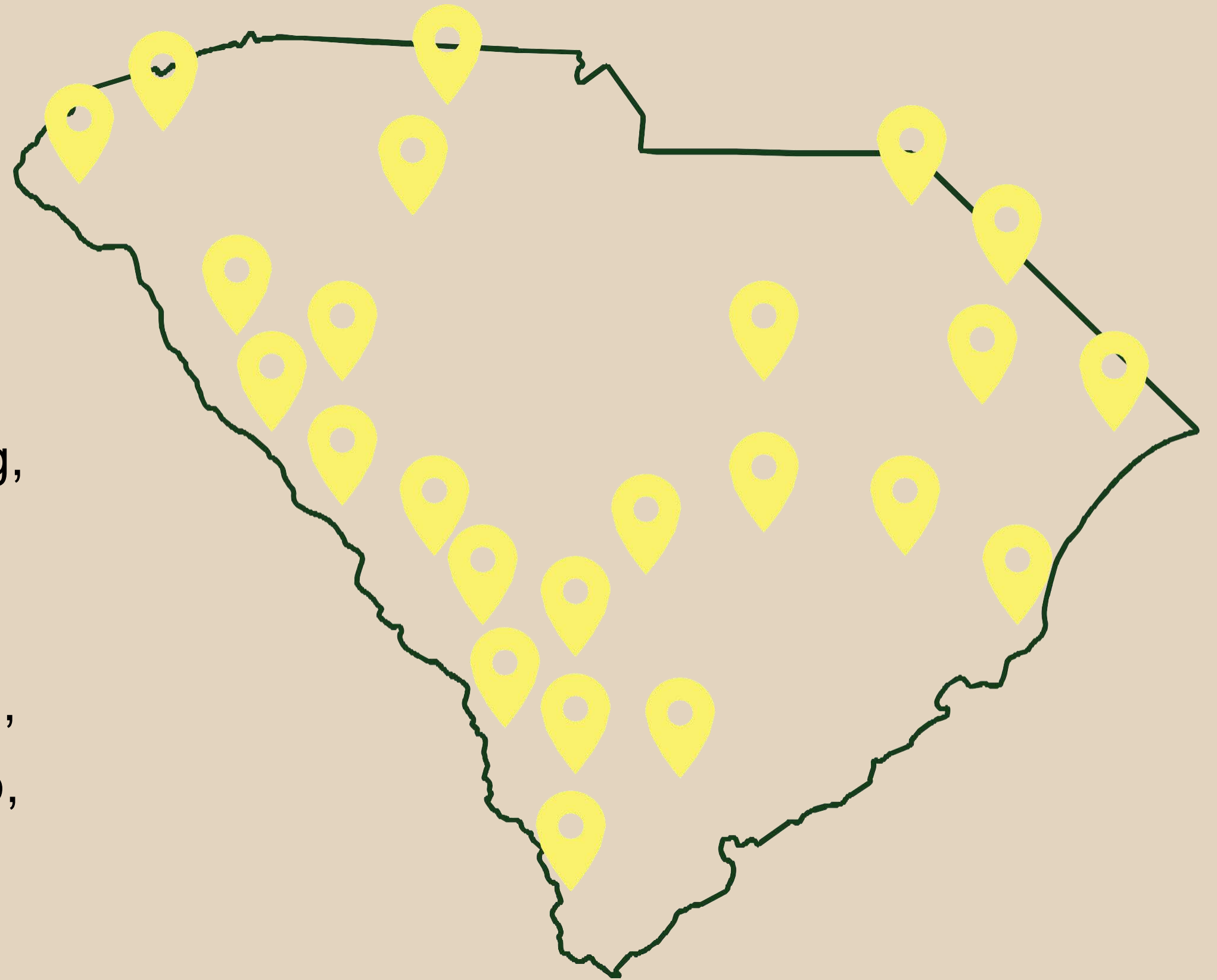


EXPANDED PROGRAM

FY 24-25

24 counties

Abbeville, Aiken, Allendale, Bamberg,
Barnwell, Cherokee, Clarendon,
Colleton, Dillon, Edgefield,
Georgetown, Greenwood, Hampton,
Horry, Jasper, Lee, Marion, Marlboro,
McCormick, Oconee, Orangeburg,
Pickens, Union, and Williamsburg.



In the years to come, ChangeSC would become an ongoing, statewide initiative.

We believe this approach of simultaneously boosting supply, by helping the food distributors, and demand, by educating the public on eating healthy, is the right recipe for generational change.



Miko Pickett
Executive Director
Pick 42 Foundation



WE LEAD WITH OUR HEART | BACKED BY DATA AND RESEARCH



*Data from 1/1 – 9/30/23

*USC Snap-Ed (Tech Assistance, Assessments) and Clemson University (Surveys, analytics)



OUR PROGRAMS ADDRESS
NUTRITION INSECURITY, FITNESS
AND COMMUNITY CONNECTIVITY
IN OUR REGION

EAT LOCAL PEE DEE | COMMUNITY GARDENS | A BETTER ME

CHANGESC

Changing Habits, Adopting New Good Eating

Food Security Council

October 20, 2023

1:00 p.m.

Meeting Notes and Next Steps

Welcome + Progress Update

Dr. Edward Simmer

Change SC Pilot Project

Miko Pickett, Pick 42 Foundation

-Chris Whitmire, Dept. of Ag: Change SC Pilot program, co-sponsored w/DHEC and Dept. of Ag with goal to nurture and grow farms around the state. Pilot program focused in the Pee Dee, raising awareness of food deserts and educating residents on access, as well as conducting pre/post research. Goal is for 24 counties.

-Miko Pickett, Pick42 Foundation: Pick42 moved to SC in 2016, HQ in Mullins with focus on food, fitness and fun. Foundation is currently reaching 18,442 community members. Information can be found on website <https://nhn4kids.org/> and YouTube page.

-Recommendation to council to support state funding of Pick42/Change SC.

Council Matters:

Dr. Edward Simmer

- Debrief from September Council Meeting

- Voting + Report Governance

 - Discuss options for voting, simple majority of council voting members. It is noted that there will be thorough discussion prior to votes.

- Information + Data Needs

 - Initial recommendation is to have aligning agency write recommendation. DHEC will write preamble, summary of state of SC regarding food insecurity and compile all recommendations. Draft will be sent out for review.

Recommendations Discussion

All

- What level of specificity does the council want on recommendations?

- Focus on actionable items, separate general and specific recommendations.

- Suggestions for inclusion: flush out inventory, annual budget and funding sources. Add counties and populations served. Add data and research. Possible champions for specific recommendations.

- Is public input being considered? Discuss plans to reach out to stakeholders and open for public comment.

-**Summer EBT:** There are operational concerns, it is a new program that has not been funded, timeline could be off pending federal guidance. Who will benefit? K-12 students eligible for free or reduced lunch. Beneficial to the local economy/farmers through spending.

-**Universal School Meals:** Another committee is looking into this as well. Dr. Simmer will reach out to discuss how to proceed.

-**Increase SNAP gross income limit:** SNAP is federally funded, but administrative workload will increase and may need state budget request. No policy concern, increase will bring in more families. Question: what percentage of families are actively participating? More data is needed before moving forward.

-**Repeal drug felon ban on SNAP and TANF:** SC is the only state with this in place currently, this would need to go through legislature. Groups are also advocating for this at the federal level.

Next Steps

All

-Next meeting will be the week of November 6th-10 (currently looking at 4-5 hours, most likely on the Nov. 8, will be finalized with calendar invite soon.)

-Vote on final recommendations and divide work.

Food Security Council

November 8, 2023

10:00 a.m.

Agenda

10:00-10:05	Welcome + Progress Update	Dr. Edward Simmer
10:05-10:25	States' Initiatives	Kayla David, DHEC
10:25-10:35	Council Matters	Dr. Edward Simmer
10:35-12:00	Recommendations Discussion	All
12:00-12:30	Lunch	
12:30-1:50	Recommendations Discussion	All
1:50-2:00	Next Steps	All



Food Security Council

November 08, 2023

South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control

Healthy People. Healthy Communities.



South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control
Healthy People. Healthy Communities.

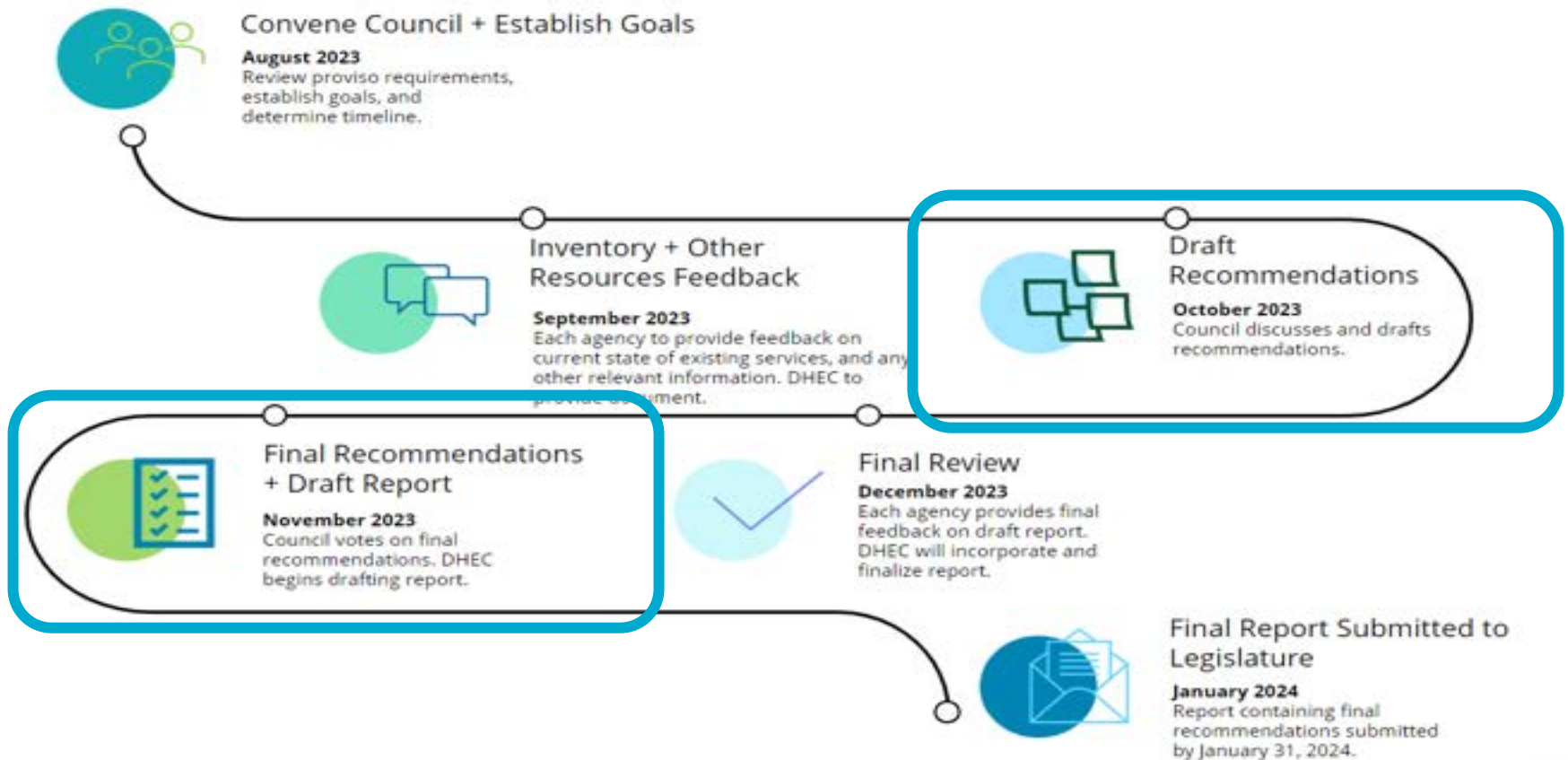
Welcome

Edward Simmer, MD, MPH, DFAPA
Director, DHEC

Agenda

- Welcome
- Progress Update
- States' Initiatives
- Council Matters
- Recommendations
- Discussion
- Next Steps

Progress Update





A Snapshot of Food Security Across the Nation

Kayla A. David, MMC
Senior Policy and Research Advisor

Council Matters

- Proviso Language
- Inventory
- Recommendations
- Drafting of report
- Deadlines



Proviso

34.70. (DHEC: Food Security Council) (A) For Fiscal Year 2023-24, there is created the Food Security Council to be housed in the Department of Health and Environmental Control. The purpose of the Council shall be to:

- (1) examine all state agency programs that address food insecurity in the State by providing monetary benefits or meal services that cover infants through senior citizens;
- (2) identify gaps in service, particularly for the most vulnerable populations; and
- (3) make recommendations on improvements to services and additional programs that can address the gaps in services.

(B) The Council shall be composed of one member representing each agency and appointed by the agency's director as follows:

- (1) the Department on Aging;
- (2) the Department of Agriculture;
- (3) the Department of Education;
- (4) the Department of Health and Environmental Control;
- (5) the Department of Social Services;
- (6) the Department of Health and Human Services;
- (7) Clemson University PSA; and
- (8) South Carolina State PSA.

(C) Any administrative services or support for the Council shall be provided by the Department of Health and Environmental Control.

(D) The Council shall provide a report to the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, and the Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee on its findings and recommendations on the issues contained in this provision by January 31, 2024. Upon submission of the report, the Council shall be dissolved.

Inventory

- What have we gathered so far?
- What are we still missing?
- How can we best gather any remaining gaps?
- When can we finalize it?

Recommendations

- Stakeholder input
- Initial council recommendations
- Recommendation template
- Deadlines

Stakeholder Input

- Program expansion
- Transportation
- Health care
- Food infrastructure
- Capacity-building

Initial Council Recommendations

- Dept. of Agriculture – expanding ChangeSC pilot

Deadlines

- Week of November 20th – draft recommendations completed using template
- Week of December 4th – recommendations finalized using template
- Week of December 18th – draft report sent to Council
- Week of January 8th – final draft report
- Week of January 22nd – report finalized
- January 31st – DHEC submits report to legislature

Next Steps

- **Proposed remaining meetings:**
 - November 30th – in-person
 - December 20th – hybrid
 - January 3rd – in-person
 - January 22nd – in-person



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S.C. Department of Health
and Environmental Control



States + Food Security

S.C. FOOD SECURITY COUNCIL | NOVEMBER 8, 2023

Today's Focus



2022 USDA Report Overview



State Initiatives + Findings

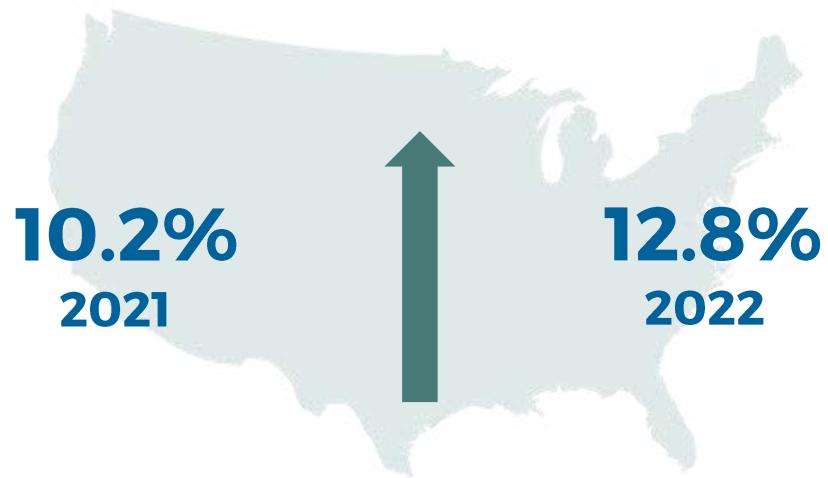


BIPOC Populations + Initiatives

Background¹

- First published in 1995 to collect information on:
 - Food access
 - Food adequacy
 - Food spending
 - Sources of food assistance
- Collected as supplement to Current Population Survey (U.S. Census Bureau)
- Current report released October 25th
 - Updates/modifications from 2021 survey, but food security data remains comparable across years
 - Use of low and very low food security terminology

USDA's Household Food Security in the United States in 2022



Prevalence of food insecurity in the U.S.¹



Prevalence of food insecurity in S.C.¹

USDA's Household Food Security in the United States in 2022

2020-2022 State Comparison

U.S. = 11.2%

Statistically Significantly Lower¹

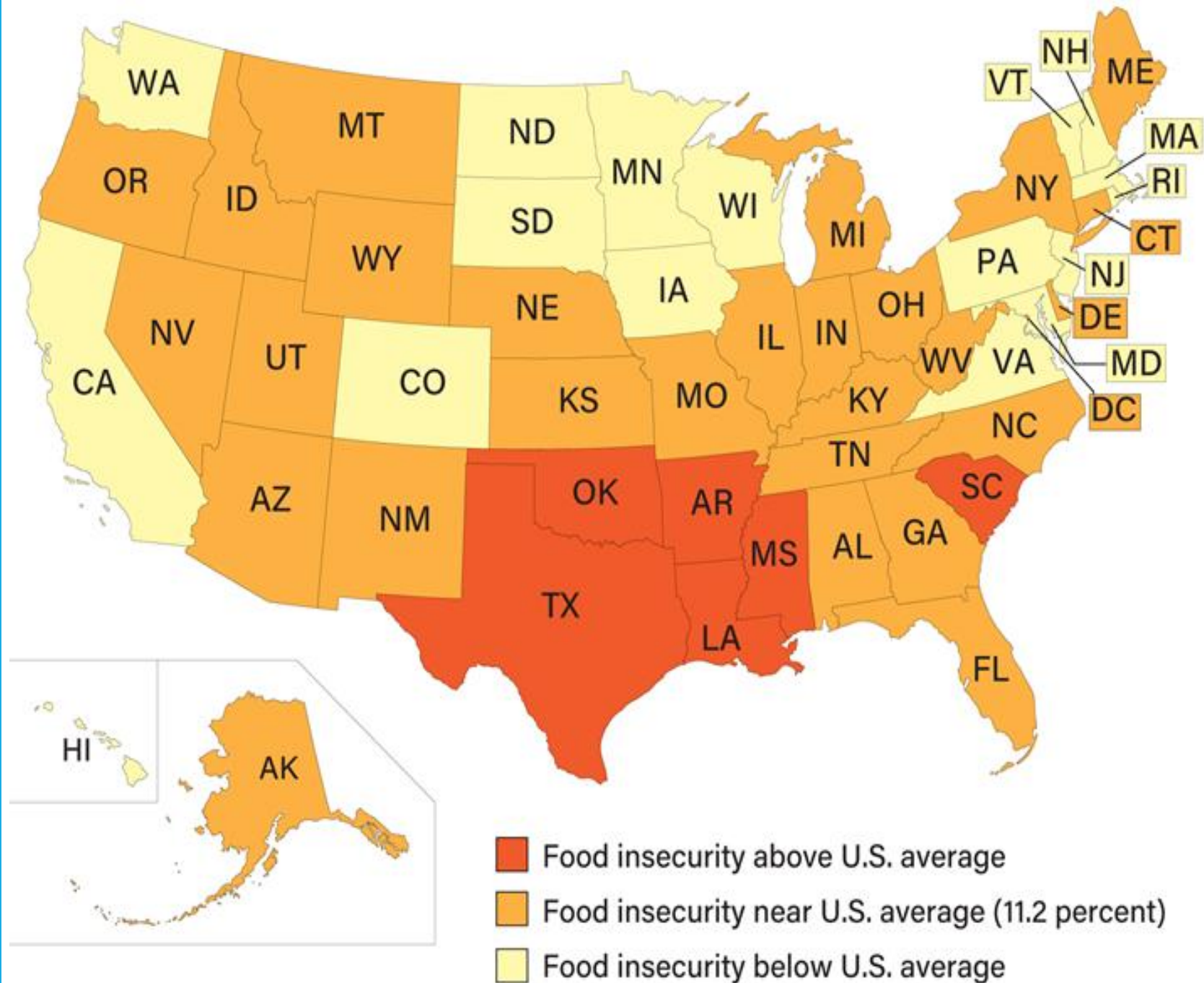
New Hampshire	6.2%	Iowa	8.9%
Minnesota	7.1%	South Dakota	8.9%
North Dakota	7.7%	Hawaii	9.1%
Vermont	8.0%	Virginia	9.3%
Washington	8.3%	Maryland	9.5%
Massachusetts	8.5%	Wisconsin	9.6%
Rhode Island	8.6%	Pennsylvania	10.1%
New Jersey	8.8%	California	10.3%
Colorado	8.9%		

Statistically Significantly Higher¹

Oklahoma	14.3%
South Carolina	14.5%
Louisiana	15.2%
Mississippi	15.3%
Texas	15.5%
Arkansas	16.6%

USDA's Household Food Security in the United States in 2022

USDA's Household Food Security in the United States in 2022²



Key Findings¹

- Prevalence statistically higher in all except one population subgroups
Household composition Ethnicity Income Residential area
- Prevalence statistically higher in the South for multiple household compositions
- Prevalence statistically higher in all households with children
- About 55% of households received assistance from one of three federal programs in month prior to survey
- Various factors affect state-level prevalence

USDA's Household Food Security in the United States in 2022

Overarching Themes



Data Maps



Universal Free School Meals



Use of Farmers Markets



Streamlining Processes

State Initiatives + Findings

Community Food Strategies³

- Support of two marker bills as part of the 2023 Farm Bill renewal
- Subsidize water access for neighborhood community gardens
- Pilot diabetic nutrition program and sourcing of culturally appropriate foods
- Partnership with county health department + translated all SNAP Double Bucks promotional materials into Spanish
- Prepared food recovery SOPs
- Farmer Resource Kits

State Initiatives + Findings



- 2023-2024 State Action Plan for Nutrition Security – Key Initiatives:
 - Unite major nutrition programs into one division
 - Increase cross-enrollment across FNS, WIC, and Medicaid programs through data matching
 - Improve participant and caseworker experience in FNS program through technology enhancements
 - Build connections between health care and nutrition supports
 - Strengthen the NCCARE360 network
 - Implement Healthy Opportunities Pilots within Medicaid Managed Care

State Initiatives + Findings



- Builds on successes from past three years:
 - Online FNS application; also made available in Spanish
 - Increase in WIC participation during the pandemic
 - Curbside pick-up programs for senior lunch sites closed by the pandemic
 - Direct grants to food banks during the pandemic
 - USDA demonstration project to increase access to National School Lunch and Breakfast programs

State Initiatives + Findings



- Statewide plan for addressing food security
- Key recommendations:
 - Update metrics used by the USDA to identify food deserts
 - Transportation – Expansion
 - Pilot home-delivered meals for school-aged children and families
 - Recurring funding stream for community-based food/meal delivery services
 - Advocate for policy flexibilities to provide assistance in non-congregate manners

State Initiatives + Findings



Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Food Security Advisory Committee⁵

- Access to Nutritious Food Options
 - Integrate food and nutrition into municipal planning policies
 - Encourage retail outlets open in communities where no food outlets exist
 - Encourage food outlets participate in federal nutrition assistance programs
- Child Hunger
 - Fund meal programs for children under school-age without requiring permanent residency
 - Remove barriers for undocumented households' participation in programs
 - Co-distribute meals for adults who accompany children for meal service
 - Establish minimum time for students to consume school meals
 - Expand nutrition and agriculture education for children (e.g., home economics)
 - Increase involvement in USDA's Beginning Farmers and Ranchers programs
 - Integrate experiential agriculture and agribusiness into the K-12 core curriculum

State Initiatives + Findings



Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Food Security Advisory Committee⁵

- Food as Medicine
 - Increase funding to create additional pilots of Produce Prescription Programs
 - Provide the resources for individuals to conduct medicinal gardening
- Federal Nutrition Assistance Programs
 - Department of Housing and Urban Development inspections include a check for resident food insecurity
 - Allow guardians of children to receive additional nutrition assistance
- Senior Hunger
 - Participation in the SNAP Elderly Simplified Application Project
 - Increased federal support to expand the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program
 - Implement malnutrition screening standards
- Food Waste
 - Limit liability and provide incentives for restaurants that leftover food to emergency feeding organizations
 - Support the redistribution of agricultural production waste

State Initiatives + Findings



Legislative Efforts

- 2021:
 - Creates and revises various DACS provisions relating to⁶:
 - tax credits for farmers
 - sponsor reimbursements for school breakfast meals and universal free school breakfast and lunch meals
 - Produce Prescription Pilot Program
 - State Nutrition Assistance Reimbursement Program⁷:
 - Requiring the Department of Children and Families to develop and implement a nutrition assistance reimbursement program to reimburse community-based nonprofit organizations and nonprofit religious organizations providing certain enrollment assistance services
- 2023:
 - Food Deserts⁸:
 - Allow a local government to enact land development regulations authorizing land use for a small-footprint grocery store located in a food insecure area.
 - Food is Medicine⁹:
 - Provide Medicaid Coverage of Prescribed-food Programs for Disease Treatment and Prevention

State Initiatives + Findings



Senate Improving Access to Healthy Foods and Ending Food Deserts Study Committee¹⁰

- Created by Senate Resolution in 2021 to:
 - determine how many Georgians live in food deserts
 - examine policies which address food deserts
 - examine economic impact
 - examine changes to Georgia's tax and economic policies
 - examine how Georgia can assist local governments
- Heard testimony from a number of stakeholders with recommendations to:
 - expedite permitting process for supermarkets and other healthy food vendors
 - update local land use policies to allow for community food systems
 - incentivize dedicated space in new housing developments for community gardens and mobile markets
 - loosen restrictions on urban agriculture to allow for small livestock
 - at colleges/universities, allow students to donate unused guest meal swipes on meal cards
 - remove additional, burdensome state requirements from federal requirements

State Initiatives + Findings

Georgia



Senate Improving Access to Healthy Foods and Ending Food Deserts Study Committee¹⁰

- Recommendations from Study Committee:
 - Encourage legislature to designate a state agency to maintain a central website
 - Encourage legislature to establish a commission
 - Encourage the continued use of tax credits to support expansion of grocery industry into food deserts
 - Encourage the support and strengthening of food banks and food pantries through State funding
 - Increase the number of farmers markets that accept SNAP payment
 - Encourage collaboration among state entities, nonprofits, and private groups

State Initiatives + Findings



Georgia State Plan to Address Senior Hunger¹¹

- Georgia has one of the largest and fastest growing populations of 60+ year olds in the nation
- Senior Hunger Summit was convened in 2016
- State Plan to Address Senior Hunger developed and implemented to:
 - Develop 12 regional coalitions
 - Establish a senior hunger position within DHS's Division of Aging
 - Establish a policy review council
 - Coordinate data collection and analysis
 - Develop and provide education and training for agencies, stakeholders and individuals
 - Continue and expand the What a Waste Program with the National Foundation to End Senior Hunger

State Initiatives + Findings



Legislative Efforts

- 2022:
 - Act 600¹²:
 - Renames SNAP to Georgia Grown Farm to Food Bank Program to require food procured pursuant to such program be Georgia grown
- 2022 and 2023:
 - Food Insecurity Eradication Act¹³:
 - Establish a food security advisory council to implement the recommendations from the 2021 Study Committee

State Initiatives + Findings



Maryland Food System Resiliency Council¹⁴

- Created by law in 2021
- Tasked with:
 - Providing annual reports on developing equity and sustainability policy recommendations to increase the long-term resiliency of the food system
 - Expanding impact of existing food council organizations
 - Developing a strategic plan to increase the production and procurement of Maryland certified food.
 - Providing recommendations on long-term Council structure

State Initiatives + Findings



- Key Recommendations from 2021 and 2022:
 - Establish and maintain a statewide food system map
 - Establish and sustain Regional Agriculture Centers to rebuild local food infrastructure and strengthen Maryland's food system
 - Establish a state-grant funded program for food council start-up, sustainment, and expansion costs
 - Adopt legislation that incentivizes school districts to purchase locally grown or produced food
 - Fund pilot programs and analyze scalability and expansion for small- and medium-sized farms

State Initiatives + Findings



Legislative Efforts

- 2023:
 - SNAP Theft¹⁵:
 - Participants who were victims of benefit theft to be reimbursed. State agency must also prioritize EBT card security in selecting EBT vendor.
 - Maryland Meals for Achievement¹⁶:
 - Full funding allowing all eligible schools to serve breakfast in the classroom and after the bell at no cost to all students.

State Initiatives + Findings



Snapshot of Other States



Nevada¹⁷

- Home Feeds Nevada Agriculture Food Purchase Program
- Remove restrictions for drug felons
- Inventory of land for use as community gardens and urban farms



Virginia¹⁹

- In 2022, mandate in effect requiring at least one afterschool meals site in every locality where the eligibility for free and reduced priced meals is greater than 50%.



Massachusetts²¹

- Improved budget line items, including Universal Free School meals, Emergency Food Assistance Program, local food policy councils, and farm to school program
- Established common application in law allowing individuals to apply simultaneously to a number of support programs



Colorado¹⁸

- Healthy School Meals for All (Universal School Meals) were voter-approved in 2022



New Hampshire²⁰

- In 2021, legislation enacted to freeze leftover school food that was never served to send home with children who participate in a free or reduced-price meals program.

State Initiatives + Findings

Food Sovereignty + Opportunities

Food Sovereignty: The right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems. It puts the aspirations and needs of those who produce, distribute and consume food at the heart of food systems and policies rather than the demands of markets and corporations.²²



North Carolina²³

- Provides Critical Actions to build long-term systems change for BIPOC populations



Alaska²⁴

- Indigenous Foods Committee to focus on support for food sovereignty



Florida⁵

- Establish a State Farmworker Assistance Fund or Program
- Ensure culturally appropriate foods are available in all nutrition assistance programs



Massachusetts²⁵

- Farmland Action Plan

BIPOC Populations + Initiatives

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Sources

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Contact



Food Security Council

November 8, 2023

10:00 a.m.

Agenda

10:00-10:05 Welcome + Progress Update

Dr. Edward Simmer

- Chair Edward Simmer, MD, MPH, DFAPA, welcomed Council members and those joining virtually by Microsoft Teams. He thanked everyone who has given input and feedback to the Council up to this point, and directed the Council to begin drafting recommendations. He also discussed the progress of the group, indicating that the Council is currently at the stage of finalizing the existing program summaries and beginning to draft recommendations.

10:05-10:25 States' Initiatives

Kayla David, DHEC

- Kayla David, lead researcher and support staff member to the Council, gave an overview of the [2022 USDA Household Food Security in the United States](#), and discussed initiatives and recommendations from other states regarding the improvement of food security.

10:25-10:35 Council Matters

Dr. Edward Simmer

- Dr. Simmer and the Council discussed how best to move forward with the day. The Council voted to go into Executive Session. While in Executive Session, no decisions were made.

10:35-12:00 Recommendations Discussion

All

- When the Council returned from Executive Session, the Council made two motions:
 - Motion 1: The Council voted to collect information from each department's program staff to meet the requirements of item (A)(1) and (A)(2) in Proviso 34.70.
 - Motion 2: The Council voted to have Council members make recommendations, and take recommendations from other Council members, using the standardized template to meet the requirements of item (A)(3) in Proviso 34.70.
- The Council also determined the next meeting dates, which are November 28th, December 19th, January 4th, and January 22nd.
- After voting in favor of these motions and scheduling the remaining meetings, the Council decided to adjourn for the day.

Food Security Council

November 28, 2023

10:00 a.m.

Agenda

10:00-10:05	Welcome	Dr. Edward Simmer
10:05-10:10	Progress Update	Dr. Edward Simmer
10:10-10:25	Program Inventory Update	Kayla David
10:25-11:50	Council Matters	All
	- Discussion of Gaps and Potential Recommendations	
	- Public Input	
11:50-12:00	Wrap-up + Next Steps	All



Food Security Council

November 28, 2023

South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control

Healthy People. Healthy Communities.

Agenda

- Welcome
- Progress Update
- Program Inventory Update
- Gaps + Recommendations
- Next Steps

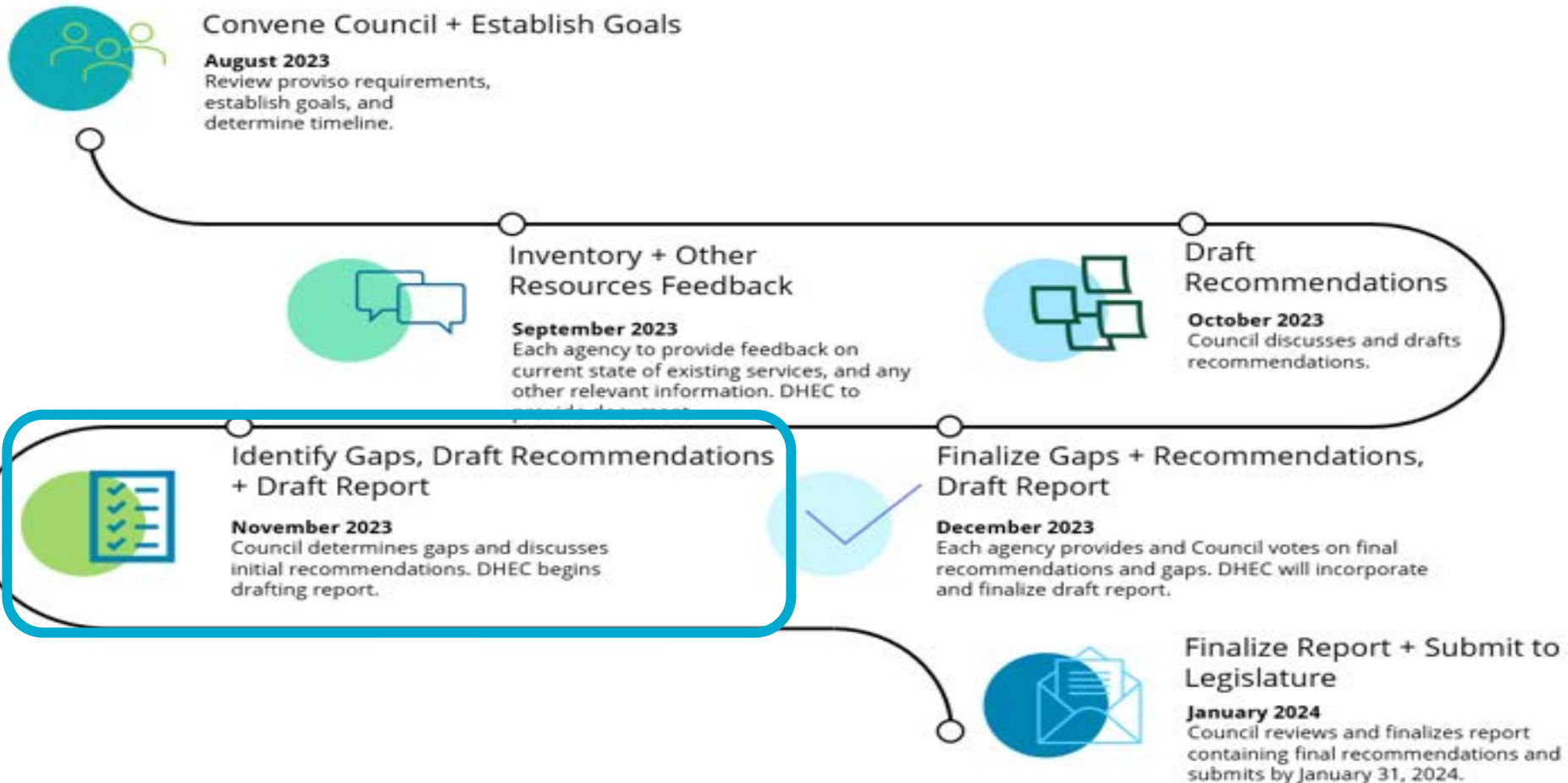


South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control
Healthy People. Healthy Communities.

Welcome

Edward Simmer, MD, MPH, DFAPA
Director, DHEC

Progress Update



Program Inventory Update

- All inventory templates completed
- DHEC to compile draft for report

Gaps + Recommendations

- Gaps identified
- Recommendation template
- Discussion

Next Steps

- December 18th – Draft recommendations due using template
- December 19th – **Council meeting** to vote on recommendations
- January 4th – **Council meeting**, draft report to Council + public comment period begins
- Week of January 15th – Draft report finalized + sent to Council for review
- January 22nd – **Council meeting** + report finalized
- January 31st – DHEC submits report to legislature



South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control
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S.C. Department of Health
and Environmental Control

Food Security Council

November 28, 2023

10:00 a.m.

Agenda

- 10:00-10:05 Welcome Dr. Edward Simmer
- Dr. Simmer welcomed the Council members and those joining by Teams. He also provided a brief overview of the guiding proviso, as well as a recap of the previous meeting.
- 10:05-10:10 Progress Update Dr. Edward Simmer
- Dr. Simmer gave an update on where the Council is in the process of developing a report. Deadlines and key action items were updated based on the previous meeting's discussions and determinations.
- 10:10-10:25 Program Inventory Update Kayla David
- Kayla thanked Council members for completing and submitting their program inventory templates and provided next steps for including those in the report.
- 10:25-11:50 Council Matters All
- Discussion of Gaps and Potential Recommendations – The Council determined any further gaps should be identified and addressed in advance of the next Council meeting. Council members from SCDA, SCDHEC, and SCDSS provided initial, draft recommendations from their agencies.
 - Public Input – The Council discussed determining the process for public input.
 - A motion was made to go into Executive Session for legal advice on receiving public input. The vote to go into Executive Session was unanimously approved.
 - While in Executive Session, no actions or votes were taken.
 - The Council returned from Executive Session
 - A motion was made to publicly notice the Council's recommendations, once voted on and approved by the Council, and to open a public comment period. The Council unanimously approved the motion.
- 11:50-12:00 Wrap-up + Next Steps All
- The Council adjusted deadlines for key action items and determined that recommendations from Council members should be submitted to DHEC staff by December 8th.

Food Security Council

December 19, 2023

10:00 a.m.

Agenda

10:00-10:05	Welcome	Dr. Edward Simmer
10:05-10:10	Progress Update	Dr. Edward Simmer
10:10-11:55	Recommendations Discussion + Voting	All
11:55-12:00	Wrap-up + Next Steps	All



Food Security Council

December 19, 2023

South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control

Healthy People. Healthy Communities.

Agenda

- Welcome
- Progress Update
- Recommendations Discussion + Voting
- Next Steps



South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control
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Welcome

Edward Simmer, MD, MPH, DFAPA
Director, DHEC

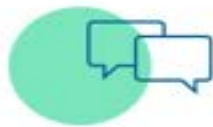
Progress Update



Convene Council + Establish Goals

August 2023

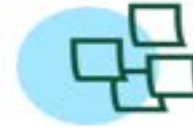
Review proviso requirements, establish goals, and determine timeline.



Inventory + Other Resources Feedback

September 2023

Each agency to provide feedback on current state of existing services, and any other relevant information. DHEC to provide document.



Draft Recommendations

October 2023

Council discusses and drafts recommendations.



Identify Gaps, Draft Recommendations + Draft Report

November 2023

Council determines gaps and discusses initial recommendations. DHEC begins drafting report.



Finalize Gaps + Recommendations, Draft Report

December 2023

Each agency provides and Council votes on final recommendations and gaps. DHEC will incorporate and finalize draft report.



Finalize Report + Submit to Legislature

January 2024

Council reviews and finalizes report containing final recommendations and submits by January 31, 2024.

Recommendations

- Process
 - Discussion for each
 - Followed by vote

Recommendation #1

- **Fund Change SC Program Expansion**
 - **Currently a pilot program in the Pee Dee area. Requesting increased funding to expand the program to:**
 - Boost infrastructure
 - Raise awareness
 - Increase demand for healthy foods
 - Conduct baseline research

Recommendations #2 and #3

- SC Food Policy Council Funding
 - Serves as robust state-level, cross-sector organization that has capacity to enhance and act on FSC's work.
 - Requesting funding for a state director, program coordinator, and other associated costs.

Recommendations #4

- **Promote + Expand Summer Break Café (Summer Program Food Service)**
 - Increase the number of sponsors and sites; specifically, more non-profit sponsors
 - Improve collaboration between SFAs and sponsors to address transportation barriers, adding more sites, and promoting all sites
 - Establish specific resource/staffing to track data
 - Use SCDE funds for more targeted marketing and outreach
 - Encourage sponsors to use mobile feeding sites
 - Apply for Excessive Heat/Advisory Waivers to allow for non-congregate meals during National Weather Advisory
 - Encourage SFAs to extend dates of operations
 - Encourage sponsors to have open sites vs. closed-enrollment sites

Recommendation #5

- Support for statewide organization to facilitate implementation of the Food Security Council findings and recommendations
 - The Food Security Council sunsets on Jan. 31, 2024
 - This recommendation supports a statewide organization to facilitate implementation of the Council's finding and recommendations provided for in the report to the General Assembly
 - Requests funding for an FTE position within the statewide organization for a specified and limited timeframe

Recommendation #6

- Establish a statewide web-based care coordination referral system that addresses food insecurity, among other social determinants of health
 - Investment in of a web-based care coordination system (i.e., multi-directional referral system) to facilitate the coordination of care and address social determinants of health
 - Address the social determinants related to increasing health care access and quality, economic stability, and education resources
 - Identify gaps in service and support systems and facilitate policy level change at the local level
 - Seamlessly connected to programs and services that can address social needs (e.g., housing, food, medicine, transportation)

Recommendation #7

- **Address challenges facing food donation including liability protection and education**
 - An estimated **40% of food** produced in the U.S. is wasted
 - Food is the number one thing that goes into South Carolina's landfills, making up about **24% of landfill waste**
 - Food donation programs can help combat both food waste and food insecurity
 - Exploring changes in state law related to liability protection and increasing education and resources on donation liability protection

Recommendation #8

- **Expand community garden programs in the state**
 - Work with partners, including Clemson University PSA, to help expand these programs by providing necessary resources through at its DHEC's local health departments and Clemson Extension's county offices
 - DHEC health departments and Clemson Extension offices are located in each of the 46 counties
 - Resources would help DHEC clients and their families as well as the public connect with community garden efforts

Recommendation #9

- **Increase the availability of fresh produce at variety stores**
 - One of the largest variety store brands has over 18,000 stores nationwide and sells fresh produce in 16% of the location
 - Variety stores are located throughout the state, particularly in rural areas. Many variety stores do not carry fresh produce
 - Of the stores that do sell fresh produce, many of them do not meet the requirements to be a WIC vendor
 - The state should explore ways that variety stores could offer more fresh produce and also expand acceptance for programs such as WIC
 - The state should further explore where variety stores are located, whether they offer fresh produce, and what programs they participate in, e.g., WIC, SNAP

Recommendation #10

- **Develop a one-stop eligibility system for public programs and services**
 - Streamline access to public programs and services, eliminating redundant paperwork and reducing administrative burdens for individuals seeking assistance
 - Enhance efficiency, save time for both applicants and state agencies
 - Allow for better coordination and data sharing among different programs, enabling the state to optimize resource allocation and identify gaps in service delivery
 - Contribute to a more responsive and equitable public service infrastructure, ultimately benefiting the well-being and livelihoods of South Carolina residents

Recommendation #11

- **Allow qualifying persons with a drug felony conviction to be eligible to receive SNAP benefits in South Carolina**
- 29 states have fully opted out of the lifetime ban; 20 states have enacted a modified ban
- A drug conviction is the only type of felony conviction that bans a person from being eligible for SNAP benefits
- South Carolina is also the only state that has not passed legislation to modify or lift this ban
- Supporting access to SNAP benefits for those with felony drug convictions is an investment in rehabilitation, reducing the likelihood of recidivism and associated costs of incarceration

Recommendation #12

- **Create a centralized food resource map for combating food insecurity**
- Create a centralized statewide food resource map that would potentially include the following, among other considerations:
 - Food distribution centers, food pantries, and food banks
 - Farmers' markets, roadside markets, and community-supported agriculture (CSAs)
 - WIC and SNAP vendors
 - Community gardens and food cooperatives
 - Transportation networks
 - Food desert and food insecurity data
 - Food and nutrition educational programs
- The creation of a centralized food resource map could also be added to or combined with another recommendation

Recommendation #13

- **Promote farmers and farmers' market participation in the WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP)**
 - There are 374 farmers' markets and roadside markets that offer fresh produce in the state; 23% of those markets allow purchases by WIC participants
 - One-time funding is needed to promote farmer participation in the WIC FMNP program in the communities in the state most at-need
 - The campaign would educate farmers on the benefits of the program and why their participation matters
 - There are 287 farmers' markets in the state that do not accept WIC payment, which presents an opportunity to increase participation

Recommendation #14

- **Expand the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program**
 - \$1.1 million in recurring dollars in the 2024 budget to expand operation of the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program
 - These additional state funds will allow the department to supplement the federal funding to serve approximately 10,000 additional seniors per year (35,000 total) and maintain a \$50 benefit level

Recommendation #15

- **Increase the Gross Income Limit for SNAP Benefits**
- 44 states (including South Carolina) have elected to implement BBCE, and 37 states have chosen to increase the gross income limit, including three in the southeast region (Florida, Kentucky and North Carolina)
- Raising the gross income limit to 150% FPL would significantly increase the number of South Carolina residents potentially eligible for federal assistance

Recommendation #16

- **Increase Coordination between SNAP and WIC**
 - Recommend DSS and DHEC collaborate to identify and implement strategies to maximize the number of eligible families enrolled in WIC
 - Potential items for the agencies to consider should include, at a minimum, targeted marketing and outreach activities, data sharing, and streamlining the application process

Recommendation #17

- **Barrier Removal Strategies**
- The council recommends state funds be provided to implement state and local level strategies that address barriers and increase access to nutritious food essential to health and well-being. Strategies to be considered include:
 - Grants to cover annual grocery delivery fees for elderly or those with a physical disability
 - Incentives for farmers to offer additional locations/venues for target populations to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables (e.g., senior centers)
 - Grants for non-profit organizations to test/implement local strategies (e.g., transportation services)
 - Grants/incentives to increase farmers' participation in state programs (i.e., Farmers Market Nutrition Program, Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program, Healthy Bucks, etc.)

Recommendation #18

- **Barrier Removal Strategies**

- Unlike P-EBT, which was 100% federally funded, the new law provides funding for only 50% of any administrative expenses associated with Summer EBT. This would include agency operating costs as well as changes to the state's EBT contract
- We anticipate the costs for Summer EBT to be considerably higher than for P-EBT
- It is likely that any state agency involved in Summer EBT would need to request additional funds in the state budget to cover the remaining 50%

Next Steps

- December 20th or 21st – public comment period begins
- January 2nd – public comment period ends
- January 4th – **Council meeting**, final draft report to Council for review
- January 17th – Council feedback and suggested revisions due to DHEC support staff
- January 22nd – **Council meeting**, report finalized + approved
- January 31st – DHEC submits report to legislature



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Food Security Council

December 19, 2023

10:00 a.m.

Meeting Notes and Next Steps

Welcome

Dr. Edward Simmer

- Dr. Edward Simmer, director of the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) and chair of the Food Security Council (Council), welcomed members of the Council (Council) and the public. He provided a brief overview of the guiding proviso and charge of the Council. He also reminded individuals that the meeting would be recorded. A recording of the meeting is available at scdhec.gov/fsc.
- Council members in attendance included:
 - Dr. Ed Simmer, Council Chair
 - Dr. Rhea Bentley, South Carolina State University-Public Service Activities
 - Virgie Chambers, South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE)
 - Amber Gillum, South Carolina Department of Social Services (DSS)
 - Rowan Goodrich, South Carolina Department on Aging (SCDOA)
 - Dr. Tarana Khan, Clemson University-Public Service Activities
 - Dr. Kevin Wessinger, South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
 - Bentley White, DHEC
 - Chris Whitmire, South Carolina Department of Agriculture (SCDA)

Progress Update

Dr. Edward Simmer

- Dr. Simmer gave an update on the progress of the Council and its work to finalize recommendations and draft a report to be presented to the General Assembly. He stated that actions taken by the Council would be incorporated into a draft report for review by the Council.

Recommendations Discussion + Voting

All

- Dr. Simmer began the recommendations and voting portion of the day's discussion by providing an overview of the process for which the discussion and voting would take place. He shared that a total of 18 recommendations were proposed by Council members. Each Council member who proposed a recommendation would be asked to provide a summary of the recommendation, prior to opening the floor for discussion and voting.
 - **Recommendation #1:** Fund Change SC Program Expansion
 - Chris Whitmire gave a summary of a recommendation to support funding to expand the Change SC Program to help address food insecurity. The increased funding would expand the program to boost infrastructure, raise awareness, increase demand for healthy foods, and conduct baseline research. The SCDA is requesting one-time state funding of \$3 million dollars in FY 2025. The recommendation is to support this state funding request and the program.

- The Council voted unanimously to approve recommendation #1 for public comment.
- **Recommendations #2 and #3: SC Food Policy Council Request for Partnership + SC Food Policy Council Funding**
 - Recommendations #2 and #3 were recommended by Dr. Tarana Khan and Dr. Rhea Bentley. . Dr. Bentley stated that the recommendation requested that the South Carolina Food Policy Council be funded. The funding request is for \$185,900 and would fund a state director, program coordinator, and other associated costs. The Food Policy Council serves as a robust state-level, cross-sector organization that has the capacity to enhance and act on the Council’s work.
 - Amber Gillum requested that the recommendations be tabled for additional discussion to ensure that the recommendations were not duplicating potential federal funding sources through SNAP-Ed.
 - Chris Whitmire also requested clarification concerning funding.
 - The Council voted unanimously to table recommendations #2 and #3 for further discussion and to be voted upon at the next Council meeting. The recommendations were moved forward for public comment and may not be included in the final recommendations.
 - **Recommendation #4: Promote and expand the Summer Break Café (Summer Program Food Service)**
 - Virgie Chambers reviewed the recommendation. In evaluating existing gaps, Chambers stated that there is a need for greater coverage of program food services during summer months. Under the recommendation, local communities and stakeholders must work collaboratively with the SCDE to increase promotion and awareness of Summer Program Food Service (Summer Break Café) opportunities, which can lead to additional viable sponsors and accessible sites for the program.
 - The Council voted unanimously to approve recommendation #4 for public comment.
 - **Recommendation #5: Create or invest in a statewide organization to facilitate implementation of the Council’s findings and recommendations.**
 - Bentley White offered a summary overview of the recommendation. The recommendation asks for the creation of an organization that does not currently exist or requesting funding for an existing statewide organization to facilitate the Council’s findings and recommendations. This includes funding for an executive director. White stated that the recommendation was similar to

recommendation #2 and #3. However, the recommendation does not specify a specific entity.

- Gillum requested clarity on what the duties/role of the individual and/or organization would be concerning implementation of the Council's recommendations. White stated that the intent was to focus on bringing stakeholders together.
 - Whitmire asked if White would envision the position/organization to include the possibility of future recommendations to the General Assembly or if it would be limited to facilitating and reporting back on the progress of the Council. White explained that it would need to tie it back to what was in the initial report.
 - The Council voted unanimously to approve recommendation #5 for public comment.
- **Recommendation #6:** Establish a statewide web-based care coordination referral system that addresses food insecurity, among other social determinants of health.
- White stated that the recommendation was to invest in a closed-looped care coordination system that could be used to connect individuals with social needs to community-based organizations that would provide those resources.
 - The Council voted unanimously to approve recommendation #6 for public comment.
- **Recommendation #7:** Address challenges facing food donation including liability protection and education.
- White stated that the recommendation requests the exploration of changes in state law related to liability protection and increasing education and resources pertaining to food donation, including liability protection.
 - The Council voted unanimously to approve recommendation #7 for public comment.
- **Recommendation #8:** Expand community garden programs in the state.
- White explained that the recommendation is to support state funding to promote DHEC's work with partners to expand or create additional community garden programs through providing necessary resources at the local level.
 - Rowan Goodrich requested that SCDOA be named as a stakeholder in the recommendation.
 - Dr. Bentley requested that the SC State 1890 Research and Extension be included as a stakeholder in the recommendation.
 - Both Aging and SC State 1890 Research and Extension provide support for community gardens.
 - The Council voted unanimously to approve recommendation #8 for public comment.

- **Recommendation #9:** Increase the availability of fresh produce at variety stores.
 - White stated that the recommendation focuses on evaluating ways to incentivize variety stores to carry fresh produce, including expanding the acceptance for programs such as WIC and exploring where stores are located, if stores offer fresh produce, and what programs they participate in, e.g., WIC, SNAP.
 - Chambers requested examples of variety stores. White provided Dollar General, Family Dollar, and Dollar Tree as examples, but eligibility would not be limited to these examples.
 - The Council voted unanimously to approve recommendation #9 for public comment.

- **Recommendation #10:** Develop a one-stop eligibility system for public programs and services.
 - White provided a summary of the recommendation to develop a one-stop system for programs and services that have eligibility requirements. Examples included WIC and SNAP. The purpose of the recommendation would be to streamline access and increase coordination and data sharing among different programs to enable the state to optimize resource allocation and identify gaps in service delivery.
 - Gillum stated she would have questions and concerns about programs that have federal requirements around eligibility determination that the state may not have the ability to change. She also shared that DSS is currently in the process of replacing the eligibility system for SNAP. White stated that federal requirements, cost effectiveness and systems communication would need to be explored.
 - Gillum asked for clarity concerning the language to explore or develop.
 - Dr. Kevin Wessinger also raised issues with understanding the recommendations and reconciling with federal rules related to Medicaid eligibility. He stated that ultimately each agency that has federal rules has to maintain their own eligibility guidelines and that would be hard to do in a one-stop system.
 - Dr. Simmer asked the Council how it would like to proceed.
 - Gillum recommended amending the recommendations language.
 - The Council voted unanimously to approve recommendation #10 with the following amended language: ***“Explore the potential of a “no-wrong” door application and/or eligibility system to make it easier for the public to access public programs and services across agencies.”***

- **Recommendation #11:** Allow qualifying persons with a drug felony conviction to be eligible to receive SNAP benefits in South Carolina.
 - White stated that South Carolina is the only state in the country that has a lifetime ban on benefits for individuals that have a felony drug conviction. The recommendation focuses on legislation at the state level to modify or lift this federal ban. South Carolina is the only state with a lifetime ban. All other states have modified or removed the ban. DSS would be the lead agency.
 - Gillum added that from the perspective of DSS the recommendation has minimal operational impacts. The recommendation is a policy matter.
 - The Council voted unanimously to approve recommendation #11 for public comment.

- **Recommendation #12:** Create a centralized food resource map for combating food insecurity.
 - White reviewed the recommendation to request potential funding to create a centralized statewide food resource map that would incorporate public facing resources as layers to locate food insecurity resources. She said that it could be combined or added to other recommendations.
 - The Council voted unanimously to approve recommendation #12 for public comment.

- **Recommendation #13:** Promote farmers and farmers' market participation in the WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP).
 - White stated that the recommendation provides for one-time funding for a campaign to promote increased farmer participation in the WIC FMNP program in communities statewide.
 - The Council voted unanimously to approve recommendation #13 for public comment.

- **Recommendation #14:** Expand the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program.
 - Gillum explained that DSS has been able to expand the Senior Farmers Market Program to all 46 counties. However, they have never been able to meet the potential demand within the federal funding level. The recommendation supports the department's state funding request to supplement the federal funding to serve approximately 10,000 additional seniors per year (35,000 total) and maintain a \$50 benefit level.
 - The Council voted unanimously to approve recommendation #14 for public comment.

- **Recommendation #15:** Increase the Gross Income Limit for SNAP Benefits.
 - Gillum stated that the recommendation is to support raising the gross income limit for SNAP benefits to 150% Federal Poverty Level and providing the funding necessary for DSS to implement the expansion. This would significantly increase the number of South Carolina residents potentially eligible for federal assistance.
 - The Council voted unanimously to approve recommendation #15 for public comment.

- **Recommendation #16:** Increase Coordination between SNAP and WIC.
 - Gillum provided an overview of the recommendation, which recommends that DSS and DHEC collaborate to identify and implement strategies to maximize the number of eligible families enrolled in SNAP and WIC. Potential strategies to consider should include, at a minimum, targeted marketing and outreach activities, data sharing, and streamlining of application processes.
 - The Council voted unanimously to approve recommendation #16 for public comment.

- **Recommendation #17:** Barrier Removal Strategies.
 - Gillum stated that the recommendation evaluates the provision of state funds to implement state and local level strategies that address barriers and increase access to nutritious food essential to health and well-being. This includes physical access issues. Strategies to consider may include grants to cover annual grocery delivery services for elderly or those with a physical disability, incentives for farmers to offer additional locations/venues for target populations to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables (e.g., senior centers), grants for non-profit organizations to test/implement local strategies (e.g., transportation services), and grants/incentives to increase farmers' participation in state programs (i.e., Farmers Market Nutrition Program, Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program, Healthy Bucks, etc.).
 - The Council voted unanimously to approve recommendation #17 for public comment.

- **Recommendation #18:** Summer EBT
 - Gillum reviewed the recommendation. The recommendation centers around requesting the legislature consider adopting the Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) program and additional resources to support the program.
 - Dr. Simmer recommended amending the recommendations language.
 - The Council voted unanimously to approve recommendation #18 with the following amended language: ***“Recommend implementation and funding of Summer EBT program in Summer 2025.”***

Wrap-Up + Next Steps**All**

- The Council's recommendations were posted online for public comment. The public comment period is scheduled to end on Jan. 2, 2024 at 5:00 P.M.
- The next meeting will be held on Jan. 4, 2024. During that meeting, the Council will review the recommendations and submitted public comments. The goal is to also review a draft report.
- By Jan. 17, 2024, the Council will provide feedback and suggested revisions to the draft report.
- On Jan. 22, the Council will meet to finalize and approve the report.
- By Jan. 31, DHEC will submit the report to the General Assembly on behalf of the Council.

Food Security Council

January 4, 2024

1:00 p.m.

Agenda

1:00-1:05	Welcome	Dr. Edward Simmer
1:05-1:10	Progress Update	Dr. Edward Simmer
1:10-1:20	Review of Draft Report Outline	All
1:20-1:40	Discussion of Submitted Public Comments	All
1:40-2:50	Final Recommendations Discussion + Voting	All
2:50-3:00	Wrap-up + Next Steps	All



Food Security Council

January 4, 2024

South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control

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Agenda

- Welcome
- Progress Update
- Review of Draft Report Outline
- Discussion of Submitted Public Comments
- Final Recommendations Discussion + Voting
- Next Steps

Progress Update



Convene Council + Establish Goals

August 2023

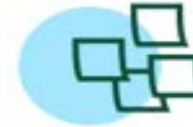
Review proviso requirements, establish goals, and determine timeline.



Inventory + Other Resources Feedback

September 2023

Each agency to provide feedback on current state of existing services, and any other relevant information. DHEC to provide document.



Draft Recommendations

October 2023

Council discusses and drafts recommendations.



Identify Gaps, Draft Recommendations + Draft Report

November 2023

Council determines gaps and discusses initial recommendations. DHEC begins drafting report.



Finalize Gaps + Recommendations, Draft Report

December 2023

Each agency provides and Council votes on final recommendations and gaps. DHEC will incorporate and finalize draft report.



Finalize Report + Submit to Legislature

January 2024

Council reviews and finalizes report containing final recommendations and submits by January 31, 2024.

Draft Report Outline

- **I. Executive Summary**
- **II. Acknowledgments (FSC members and other contributors)**
- **III. Key Terms**
- **IV. Introduction**
 - a. Proviso
 - b. Council Scope + Overview
 - c. Stakeholder + Public Input
 - d. Final Recommendations + Report
- **V. Key Findings**
 - a. Snapshot of current state of nutrition security in SC
 - b. Snapshot of current SC food security programs and initiatives by each agency
 - c. Analysis of existing gaps
 - d. What is currently working that we want to preserve? What are the challenges? What opportunities for improvement exist?
- **VI. Recommendations**
- **VII. Conclusion**
- **VIII. Sources**
- **IX. Attachments**



Public Comments

- Discussion

Recommendations

- Process
 - Discussion for each category
 - Followed by vote for each category

Recommendations #1 and #15

- **#1:** Fund Change SC Program Expansion
- **#15:** Increase the Gross Income Limit for SNAP Benefits

Recommendations #2, #3, #5

- **#2:** SC Food Policy Council Request for Partnership
- **#3:** SC Food Policy Council Funding
- **#5:** Create or invest in a statewide organization to facilitate implementation of the Food Security Council findings and recommendations

Recommendations #4 and #18

- **#4:** Local communities and stakeholders must work collaboratively with the SCDE to increase promotion and awareness of Summer Program Food Service (Summer Break Café) opportunities, which can lead to additional viable sponsors and accessible sites for the program
- **#18:** Recommend implementation and funding of Summer EPT program in Summer 2025

Recommendations #6, #10, #12

- **#6:** Establish a statewide web-based care coordination referral system that addresses food insecurity, among other social determinants of health
- **#10:** Explore the potential of a “no-wrong” door application and/or eligibility system to make it easier for the public to access public programs and services across agencies.
- **#12:** Create a centralized food resource map for combating food insecurity

Recommendations #8, #9, #13, #14

- **#8:** Expand community garden programs in the state
- **#9:** Increase the availability of fresh produce at variety stores
- **#13:** Promote farmers and farmers' market participation in the WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP)
- **#14:** Expand the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program

Recommendations #16 and #17

- **#16:** Increase Coordination between SNAP and WIC
- **#17:** Barrier Removal Strategies

Recommendations #7 and 11

- **#7:** Address challenges facing food donation including liability protection and education
- **#11:** Allow qualifying persons with a drug felony conviction to be eligible to receive SNAP benefits in South Carolina

Next Steps

- January 17th – Council feedback and suggested revisions due to DHEC support staff
- January 22nd – **Council meeting**, report finalized + approved
- January 31st – DHEC submits report to legislature



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S.C. Department of Health
and Environmental Control

Food Security Council

January 4, 2024

1:00 p.m.

Meeting Minutes

Welcome

Dr. Edward Simmer

- Dr. Edward Simmer, director of the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) and chair of the Food Security Council (Council), welcomed members of the Council and the public. He provided a brief overview of the guiding proviso and charge of the Council. He also reminded individuals that the meeting would be recorded. A recording of the meeting is available at scdhec.gov/fsc.
- Council members in attendance included:
 - Dr. Ed Simmer, Council Chair
 - Dr. Rhea Bentley, South Carolina State University-Public Service Activities
 - Virgie Chambers, South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE)
 - Amber Gillum, South Carolina Department of Social Services (DSS)
 - Rowan Goodrich, South Carolina Department on Aging (SCDOA)
 - Rhonda Matthews (in attendance for Dr. Tarana Khan), Clemson University-Public Service Activities
 - Dr. Kevin Wessinger, South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
 - Bentley White, DHEC
 - Chris Whitmire, South Carolina Department of Agriculture (SCDA)

Progress Update

Dr. Edward Simmer

- Dr. Simmer gave an update on the progress of the Council and its work to finalize recommendations and draft a report to be presented to the General Assembly. He indicated the Council is on track to finalize and submit a report by the required deadline.

Review of Draft Report Outline

Kayla David

- Kayla presented the proposed outline of the draft report, highlighting the key components of content areas. The Council agreed to the outline, acknowledging that during their review period, revisions could be made as appropriate.

Discussion of Submitted Public Comments

All

- Dr. Simmer acknowledged that public comments had been received on the draft recommendations and distributed to the Council for their awareness and discussion. He asked if

the Council had any questions or specific comments they wished to discuss; the Council determined no discussion was needed.

Final Recommendations Discussion + Voting

All

- Dr. Simmer began the discussion by giving an overview of the previous meeting's recommendations and voting process. He then stated that the process for today's meeting would be to conduct final votes on the recommendations organized by overarching theme/category.
 - **Recommendations #1 (Funding Change SC Program Expansion) and #15 (Increase the Gross Income Limit for SNAP Benefits)** – the Council voted unanimously to include the recommendations in the final report.
 - **Recommendations #2 (SC Food Policy Council Request for Partnership), #3 (SC Food Policy Council Funding), and #5 (Create or invest in a statewide organization to facilitate implementation of the Food Security Council findings and recommendations)** – recommendations #2 and #3 were tabled during the December 19th Council meeting. Clarification was given by Clemson Extension regarding the purpose of the SC Food Policy Council and the funding request. Upon further discussion, the Council determined recommendations #2 and #3 should be removed as individual recommendations and combined with #5. The Council voted unanimously to include the amended recommendation in the final report.
 - **Recommendations #4 (Local communities and stakeholders must work collaboratively with the SCDE to increase promotion and awareness of Summer Program Food Service (Summer Break Café) opportunities, which can lead to additional viable sponsors and accessible sites for the program and #18 (Recommend implementation and funding of Summer EPT program in Summer 2025)** – the Council voted unanimously to include the recommendations in the final report.
 - **Recommendations #6 (Establish a statewide web-based care coordination referral system that addresses food insecurity, among other social determinants of health), #10 (Explore the potential of a “no-wrong” door application and/or eligibility system to make it easier for the public to access public programs and services across agencies), and #12 (Create a centralized food resource map for combating food insecurity)** – the Council voted unanimously to include the recommendations in the final report.
 - **Recommendations #8 (Expand community garden programs in the state), #9 (Increase the availability of fresh produce at variety stores), #13 (Promote farmers and farmers' market participation in the WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP)), and #14 (Expand the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program)** – the Council voted unanimously to include the recommendations in the final report, with an amendment to #8 to include all stakeholders who expressed interest during the public comment period.
 - **Recommendations #16 (Increase Coordination between SNAP and WIC) and #17 (Barrier Removal Strategies)** – the Council voted unanimously to include the recommendations in the final report.

- **Recommendations #7 (Address challenges facing food donation including liability protection and education) and #11 (Allow qualifying persons with a drug felony conviction to be eligible to receive SNAP benefits in South Carolina)** – the Council voted unanimously to include the recommendations in the final report.

Wrap-up + Next Steps

All

- Dr. Simmer indicated that the draft report should be sent to Council members for review and comment by January 9th. Once comments are submitted to DHEC support staff by January 17th, the report will be finalized for the January 22nd meeting, where the Council will vote to submit as final.

Food Security Council

January 22, 2024

3:00 p.m.

Agenda

3:00-3:05	Welcome	Dr. Edward Simmer
3:05-3:10	Progress Update	Dr. Edward Simmer
3:10-4:45	Review of + Vote on Final Report	All
4:45-5:00	Wrap-up + Next Steps	All



Food Security Council

January 22, 2024

South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control

Healthy People. **Healthy Communities.**

Agenda

- Welcome
- Progress Update
- Final Report + Voting
- Next Steps



South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control
Healthy People. Healthy Communities.

Welcome

Edward Simmer, MD, MPH, DFAPA
Director, DHEC

Progress Update



Convene Council + Establish Goals

August 2023

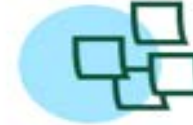
Review proviso requirements, establish goals, and determine timeline.



Inventory + Other Resources Feedback

September 2023

Each agency to provide feedback on current state of existing services, and any other relevant information. DHEC to provide document.



Draft Recommendations

October 2023

Council discusses and drafts recommendations.



Identify Gaps, Draft Recommendations + Draft Report

November 2023

Council determines gaps and discusses initial recommendations. DHEC begins drafting report.



Finalize Gaps + Recommendations, Draft Report

December 2023

Each agency provides and Council votes on final recommendations and gaps. DHEC will incorporate and finalize draft report.



Finalize Report + Submit to Legislature

January 2024

Council reviews and finalizes report containing final recommendations and submits by January 31, 2024.

Final Report + Voting

- Approve Council revisions
- Vote on final report for submission

Final Report Changes

- **Pg. 7** – Added rates of senior food insecurity
- **Pg. 15** – Added breakdown of funding
- **Pg. 17** – Removed language not needed
- **Pg. 20** – Removed duplication of program
- **Pg. 36** – Added note on DHEC split for clarity

Final Report Changes

- **Pgs. 42 + 43** – Added language for FTE position; amended stakeholders for clarity
- **Pg. 45** – Amended stakeholders for clarity
- **Pgs. 48 + 49** – Amended challenges and stakeholders for clarity
- **Pg. 53** – Amended stakeholders for clarity
- **Pg. 65** – Amended senior language for preferred terminology

Next Steps

- January 31st – DHEC submits report to legislature on behalf of Council
- Once received by legislature – post to FSC webpage on DHEC website



Thank You

- Council Members
- DHEC Staff
- Legislature



South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control
Healthy People. Healthy Communities.

CONTACT US

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Food Security Council

January 22, 2024

Minutes

Welcome

Dr. Edward Simmer

- Dr. Edward Simmer, director of the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) and chair of the Food Security Council (Council), welcomed members of the Council and the public. He reminded individuals that the meeting would be recorded. A recording of the meeting is available at scdhec.gov/fsc.
- Council members in attendance included:
 - Dr. Ed Simmer, Council Chair
 - Dr. Rhea Bentley, South Carolina State University-Public Service Activities
 - Virgie Chambers, South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE)
 - Amber Gillum, South Carolina Department of Social Services (DSS)
 - Rowan Goodrich, South Carolina Department on Aging (SCDOA)
 - Dr. Tarana Khan, Clemson University-Public Service Activities
 - Dr. Kevin Wessinger, South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
 - Bentley White, DHEC
 - Chris Whitmire, South Carolina Department of Agriculture (SCDA)

Progress Update

Dr. Edward Simmer

- Dr. Simmer gave an update on the progress of the Council and its work to finalize recommendations and draft a report to be presented to the General Assembly. He indicated the Council is on track to finalize and submit a report before the required deadline.

Review of + Vote on Final Report

All

- Council members were provided copies of the final draft report. DHEC staff presented amendments made to the draft report based on Council feedback.
- A vote was taken to approve the report as final and to approve for submission to the General Assembly. The Council voted unanimously to approve the report and submit it to the General Assembly.

Wrap-up + Next Steps

All

- Dr. Simmer indicated the report will be submitted to the General Assembly in the coming days. He also indicated a copy would be sent to each Council member's agency director.
- Upon submission of the report, the Council is dissolved.