

# Improving Access to Healthy Food in Rural Communities

July 15, 2015 2:00 p.m. Eastern

Tawnya Laveta, Farm to Table

David Procter, Kansas State University's Center for  
Engagement and Community Development

Pam Roy, Farm to Table and New Mexico Food and  
Agriculture Policy Council

Mikki Sager, The Conservation Fund

*Grantmakers in Health Webinar*  
*July 15, 2015*

*Kansas State University's Rural Grocery Initiative"*

**R G I**  
**Rural Grocery Initiative**

Strengthening our stores  
Strengthening our communities

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[www.k-state.edu/cecd](http://www.k-state.edu/cecd)

[www.ruralgrocery.org](http://www.ruralgrocery.org)

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# Kansas State University's Center for Engagement and Community Development

## Mission:

To connect the resources and expertise of Kansas State University to the significant issues of public need facing Kansans and communities worldwide.

# Kansas State University's Rural Grocery Initiative

## Goals:

1. Identify challenges facing rural grocery stores (2,500 or less)
2. Develop responses to those challenges
3. Identify and detail sustainable business models of grocer operation
4. Build virtual and face-to-face information networks for rural grocers

**R G I**  
**Rural Grocery Initiative**

**Strengthening our stores**  
**Strengthening our communities**

# Why Focus on Rural Food Retail?

**Because,  
Rural Grocery Stores Provide:**

- **Economic Development**
  - Rural grocery stores are an important rural economic driver
- **Food Access**
  - Rural grocery stores provide a primary source of nutritious and competitively priced foods
- **Important Community Hubs**
  - Rural grocery stores provide important local, civic and social meeting spaces





# Economic Development: Why Focus on Rural Grocery Stores

- Because,  
Rural grocery stores are a critical small business
  1. Rural grocery stores in KS, on average, contribute \$644,000 to the local economy.
  2. Grocery stores are resilient businesses in economic downturn times
  3. Kansas rural grocery stores provide, on average, 17 local jobs
    - 6 full time; 11 part time
  4. Rural grocery stores in Kansas generate 1 out of every 5 tax dollars for local community
  5. Locally-owned, small business have a larger economic multiplier
  6. SNAP and WIC benefits provide economic stimulus
    - SNAP puts food dollars directly and indirectly into local economies.
    - Food Dollar Leakage: Local grocery stores are critical to capture SNAP dollars



# Healthy Food Access: Why Focus on Rural Grocery Stores

Because,

8% of rural population (Approx. 4.75 million people) in the U.S. are living in communities lacking access to healthy foods. (Policy Link; Food Trust, 2013)

- **Poverty:** 20% of census tract is below poverty level.
- **Lack of Access:** 33% of the census tract's population resides more than 10 miles from a supermarket or large grocery store.



# Healthy Food Access: Why Focus on Rural Grocery Stores?

Because,

1. Rural areas suffer the highest obesity rates in the nation.
2. Rural grocery stores offer more healthy foods, at lower cost, than rural convenience stores.
3. Prevalence of grocery stores in non-metro counties is inversely associated with incidence of obesity.
4. Rural grocery stores are often a distribution point for locally-sourced foods.
  1. Provides support for local producers
  2. Provides site for fresh produce sales





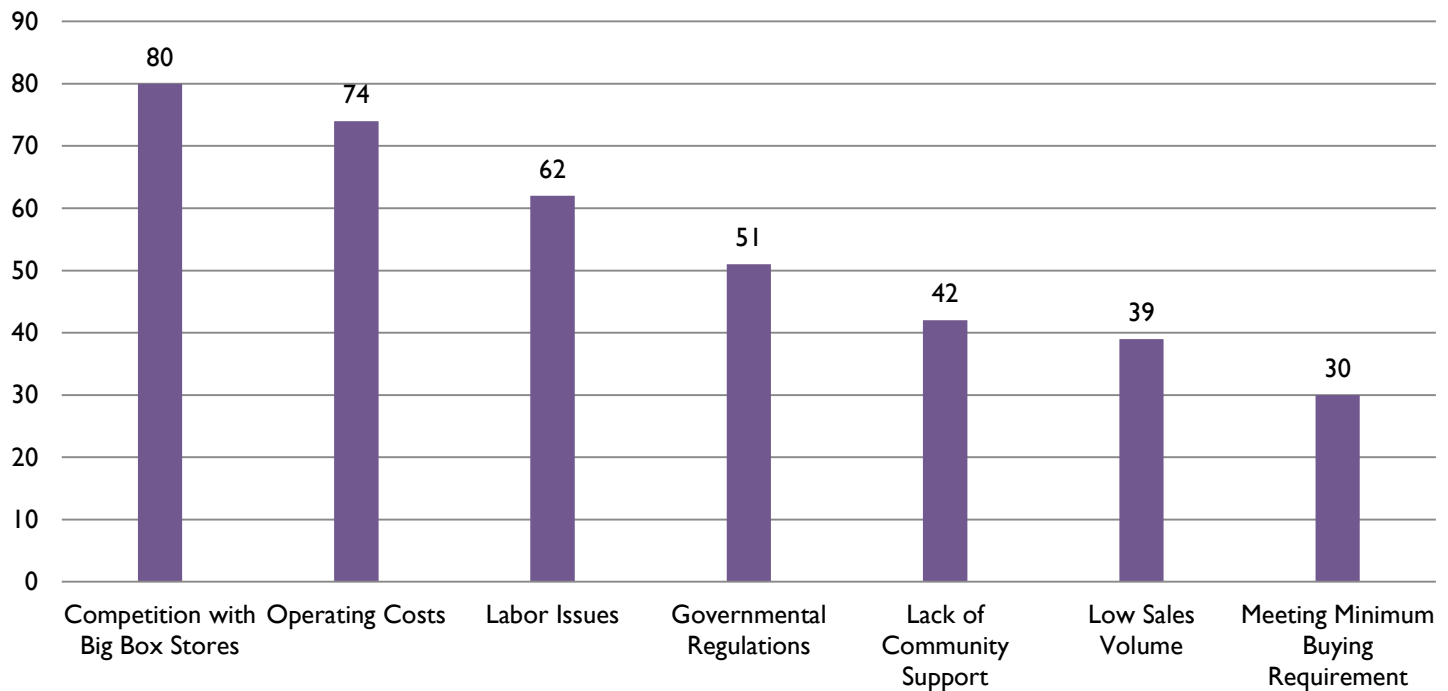
# Community Hubs: Why Focus on Rural Grocery Stores

- Functions as anchor of community life
  - Helps form community identity
  - Develops and maintains social contacts
- Provides a place for talking with one another
  - A place for small talk
  - A place to talk about current affairs – local and national
  - A community gathering space
- Creates habits of public association



# Rural Grocer Survey: Top Seven Challenges

**Rural Grocer Challenges:  
Percent of Owners Identifying Each Challenge**



# Recommendation #1:

## Build Community Investment in Rural Food Access

### Conduct **FEAST** events:

- A facilitated deliberation about community food system based on community assets
- Brings together wide diversity of community food stakeholders
- Builds community investment resulting in change actions to make community more food secure.



Food \* Education \*  
Agriculture \* Solutions \* Together



# Recommendation #2: Address Food Distribution Challenges

- Explore / facilitate / energize innovative food distribution systems
  - More conversation is necessary. Possible options:
  - Regional re-distribution centers
  - Rural grocery stores serving as food hubs
    - Establish collaborations among rural grocery stores and farmers' markets
    - Establish collaborations among rural grocery owners and local growers
    - Create value-added food market opportunities





# Recommendation #3: Provide Technical Assistance for Grocery Operations

## 1. *Provide T/A for Rural Grocery Operations*

- *Develop Case Studies of Sustainable Rural Grocery Business Models*
- *Provide Technical Assistance for Specific Business Operational Needs*
  - *Rural Grocery Toolkit (<http://www.ruralgrocery.org/resources/>)*

## 2. *Invest in Information Network Portals*

- *Virtual Network Portals*
  - *Websites, webinars, etc*
- *Face-to-Face Information Networks*
  - *Conferences, summits, etc*



Bush's Market in Solomon



# Thank You

# R G I

## Rural Grocery Initiative

Strengthening our stores  
Strengthening our communities

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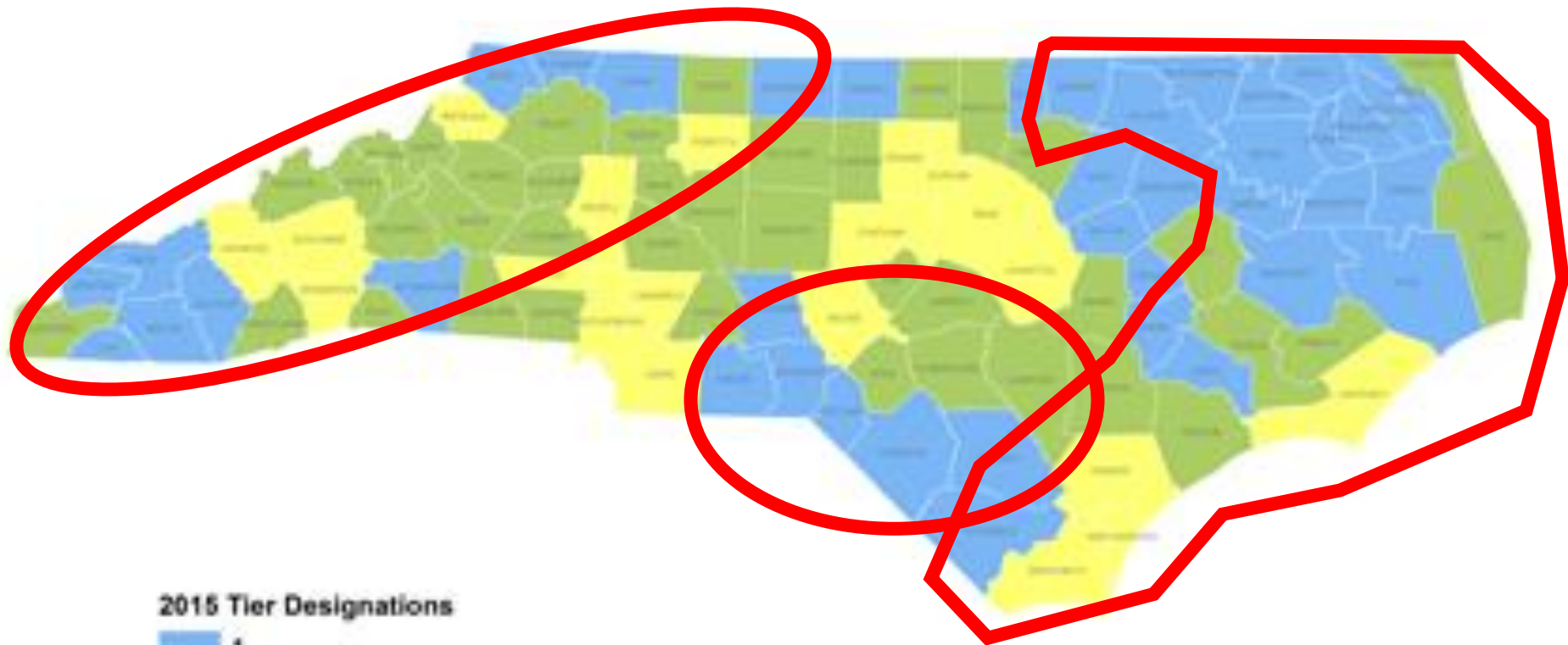
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[dprocter@k-state.edu](mailto:dprocter@k-state.edu)

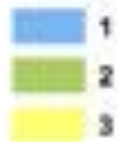




Growing Rural Food Access



2015 Tier Designations



 Significant  
Natural  
Systems

NC Department of Commerce Tier Designations:

1 (blue) = most economically distressed

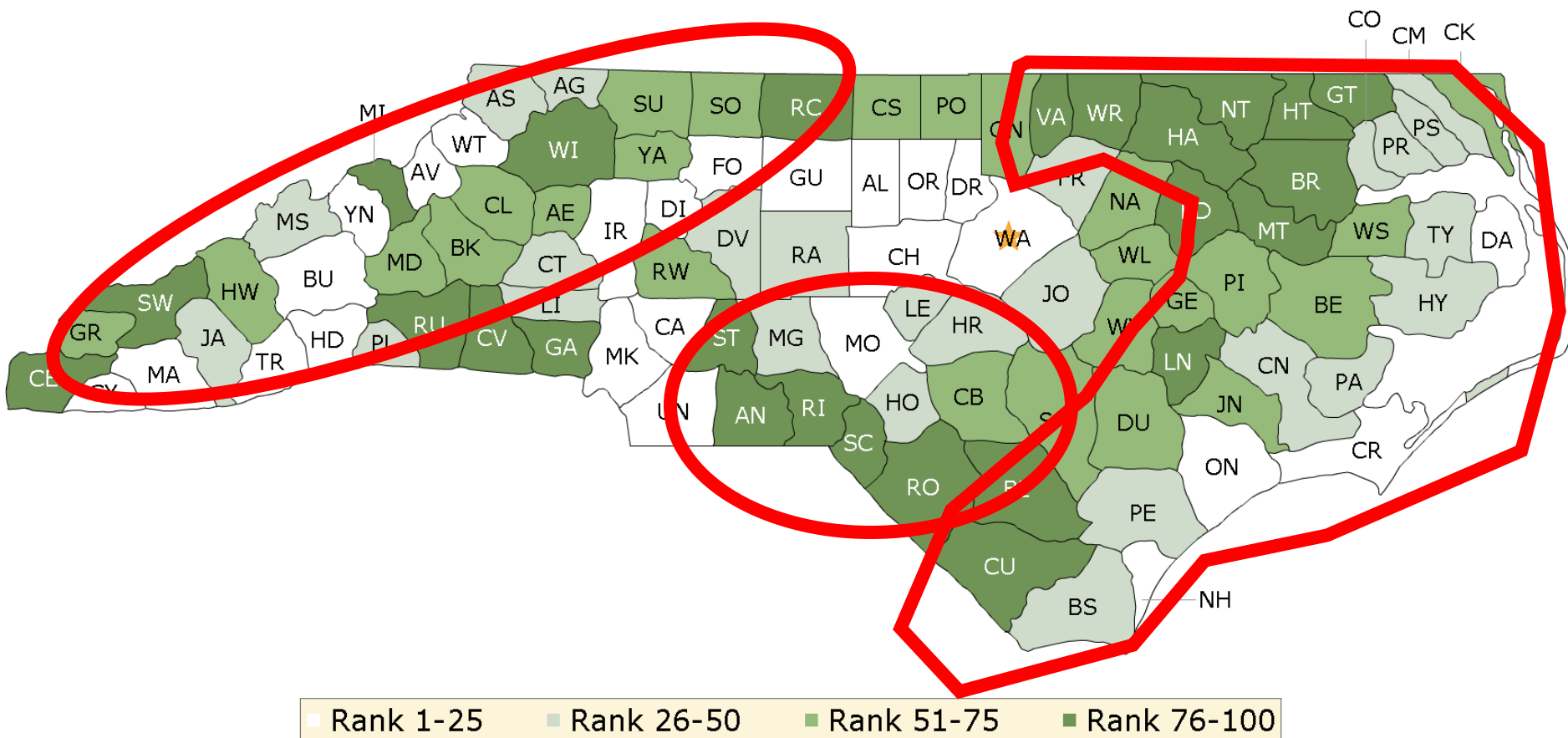
3 (yellow) = most affluent

**All Tier One counties are rural**

Why We Use the Triple Bottom Line Approach



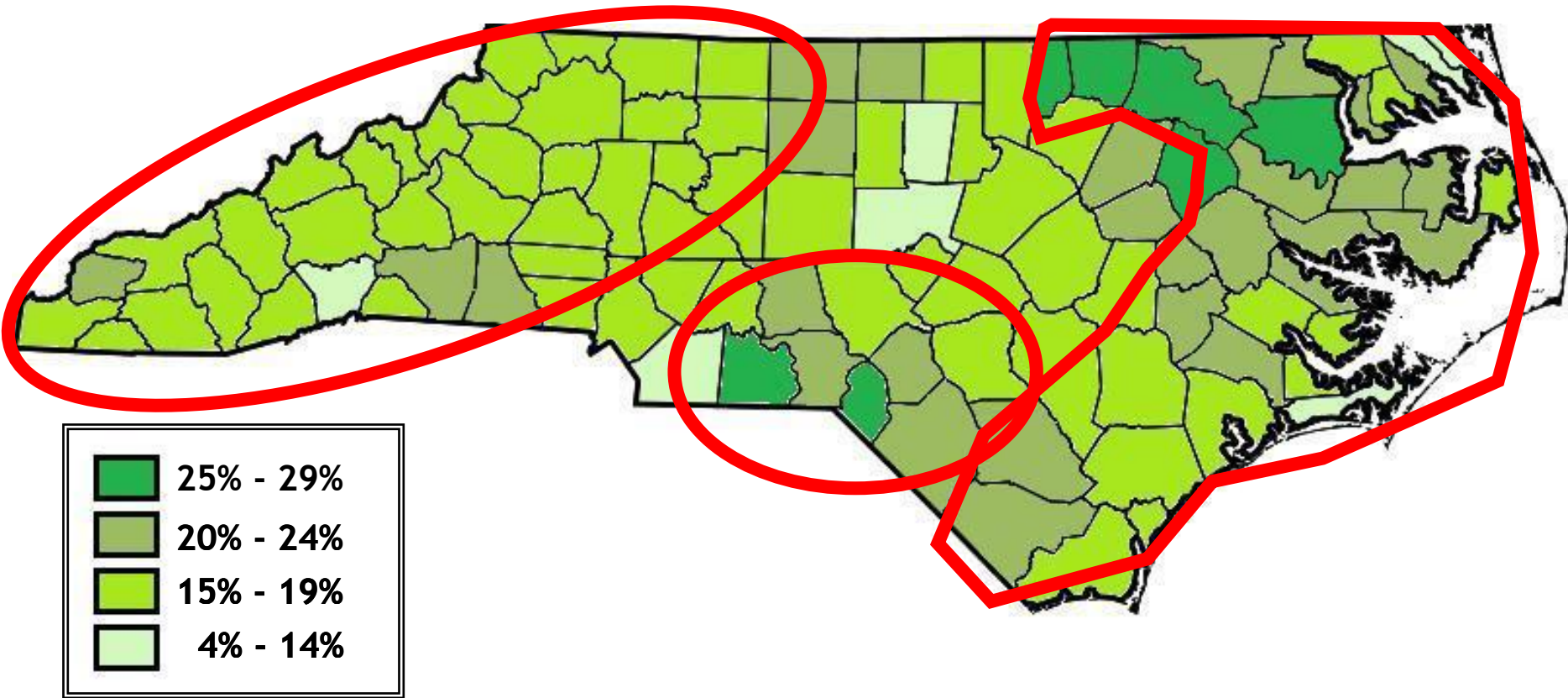
# 2012 NC Health Outcomes



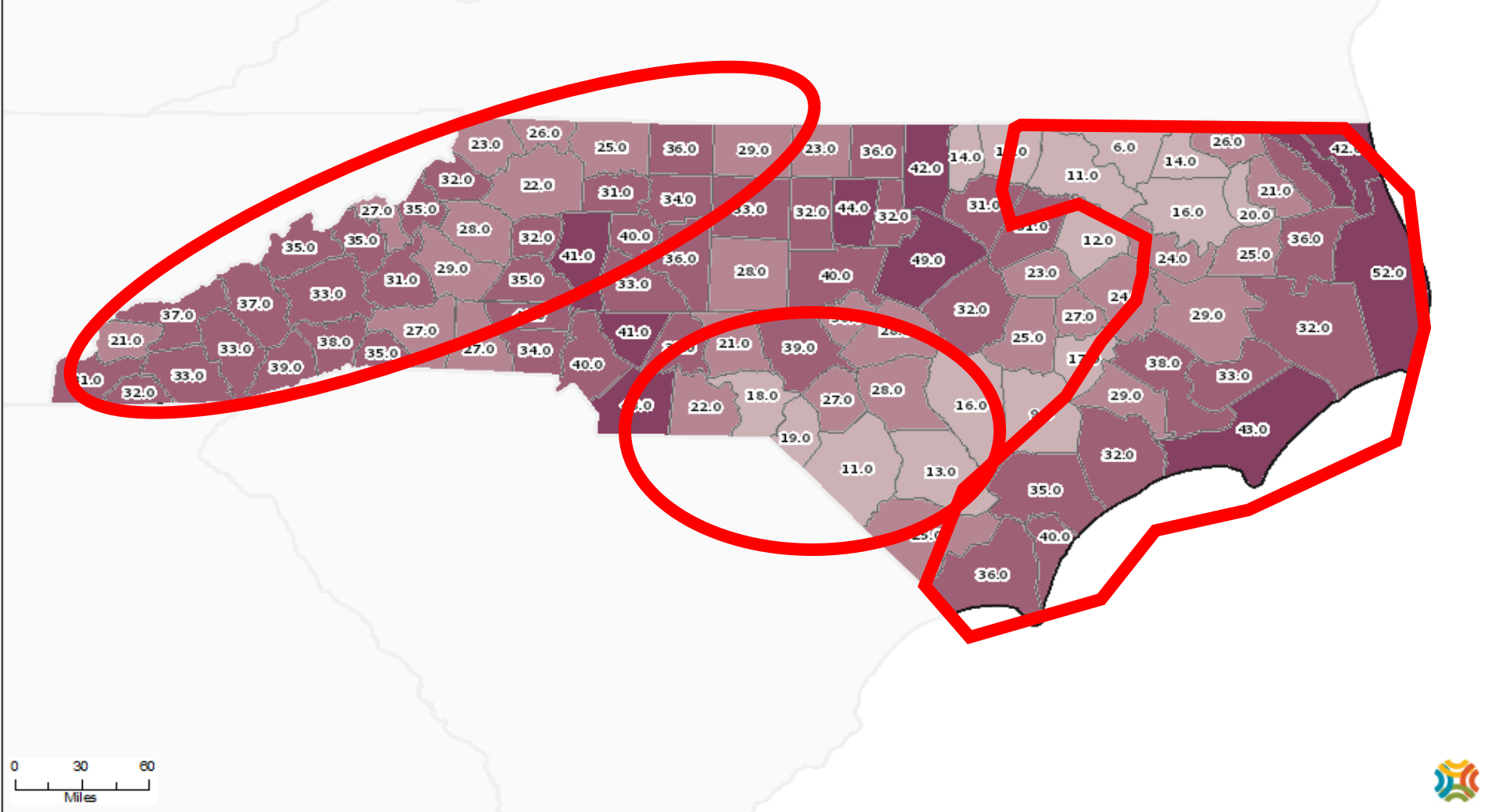
Source: [countyhealthrankings.org](http://countyhealthrankings.org)

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation & University of Wisconsin, Population Health Institute

# 2010 Food Insecurity Rates



Source: Feeding America, *national network of food banks*



### Map Legend

Food Insecure Population Ineligible for Assistance, Percent by County, Feeding America 2011

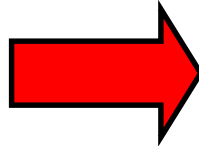
- Over 40.0%
- 30.1 - 40.0%
- 20.1 - 30.0%
- Under 20.1%

# Holistic Approaches to Rural Challenges

## Conventional Wisdom:

Attributes environmental degradation to landfills, hog farms, chemical plants, land conversion, etc.

**Rural Reality:** Social and economic stresses are the root causes of community decisions that lead to environmental degradation



- Poverty
- Racism, class-ism, sexism & other “isms”
- Power imbalances
- Wealth disparities
- Disenfranchised communities
- Low educational attainment
- Poor health outcomes and conditions

## Why We Work the Way We Do



# THE CONSERVATION FUND

SUSTAINABLE  
PROGRAMS: PEOPLE

CONSERVATION  
VENTURES: PROSPERITY

LAND CONSERVATION:  
PLANET



Conservation  
Leadership  
Network

Strategic  
Conservation  
Planning



WORKING FOREST FUND



NATURAL CAPITAL INVESTMENT FUND



Freshwater  
Institute



**People:  
Social Justice**

**Planet:  
Landownership,  
Environmental  
Stewardship**

**Prosperity:  
Sustainable  
Economic  
Development**



# Rural Food Access Goals

# New Markets in Low-Income Communities

- “You Choose” grocery boxes purchased with SNAP / EBT and Double Bucks
- 21 Black farmers producing meats, dairy, vegetables and fruits delivered to churches, schools, communities
- Undergoing due diligence for NCIF loan to purchase and renovate meat processing facility and serve farmer cooperatives



Coalition for Healthier Eating



# Flipping Rural Prisons and Young Lives

- Partnered with NC prison system, 99-year lease
- 130 acres plus buildings
- Sustainable agriculture training for military veterans and adjudicated youth
- Youth agro-enterprises (vermiculture, aquaponics) and food distribution to neighbors
- Youth leadership development



[growingchange.org](http://growingchange.org)

**Resourceful  
Communities**  
*People. Places. Opportunities.*



# “Food as Medicine”

- Faith-based youth and adult development programming
- 25-acre community garden and bee farm managed by youth and parents
- Harvesting / sharing of produce and honey with community
- Youth food enterprises, 15 certified beekeepers and scholarships for participants



Conetoe Family Life Center

# Growing Food, Trees and Community Wealth

- TCF bought forestland in Fort Stewart buffer, and sold a conservation easement
- McIntosh SEED purchased 1,148+ acres (\$1.6 million worth of land) from TCF for \$689,000
- Sustainable timber harvests, agroforestry (crops, small livestock) production, ecotourism development, landowner education and sweetgrass propagation



McIntosh S.E.E.D.



# Strengthening Markets and Farm Operations

- **Grain Storage Bins:** State funding used to subsidize loans to limited-resource farmers for grain storage bins. Higher income through crop sales at higher markets.
- **Food Hubs:** Loans and technical assistance for start-up operations, facilities, equipment, trucks, etc. Increased farm income and efficiency.
- Technical assistance and patient capital open otherwise inaccessible doors



Farmers and Food Hubs



# People and Communities: Social Justice

- Food is both a need and a natural catalyst for organizing in rural communities. Grassroots groups and faith groups, are reaching the most vulnerable rural populations but have suffered the largest losses of funding.
- Capacity-building support, access to resources and connections to peers add significant value to small grant investments in grassroots groups.
- Foundation partnerships can provide the critical match funds needed to leverage federal agency investments.



## Lessons Learned



# Prosperity through Sustainable Economic Development

- Small grants provide the critical first step in supporting grassroots rural organizations and communities in growing food access through programs and asset-building approaches.
- Access to loan capital, combined with business skills development, capacity building and new market development are critical to help under-resourced farmers, businesses and organizations grow food access and achieve sustainability.



## Lessons Learned

# Planet: Landownership and Environmental Stewardship

- Land (ownership and control) is power in rural America – social, economic, political – and the key to self-determination and environmental sustainability.
- Land and water provide the infrastructure for food production, recreation, healthy lifestyles, and quality of life.
- Partnering with rural and environmental funders can leverage resources to help communities acquire, manage and steward land, and create or retain wealth.



## Lessons Learned

# QUESTIONS?

Mikki Sager  
The Conservation Fund

[msager@conservationfund.org](mailto:msager@conservationfund.org)  
919-949-5687

Thank you!





# Creating Community Resiliency through Rural Food Access Initiatives in NM

For Grantmakers In Health Webinar

July 15, 2015

By Farm to Table in New Mexico







# New Mexico

## 2 million people



22 Sovereign Nations

121,000 sq mi

17 people/ sq mi

\$23,700 per capita  
income

20% below poverty level





Navajo Nation-  
*1 hr trip to nearest  
grocery store*

Background Work:  
**2006-2009 NM's  
Rural Food Gap**  
-FTT & NM Food & Ag  
Policy Council

## Closing New Mexico's Food Gap: A report on food access in New Mexico



Submitted to  
Governor Richardson and  
the New Mexico State Legislature  
by the NM Food Gap Task Force  
November 30, 2008





New Mexico, United States

Change Background

Pr

USDA Food Access Research Atlas

> 10 miles to a grocery store

**Navajo Nation  
Low Income  
&  
Low Food  
Access**

10 full  
service  
grocery  
stores in  
Navajo  
Nation

**New Mexico  
Low Income  
&  
Low Food Access**



60mi

**Navajo Nation-**  
300,000 members-2015

**Diabetes** affecting NN-  
25,000 w/ Type 2  
75,000 pre-diabetic  
*-Indian Health Services*

**Navajo Nation**

PIH.org COPE Navajo article



Photo: Rebecca E. Rollins/Partners In Health

The Navajo, like many other American Indians and Alaska Natives, struggle with some of the worst health outcomes in the United States. Forty percent of Navajo Nation residents are obese, double the 20 percent rate among white Americans. Five

## U.S. Census Data: Navajo Nation and Poverty Line

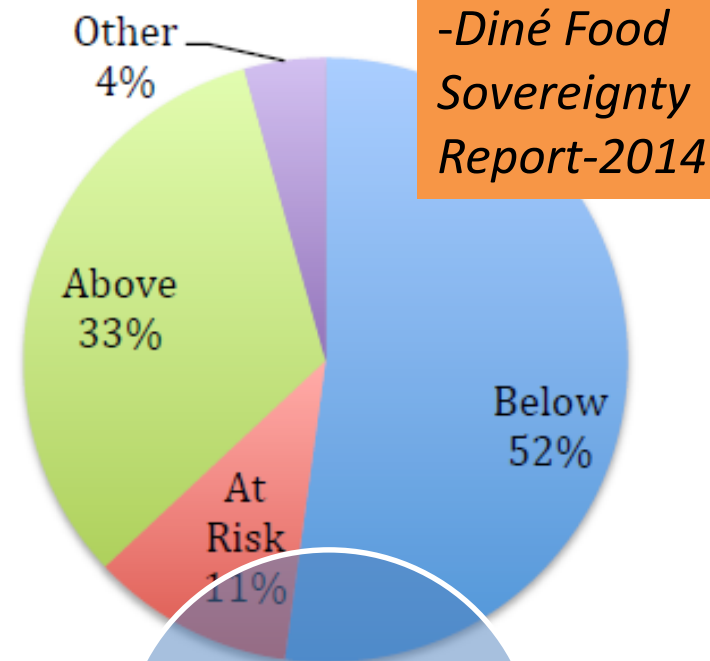
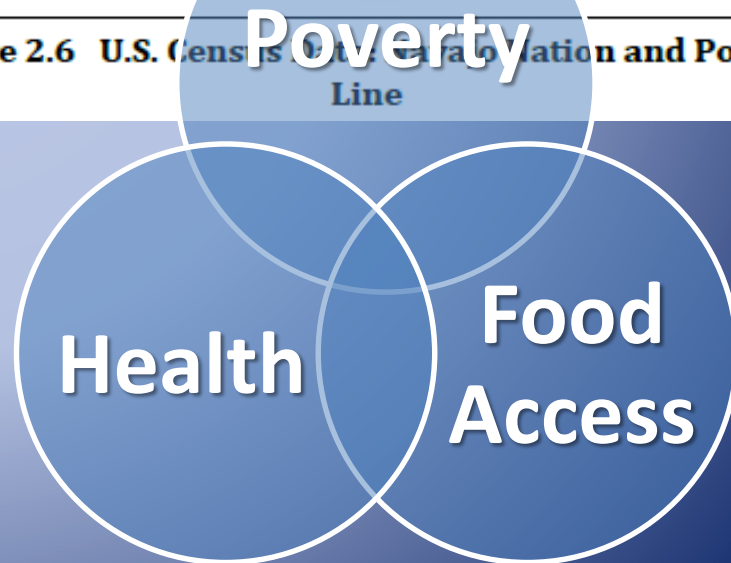


Figure 2.6 U.S. Census Data: Navajo Nation and Poverty Line







# Addressing Food Access Challenges from the ground, UP: Market approaches meet Lifeways





# Ancient Waters Farm

- La Madera, NM -

Get to know your  
**LOCAL Farmer!**

¿Conoce a tu  
granjero!

Name: Alcidas and Erin  
Ortigoza  
Farm: Ancient Waters-  
Granja:  
Size: about 10 acres  
Tamaño: cerca 10 acres  
Location: La Madera, NM

Main Crop: carrots, beets, zucchini, melons, cucumbers,  
lettuce, greens

Cultivos Principales: zanahorias, betabelles, calabacitas,  
melones, pepinos, lechuga y verduras.

Ancient Waters Farm is a small family farm in Northern NM where many different  
types of fruits and veggies grow. Ancient Waters Farms has been growing  
carrots, cucumbers and a variety of other fruits and vegetables for 2 years. You  
and your family can find these foods at local restaurants, farmers markets,  
grocery stores, and your school cafeteria!

Ancient Waters Farm es una granja  
que crecen varios tipos de frutas y verduras.  
Ancient Waters Farms ha estado cultivando  
zanahorias, pepinos, y una variedad  
de frutas y verduras por 2 años. Usted  
y su familia pueden encontrar estas cosas  
en restaurantes locales, mercados de  
granjeros, el supermercado, y también en la escuela.

The fresh fruits and vegetables you  
find at the communities of La Madera.

Las frutas y verduras frescas que están  
disponibles en las comunidades de La Madera.

Ancient Waters Farm has been growing  
school communities since 2015. By  
helping to ensure that folks across  
the state have access to fresh produce in the places they live.

Ancient Waters Farm han cultivado  
comunidades escolares desde 2015. Al  
ayudar a asegurar que la gente en  
todas las comunidades tenga acceso a  
productos frescos en los lugares donde viven.



LOVE LOCAL



## How It Works Program Components

Love Local: Produce of the Month is a  
farm to school local food promotion  
program which consists of three key  
elements essential to implementing an  
integrated and effective farm to school  
program:

- Purchasing seasonal, New Mexico  
grown foods to complement the  
National School Lunch Program, Fresh  
Fruit and Vegetable Tasting Program,  
or other nutrition and farm to school  
programs at your school.
- Utilizing promotional materials in the  
cafeteria, and school campus to  
promote your commitment to  
purchasing local foods and local  
farming in New Mexico.
- Aligning educational materials and  
curriculum offerings with classroom,  
garden, or after school lessons to  
teach students about healthy  
eating and farm to school.

To learn more please contact us:

Web:  
[www.farmtotablenm.org/](http://www.farmtotablenm.org/)  
[programs/farm-to-cafeteria/](http://programs/farm-to-cafeteria/)

Shauna Woodworth  
[shauna@farmtotablenm.org](mailto:shauna@farmtotablenm.org)  
Phone: 505-660-4267

Alena Palsano

## Farm to School

Farm to school supports healthy  
communities by offering students  
access to fresh and local foods as well  
as education opportunities such as  
tasting and cooking programs, school  
gardens, and farm field trips.

Children and families participating in  
farm to school are empowered to  
make informed food choices while  
strengthening the local economy by  
supporting local farming, contributing  
to student healthy communities across  
New Mexico.



Love Local is a farm to school program  
which integrates experiential learning  
with seasonal local food purchasing.

The program is an excellent way to  
introduce farm to school to your  
community, strengthen school gardens  
and teaching programs.

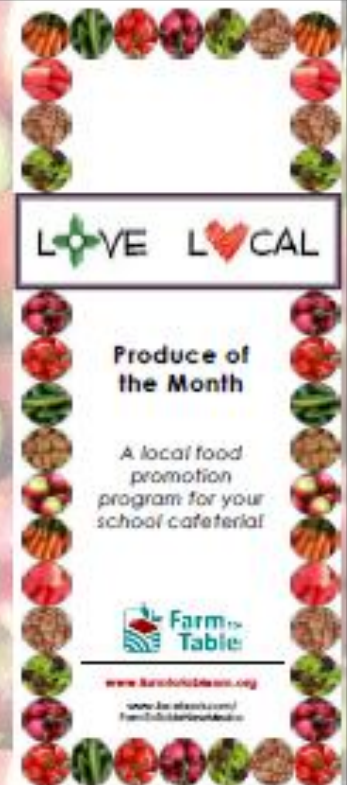
• The impact of local food  
eating in the cafeteria.

## SUCCESS STORIES FROM THE FIELD

New Mexico Guide to  
Business & Financial  
Resources  
—  
for Food System  
Entrepreneurs  
2011

For Farmers • Ranchers  
Value-Added Producers  
Processors • Distributors  
Retailers & Other  
Allied Enterprises

A PROJECT OF FARM TO TABLE



Farm to  
Restaurant



# Food Access Initiatives:

## Food Buying Clubs



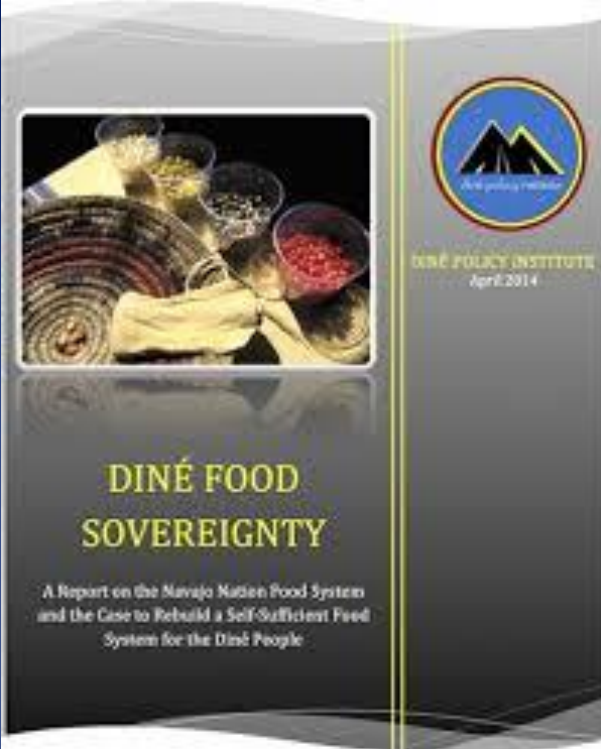
## Ojo Encino, Torreon, Counselor Chapters



## Farmers' Markets in Tribal Communities: Starting Up & Sustaining Success







2011-2014 Diné Policy Institute Report frames food insecurity, health disparities, and economic insecurity as legacies of ongoing US colonialism.

***Food  
Sovereignty  
beyond  
food access  
becomes the  
goal.***

2011-DCAA visits Chapters regarding policy opportunities to improve Navajo health & wellness:

***Propose junk food tax to fund wellness projects***

**You Are Invited!**



**Dine' Community Advocacy Alliance (DCAA) Gathering**


August 23, 2013  
Navajo Nation Museum  
Window Rock, AZ  
10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Come Join Us to learn about how to revitalize Hozhoogo lina' through Community Advocacy and Policy Making!


Information to be shared:

- \* WHAT IS COMMUNITY ADVOCACY
- \* HEALTHY DINE' NATION ACT OF 2013
- \* DCAA EFFORTS



[www.facebook.com/dineadvocacy](http://www.facebook.com/dineadvocacy)



COPE, Navajo Division of Health, Community Health Representatives develop food literacy, family-based wellness trainings -2009-current



COPE receives minigrants for Navajo/Zuni garden projects from Con Alma Health Foundation -*Healthy People, Healthy Places* program





April 2014  
DCAA/Diné Food  
Sovereignty Alliance wins  
Council support for junk  
food tax but vetoed by  
President; **amendment  
removes 5% sales tax on  
Fresh Fruits & Vegetables**

November 2014:  
**Signed 2% tax on junk  
foods to fund wellness  
projects in 110 Chapters**

May 2015  
Implemented tax changes  
Now designing Wellness  
Projects grant program

**2% tax  
estimated  
to raise  
\$1M  
annually**

Diné Traditional Knowledge on Food:

- People have connection to food. Origin of Diné existence
- K'é System: relationship and responsibility to all plants and animals
- Navajo Fundamental Laws and Natural Laws
- Spiritual Wellness tied to food
- Diné Lifeway: values and lessons related to food

Important Contributions for Food System Recommendations

Recommendations are focused on revitalizing traditional foods and traditional food knowledge through re-establishment of a self-sufficient food system and to increase access to healthy foods for the Diné People.

- Restoration of Hozho
- Sovereignty
- K'é
- Rebuilding capacity of Navajo growers, livestock owners, and food gatherers



IMPLICATIONS, STRATEGIES, and RECOMMENDATIONS (cont.)

- Economic capacity (profit) cannot be the only focus of food system work
- Consideration of environmental sustainability and ecological conservation
- Working within the context of your environment, indigenous foods
- Include community based knowledge in formal programming and policy solutions

For more information, see Diné Policy Institute's full Food Sovereignty report at:

<http://www.dinecollege.edu/institute/DPI/policy.php>

PO Box 848  
Tsaile, Arizona, 86556  
(928) 724 - 6945



Diné Food  
Sovereignty



Diné Policy Institute





# COPE receives CDC REACH grant, 2014 ~ \$1M over 3 yrs with coalition partners

Clinical teams , CHRs providing wellness trainings  
to families, prescribing FVRx



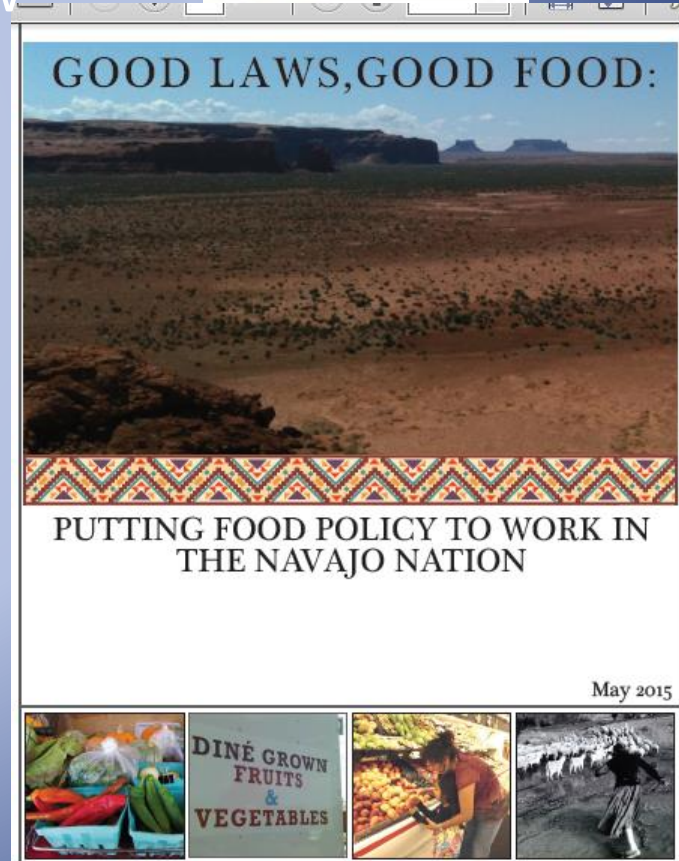
C-stores assessments , T&TA to implement new  
tax law and participate in FVRx

T&TA for Navajo growers to sell produce and  
Traditional Foods at C-stores, FVRx

Navajo Food Policy Toolkit created for Navajo  
groups to navigate food system challenges  
and advocate for change



NCHO youth leadership cohort promoting  
healthy living and community projects



# Insights from Food Access Coalition Work

Community-determined values & strategies are essential for defining food access/wellness approaches & outcomes with diverse public & private partners

Coalition partners must build trust to honestly dialogue about equitable use of Power & Resources for short-term & long-term goals & continue this dialogue as a practice

Each group, each sector, each person brings unique worldviews, initiatives, tools that can converge to create holistic changes in many lives: Respect each one & honor the ongoing process of learning about one another

Listen first; then determine the best you can contribute each moment, keep your word, reflect w/ others

# Recommendations for Grantmakers

## #1

Invest in *relationship development* among diverse, new & existing collaborative partners *while* investing in people to fully develop projects, policy upgrades, and *community-determined goals and processes*



# Recommendations for Grantmakers

## #2

Commit time & money to project partners *at least 5 years*:

- Get to know them and their work
- Collaborate w/ diverse grantmakers to fund holistic activities from ground, up & across lifeways and sectors.
- Commit to your respective funding domain while investing with a collaboration of grantmakers (public, private, donors); learn from one another's experience and from grantees in real time, not from interim/final reports

# Recommendations for Grantmakers

## #3

Consider if your foundation's interest bearing investments capitalize economic activities that negatively impact human and environment health, wellness & vitality

--If so, divest and become a greater force of transformation with grantees and their respective communities



Farm to Table

Pam Roy, Executive Director

Tawnya Laveta, Program Director

[www.farmtotablenm.org](http://www.farmtotablenm.org)

Phone: 505-473-1004



- More webinars on this topic?
- New topics you want to tackle or learn more about?
- Innovative work that you want to share?
- A question you want to pose to your colleagues?

Contact us at [\(heal\)@gih.org](mailto:(heal)@gih.org)