



Case Study

Healthy Food Happens Here

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Report by

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The California Center for Rural Policy at Cal Poly Humboldt is a research and policy center committed to informing policy, building community, and promoting the health and well-being of people and environments.

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Executive Summary

Accessing healthy and affordable foods can be challenging for rural populations. Many rural areas like Del Norte County and Tribal Lands (DNATL) lack food retailers and producers, and are considered food deserts. DNATL has one of the highest rates of food insecurity, poverty and childhood obesity in the state of California. Within the last decade (2010-2020), the DNATL Building Healthy Communities (BHC) Initiative and their community partners were able to establish structures to assure DNATL residents can have access to healthy, organic, locally produced, and nutritious food.

This exploratory case study applies a retrospective qualitative methodology to describe the effectiveness of a community driven campaign, and examines how policy makers and grant funders can better support rural and remote communities to plan and implement food systems change.

The BHC Food Initiative in DNATL was a community-wide effort to increase access to healthy food in one of the most rural, food-insecure communities in the state of California. The overarching goal of the Food Initiative was to ensure that all DNATL families have

access to healthy, culturally appropriate foods by:

- 01 Addressing food insecurity and increasing access to fresh vegetables and fruits.
- 02 Strengthening and supporting the local food economy.
- 03 Training youth to participate in the local food economy.
- 04 Focusing on schools as a central site for children to access nutritious food.
- 05 Shifting eating habits through education and access to nutritious and culturally appropriate foods.
- 06 Building a regional emergency food response network.

During the year 2020, the California Center for Rural Policy (CCRP) reviewed and analyzed 10 years' worth of qualitative and quantitative data collected from BHC DNATL participants, community members, and CCRP researchers. In addition to an archival analysis, CCRP also conducted key informant interviews with current and former participants of the DNATL BHC Food Initiative.

Findings and Policy Recommendations

Research and Data Driven Change

- ▶ **Finding 1:** It is critical to have current/updated data available to better understand systemic issues instead of shifting blame on parents and children.
- ▶ **Finding 2:** It is important to build local capacity around data literacy. Data literacy refers to the ability to read, understand, apply, create, and communicate data as information.

Collaboration and Partnerships

- ▶ **Finding 3:** Leveraging the expertise and knowledge of community partners increased capital, capacity, and impact in the community.
- ▶ **Finding 4:** Youth in the community played a critical role in advancing access to healthy food in schools.
- ▶ **Finding 5:** Connecting local farmers to CalFresh beneficiaries increased affordability/accessibility to local produce while supporting the local economy.
- ▶ **Finding 6:** Creating a community-led food council led to the expansion of funding for improving DNATL food systems and the establishment of critical partnerships.
- ▶ **Finding 7:** The collaboration between the DNATL Community Food Council, the Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation, and local schools led to the establishment of school and community gardens and food forests in some of the most food insecure areas in DNATL.

Cultural Competency, Racial Equity, and Inclusion

- ▶ **Finding 8:** Racial equity and inclusion needs to be prioritized in food work. Food equity/advocacy work requires local/community ownership and cultural competency.
- ▶ **Finding 9:** One of the main barriers to eating healthy foods is not knowing how to grow, prepare, or cook healthy food.
- ▶ **Finding 10:** The food forest site at the College of the Redwoods is successful for its visibility, accessibility, and the dynamic ways it serves the community.
- ▶ **Finding 11:** Conducting empathy research was critical to understand the barriers residents experience in accessing healthy foods.
- ▶ **Finding 12:** The DNATL BHC Food Initiative applied the results from the empathy research project to create feasible and culturally appropriate solutions towards food insecurity.

Current Work/Future Vision of DNATL Food System

- ▶ **Finding 13:** Resilient rural food systems can benefit from long-term strategies that support food recovery programs and mechanisms to make locally grown food accessible to local residents.
- ▶ **Finding 14:** It is important to create opportunities for youth to interact and participate in the local agricultural/food system as well as advocate for policy changes that support healthy foods in schools.

The following are policy recommendations for increasing access to healthy foods and food security rates in marginalized, rural and remote communities like DNATL.

1

Create a strategic planning process to ensure sustainable progress on food systems work in DNATL.

2

Continue to expand regionally and strengthen regional networks/partnerships.

3

Promote strategies and policies to help people grow their own healthy foods to promote self-sufficiency and decentralization.

4

Replicate the steps that the community took to achieve the policy victories from the first ten years.

5

Create a policy toolkit for local partners (schools, Tribes, non-profits) that highlights local successes and provides sample policies and tools to help further efforts to increase access to healthy foods.

6

Connect the Ancestral Guard Program (Youth-led) to Redwood Voice to recognize and highlight youth leadership and efforts in DNATL.

7

Continue to expand the Agriculture Entrepreneurship Program as part of the Youth Training Academy.

8

Create more food access sites in areas that are considered food deserts. (Refer to Figures 18 and 19).

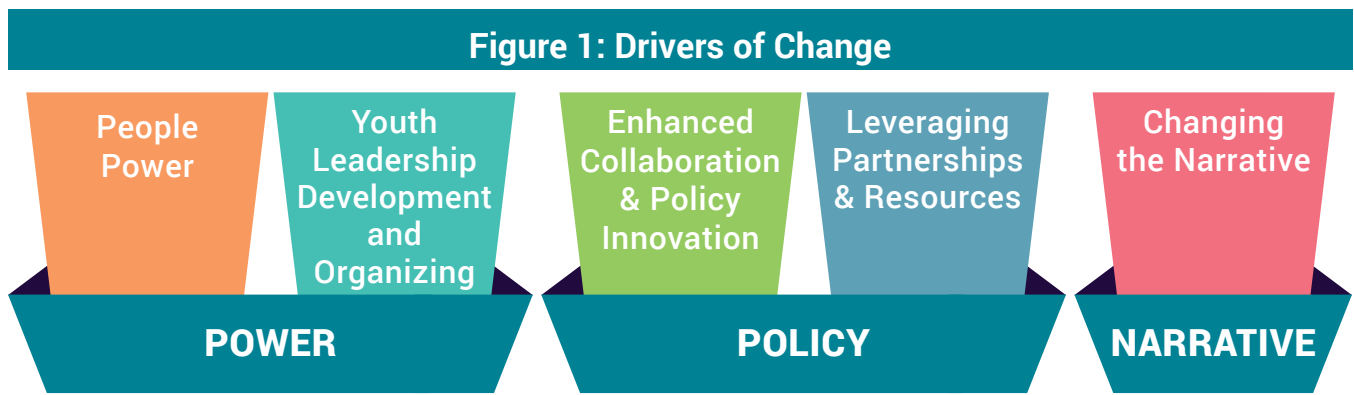
Introduction

Accessing healthy and affordable foods can be challenging for rural populations. Many rural areas like Del Norte County and Tribal Lands (DNATL) lack food retailers and producers, and are considered food deserts. DNATL has one of the highest rates of food insecurity, poverty, and childhood obesity in the state of California.

Within the last decade (2010-2020), community members were able to establish structures and partnerships to ensure that residents can have access to healthy, locally produced food. One of the primary goals of The California Endowment's (TCE) Building Healthy Communities (BHC) Initiative was

to support youth and future generations to reduce childhood obesity, malnutrition, and food insecurity among families living in food deserts. There were no concrete plans or methods on how to achieve the goals of BHC. It was up to each of the 14 BHC grantees/communities to manage large sums of funding and navigate ways to create long-lasting system change in ten years.

Within the BHC theory of change, the drivers of change are rooted in power, policy, and narrative. Figure 1 is a diagram showing the drivers of change identified by TCE. The drivers of change guided the DNATL BHC Food Initiative approach.



The overarching goal of the DNATL BHC Food Initiative was to ensure that all DNATL families have access to healthy, culturally appropriate foods by:

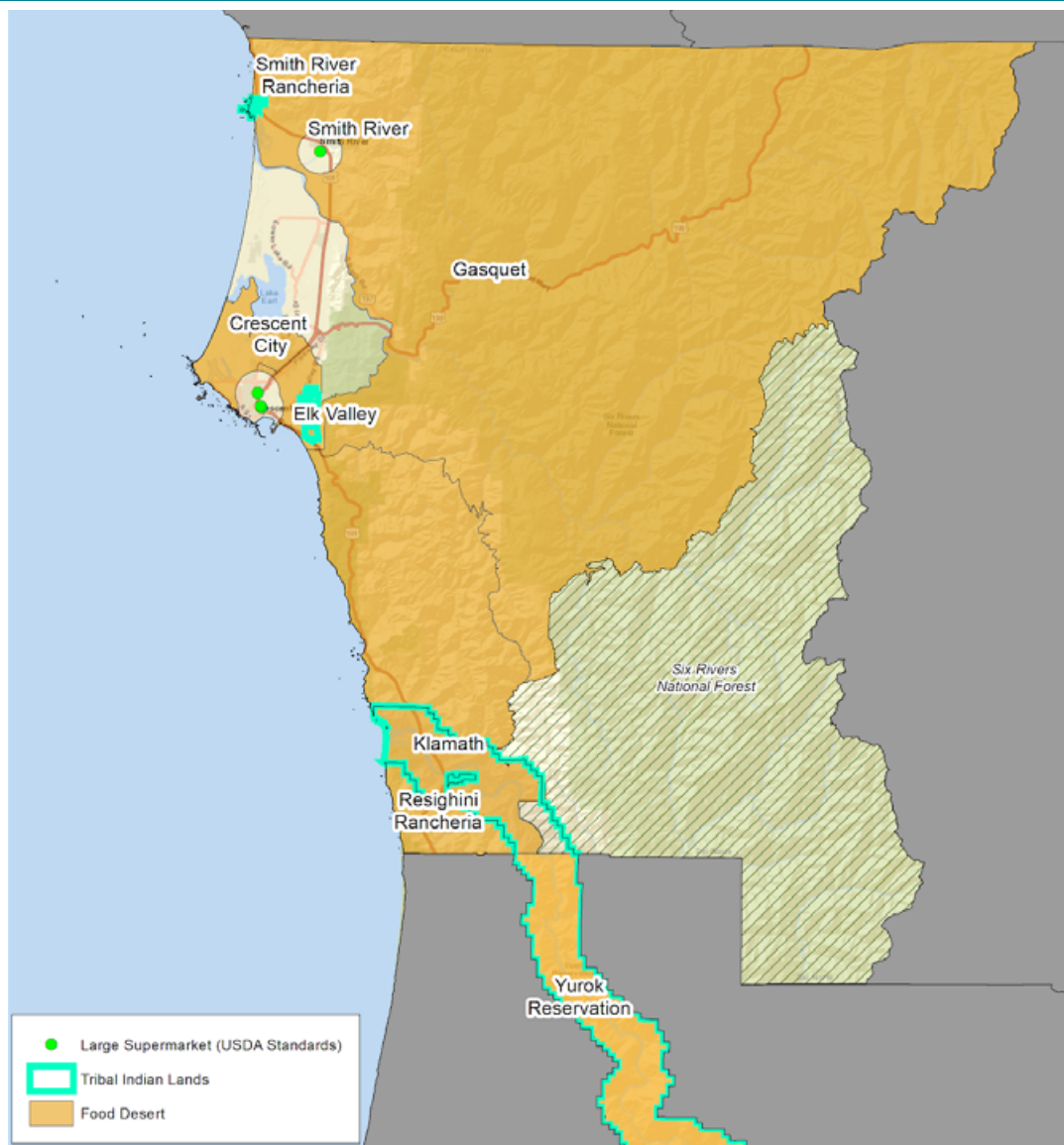
- 1 Addressing food insecurity and increasing access to fresh vegetables and fruit.
- 2 Strengthening and supporting the local food economy.
- 3 Training youth to participate in the local food economy.
- 4 Focusing on schools as a central site for children to access nutritious food.
- 5 Shifting eating habits through education and access to nutritious and culturally appropriate foods.
- 6 Building a regional emergency food response network.

Background

The majority of DNATL is considered a food desert. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) uses the following criteria to determine if a region is classified as a food desert:

- 1 A census block with at least 20% of residents living in poverty.
- 2 Must be at least a mile away from a large grocery store.
- 3 USDA defines a large grocery store as a supermarket that profits about 2 million dollars annually.

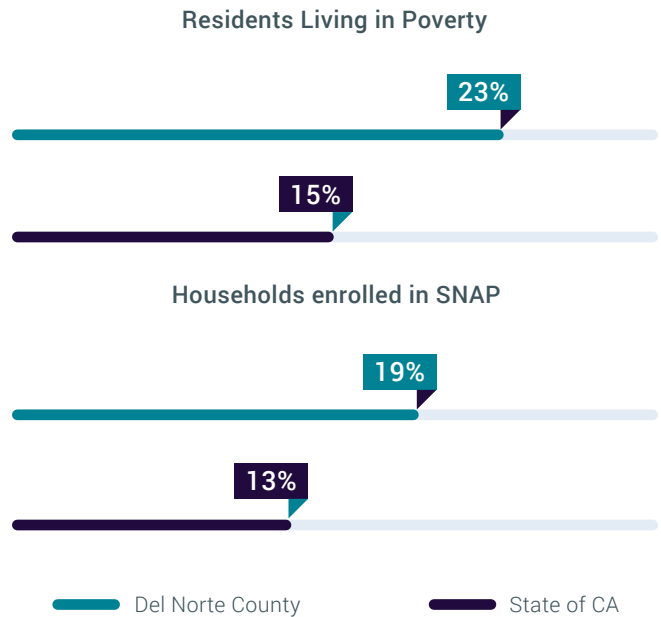
Figure 2: Food Deserts in DNATL 2016



Food insecurity is defined as the limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or limited uncertain ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways. The USDA defines the level of food insecurity based on severity. These categories include high food security, marginal food security, low food security, and very low food security. The percentages of food insecurity of a region are based on the number of households enrolled in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance (SNAP) program, which is referred to as CalFresh or food stamps in California. USDA administers SNAP to help guarantee low income households and individuals access to a basic level of nutrition. Figure 3 compares the percentage of households enrolled in SNAP and residents living in poverty in Del Norte County compared to the state of California.

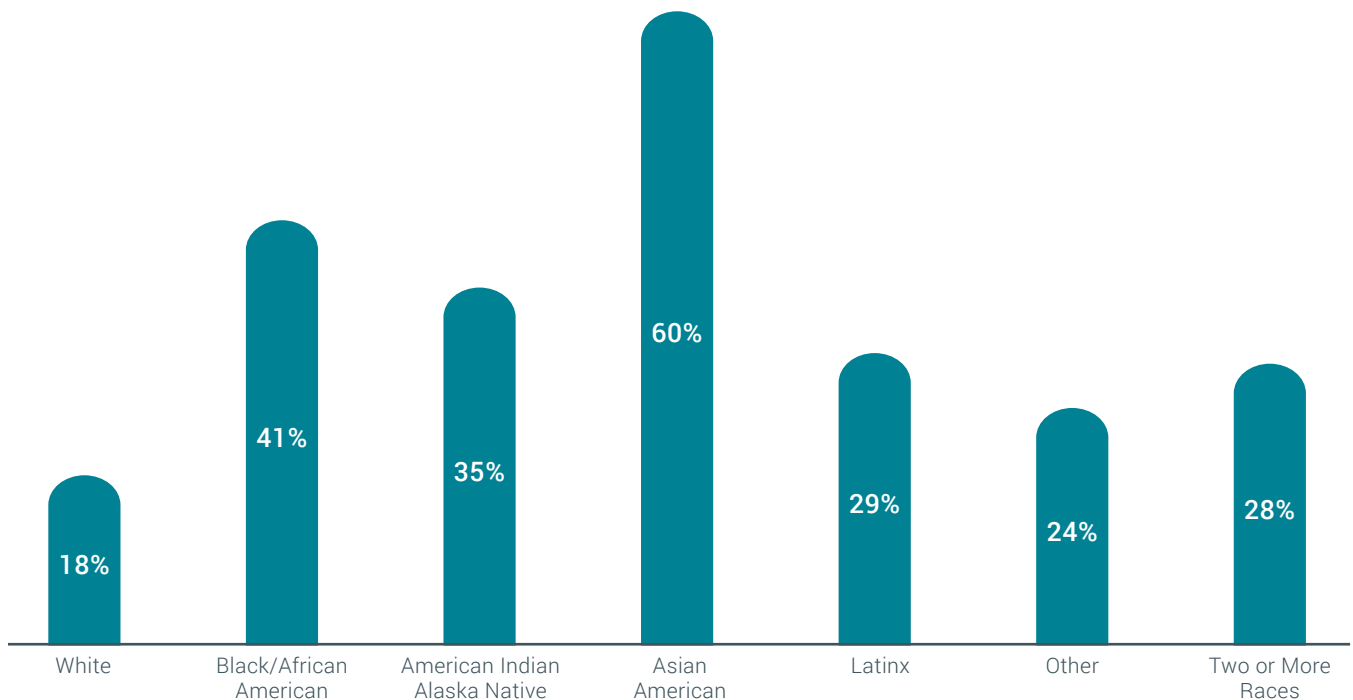
Del Norte County has one of the highest percentages of residents living in poverty in the state of California. In DNATL, people of color disproportionately live below the poverty line compared to residents who identify as white. Figure 4 demonstrates the demographics of DNATL residents who live in poverty.

Figure 3: The Percent of Residents Living in Poverty Enrolled in SNAP (2019)



Source: CCRP 2019 & U.S Census 2018 ACS estimates

Figure 4: Percent of Residents Living Below the Poverty Line by Race/Ethnicity (2018)



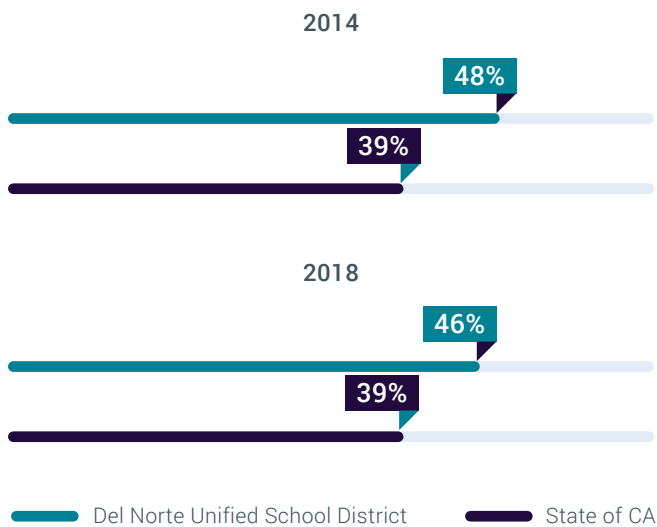
Source: CCRP 2019 & U.S Census 2018 ACS estimates

In 2013, the California Center for Rural Policy (CCRP) at Cal Poly Humboldt conducted a childhood obesity assessment to provide some baseline information about childhood obesity in Del Norte County. CCRP's BMI assessment raised awareness of the prevalence of childhood obesity in DNATL. CCRP's analysis revealed that the prevalence of overweight and obesity among students in DNATL was disproportionately higher than the State of CA (CCRP, 2013). In 2013, about half of the student population from Grades K – 9 were considered overweight or obese.

According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), childhood obesity is one of the most pressing public health issues (CDC, 2019). In addition to health problems, overweight and obese school-aged children are more likely to be victims or perpetrators of bullying, have a greater risk for school absenteeism, and lower grade point averages compared to their healthy-weight peers.

Figure 5 illustrates the percentage of students who were overweight or obese in the Del Norte Unified School District (DNUSD) compared to the state of California.

Figure 5: Percent of Students Grade 5-9 who were Overweight or Obese (2014 and 2018)

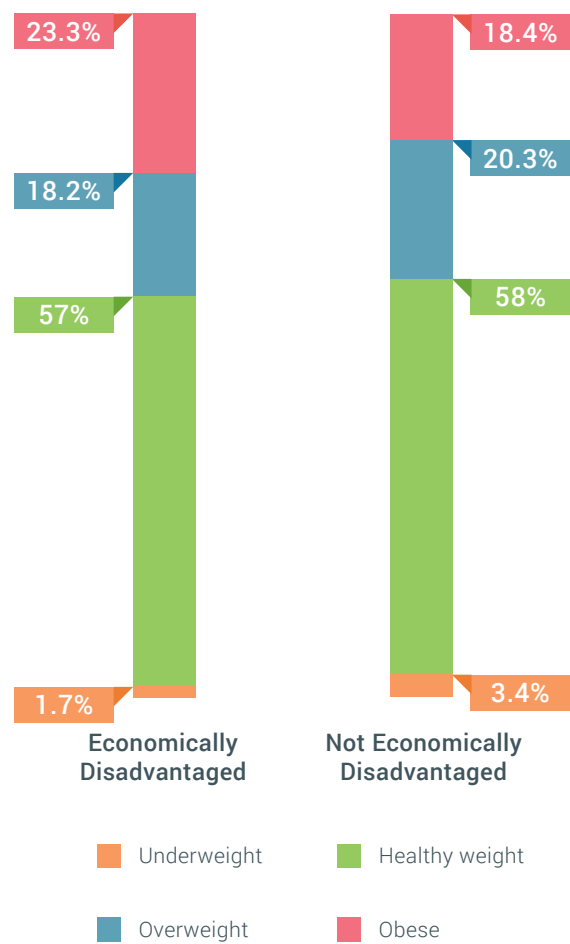


Source: Kidsdata.org

One may assume that obesity is related to the overconsumption of food and nutrition. However, the data indicates that communities with higher rates of poverty, food insecurity, and malnutrition also experience higher rates of obesity. In fact, one of the main causes of obesity is the over-dependence on highly processed unhealthy food (CDC, 2019).

In 2016, childhood obesity was more prevalent in economically disadvantaged DNATL students when compared to DNATL students who are not economically disadvantaged. Figure 6 demonstrates the percentage of students living in poverty who are overweight/obese compared to students who are not economically disadvantaged.

Figure 6: Weight Category Distribution by Economic Status



Source: CCRP, 2016

Poverty, food insecurity, and poor access to supermarkets with healthy affordable foods can cause families to consume foods that are inexpensive with high calories and low nutritional value. Food deserts have convenience stores, fast food chains, and gas stations that provide fringe food. Fringe food refers to cheap, highly processed, easy to prepare and non-nutritious food. Low-income residents living in food deserts tend to rely on fringe food because it is available, affordable, and convenient.

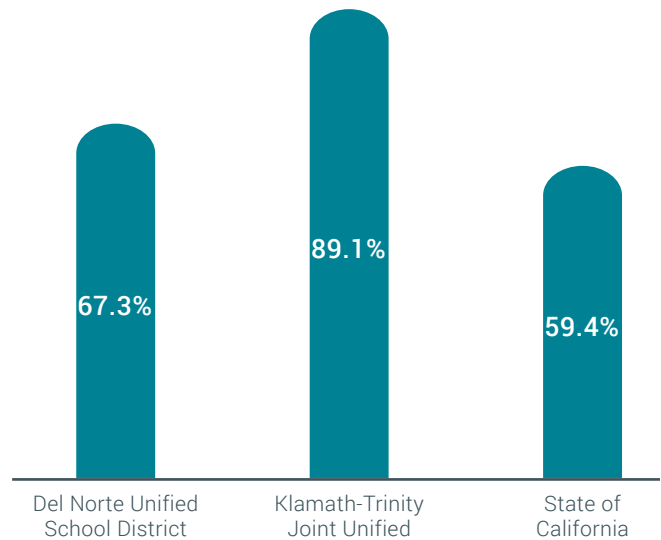
The travel, time, and monetary cost of finding healthy food makes fringe food preferable and sometimes the only option. For generations, many DNATL residents have not been able to afford to buy or access healthy food, and have been used to depending on fringe food instead.

Food in Schools

The school setting provides multiple opportunities for interventions designed to prevent and reduce childhood obesity. In addition, schools located in food deserts serving low-income students have the opportunity to decrease the risk of food insecurity by providing free healthy nutritious meals to students. Many DNATL students rely on school meals as their most consistent source of nutritional food. School meals are critical in addressing food insecurity because children are in school for about 6-7 hours a day for the majority of the year.

The Free/Reduced Priced Meals Program (FRPM) data indicates how many students are food insecure and living in poverty. Low-income children are eligible to receive free or reduced-price meals at school. During the 2017-2018 school year, almost 7 out of 10 (67.3%) students attending Del Norte County public schools were enrolled in the FRPM program (CA Dept. of Education). In Klamath CA, about 83% of Margaret Keating students were enrolled in FRPM (CCRP, 2018). Figure 7 demonstrates the percentage of students from DNATL enrolled in FRPM compared to the state of California.

Figure 7: Percent of Students Enrolled in FRPM (2018)



Source: California Department of Education 2018

School meals do not always provide the best quality of food. School meals are uniform across the nation with a certain criterion on looks, taste, salt, and fat content. However, the guidelines for the nutritional value of school meals may not meet the needs of children's health.

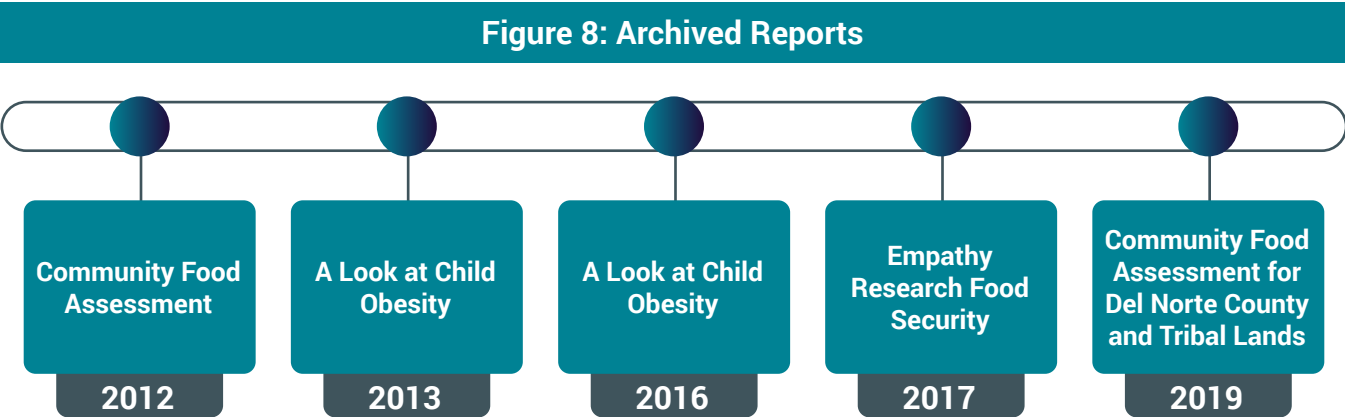
Every public school receives funding for food but the majority of the funding goes to food processing companies that convert food into highly processed nutritionally deficient food. For example, ketchup is considered a vegetable, cheese and tomatoes are converted to frozen pizzas, chicken and potatoes become deep-fried chicken nuggets and fries, and fruits become juice. Maintaining a kitchen or kitchen staff requires funding, therefore highly-processed food becomes the most affordable and practical option.

Methods

This exploratory case study applies a retrospective qualitative methodology and archival analysis to describe the effectiveness of a community-driven campaign and examine how policymakers and grant funders can better support families and residents living in remote, rural food deserts.

Since 2010, CCRP has been collaborating with the DNATL BHC Food Initiative by conducting evaluations and supporting community-led research projects. During 2020, CCRP reviewed and analyzed 10 years' worth of qualitative and quantitative data collected from the DNATL BHC Food Initiative leaders and community members.

Figure 8 below represents the reports produced by the BHC Food Initiative and CCRP:



In addition to an archival analysis, CCRP also conducted key informant interviews with current and former participants of the DNATL BHC Food Initiative.

Key informant interviews were conducted from 2019 to 2021. CCRP conducted key informant interviews after the ten year period to allow participants to reflect on the past ten years, their experiences and the lessons learned.

Discussion of Findings

Research and Data Driven Change

Finding 1: It is critical to have current/updated data available to better understand systemic issues instead of shifting blame on parents and children.

At the beginning of the DNATL BHC Initiative, a series of research studies helped to set the stage for future work of the BHC Food Initiative. Results from these studies motivated community partners and Initiative staff to work together to address the problem of childhood obesity in DNATL.

Regarding the issue of childhood obesity, blaming the child or the family for the problem would have been counterproductive. CCRP's BMI assessment revealed that children living in poverty with food insecurity had higher rates of childhood obesity. *(Please see the background section for statistics from 2013 to 2018).*

From 2010-2011, TCE also set out to gather data on the strengths and challenges of area schools so community members could have an informed conversation about youth and the school system. The Center for Effective Philanthropy conducted a Youth Truth survey among 164 high schools across the country. In DNATL, all four high schools were included in the survey with a total of 1,415 DNATL students.

“What we needed was a common understanding of current conditions in schools...You’d walk into a coffee shop and people would say the school system is failing. You would ask ‘What about the system failing?’ But they didn’t know. Nobody could really talk about it.”-Community Member

The student survey revealed that almost half of DNATL's students (46%) did not eat the lunch provided at their school on a regular basis. About 36% of these students mentioned that they did not

eat the lunch provided at their schools because they did not like the taste, and about 25% of students prefer to get healthy food off school property/campus. The results of CCRP's evaluation efforts and the Youth Truth Survey created a critical shift from:



Understanding the systemic issues that played a role in high obesity rates helped community partners identify multiple strategies to address childhood obesity. The DNATL BHC Food Initiative was also able to review existing literature about effective strategies to reduce childhood obesity. For example, the World Health Organization (WHO) recommends the following to reduce or prevent childhood overweight and obesity:

- Increase consumption of fruits and vegetables (as well as legumes, whole grains, and nuts).
- Limit the intake of sugars, saturated fats, and processed foods with little or no nutritional value.
- Increase physical activity to at least 60 minutes a day.

Figure 9: BHC River of Indicators

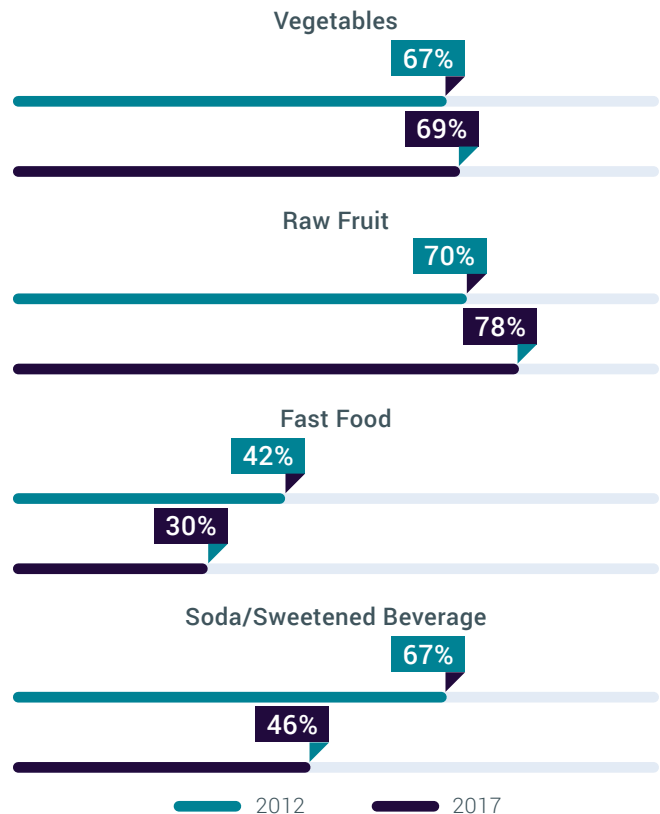


The five data indicators used to track their progress towards reducing childhood obesity included:

- 1 Fruit/vegetable consumption levels
- 2 Fast Food and/or soda/sugary drink consumption
- 3 Food insecurity rates
- 4 Youth BMI rates
- 5 Youth physical activity and screen time

Out of the five indicators in Figure 9, the most significant shift was the percentage of students consuming fast food and soda/sugary drinks. Figure 10 demonstrates student (Grade 9-11) consumption habits. From 2011 to 2017, there has been a significant decrease in consuming fast food and soda or sugary drinks. In addition, there has been a slight increase in consumption of raw vegetables and fruits.

Figure 10: What Students Consumed in the Past 24 Hours



Source: CA Healthy Kids Survey 2011-12 and 2015-17.

Community Members Conduct Research at Smith River Elementary

Finding 2: It is important to build local capacity around data literacy. Data literacy refers to the ability to read, understand, apply, create, and communicate data as information.

In 2010, the DNATL BHC Initiative set out to build community capacity around data literacy.

Data literacy refers to the ability to read, understand, apply, create, and communicate data as information.

Initiative members often facilitated meetings to share data insights with community members,

educators, and parents. Being data literate includes the ability to recognize the following:

- The issue/problem (Example: childhood obesity)
- Refusing to share or ignoring population data does more harm than good to the participants the data represents
- The systemic barriers contributing to the issue (Example: poverty, food insecurity, lack of nutritional food in schools)
- Something can be done about it on a community level

This story illustrates the impact of shifting from having no data to becoming data literate.

“The final stage of data awareness: We have a problem and can do something about it, and also what else do we not understand so we can do something about it?”

-Community Member

Initially, when BHC staff talked to school staff about healthy foods at school, school staff said that

“...salad bars will be too expensive and they will lead to waste because students do not eat salads.”

-Community Member

data from community-based research and secondary data revealed that there was a disconnect between what partners assumed students prefer to eat and what students said they wanted to eat (Youth Truth Survey 2012 & CCRP BMI Assessment 2013).

The unexpected report results prompted the formation of the Children’s Health Collaborative (CHC). The CHC consisted of parents, educators, and physicians. The CHC was a community-based

organization founded on the conviction that all students should have access to wholesome, healthy food options.

“People were furious about the data and they wanted answers.”

-Community Member

In 2011, the CHC conducted research with the Del Norte Unified School District (DNUSD) about the food in local schools. During the research project, CHC members visited Smith River Elementary to observe and learn about the food system in place in the school. To their surprise, the school had a salad bar and a hot meal option for students.

“The parents watched kids eating from the salad bar and going for healthier choices.”

-Community Member

This observation inspired a collaboration between the Director of Nutrition for Del Norte Unified School District and the DNATL BHC Food Initiative.

Collaboration and Partnerships

Finding 3: Leveraging the expertise and knowledge of community partners increased capital, capacity, and impact in the community.

Opening Salad Bars and Healthy Food Access to DNATL Schools

The DNATL BHC Food Initiative worked closely with the school district’s Nutrition Director to expand the school food program and improve nutrition by building local capacity for schools to offer bulk meals made from scratch and salad bars. The main barrier was that the majority of the schools were used to serving prepackaged food and did not have the capacity or the equipment necessary to sustain a salad bar or to do scratch bulk cooking.

Funding was provided to DNUSD schools to cover the costs of salad bars and equipment upgrades so that hot meals could be prepared from scratch. From 2011-2012, TCE provided small grants to fund kitchen renovations for salad bars. In addition, Home Depot donated appliances and the CHC held fundraisers for salad bars.

The Nutrition Director also connected schools to the *Let’s Move Salad Bars to School* nationwide initiative. The *Let’s Move Salad Bars to School* initiative’s goal was to increase children’s access and consumption

of fresh fruits and vegetables by donating salad bars to schools nationwide. The purchase of salad bars helped convince the school board to approve the expansion of staff for school cafeterias. As one community partner indicated, “BHC inspired the work. Now it is self-sustaining. They just needed a kick start.”

To ensure school staff had the capacity to do bulk cooking from scratch, in 2011 BHC funded training in two schools for scratch-bulk cooking with a professional chef. In 2012, the DNUSD Food Service staff worked with Sutter Coast Hospital’s chef to learn how to create hot meals from scratch. In 2013, TCE small grants continued to fund minor infrastructure needs for scratch bulk cooking.

In 2013, DNUSD leaders continued to find ways to sustain the changes they made to improve school nutrition. DNUSD added Ocean Air Farms as a local food vendor and connected with the *California Thursday Program*.

The *California Thursday Program* is a collaboration between the Center for Ecoliteracy and public school districts that allow schools to serve healthy, freshly prepared school meals made from food grown in California. Figure 11 below demonstrates the student population, FRMP rates and the meals served through the California Thursday Program for each school district in DNATL.

Figure 11. CA Thursday Program Meals Served by School

	Student Population	Students Enrolled in FRPM (2019-20)	Annual Meals Served As of 2020	Summer Meals As of 2020
Klamath-Trinity Joint Unified	999	76.2%	196,003	0
Del Norte Unified	3,679	65.8%	593,901	36,498

Source: <https://www.californiafoodforcaliforniakids.org/california-thursdays>

Figure 12: Community Change Timeline: Improving School Meals in DNATL



Drivers of change

- Raising Profile/ Changing the Narrative
- Collaborative efficacy
- Youth/People power
- Leveraging partners
- Policy change
- Moving the needle
- Findings results

Finding 4: Youth in the community played a critical role in advancing access to healthy food in schools.

Sunset High Students and BHC (2014): Youth Organizing for Healthier Schools

In 2014, Sunset High students participated in a listening campaign spearheaded by a community organizer from the True North Organizing Network. The purpose of the listening campaign was to determine what students wanted to change. Students were frustrated by the pre-packaged and processed food options and that fresh fruit and vegetables were only available once a week. Students passionate about changing school lunches recruited their friends, and those friends recruited their friends. Shortly after, the students planned an all-student assembly, and that's where the Student Organizing Committee was born.



When the Student Organizing Committee first formed, their school lunches were unhealthy due to failing to change/update a policy after a major transformation of the school's infrastructure. Sunset High used to be more of a drop-in center without a set schedule, which offered snacks for students who happened to be there during lunchtime. Over the years the school adopted a set schedule giving it more of an informal public high school environment, but not all necessary changes were made to update the school lunch program.

The Sunset High Student Organizing Committee decided that talking to experts was the best way to make a plan for accessing healthier foods and lunches. Students had the opportunity to meet with community members such as a pediatrician, a school superintendent, and the school district's head of nutrition. Students had the opportunity to learn

that malnutrition and other adverse health impacts are the results of consuming too much processed, unhealthy foods.

The students realized that some community members had no idea about the unhealthy foods being served at Sunset High. Students suggested that healthy food was not prioritized due to lack of awareness. The students also learned the business aspect of school lunches such as USDA reimbursements, unions, food distribution, and food safety laws. Youth figured out that if they could give up the unpopular frozen pizzas and hamburgers, the school district could add fresh fruits and vegetables without breaking the budget. In 2014, the students came up with the following four requests:



- 01 A hot entree and salad bar 3 days a week
- 02 Keep the spicy chicken sandwich once a week
- 03 Implement these changes by May 21st
- 04 Have a follow-up meeting with the deputy superintendent in June

The Student Organizing Committee hosted a meeting at their school and invited teachers, parents, policymakers, community members, and other students. Students gave speeches and testimonies, offered solutions, and held the primary policymaker in the room accountable by requesting their four policy objectives. As a result of their efforts, the four policy requests were granted.

The change began about a week after the meeting, but the story did not stop there.



Students continued to navigate through implementation issues and sustain policy changes. They learned the vital lesson that change does not last with a simple yes or no response; instead, the change is a process that must be continually tweaked, modified, and reworked.

The Student Organizing Committee did not just end with healthier lunches. At Sunset High, the committee continues to fight for a more beneficial school. Within the last decade, students upgraded their gym/weight room and abolished styrofoam trays.

Below is a list of youth-driven food projects that led to policy changes and a major impact for youth in DNATL:

- Local Youth Grant \$11,000
- Sunset High Weight Room Upgrade
- Healthier Lunches at Sunset High
- Abolished Styrofoam Trays from their Cafeterias
- Youth Driven Policy to bring in Food Trucks

Finding 5: Connecting local farmers to CalFresh beneficiaries increased affordability/accessibility to local produce while supporting the local economy.

Establishing an Equitable and Inclusive Farmers Market

The sustainable “Go Local” food movement has been gaining popularity for a couple of decades, challenging American consumers to rethink where their food comes from and encouraging people to eat local and grow their own food. At the same time, the movement is primarily accessible for families who can afford the high costs of local produce at organic food stores or farmer markets, and/or have the means to grow their own food. The sustainable local food movement often neglects the needs of low-income and diverse communities.

Local farmers’ prices are often higher than the products sold at chain grocery stores. This struggle creates an equity gap for those who can afford to purchase local products and those who can’t. Prior to the DNATL BHC Food Initiative, the Farmers Market had low attendance and participation. Low participation levels at the Farmers Market left many vendors pondering if their engagement was even worth it.

“It wasn’t that residents were uninterested in the opportunity to receive healthy local organic food, it was that they could not afford it.”



Connecting local farmers to CalFresh beneficiaries increased food security while also supporting the local economy. Since 2010, CalFresh (commonly known as food stamps or EBT) participants have been able to use their EBT cards at local Farmers Markets. These programs allow low-income consumers to be part of the community event and build producer-to-consumer relationships that direct markets. At the beginning of the DNATL BHC Food Initiative, the community (vendors and residents alike) were not aware that people could use those benefits at the Farmers Markets.

The DNATL BHC Food Initiative brought farmers and community members together to create capacity, support, and establish an inclusive and equitable Farmers Market. In 2011, the Crescent City Saturday Farmers Market broadly advertised its ability to accept CalFresh and even had funds to provide CalFresh users with a Market Match. With a gift of \$2,000 in funds from Sutter Coast Hospital, the market manager’s booth was able to offer an additional \$5 in market tokens when CalFresh users swiped their EBT card for \$10. In other words, for every \$10 of their CalFresh benefits used, shoppers were able to purchase \$15 worth of farmers’ market produce.

The additional advertising and outreach to spread the word to CalFresh participants was made possible from a grant collaboration between Rural Human Services and Community Assistance Network. Del Norte Department of Health and Human Services, which administers CalFresh, cooperated closely with the organizations by handing out information about the Farmers Market programs to all newly enrolled and renewing CalFresh recipients.



Finding 6: Creating a community-led food council led to the expansion of funding for improving DNATL food systems and the establishment of critical partnerships.

The DNATL Community Food Council

It is important to not solely rely on federal food service organizations to feed families living in poverty. Solutions must be grass roots, community owned, and collaborative with existing services. Food service organizations in some of the most food insecure communities were overwhelmed and underfunded. Local food service organizations often struggle to maintain funding and support. Virtually all local organizations that provide food services struggled with two major issues: lack of funding and limited staff/volunteer support. Some local food security organizations operate at a loss, while others risk being scrapped entirely.

In 2011, the DNATL BHC Food Initiative created the DNATL Community Food Council. The DNATL

Community Food Council is a group of individual residents and agency representatives who are working together to build a local food system that provides healthy, culturally appropriate food to all families in DNATL by:

- 1 Addressing food insecurity and increasing access to fresh fruits and vegetables**
- 2 Strengthening and supporting the local food economy**
- 3 Shifting eating habits through education and access to nutritious and culturally appropriate foods**

The DNATL Community Food Council brought in over \$500,000 in USDA funding and \$250,000 in State funding for food-related projects. Below are the accomplishments of the DNATL Community Food Council from 2010 to 2020:

Community Outreach & Education

- ▶ Hosted over 50 cooking/gardening DIY classes and workshops hosted throughout DNATL
- ▶ Hosted several conferences and events including a 2-day NorCal convening of the California Food Policy Council, as well as a conference on community gardens with the Del Norte Open Door Community Health Center
- ▶ Created a holiday event centered around celebrating local food producers
- ▶ Helped the Harvest of the Month program gain long-term funding support
- ▶ Implemented the Rethink Your Drink Campaign throughout DNATL
- ▶ Facilitated a Farm Camp
- ▶ Srtaa~Shvm (hii) Mvlh Ghee-saa-ghit-na' Good Food Makes Us All Healthy (food forest/community garden sites)
- ▶ School mini gardens located in 9 DNATL schools

Local Food - Economic Development

- ▶ Secured grant funding for Crescent City Farmers Market and Downtown Farmers Market to participate in the statewide Market Match program
- ▶ Secured grant funding from the USDA Local Food Promotion Program for Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation to explore agriculture enterprise options
- ▶ Established a "Go Local" campaign to promote local food producers
- ▶ Hosted a Del Norte farm tour for food and agriculture representatives from Oregon and Humboldt County
- ▶ Provided a pathway of educational opportunities through the Youth Training Academy
- ▶ Started a Farm and Food Academy
- ▶ Started the DNATL Food Recovery Program to work with local producers and rescued over 70,000 pounds of food in a year

Food Insecurity

- ▶ Conducted 25 empathy interviews to gain a better understanding of the experience of food insecurity in Del Norte and developed 6 prototype solutions from the interview findings
- ▶ Received a Community Development Block Grant to open a choice food pantry at the Family Resource Center of the Redwoods
- ▶ Large expansion of Seamless Summer Meal program
- ▶ Won the USDA's "Summer Sunshine" award for the Western Region of the US two years in a row
- ▶ Created and/or provided funding support to 15 school gardens, 5 community gardens, and 4 food forests in DNATL
- ▶ Home Gardens installation program created in partnership with Open Door Community Health Center
- ▶ DNATL Food Recovery Program - Rescued over 70,000 pounds of food in one year
- ▶ Seamless Meal - Delivery of School Meals to DNATL youth during the Summer at 14 sites
- ▶ Formed Partnership with the Yurok Food Sovereignty Department

DNATL Community Food Council partners include:

- ▶ Family Resource Center of the Redwoods
- ▶ First 5 Del Norte
- ▶ Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation
- ▶ Del Norte County Unified School District
- ▶ Fire Management Council
- ▶ College of the Redwoods
- ▶ Howonquet Head Start
- ▶ Margaret Keating Elementary School
- ▶ Crescent City Farmers Markets
- ▶ Open Door Community Health Center
- ▶ Yurok Tribe
- ▶ The Ancestral Guard
- ▶ California Food Policy Council
- ▶ Humboldt County - Food for People
- ▶ Del Norte Veteran Services



Finding 7: The collaboration between the DNATL Community Food Council, the Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation, and local schools led to the establishment of school and community gardens and food forests in some of the most food insecure areas in DNATL.

DNATL School Gardens

In 2016, the DNATL Community Food Council applied for a mini grant to fund 11 schools with \$500 annually to grow and maintain a garden. School gardens provided a place for students to learn about where food comes from and the rewarding work required to grow it. Gardens also

served as a living laboratory for learning about biology and plant science.

The schools are all located in districts with disproportionately high rates of food insecurity. Figure 13 below includes a list of all the schools with gardens, along with the percent of students who are enrolled in the FRPM program.

School garden sites also include the following preschools/Head Starts: Little School of the Redwoods (Crescent City), Kepel Head Start (Hoopa/Weitchpec), and Howonquet Head Start (Smith River).

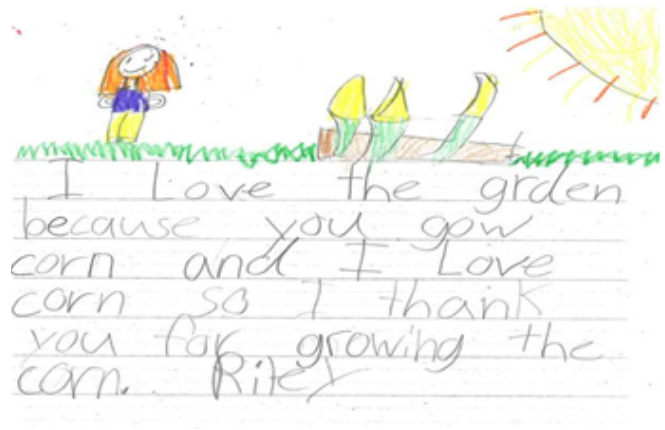


Figure 13: Schools with School Gardens

Region	Name of School	2018-2019 FRPM Rates
Weitchpec	Weitchpec Yurok Magnet School	100%
Weitchpec	Jack Norton Elementary	89%
Klamath	Margaret Keating	89%
Crescent City	Bess Maxwell	84%
Smith River	Smith River Elementary	80%
Crescent City	Mary Peacock Elementary	67%
Crescent City	Uncharted Shores Academy	60%
Crescent City	Mountain Elementary	30%
Crescent City	Del Norte Juvenile Hall	100%



Srtaa~Shvm (hii) Mvlh Ghee-saa-ghit-na'- Good Food Makes Us All Healthy

In 2015, the DNATL Community Food Council and the Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation received funding from the USDA Community Food Project grant. The funding lasted five years and was used to create new food forests and support numerous school and community gardens. The goal of the project was to increase healthy food access and increase the self-reliance of local communities by providing training and resources for them to create and control their own food supply.

By the end of the project, two food forests were created. The creation of food forests and community/school gardens is very complex. Obtaining labor, tractors, fencing materials and fertile soil was challenging. It took longer than

expected to find sites, get approval for sites, prepare the sites, and plant/produce food. Some of the sites were not prepared to be a food forest or a community garden due to their remoteness or soil status. Also, the cost of infrastructure materials for food forests and community gardens and labor was not covered by the USDA grant. Upkeep of food forests and gardens relied heavily on volunteers.

Securing ongoing volunteer support also turned out to be very complex. Some populations such as seniors/elders did not have the physical stamina to work in a garden. Some of the sites were located in remote areas that were inaccessible to people without vehicles. The sites were also located in areas where there were high levels of poverty. Expecting people living in poverty to volunteer their time turned out to be an equity issue. Despite limited funding and volunteer capacity, the project staff were able to collaborate with other DNATL BHC initiatives and establish critical partnerships in the community that assisted in funding opportunities for material costs and labor costs.

Despite the challenges, the food forest and garden sites had many successes. The two food forests represent a community site where residents can gather, children can play, people can attend educational free community events, and families can receive healthy organic produce and traditional medicinal plants.

Cultural Competency, Racial Equity, and Inclusion

Finding 8: Racial equity and inclusion needs to be prioritized in food work. Food equity/advocacy work requires local community ownership and cultural competency.

In the United States, American Indian/Alaska Native communities experience disproportionately high levels of preventable, non-communicable chronic diseases (heart disease, obesity, type II diabetes) compared to communities who identify as non-Hispanic/White. According to the CDC, American Indian/Alaska Native adolescents are 30% more likely than non-Hispanic white adolescents to be obese. As for adults, the percentage increases to 50%.

It is important to consider the history of racist policies, forced relocation, deprivation of ancestral foodways, inequity, exclusion, and genocide when navigating the systemic barriers that contribute to lower life expectancy and higher rates of obesity and related diseases on Tribal Lands. The legacy of colonialism continues to have devastating health consequences. Food advocacy work requires cultural sensitivity and not prescribing ethnocentric solutions.

Au-Minot We-nue-nep-ueh -The Klamath Food Forest - Margaret Keating Elementary

The purpose of the Klamath Food Forest is to involve and inspire youth to learn about and participate in their local food system, revive traditional approaches to sustainable food, and create future food producers for their community.

The Klamath Food Forest is one of four food forest sites developed in the region. This particular program is located on an elementary school campus, nestled inside the Yurok reservation. In addition to the food forest, it also includes a school/community garden and an outdoor classroom.

An immediate goal for this food forest was to serve the Klamath community in a culturally appropriate way by bringing indigenous plant food sources and traditional basket weaving material plants back to a more central location. The food forest was located strategically at a school to pass along cultural values and practices around food to the younger generation.

Xaa-wan'-k'wvt Cheetne' Tetlh-tvm' (Howonquet Head Start Food Forest)

The Xaa-wan'-k'wvt Cheetne' Tetlh-tvm' Food Forest is part of the collaborative project (Srtaa~Shvm (hii) Mvlh Ghee-saa-ghit-na' - Good Food Makes Us All Healthy) with the DNATL Community Food Council and the Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation. The Xaa-wan'-k'wvt Cheetne' Tetlh-tvm' Food Forest seeks to revive cultural practices surrounding native plants and address chronic food insecurity in the community.

From 2016 to 2019, project staff recruited youth participants from the Tolowa Summer Youth Program and the Sierra Service Project. Youth were given stipends to assist in building and maintaining the food forest. Project staff planted native plants and annual crops at the site. Within the first year, this food forest produced over 700 pounds of food. The food from the food forest was used for multiple programs including the elder nutrition program and other food programs serving Tribal members.

Community members participating in the food forest focus on utilizing native plants for traditional medicinal use. Since the beginning of the project, local Tribal members have been hosting various workshops about gardening techniques (pruning/grafting), herbs, planting food, and medicinal use.

Project staff converted the food forest to a community meeting place by adding a new playground for children. During the Fall of 2019, the site hosted its first community event, a pumpkin patch.

The food forest project also inspired the Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation to begin an agricultural program that makes edible native plants more accessible to Tribal members and is aligned with cultural traditions such as prescribed burns and selective harvesting. Native plants are not sold in stores in DNATL. Therefore, the agricultural program offers residents who are unable to hike and gather an opportunity to access native plants.

The Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation established a low-income housing project with 21 units, each with a yard planted with edible native plants. The DNATL BHC Food Initiative also wrote a grant for a native plant library in the Tolowa language. The native plant library will be the first published library in the Tolowa language.

Partnering with Yurok Food Sovereignty Division

In DNATL, traditional food sources such as wild salmon from the Klamath River are on the brink of extinction. Local Tribal members have had to resort to other means to feed their families in a food desert. For Klamath residents, the nearest grocery store is located about an hour away in Crescent City. For residents who do have a form of transportation, their food sources are limited to convenience stores or a gas station.

The DNATL Community Food Council worked with the Ancestral Guard, (a youth-led nonprofit) to develop gardens, deliver fresh produce and assist families with growing and preserving produce in Yurok Tribal Lands. The Ancestral Guard is an indigenous organizing network. Their programs combine traditional ecological knowledge, science and values of world renewal.

This collaboration led to the following changes/projects:



- In 2020, the Yurok Tribe purchased 40 acres of land around Margaret Keating Elementary to create food forests and help address food insecurity. The Community Food Council is assisting the Yurok Tribe with garden design.
- In 2019, local community members took over the food forest in Klamath. Youth are leading the efforts in addressing food insecurity issues in their community.
- Project staff are utilizing the food forests to grow and deliver food to 30 families.
- The Community Food Council plans to install 60 raised beds in 2021.
- In 2020, the Community Food Council applied for the Fisherman COVID relief grant with the Yurok Tribe. The grant will allow Tribal members to harvest, sell and distribute fish. This collaborative effort will make fish more accessible for DNATL residents.
- As part of the Fisherman COVID relief grant, Yurok youth will have the opportunity to learn how to harvest seafood and distribute seafood to Elders.



Finding 9: One of the main barriers to eating healthy foods is not knowing how to grow, prepare, or cook healthy food.

DIY Food Garden Workshops for Community Members

In 2011, the DNATL Community Food Council started organizing cooking and gardening workshops with local instructors. The goal of the food garden workshops was to provide free educational opportunities for residents to learn how to become more self-sufficient in obtaining and preparing their food. The workshop topics have included container gardening classes, water bath and pressure canning, soil testing and amendments, and more. Instructors have taught community members how to make bread, create effective raised beds, begin keeping bees, forage for wild mushrooms, and even start a Cottage Food business.

Finding 10: The food forest site at the College of the Redwoods is successful for its visibility, accessibility, and the dynamic ways it serves the community.

College of the Redwoods- Food Forest

Prior to the DNATL BHC Food Initiative, there was an empty lot in front of the College of the Redwoods (CR) in Crescent City. The lot sat empty for several years filled with construction debris, dirty water, litter, and unhealthy soil. In 2017, this empty lot was transformed into a food forest that will have a lasting impact on the community. The CR food forest is the most publicized site due to its prominent, highly visible location in Crescent City.

The CR food forest serves the community in dynamic ways. It is an educational site, a training site for youth, and a place to socialize and receive organic produce.

Since the DNATL BHC Food Initiative had limited staff and volunteers, they collaborated with the Youth Training Academy (YTA) to provide opportunities for youth to work in the food forest. Youth members were able to work a few hours in the food forest while participating in the Youth

Training Academy. A former YTA member eventually took over the site and began teaching the YTA food program. Youth were able to learn about a healthy food ecosystem and they were also able to do the prep work in the garden that allowed the program to flourish into the future.

The CR food forest was able to receive additional funding from community partners to borrow agricultural machinery, build a fence, hoop house, and an outdoor classroom. The site continues to produce an abundance of food for community members. Project staff are able to supply local food pantries with produce from the food forest. Over the years, the CR food forest hosted several community events including free workshops and an annual harvest festival celebration.

During the Fall of 2019, CR offered an agricultural class to utilize the food forest as part of their curriculum. Unfortunately, due to a lack of qualified teachers, the plans to utilize the food forest as an outdoor classroom was put on hold. However, there are still opportunities for CR students to utilize the food forest. For example, CR plans to collaborate with the food forest to establish a food pantry filled with organic produce for students.

Finding 11: Conducting empathy research was critical to understand the barriers residents experience in accessing healthy foods.

The Food Empathy Research Project

In 2017, CCRP worked with the Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation to administer a survey of 71 residents to assess food security levels as well as access to community gardens and local food sources. The majority of survey respondents reported their race as American Indian/Alaska Native, with 92% specifying Tribal affiliation with the Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation.

Survey respondents spent an average of \$479.97 per month on food. Almost half of the survey respondents were experiencing food insecurity. Almost all of the respondents (98%) indicated using grocery stores to acquire their food. Less than half of the respondents indicated utilizing food assistance programs even though they were eligible.

About 41% of respondents indicated that the food they bought did not last, and they frequently did not have money to buy more. Almost half (45%) of the respondents said they "often" or "sometimes" could not afford to eat balanced meals.

Only 10% indicated that they were able to use the community gardens and 70% of respondents indicated being interested in eating locally grown or produced food. The most common reasons for

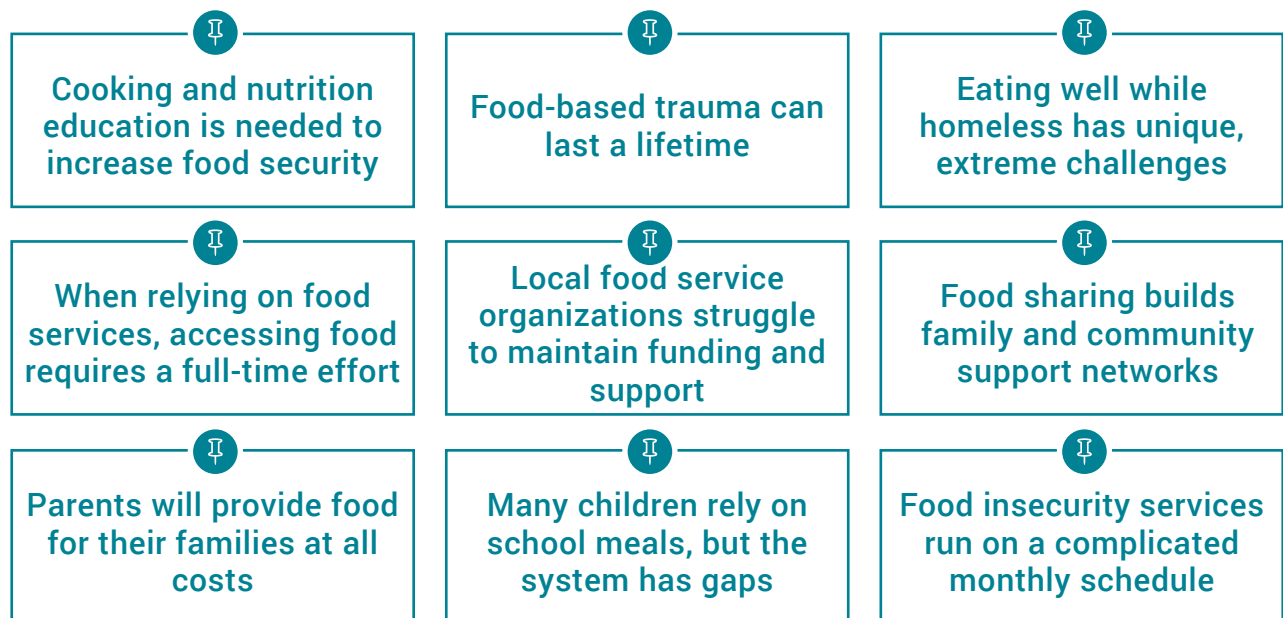
respondents not eating locally grown or produced food were that they are too expensive (51%), there is a lack of availability (33%), or a poor selection in stores and food assistance programs (29%) (CCRP, 2017).

In 2017, the DNATL BHC Food Initiative felt as though they did not understand people's experiences with food insecurity in DNATL. There were still too many gaps in the food system such as low participation rates at food pantries with high food insecurity levels.

To address the gaps, a Food Security Core Design Team was formed in 2017 with a combination of food security service providers, Tribal employees, health care professionals, community workers, and educators. In order to understand the lived experience of those experiencing food insecurity in Del Norte, the Food Security Core Design team utilized the Human-Centered Design approach, in what was called the "Food Empathy Project."

The empathy work involved designing a robust research approach, conducting empathy interviews with people using the local food security system and those working in the system, and analyzing the interview data. Figure 14 represents the nine key insights that emerged from the empathy research analysis. These insights help illustrate the experience of being food insecure in DNATL.

Figure 14: Key Insights from Food Empathy Project



Following the interview analysis, the team developed five personas to bring the characteristics of the people they spoke to life. They mapped out the food security experience for these personas and identified the system shifts required to make a new food security experience for people interacting with or working in the system. The five personas are below:

The Exhausted Juggler

“I would go to any lengths to feed my family. This has included breaking the law to get formula for my baby.”

The Thrifty Elder

“I have to keep track of so many things. If it wasn't for what I get, I don't know how I would make it to the end of the month financially.”

The Cultural Connectors

“We've met a lot of people from the same state in Mexico so we're getting to know them through sharing meals with our neighbors.”

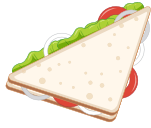


The Daily Struggler

“I'm homeless. The availability of cooking facilities or a way to cook is the number one problem among the homeless population.”

The Stability Providers

“Both of my foster children are food hoarders. Sometimes they hoard food and eat until they throw up. I don't know if they will ever break these habits.”

Figure 15 below is an example of mapping out the food experiences of each persona:

Figure 15. BHC DNATL Initiative Food Empathy Research Presentation						
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
<p>1</p> <p>Terry spends the night in the doorway. He gets woken up in the middle of the night by police. He can't get back to sleep afterwards so spends the rest of the night walking to stay warm.</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Terry goes to see if the food bank is open. It's not.</p> <p>"Where am I going to find food today?"</p>	<p>4</p> <p>He finds a group of other homeless residents cooking on the beach. He joins them and gets a meal.</p>	<p>5</p> <p>Someone gives Terry an old sleeping bag to use.</p>	<p>6</p> <p>Terry goes to Safeway and uses his EBT card to buy two sandwiches.</p> 	<p>7</p> <p>It rains overnight and all of his belongings get drenched.</p> <p>"My leftover sandwich is soggy. I was looking forward to eating it."</p>
<p>8</p>	<p>9 Defeated</p> <p>Terry's bike and bag got stolen overnight. His EBT card was in there.</p> <p>"Last time this happened it took some time to get a new card."</p>	<p>10</p> <p>Terry is tired and frustrated. He runs into an old vet friend who offers him a bed for the night. He takes up this offer.</p> 	<p>11</p> <p>He goes to see if the food bank is open. It's not.</p>	<p>12</p> <p>Terry goes to our Daily Bread Ministries for a meal.</p> <p>"I'm grateful for the meal, but I wish I didn't feel so judged."</p>	<p>13 Defeated</p> <p>He plans on going in to get a new EBT card. It's raining and he can't motivate himself to walk there.</p> <p>"I wish I still had my bike or better yet my card"</p>	<p>14</p> <p>"Where will I find food today?"</p>
<p>15</p>	<p>16</p> <p>Terry hears that the food bank is open tomorrow. He plans to go in the morning.</p>	<p>17</p> <p>It's raining, but he walks 3/4 mile to the food bank anyway. He is hungry and tired.</p> <p>"I'll eat this fruit now and figure out what to do with food I need to cook later."</p>	<p>18</p> <p>Terry goes down to the beach to make a fire and cook his food. It's too much food just for himself, so he shares it with others.</p>	<p>19</p>	<p>20 Thankful</p> <p>A VA volunteer drops off a meal at his camp. The volunteer asks how he's doing. Terry is not sure how to respond or talk about how he's feeling mentally or emotionally.</p>	<p>21</p>
<p>22</p>	<p>23</p> <p>It's a nice day so he decides to go and get a new EBT card. They tell him he will need to fill out a form and give his address and social security number.</p>	<p>24</p> <p>"It's going to be hard to go two more weeks without my card. What will I eat tonight?"</p>	<p>25</p>	<p>26</p> <p>Terry is getting desperate. He panhandles on the roadside and gets \$10. He decides to buy beer and potato chips from the gas station.</p> 	<p>27</p> <p>"This helps to calm me down and focus on something else for a while."</p>	<p>28</p>

The final step in the food empathy research project was to generate ideas to create a future experience and prototype ways to improve the food access experience for the personas. This process enabled the team to understand DNATL’s food security system from a user perspective. Figure 16 is a snapshot of the prototype that was created to provide breakfast to all students.

Figure 16: Prototype of Breakfast Plan



Each student receives a healthy breakfast at school and has plenty of time to eat in a relaxed environment with their teacher and other children

4th grade student named Thomas gets dropped off at school at a different time each day. Some days he has time to eat breakfast but some days he arrives at school too late. He often misbehaves in class in the morning if he misses breakfast.

We need: to make sure breakfast is an essential part of the school day as it sets a child up for their day of learning.

We provide: a school day structure that prioritizes breakfast to ensure that all students are able to eat breakfast before their school day starts. School nutrition program revenues increase due to increased breakfast participation.

So that: students are more able to clearly focus on their school work, there are less disruptions in class and so that teachers don’t need to purchase snacks using their own money.

The results of the food empathy project inspired the creation of the Pacific Pantry and bringing breakfast into the classrooms. This is described in more detail in the subsequent finding.

Finding 12: The DNATL BHC Food Initiative applied the results from the empathy research project to create feasible and culturally appropriate solutions towards food insecurity.

The Story of Pacific Pantry

Results from the food empathy project helped the Food Security Core Design Team learn about the real-life experiences of the DNATL community:

- ▶ It was impossible for working people to get to existing food banks that were open during business hours.
- ▶ Homeless people couldn't prepare the food they received from existing food banks.
- ▶ People experiencing homelessness could not track when the pantries were open and didn't know when food was available.
- ▶ People were often disappointed with the highly processed foods available at food banks.
- ▶ People often felt ashamed about participating in food banks.
- ▶ The lack of healthy foods and choice at food banks was unmotivating.

In April of 2018, the Family Resource Center of the Redwoods opened Pacific Pantry, the first choice-based food bank in Del Norte County. The choice-based food bank model means that clients are able to "shop" in the pantry, selecting the foods that go into their food boxes. This model creates a dignified experience for clients, allows for cultural and dietary needs to be met, and minimizes food waste.

Since opening its doors in April of 2018, the Pantry has served 9,135 Del Norte households, with a total of 23,076 people. Pacific Pantry mainly serves low and moderate-income clients, with 99% of their clients living below 80% of the federal poverty level. Pacific Pantry has proven to be an asset to the community, filling a need for increased access to quality food for low-income residents.

At Pacific Pantry, staff source local and organic foods whenever possible. They carry locally raised meat and eggs, Rumiano's cheese and butter, Crystal and Alexandre Farms milk, produce grown in Taa'-at-dvn Chee-ne' Tetlh-tvm' community food forest, Ocean Air produce, as well as products from other local producers and community members.



Breakfast in the Classroom

Prior to the DNATL BHC Food initiative, the free breakfast program at schools had low participation rates. Although schools provided free breakfast before class, students did not arrive early enough to receive free breakfast. Two DNATL BHC campaigns (Literacy and Food) worked together to participate in the *Breakfast After the Bell Program* to decrease food insecurity issues and increase student performance. The empathy research taught the DNATL BHC Food Initiative members that parents living in poverty are overwhelmed and struggle to afford to maintain a nutritious diet for their household.

Breakfast after the Bell is a nationally recognized program that has been shown as one of the most effective ways to boost breakfast participation in schools. *Breakfast after the Bell* is an initiative pushing for a simple method to assist in food insecurity issues and enhance student performance. With the program, teachers are able to provide breakfast foods during the beginning of class.



In 2018, the Del Norte Unified School District was able to pilot the program in two classrooms at Mary Peacock Elementary. The *Breakfast After the Bell Program* led to a huge increase (from 20-23% to 80-90%) in DNATL students eating breakfast. Teachers who participated in this program observed that their students are now calmer with fewer nurse visits and anxiety about when they would get snacks.

Current Work/Future Vision of DNATL Food System

Finding 13: Resilient rural food systems can benefit from long-term strategies that support food recovery programs and mechanisms to make locally grown food accessible to local residents.

Food Rescue Del Norte Project

In Del Norte County, every year nearly 4 million pounds of food goes into the landfill where it wastes uneaten, and rots while emitting greenhouse gasses. In 2019, the DNATL Community Food Council created the Food Rescue Del Norte Project with funding from a CalRecycle grant. Soon after Food Rescue Del Norte started, the DNATL Community Food Council partnered with the Del Norte Solid Waste Management Authority. Together they focused on meeting the state law, SB-1383 which sets goals for reducing emissions from methane and other short-term pollutants. SB-1383 also includes diverting food waste from the landfill for composting and animal feed. As a result of their collaborative efforts, the Solid Waste Management Authority has nominated Food Rescue Del Norte for an award through CalRecycle.

Since October 2019, the project continues to be successful as they now have project staff, volunteers, and delivery vans that have helped them

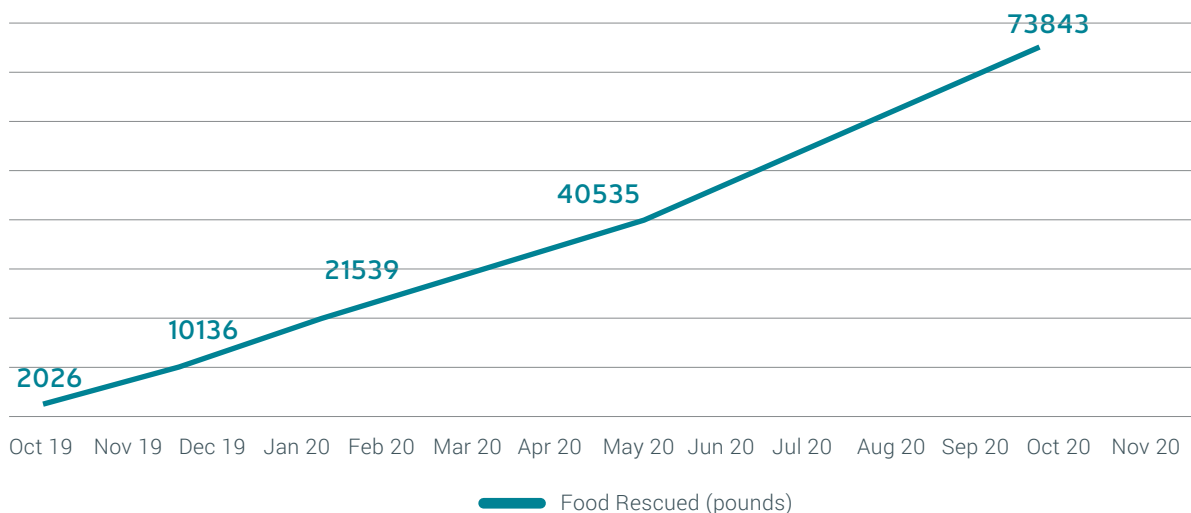


rescue and serve over 70,000 pounds of food to residents in Del Norte County. Local farmers and producers also participate in the project so they are able to provide the rescued food to other food security programs such as the Pacific Pantry.

The Community Food Council's goal is to prevent 400,000 pounds of edible food from going to the landfill by April 2021. The program continues to develop a food waste management plan, educate about how to reduce food waste, as well as rescue, glean, preserve, and redistribute food.

Figure 17 demonstrates the progress of the Food Rescue Del Norte project.

Figure 17: The Amount (pounds) of Food Rescued and Served to DNATL Residents (October 2019-November 2020)



Finding 14: It is important to create opportunities for youth to interact and participate in the local agricultural/food system as well as advocate for policy changes that support healthy foods in schools.

Food and Farm Academy

In 2020, the DNATL Community Food Council shifted from training youth on how to farm to include entrepreneurial training. The DNATL Community Food Council created the Food and Farm Academy where four youth interns were able to grow food and sell it at their local Farmers Market. The DNATL BHC Food Initiative plans to create a year-round program with youth managing the food forest and selling produce at an onsite farm stand.



Food and Farm Camp (Harvest Season Adventure)

In 2020, the DNATL Community Food Council led a week-long Food and Farm Camp for youth that included gardening activities, garden inspired arts & crafts, and cooking. Youth learned about ecology, healthy food, and got to play and learn in a safe environment outside. Youth also harvested and prepared their meals onsite.



Creating a New Resilient Local Food System in DNATL

During the beginning of the DNATL BHC Food Initiative, DNATL had two food systems. One catered to those who can afford to purchase local organic produce, and one system was characterized by gaps and barriers for low-income households. The DNATL BHC Food Initiative started the process of creating one resilient local food system. The projects and programs that began during the 10-year initiative continue to play a critical role in feeding DNATL families.

The initiative created and supported the expansion of sites where DNATL residents can access healthy and nutritious food. Figures 18 and 19 are maps of the food deserts in DNATL with all of the locations of projects and programs facilitated by the DNATL BHC Food Initiative.

Figure 18: Food Deserts & Food Access Sites in 2021

Figure 18: Food Deserts & Food Access Sites in 2021

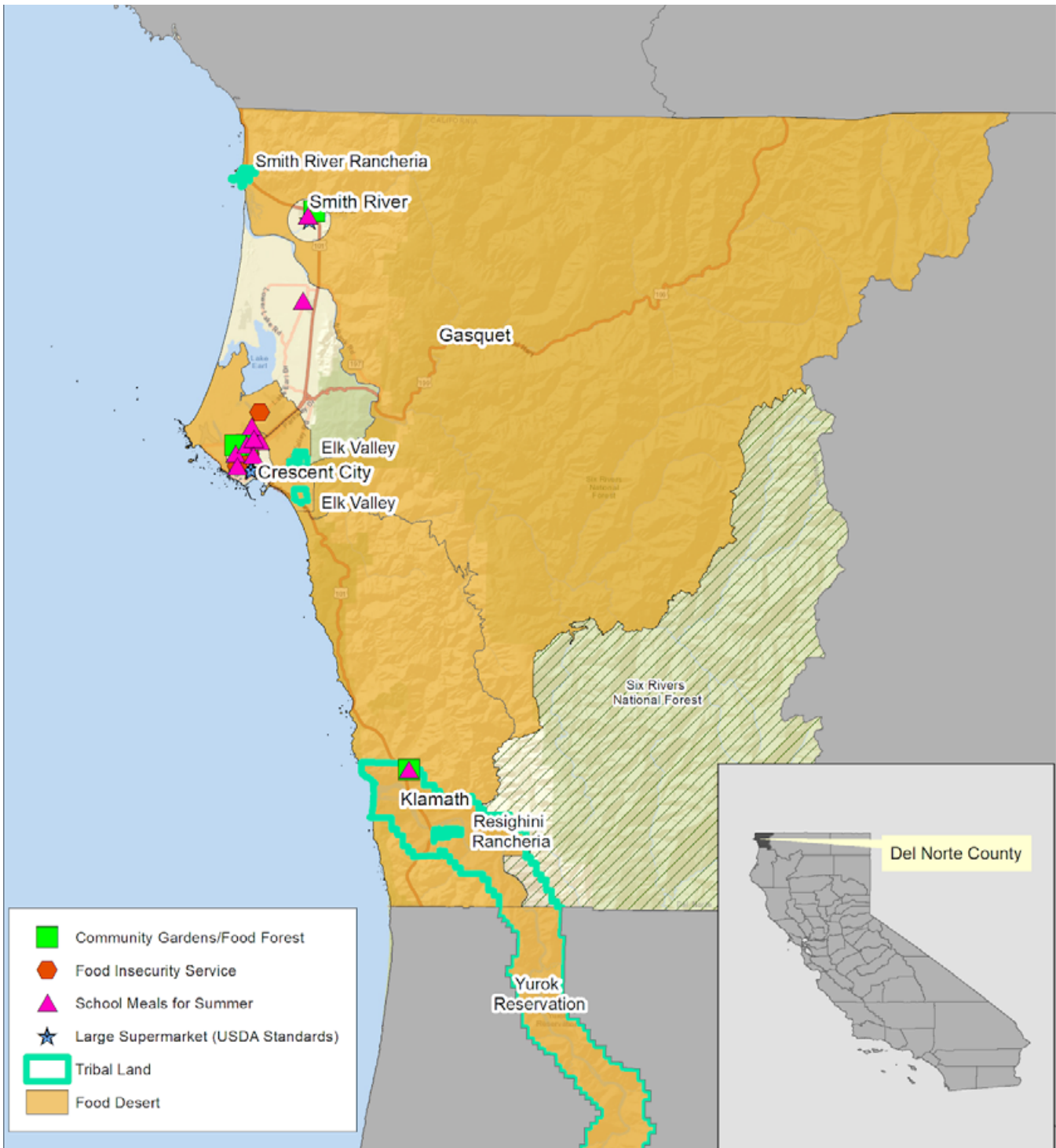
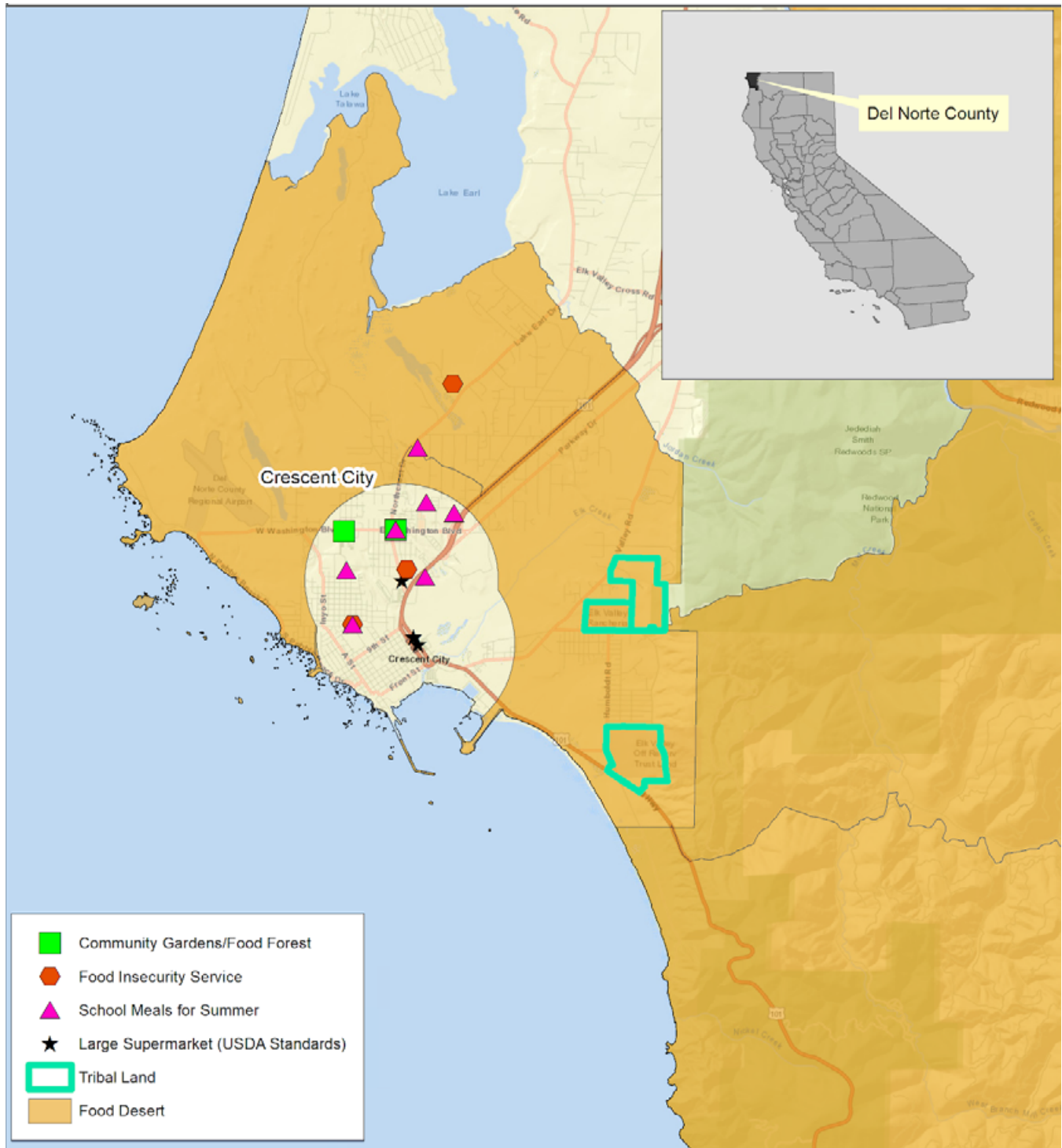


Figure 19: Food Deserts and Food Access Sites in Crescent City in 2021



The Emergency Food Task Force

At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the DNATL Community Food Council was able to step in during a time of crisis and convene a group of community members committed to ensuring food security through the COVID-19 pandemic. Since March of 2020, the Emergency Food Council has been holding monthly or bi-weekly meetings to address the local food security issues and strategize around a regional approach.

“The biggest victory is the number of community members coming together.”
-Member DNATL Community Food Council

The Emergency Food Task Force with support from local and regional partners have since accomplished the following activities or events:

- The Community Food Council purchased two delivery vans.
- Five hundred (500) food boxes were delivered during the 2020 holiday season.
- Delivered about 175 boxes for Meals on Wheels when the Senior Center Staff was in quarantine.
- Rescued about 17,000 pounds. of produce (onions, apples, potatoes, etc.) from Blue Lake Rancheria when there was an extra semi-truck full of USDA produce boxes and nobody in Humboldt County could distribute the extra food.
- Applied for a Community Development Block Grant to bring food in mobile pantries to outlying areas.

The DNATL Community Food Council is planning to expand the DNATL food system. Currently they are addressing the following:

Addressing Odd Trends with Research

Although the CalFresh recipients have increased in Del Norte County, Pacific Pantry and other food banks have had a major decrease in participation. Currently CCRP is evaluating what the barriers may be to accessing food at the pantries during COVID-19.

Regional Food Hub

The Community Food Council started working with Humboldt County's Food for People to build a Regional Food Resilience Network.

“Relationships have been built, and the work is able to move at a much easier pace as a result.”
-Member DNATL Community Food Council

APPENDIX

Tangible Wins and Benefits

2012

- The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) grant supports purchase and deployment of the mobile teaching kitchen.
- The Del Norte Open Door Community Health Clinic supports dental van delivery of services to all Del Norte children through the education system. It permanently funds dental van services to children and bilingual outreach/promotora workforce.

2013

- City Council of Crescent City inclusion and adoption of “health” in official city vision statement.
- The Del Norte Open Door Community Health Clinic provides prescriptions for fresh produce at farmers market.
- Hydration stations are installed at three schools and a healthy food service program is implemented in all schools including salad bars, increased scratch cooking and local farm to school strategies (vendor contracts), and harvest of the month.

2014

- School Board passes resolutions restricting sugared drinks and snacks as incentives and supporting placement of hydration stations.
- School Budget includes additional funding to support school gardens, local produce vendors, salad bars at all schools, and a higher percentage of from scratch meals.
- The City changes its policy on Farmer’s Market fees in order to support vendor participation and ensure they are successful, leading to better access to healthy food in neighborhoods.

2015

- School Wellness Policy is created and adopted.
- The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) supports development of community gardens and farmers markets.
- The Tolowa Dee-ni’ Nation is awarded \$400,000 USDA grant to create four Food Forest sites in food deserts across Del Norte and Tribal lands.
- City of Crescent City creates a farmer’s market fund to ensure clinic prescriptions are filled.

2016

- Crescent City Council votes to adopt a youth-driven policy to expand food trucks' service areas and hours as a result of the growing local, healthy food economy.
- The Del Norte School District nutrition program is recognized by the USDA with the "Western Region 2016 Summer Sunshine" award. By leveraging partnerships with the Del Norte BHC and the Community Food Council, the district is able to outreach and increase the summer meal program from 3,500 meals in 2014 to more than 22,000 meals in 2016. The district is also able to leverage \$30,000 for the program.
- Del Norte Unified School District commits to purchasing local, organic meat and produce for its school nutrition program, increasing its local institutional purchasing by \$30,000 in its first year.

2018

- Breakfast after the Bell program is piloted in two classrooms at Mary Peacock Elementary School to increase student access to healthy foods.
- The DNATL Community Food Council and the Del Norte Senior Center team up to form a Del Norte Local Board for FEMA Emergency Food and Shelter Program funding. This collaborative project leverages an additional \$12,500 renewable on an annual basis.
- Grand opening of Pacific Pantry, a partnership between the Family Resource Center of the Redwoods and the Community Food Council, is made possible through CDBG funding from the City of Crescent City. The choice pantry focuses on offering organic, healthy and local food items in addition to non-perishables to families and low-income individuals.

2019

- Del Norte Community Food Council holds Grand Opening/Harvest Festival at the Taa-'at'dvn Chee-ne' Tetlh-tvm' Community Forest in Crescent City with more than 200 people in attendance.
- DNATL Community Food Council partners with Cal-Fresh Healthy Living from Public Health to offer a Seed to Supper course designed by the Oregon Food Bank to empower people to learn how to grow, harvest, and prepare their own healthy food.
- Del Norte and Tribal Lands Community Food Council receives a \$306,000 CalRecycle grant to initiate the county's first ever food rescue program for Del Norte and begins partnering with Del Norte Unified School District, Wild Rivers Market, Alexandre Dairy, and other businesses and nonprofits to recover and redistribute food that would otherwise go to the landfill. By February 2020 more than 12,000 pounds of food is rescued.

2020

- In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Del Norte and Tribal Lands Community Food Council convenes the Emergency Food Security Task Force with wide representation from the City of Crescent City, County of Del Norte, Department of Health and Human Services, Del Norte Unified School District, Tolowa Dee-Ni' Nation, and other nonprofits pertinent to food security work. The group is working to build effective collaboration to both address food security needs now and a better system for the future.
- The Family Resource Center of the Redwoods and Del Norte Community Food Council enter into a MOU with the county of Del Norte to use county owned facilities for extra food storage capacity for Pacific Pantry and to ensure the County is better prepared with food stores for the community in the event of widespread emergency, pandemic, disaster, or declared state of emergency.