

# St. Lawrence County Community Food Security Assessment



2014

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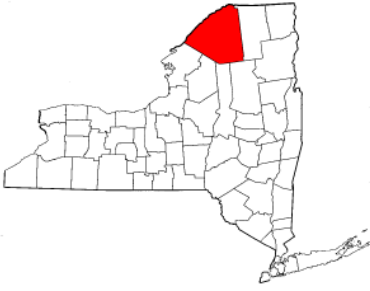
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## Introduction



St. Lawrence County is among the very poorest counties in New York State. Our poverty and unemployment rates are well above state and national averages. In recent years, global economic problems have had a significant impact on our already vulnerable region, especially with regard to access to adequate nutrition. Demand for food stamps and emergency food has risen sharply in recent years.

**Community food security (CFS)** has been defined by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), as a “prevention-oriented concept that supports the development and enhancement of sustainable, community-based strategies to improve access of low-income households to healthful nutritious food supplies, to increase the self-reliance of communities in providing for their own food needs, and to promote comprehensive responses to local food, farm, and nutrition issues (Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture 2014). According to Cohen, Andrews, and Kantor, communities may be considered to be food insecure if:

- *There are inadequate resources from which people can purchase foods.*
- *The available food purchasing resources are not accessible to all community members.*
- *The food available through the resources is not sufficient in quantity or variety.*
- *The food available is not competitively priced and thus is not affordable to all households.*
- *There are inadequate food assistance resources to help low-income people purchase foods at retail markets.*
- *There are no local food production resources.*
- *Locally produced food is not available to community members.*
- *There is no support for local food production resources.*
- *There is any significant household food insecurity within the community (2002, 3-4).*

This project was undertaken in collaboration with GardenShare, Inc., a local, non-profit, community food security organization whose mission is “to build a North Country where all of us have enough to eat and enough to share—where our food choices are healthy for us, for our communities, and for the environment.” To that end, GardenShare has developed numerous programs that reconnect rural revitalization and farming, increase access of low-income families to healthy local food, and build community food security:

- **Local Food.** GardenShare promotes the benefits of eating locally grown food and of revitalizing a community-based, sustainable food system. GardenShare’s annual *Local Food Guide* lists over eighty farms, farmers’ markets, farm stands, U-pick orchards, and other sources of locally grown food in the north country region; 35,000 copies are distributed in St. Lawrence County.
- **Farm-to-School.** GardenShare helped establish a farm-to-school project and develop it into the North Country Grown Cooperative, a farmer-run organization that now markets locally grown food to four area universities, an elementary school, and a hospital.
- **Farmers’ Market.** GardenShare developed a project that enables shoppers to spend their Food Stamp benefits at many of St. Lawrence County’s farmers’ markets. The project utilizes a wireless Food Stamp–benefits terminal staffed on-site. It has brought many thousands of dollars in new sales to farm vendors and healthy local food to hundreds of local households.
- **Food Security Awareness and Education.** Each year GardenShare presents its Growing Community Award to recognize local efforts to build community food security. Other public events have featured noted speakers such as local-foods advocate Bill McKibben and sociologist Dr. Janet Poppendieck, expert on the

emergency food and school food systems. GardenShare also hosts the Food Day Youth Summit every other year, bringing hundreds of high school students together to learn about sustainable food systems and food justice.

- **Small-Scale Farming.** GardenShare collaborates with local farmers to promote CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) and other direct marketing opportunities.
- **Harvest Sharing.** GardenShare continues its long-time endeavor encouraging North Country gardeners to share their garden harvests with over two dozen participating St. Lawrence County food pantries.

Having established these small and successful initiatives with regard to community food security, GardenShare sought further information in order to plan new programming aimed at addressing these issues on a wider scale. This research is provided as a resource for the work of addressing food insecurity and to lay a foundation for ongoing longitudinal study tracking our community food security in years to come.

**Community food security assessments (CSFAs)** can take many forms. They typically include:

*the collection of various types of data to provide answers to questions about the ability of existing community resources to provide sufficient and nutritionally sound amounts of culturally acceptable foods to households in the community. The result of the assessment is the generation of a community profile that may highlight the negative and positive components of the community's efforts to satisfy households' food needs (Cohen et al 2002, 8).*

The research questions guiding this CFSA for St. Lawrence County are as follows:

- What is the extent of hunger and food insecurity?
- Are food resources accessible? Are there “food deserts” in St. Lawrence County?
- What are the barriers to residents being able to access nutritious foods?
- Are federal food assistance programs available to help people purchase food?
- Are people in the community participating in food assistance programs?
- What resources are available in the community for purchasing food?
- Are emergency resources available in the event that residents do not have enough money to purchase food through normal channels?
- What proportion of those eligible don't use available food assistance programs? Why not?

This CFSA is an attempt to answer these questions for St. Lawrence County while placing the findings in the larger context of state and national level data.

### **Study Methods**

This CFSA process employed multiple methodologies for gathering data. The overall study design was guided by discussions with key stakeholders as well as the USDA Community Food Security Assessment methodology, updated and adapted to reflect current conditions. This CFSA contains the following components:

- **Socioeconomic and food security profile of the county.** This is based on existing data collected by local, state and national entities such as the US Census Bureau, USDA, Feeding America, and St. Lawrence County.

- **Profile of community food resources.** This component is based on listings of locations of food resources including retail food stores, farmers’ markets, food cooperatives, and food assistance programs available through government statistics, community directories, and the *Local Food Guide* published annually by GardenShare .
- **Assessment of individual household food security.** This component included both surveys and focus group interviews.
  - **Survey** – The household food security survey was a lengthy (8-page) instrument developed with input from key stakeholders (GardenShare Executive Director Aviva Gold, St. Lawrence County Department of Social Services Commissioner Chris Rediehs, and Potsdam Neighborhood Center Director Daisy Cox) and included questions from a standardized instrument, the USDA’s Household Food Security Questionnaire (that results in a reliable measure of the severity of household food insecurity on a scale of three levels: food secure, food insecure without hunger, food insecure with hunger). In addition to food security questions, there were questions about shopping and eating habits, food spending and access to food, use of food assistance programs, and basic demographics.

The intent of the survey was to develop a richer understanding of the challenges faced by low-income households and so used a purposive sample to target that demographic. It was distributed in packets placed in boxes labeled with recruitment posters at various locations in the county including the Department of Social Services main reception area and at neighborhood centers in various towns. A recruitment flyer about the study with information for receiving the packet was posted in a variety of locations (such as libraries, grocery stores, laundromats) across the county. Due to the diverse nature of the county population and the sensitive nature of the questions, the survey was offered in both self-administered and phone survey formats. However, there were no respondents who opted for the phone survey. The self-administered survey ensured the anonymity of all respondents. A \$15 grocery store gift card thank you/incentive was provided to all respondents. The survey was completed by 207 St. Lawrence County residents between March and December 2013. See Appendix A for the complete survey and results.

- **Focus group interviews.** In order to gather qualitative data and gain deeper insight into the problems of food insecure households in more remote areas of the county, focus groups were held in Star Lake, a community located about 50 miles from any major town in any direction. Focus group questions centered on the following topics: food shopping and food sources, household food security and food assistance programs, and ideas for increasing community food security.

A recruitment flyer about the study with information for participating in a focus group was posted in a variety of locations (such as the post office, community center, bottle redemption center, subsidized housing complex, grocery store, and gas station convenience stores) around the town. A \$30 grocery store gift card thank you/incentive was provided to all participants. A total of twenty-three people participated in two focus groups conducted in November 2013.

Note: In the rest of this report, statistics from the survey have been rounded off to whole numbers and comments from study respondents (both survey and focus groups) are quoted throughout the text in side boxes.

### Socioeconomic and Food Security Profile

St. Lawrence County is geographically a very large county, but in terms of population is one of the smallest in the state. The following is a brief profile of St. Lawrence County based on the U.S. Census Bureau’s 2008 - 2012 American Community Survey (St. Lawrence County Government 2014).

Total Population*	112,060
% Male/Female*	50.9% / 49.1%
% aged <18*	21.0%
% aged 18-64*	65.1%
% aged 65+*	13.9%
% White **	94.0%
% Black/African-American	2.5
% Asian or Pacific Islander	1.1
% Native American	1.1
% Two or more races	1.4
% Hispanic/Latino***	2.1
<small>* St. Lawrence County Government 2014.                      **US. Census Bureau. 2014.            ***Note: The U.S. Census has two separate questions for determining race and Hispanic/Latino identity so the race/ethnicity percentages total more than 100%.</small>	

### Poverty and Unemployment

Poverty levels are important tools for understanding community food security issues and for determining needs and eligibility for various programs. It is important to note that there are two slightly different versions of the federal poverty measure: **poverty thresholds**, determined by the Census Bureau used primarily for statistical purposes like estimating the numbers of Americans in poverty, and **poverty guidelines**, a simplification of the poverty thresholds determined by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) largely for use determining eligibility for various programs. For a better understanding of these nuances see the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ “2013 Poverty Guidelines.”

Persons in family/household	Poverty guideline
<b>1</b>	\$11,490
<b>2</b>	15,510
<b>3</b>	19,530
<b>4</b>	23,550
<b>5</b>	27,570
<b>6</b>	31,590
<b>7</b>	35,610
<b>8</b>	39,630
For families/households with more than 8 persons, add \$4,020 for each additional person.	

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the overall and childhood poverty levels and unemployment rates in SLC are well above state and national averages (see Table 3).

**Table 3. Poverty and Unemployment (US, NYS, SLC)**

Indicators	U.S.	New York State	St. Lawrence County
Individuals in Poverty*	15.7%	15.6%	19.1%
Children (<18) in Poverty*	21.8%	22.1%	28.5
Senior Citizens (65+) in poverty*	9.1%	11.4%	8.6%
% Unemployed**	9.3%	8.7%	10.6%

\* NYS Community Action 2014.      \*\* St. Lawrence County Government 2014.

### Food Insecurity

Food insecurity is closely related to, but is not the same as poverty. In fact, in 2013, about 57% of food insecure households were found to have incomes above the federal poverty level and 58 % of poor households are actually food secure (Coleman-Jensen, Nord and Singh 2013). According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s definition, **food security** means “access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life.” By contrast, **food insecurity** is “a household-level economic and social condition of limited or uncertain access to adequate food” which is also differentiated from **hunger**, “an individual-level physiological condition that may result from food insecurity.” The USDA also uses the terms “low food security” and “very low food security” to convey the severity of food insecurity without using the word “hunger,” since hunger itself is not directly assessed in the food security survey (USDA ERS 2014c, 2014d).



Photos courtesy of GardenShare.

Each year the U.S. Census Bureau collects food security data as part of the annual Current Population Survey (CPS) on behalf of the USDA using the questions in Table 4.



**Table 4. USDA Food Security Assessment Questions**

1. “We worried whether our food would run out before we got money to buy more.” Was that often, sometimes, or never true for you in the last 12 months?
2. “The food that we bought just didn’t last and we didn’t have money to get more.” Was that often, sometimes, or never true for you in the last 12 months?
3. “We couldn’t afford to eat balanced meals.” Was that often, sometimes, or never true for you in the last 12 months?
4. In the last 12 months, did you or other adults in the household ever cut the size of your meals or skip meals because there wasn’t enough money for food? (Yes/No)
5. (If yes to question 4) How often did this happen—almost every month, some months but not every month, or in only 1 or 2 months?
6. In the last 12 months, did you ever eat less than you felt you should because there wasn’t enough money for food? (Yes/No)
7. In the last 12 months, were you ever hungry, but didn’t eat, because there wasn’t enough money for food? (Yes/No)
8. In the last 12 months, did you lose weight because there wasn’t enough money for food? (Yes/No)
9. In the last 12 months did you or other adults in your household ever not eat for a whole day because there wasn’t enough money for food? (Yes/No)
10. (If yes to question 9) How often did this happen—almost every month, some months but not every month, or in only 1 or 2 months? (Questions 11-18 were asked only if the household included children age 0-17)
11. “We relied on only a few kinds of low-cost food to feed our children because we were running out of money to buy food.” Was that often, sometimes, or never true for you in the last 12 months?
12. “We couldn’t feed our children a balanced meal, because we couldn’t afford that.” Was that often, sometimes, or never true for you in the last 12 months?
13. “The children were not eating enough because we just couldn’t afford enough food.” Was that often, sometimes, or never true for you in the last 12 months?
14. In the last 12 months, did you ever cut the size of any of the children’s meals because there wasn’t enough money for food? (Yes/No)
15. In the last 12 months, were the children ever hungry but you just couldn’t afford more food? (Yes/ No)
16. In the last 12 months, did any of the children ever skip a meal because there wasn’t enough money for food? (Yes/No)
17. (If yes to question 16) How often did this happen—almost every month, some months but not every month, or in only 1 or 2 months?
18. In the last 12 months did any of the children ever not eat for a whole day because there wasn’t enough money for food? (Yes/No)

### **Assessing Levels of Food Insecurity**

*The food security status of each interviewed household is determined by the number of food insecure conditions and behaviors the household reports. Households are classified as **food secure** if they report no food-insecure conditions or if they report only one or two food-insecure conditions. (Food-insecure conditions are indicated by responses of “often” or “sometimes” to questions 1-3 and 11-13, “almost every month” or “some months but not every month” to questions 5, 10, and 17, and “yes” to the other questions.)*

*They are classified as **food insecure** if they report three or more food insecure conditions. Households are classified as having food-insecure children if they report two or more food-insecure conditions among the children, that is, in response to questions 11-18.*

*Food-insecure households are further classified as having either low food security or very low food security.*

*The **very low food security** category identifies households in which food intake of one or more members was reduced and eating patterns disrupted because of insufficient money and other resources for food. Households without children are classified as having very low food security if they report six or more food-insecure conditions. Households with children age 0-17 are classified as having very low food security if they report eight or more food-insecure conditions, including conditions among both adults and children. They are further classified as having very low food security among children if they report five or more food-insecure conditions among the children (that is, if they respond affirmatively to five or more of questions 11-18) (Coleman-Jensen, Nord and Singh 2013, 2-4 with emphasis added).*

The following table presents basic food insecurity rates for 2012 from Feeding America’s “Map the Meal Gap” report (2013):

Table 5. Food Insecurity Rates, 2012 (US, NYS, SLC)*				
	% population food insecure	# of food insecure persons	% children food insecure	# of food insecure children
U.S.	15.9%	48,966,000	21.6%	15,898,000
New York State	14.1%	2,758,740	21.8%	927,150
St. Lawrence County	13.6%	15,290	24.8%	5,850

The USDA ERS’s “Food Environment Atlas” (2014b) provides additional detail about the level of food insecurity in St. Lawrence County as well as changes over time (most recent figures are highlighted in bold print). This data shows that both overall and childhood food insecurity have risen in St. Lawrence County over the past decade:

Table 6. Food Insecurity in St. Lawrence County 2002-2012	
Household food insecurity (% , three-year average), 2000-02	9.4%
Household food insecurity (% , three-year average), 2007-09	12.4%
<b>Household food insecurity (% , three-year average), 2010-12</b>	<b>13.2%</b>
Household food insecurity (change %), 2000-02 to 2010-12	+3.8%
Household very low food security (% , three-year average), 2000-02	2.9%
Household very low food security (% , three-year average), 2007-09	4.6%
<b>Household very low food security (% , three-year average), 2010-12</b>	<b>5%</b>
Household very low food security (change %), 2000-02 to 2010-12	+2.1%
Child food insecurity (% households, multiple-year average), 2001-07	8%
<b>Child food insecurity (% households, multiple-year average), 2003-11</b>	<b>9.5%</b>
Child food insecurity (change %), 2001-07 to 2003-11	+1.5%

As noted above, many households with incomes above the poverty line struggle with access to food. As a result, many food assistance programs (e.g. SNAP, WIC, School Breakfast and School Lunch) set eligibility levels at varying multiples (such as 130% or 185%) of the federal poverty line. The “Map the Meal Gap” report provides a clear explanation for these eligibility levels:

*The poverty thresholds, which vary by family composition, are set to reflect a minimum amount of money that is needed for a family to purchase basic necessities. The thresholds were first set in 1963 and were based on research that indicated that the average family spent about one-third of its annual income on food. The official poverty level was set by multiplying food costs for a “bare bones” subsistence meal plan by three. Since then the figures have been updated annually to account for inflation, but have otherwise remained unchanged, despite the fact that modern family budgets are*

*divided very differently than they were fifty years ago, and now include myriad expenses that were virtually non-existent when the official poverty measure was created...*

*Food assistance programs such as SNAP, WIC, SBP and NSLP determine eligibility by multiplying the official poverty line by 130 percent or 185 percent to provide a rough proxy for need beyond the scope of the official poverty level. State-specific SNAP eligibility ceilings range from 130-200 percent, while WIC and reduced price lunches are typically not available for children in households with incomes above 185 percent of poverty. For example, the 2012 poverty guideline for a family of four in the lower 48 states was a pre-tax income of \$23,050. To determine the limit for SNAP eligibility, one would multiply \$23,050 by 130 percent to arrive at \$29,965, the income limit for a family of four to be eligible for SNAP benefits in 2012, among other eligibility criteria (Feeding America 2014, 17-18).*

With this in mind it is useful to know the distribution of food insecure individuals by income.

<b>Table 7. Food Insecure Population with Incomes above Program Thresholds (NYS, SLC)</b>		
	<b>% food insecure population with incomes 200% of poverty or higher</b>	<b>% food insecure children in households with incomes 185% of poverty or higher</b>
<b>New York State</b>	27%	33%
<b>St. Lawrence County</b>	34%	25%

### **Food Deserts in St. Lawrence County**

Beyond the household level barrier of income, some struggle with accessing food due to geographic access and affordability. According to the USDA, food deserts are “urban neighborhoods and rural towns without ready access to fresh, healthy, and affordable food. Instead of supermarkets and grocery stores, these communities may have no food access or are served only by fast food restaurants and convenience stores that offer few healthy, affordable food options” (USDA AMS 2014a).

In order to determine the areas that meet this definition, the USDA and other federal agencies use census tracts and the following low-income and low-access thresholds:

- 1. They qualify as "low-income communities", based on having: a) a poverty rate of 20 percent or greater, OR b) a median family income at or below 80 percent of the area median family income; AND*
- 2. They qualify as "low-access communities", based on the determination that at least 500 persons and/or at least 33% of the census tract's population live more than one mile from a supermarket or large grocery store (10 miles, in the case of non-metropolitan census tracts). (USDA AMS 2014a).*

According to this definition, St. Lawrence County has eight census tracts that meet the definition of food deserts. The USDA Economic Research Service’s “Food Access Research Atlas” goes beyond the basic definition to provide a more nuanced look at varying levels of access to food resources:

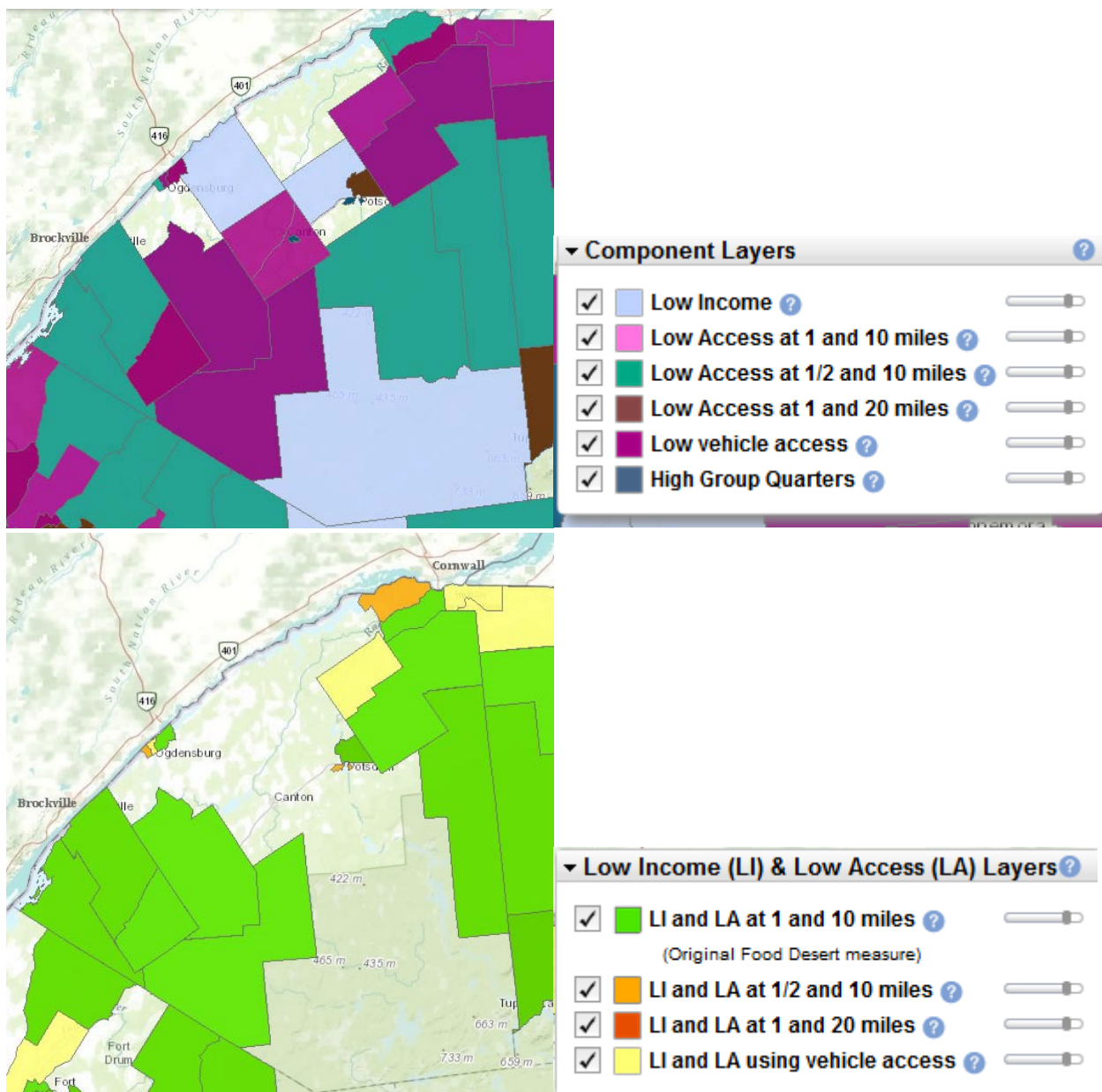
*In the new Food Access Research Atlas, food access indicators for census tracts using 1/2-mile and 1-mile demarcations to the nearest supermarket for urban areas, 10-mile and 20-mile demarcations to the nearest supermarket for rural areas, and vehicle availability for all tracts are estimated and mapped. Users of the Atlas can view census tracts by food access indicators using these different*

measures, including the original food desert measure, to see how the map changes as the distance demarcation or inclusion of vehicle access changes.

The vast majority of people in the United States use motor vehicles to shop for groceries, so vehicle availability is a key indicator of supermarket access. Users can now view whether a census tract has a significant number of housing units that are far from supermarkets and do not have vehicles.

Some census tracts that contain college campuses and other large institutions technically meet the low-access and low-income conditions, but are likely to provide dining services where residents eat on a regular basis. To provide more context for these areas, users can view an indicator that measures whether a census tract has a high share of people living in "group quarters".

The following "Food Access Research Atlas" maps indicate the varying levels of access for areas across St. Lawrence County (USDA ERS 2014a).



Another rich source of data on food environment indicators is the USDA ERS’s “Food Environment Atlas,” (2014b) from which the following table on grocery store access and proximity was drawn.

Households, no car & low access to store (%)	4%
Children, low access to store (%)	3%
Population, low access to store	15,983
Seniors, low access to store	2,451
Children, low access to store	3,605
Low income & low access to store	6,862
Households, no car & low access to store	1,479
Population, low access to store (%)	14%
Seniors, low access to store (%)	2%
Low income & low access to store (%)	6%
*2010 data (USDA ERS 2014b); all values rounded to nearest whole number.	

### **St. Lawrence County Food System Resources**

This next section of the report outlines the variety of food resources that make up the St. Lawrence County food system.

#### **Retail: Stores and Restaurants**

The food retail sector is notoriously variable, with restaurants open and closing with greater frequency than grocers. For an imperfect snapshot of retail food resources, albeit slightly out-of-date, Table 8 presents a listing of the numbers of various types of stores and restaurants in the county gleaned from the USDA ERS’s “Food Environment Atlas,” (2014b). Where available, the data include historical trends. The overall trend is toward a loss of retail food resources (see Table 9).



<b>Table 9. St. Lawrence County Food Stores and Restaurants</b>	
<b>Grocery stores, 2011</b>	<b>27</b>
Grocery stores/1,000 pop, 2011	0.25
Grocery stores (% change), 2007-11	-3.6%
Grocery stores/1,000 pop (% change), 2007-11	-5.4%
<b>Supercenters &amp; club stores, 2011</b>	<b>2</b>
Supercenters & club stores/1,000 pop, 2011	0.02
Supercenters & club stores (% change), 2007-11	100%
Supercenters & club stores/1,000 pop (% change), 2007-11	97%
<b>Convenience stores, 2011</b>	<b>57</b>
Convenience stores/1,000 pop, 2011	0.5
Convenience stores/1,000 pop (% change), 2007-11	-17.7%
<b>Specialized food stores, 2011</b>	<b>4</b>
Specialized food stores/1,000 pop, 2011	0.04
Specialized food stores/1,000 pop (% change), 2007-11	-34.6%
<b>SNAP-authorized stores, 2012</b>	<b>108</b>
SNAP-authorized stores/1,000 pop, 2012	0.96
SNAP-authorized stores (% change), 2008-12	+11.9
SNAP-authorized stores/1,000 pop (% change), 2008-12	+9.2
<b>WIC-authorized stores, 2012</b>	<b>24</b>
WIC-authorized stores/1,000 pop, 2012	0.22
WIC-authorized stores (% change), 2008-12	-4%
WIC-authorized stores/1,000 pop (% change), 2008-12	-6.3%
<b>Full-service restaurants, 2011</b>	<b>98</b>
Full-service restaurants/1,000 pop, 2011	0.9
<b>Fast-food restaurants, 2011</b>	<b>57</b>
Fast-food restaurants/1,000 pop, 2011	0.5

### **Farms, Direct Market and Local Food Sources**

St. Lawrence County has a rich, historical agricultural legacy, a large dairy sector, and a vibrant and growing local foods movement. The most recent USDA agriculture census, conducted in 2012, found over 1300 farms on a total of more than 350,000 acres. A summary of highlights from this census for New York State and St. Lawrence County appears in Appendix A. Many more details from this census may be found at the main census website: [www.agcensus.usda.gov](http://www.agcensus.usda.gov).

The USDA ERS's "Food Environment Atlas," (2014b) also lists a variety of statistics about local food resources. Table 9 combines this data with more recent data listed in the GardenShare *Local Food Guide* (2014). The locations of all of the local food resources listed by GardenShare are available in the *Local Food Guide*.

Table 10. Farm and Local Food Resources in St. Lawrence County	
Farms & orchards with produce &/or animal products for direct market (via farm stands, U-pick, operations, farmers' markets, CSA, etc.), 2014 **	70
Farmers' Markets, 2009 *	6
Farmers' Markets, 2014**	16
Farmers' Markets that report accepting SNAP, 2014**	13
CSAs (Community Supported Agriculture ) operations **	13
Restaurants sourcing local farm products**	5
Stores sourcing local farm products**	6
Food hubs, 2012*	0
Agritourism operations*	18
* USDA ERS 2014b. **GardenShare 2014.	

Most people are familiar with the concept of farm stands and farmers' markets, but many are unaware of a growing model for getting local food direct from the farmer, Community Supported Agriculture, better known simply as CSA. In a CSA individual members (also called shareholders) buy shares in a farm's produce at the start of the growing season, share the burden of risk with the farmer, and receive a weekly delivery of harvested goods throughout the season. Typically CSA shares are made up primarily of vegetables, with some CSAs offering fruits, flowers, eggs, cheese, honey, meats and other local agricultural products. According to the Hunger Action Network of New York State (HANNYS), "CSA programs are a key component of achieving community food security: that all people have access an adequate amount of nutritious food, at all times, through local, non-emergency sources (2004, p.4). According to the Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York (NOFA-NY), "a typical CSA might provide 4-15 pounds of vegetables to a family each week from June through November, often for less than it costs to buy the same conventional produce in supermarkets" (NOFA-NY 2007, p. 1).

Season length and share price vary widely, but in 2007 the average share price in New York State CSAs was \$442 (NOFA -NY 2007). Some CSAs offer winter shares as well or operate year-round. Paying up front for the share is difficult for low-income families and many CSAs have created programs to provide access including flexible payment plans, sliding scale, working shares, acceptance of food stamps/EBT among others. GardenShare has also created a program to make CSA membership accessible to more low-income families (see CSA Bonus Bucks below).

## Food Assistance Programs

### SNAP/EBT Program

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), previously known as food stamps, are delivered monthly to eligible participants through electronic debit (EBT) cards that can be used to purchase groceries at over 231,000 authorized retailers nationwide. SNAP/EBT cards are programmed to only allow the purchase of food. The SNAP/EBT program brings federal dollars into communities by assisting eligible individuals and families to purchase food at local stores and participating farmers' markets. Shoppers can use their EBT benefits for purchases at all of the major Farmers' Markets in St. Lawrence County. SNAP is the largest program in the domestic hunger safety net. In March 2014 over 46,000,000 (about one in seven) people in the U.S. received SNAP and about one in eight were unemployed or underemployed (FRAC 2014). At the local level the numbers have been rose dramatically during the recent recession. According to the county Department

of Social Services, the number of individuals receiving SNAP in the county went from 11,183 in 2008 to 13,198 in 2009 and to more than 15,000 by 2012. Still, about one in five people eligible for SNAP are not served (FRAC 2014).

#### Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC)

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) provides federal grants to states for supplemental foods, health care referrals, and nutrition education for low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, and non-breastfeeding postpartum women, and to infants and children up to age five who are found to be at nutritional risk. Until recently, participants in the WIC (Women, Infants, and Children) program could redeem their monthly checks only at food stores and pharmacies. Thanks to the WIC Vegetables and Fruits program, moms can also use their WIC checks to buy eligible fresh produce at farmers' markets. Purchases must be made from authorized market vendors. For more information in St. Lawrence County, contact the North Country Children's Clinic at (315) 386-8128.

#### School Meal Program

The National School Lunch Program (NSLP), signed into law in 1946, and the School Breakfast Program (SBP), started in 1966, provide a federally funded reimbursement to public and private schools and childcare institutions for free and reduced price meals. The national school meal program makes healthy breakfasts and lunches available to all students daily. Children from low- or moderate-income households qualify for free or reduced-price meals. In 2011, 52.4% of public school children in grades K-6 received free or reduced priced lunches.

#### Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)

The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) provides free meals and snacks to low-income children during the summer months and long school vacations. The SFSP works to reach children in need through sites operated by schools, government agencies, summer camps, day camps, churches, or community organizations. Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) provides free meals through the summer months to bridge the gap left by lack of access to school food during the summer vacation months. All children ages 18 and younger (21 and younger for those with disabilities) may eat summer meals, where available. In 2013, "over 390,000 children throughout New York State were able to eat at nearly 2,500 locations, including parks, pools, recreation centers, schools, camps, housing authorities, libraries, and other places in their neighborhoods" (Hunger Solutions New York, 2014). According to Hunger Solutions New York there were five sites for summer food in SLC in 2013, the first four of which were school district sites and the fifth was a camp program: Brasher Falls, Edwards-Knox, Gouverneur, Massena, Potsdam.

#### BackPack Program

Many of low-income children eat their most hearty and nutritious meals of the week in the school cafeteria. Like the summer feeding program, Backpack Programs have emerged to address this nutritional gap by providing children with healthy and easy-to-prepare meals to take home for over the weekend. Backpack programs are currently operating in the following school districts in St. Lawrence County: Canton, Colton-Pierrepont, Lisbon, Ogdensburg, Parishville-Hopkinton, and Potsdam.



### Farmers' Market Nutrition Program

The Farmers' Market Nutrition Program assists limited-income seniors, women, infants, and children by providing checks that are redeemable for fresh fruits and vegetables at participating farmers' markets. Besides improving nutrition for these participants, the program is an important source of sales for local farmers. In St. Lawrence County, checks for seniors are distributed at senior centers by the Office for the Aging. Checks for women, infants, and children are distributed at WIC clinics by the North Country Children's Clinic. FMNP checks are welcome at all the farmers' markets in St. Lawrence County.

### Child and Adult Care Food Program

The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) is federally funded and provides reimbursement for meals and snacks served in child and adult daycare facilities as well as to children in emergency shelters.

### Nutritional Program for the Elderly

The Nutrition Program for the Elderly includes congregate meal sites and homebound meals (i.e. Meals on Wheels), which are federally funded. Eight "Food and Friendship Centers" provide well-balanced, low-cost noon meals and home-delivered meals to county residents 60 years and older. A 24-hour reservation is requested before eating at any of the eight meal sites: Brasher Falls, Canton, DeKalb Junction, Edwards, Morristown, Ogdensburg, Potsdam, and Star Lake. Meals on Wheels routes currently serve Brasher, Canton, Colton, DeKalb, Edwards, Fowler, Gouverneur, Hailesboro, Hermon, Madrid, Norfolk, Norwood, Potsdam, Russell, South Colton, Star Lake and Waddington. To find the contact information for each meal site, location and serving times, and other services including Home Delivered Meals, contact the Office for the Aging, (315) 386-4730.

### Community Meals

Also referred to as Good Will or Free Will Dinners, community meals can be found around St. Lawrence County almost every day of the week. These meals are always free and open to the public. They are currently being offered in the following communities (with notation of multiple meal sites): Canton (3), Heuvelton (2), Massena, Norfolk, North Lawrence, Ogdensburg (2), and Potsdam.

### Food Pantries

The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) is a means-tested federal program that provides food commodities at no cost to Americans in need of short-term hunger relief through emergency food providers like food banks, pantries, soup kitchens, and shelters. The St. Lawrence County Community Development Program operates eight "Neighborhood Centers" (Canton, Colton, Gouverneur, Hammond, Massena, Ogdensburg, Parishville, Pierrepont, and Potsdam,), each with a food pantry and offering assistance with other emergencies such as utilities, fuel and shelter. In addition to the CDP Neighborhood Centers, an additional thirteen food pantries operate in the following communities across the county: Canton, DeKalb Junction, Ft. Jackson, Gouverneur, Hannawa Falls, Madrid, Norfolk, Ogdensburg, Potsdam, Raymondville, Richville, Russell, Star Lake and Waddington. For contact and location information see [gardensgre.org/content/food-pantries](http://gardensgre.org/content/food-pantries).

### CSA Bonus Bucks

GardenShare's "CSA Bonus Bucks" program spreads the benefits of Community Supported Agriculture to people living on a tight budget. The program pays \$100 of the cost of a CSA membership for limited-income households.

## Community Gardens and Harvest-Sharing

The UShare Project of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Canton grows a garden in Canton and another in Potsdam to raise food for pantries and community dinners. For more information see [www.uucantonny.org/sections/11/ushare](http://www.uucantonny.org/sections/11/ushare). Some Neighborhood Centers have gardens to grow produce for their clients and several schools around the county have gardens as well. In an effort to raise awareness about hunger and to help low-income families access fresh, healthy produce, GardenShare got its start by encouraging North Country gardeners to share their garden harvests with their local food pantry. Their website still encourages this: <http://www.gardenshare.org/content/share-your-harvest>.

## **Digging Deeper Part I: Household Food Security Survey**

As described in greater detail in the “Study Methods” section above, we conducted a household food security assessment survey in order to develop a richer understanding of the challenges faced by low-income households. The complete survey and results appear in Appendix B. Keep in mind that we used a purposive sampling technique which recruited primarily low-income respondents. The data below are not a representative sample of St. Lawrence County residents or even of low-income residents of SLC. However, the results do provide valuable information about the struggles of low-income households with food access issues, their coping strategies, and their ongoing needs.

### **Survey Respondent Profiles**

Respondents to the survey were overwhelmingly female (79%), white, (95%), low income (55% had household incomes of \$19,999 or lower including 32% with incomes lower than \$10,000; the median income of the sample was \$15,000), and had low educational attainment (53% had a high school diploma, GED, or less). The largest group were between the ages of 30 and 49 (43%) with another 25% between 50 and 64.

The majority lived in small households with only one or two people (72%), 49% had one or more children in the household, and 18% of the households included senior citizens. While most reported living in a house or apartment they could afford (64%), 19% said they paid over half their income in rent, 14% were staying with family or friends, and 2% were homeless (living in a shelter, a car or on the street).

Twenty-six percent reported having full-time employment and an assortment of other sources of income were reported including part-time employment (17%), occasional work (12%), social security (25%), SSI (19%), pensions or disability (13%), child support (9%), WIC (11%), food stamps (54%), and help from family or friends (17%).

### **Provisioning, Diet, and Health**

Respondents had a choice of twenty food sources from which to identify any regular sources of food. The top 12, chosen by more than 30% of the sample, are listed in the box at right. The top three sources of food among respondents were grocery stores (95%), supercenters (80%), and discount stores (87%) and 60% also shop for food at dollar stores. Fast food restaurants were the next highest source with 54% reporting this as a regular

#### **Top 12 Sources of Food**

- 1) Grocery stores (95%)
- 2) Supercenters (80%)
- 3) Discount stores (87%)
- 4) Dollar stores (60%)
- 5) Fast food restaurants (54%)
- 6) Gas Station/Convenience Store (45%)
- 7) Farmers' Market (44%)
- 8) Food Pantry (44%)
- 9) Drug Store (42%)
- 10) Warehouse Club (31%)
- 11) Roadside Stand (34%)
- 12) Restaurant or Diner (34%)

source of food. It is interesting to note that equal numbers access food through farmers’ markets and food pantries. Other important sources included own farm/garden (29%), hunting/fishing (25%), and cafeterias (21%). The option chosen by the least number of respondents was CSA (community supported agriculture) at only 3%. The most important reasons for food source choice were affordability (85%) and convenience (63%) with quality of food reported by 40%. Health (28%) and taste (21%) were last and some reported “other” (8%) reasons including “no other choice,” “they take EBT,” “sales,” “good variety,” “they have organic,” and “we grow it.”

Most people rely on cars (82%) to get to the places they shop most often. Some walk (15%), some take a taxi (5%) or a bus (1%) and many rely on rides from friends or family (19%). Given the rural character of the county and the lack of public transportation, these numbers make sense. It takes 27% of respondents less than 10 minutes to get to a store and an additional 35% are 10-19 minutes away. Ten percent of the sample reported being 35-90 minutes from the place shop most often. The median time reported was 15 minutes.

When it comes to health, 48% reported having a household member with diet-related health problems. Most people rated themselves as eating somewhat healthfully (on a scale of one to five with five being “I always eat a healthy diet”) with 45% choosing “3” and 36% choosing “4.” When it comes to their children, respondents reported their eating habits as somewhat healthier.

<i>I rarely eat very healthfully</i>	1	2	3	4	5	<i>I always eat a healthy diet</i>
	<b>2%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>5%</b>	
<i>My children rarely eat very healthfully</i>	<b>2%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<i>My children always eat a healthy diet</i>

When asked what prevents them from eating better, the majority indicated that the cost of food is too high (53%) with others cited a lack of time (20%), taste issues (14%), dislike of cooking (6%), lack of access to a store (4%), a lack of equipment (3%) or facilities (2%), physical issues (3%), and “other” (9%) including “junk food is cheaper than healthy food,” “picky eaters,” and issues with cooking for just one person. When asked specifically about fruits and vegetables 70% said they were too expensive, others reported that they were hard to get from sources during the work day (45%) or at restaurants (39%), and others reported not knowing how to prepare (26%) or shop for them (21%). Still others reported problems with storage (5%), preparation (13%), or just plain not liking them (self -8%, other family members – 21%). A very small percentage (2%) lacked regular access to a stove or refrigerator, which are significant barriers to household food security.

We also asked about other eating habits including frequency of fast food dining and typically dinnertime practices. Contrary to popular perceptions, most reported infrequent fast food dining with 68% reporting eating fast food only a few times a month or less. Only 2% reported eating fast food daily while 9% did so a few times a week and 21% did so once a week. For most respondents dinnertime practices centered on making dinner from scratch (52%) or preparing easily made prepackaged foods (20%) 5-7 days a week. Eating elsewhere or getting take-out were more rare. The full results appear in Table 11.

**Table 11. Thinking about a typical week, how many times does your family do each of the following for dinner?**

	Never (0 x/week)	Rarely (1-2 /week)	Sometimes (3-4 x/week)	Most days (5-6 x/week)	Every day (7 x/week)
Eat at a friend’s or relative’s home	52%	38%	7%	3%	1%
Make dinner from scratch	5%	21%	22%	39%	13%
Cook mostly easy-to-prepare, packaged foods	12%	38%	30%	18%	2%
Heat up packaged, pre-made foods	25%	44%	23%	7%	2%
Eat prepared takeout from a restaurant or store	35%	55%	10%	1%	-
Eat fast food	31%	55%	13%	-	-
Eat at a non-fast food restaurant	44%	47%	8%	-	1%

### Food Insecurity

As was expected with a sample of low-income households, we found significant levels of food insecurity. Only 21% of respondents reported always having enough of the kinds of foods they wanted. A small, but significant 3% said they often do not have enough to eat while 21% reported sometimes not having enough. Most (54%) said they had *enough*, but not always the kinds of foods they wanted, which echoes the 70% reporting fruits and vegetables as unaffordable. Seventy-three percent reported not having enough money for food each month and 57% reported receiving SNAP/EBT/food stamps. A lengthy series of food security questions based on the USDA’s food security measures appears in the full survey results (question sets 24 and 25 - see Appendix B). These answers to these questions combine to indicate varying levels of food security within a household and also among children in a household. The results among this sample appear in Table 12.

**Table 12. Levels of Food Insecurity Among Households (based on Q24 & Q25)**

Food secure households (report 0- 2 conditions among all listed in #24 & #25)	41%
Low food security households with or without children (report any 3+ conditions in #24 & #25)	35%
Household with overall low food security among children (report 2+ conditions in #24 & #25 among children)	16%
Very low food security households without children (report 6+ conditions in #24 & #25 among adults)	10%
Very low food security households with children (report any 8+ conditions in #24 & #25)	15%
Household with very low food security among children (report 5+ conditions in #24 & #25 among children)	3%

While this data indicates that 41% of the households are “food secure” according to the USDA definition, it is important to realize that only 20% of the sample answered negatively to every single question regarding struggles around food security and so a full 80% of the sample had experienced at least one condition of food insecurity in 12 months prior to the survey.

Conditions of food insecurity includes worrying about running out of money for food, running out of food and not being able to buy more, feeling hungry, skipping meals, and not eating for a whole day because there was no money for food. For a more complete picture of the varying food security conditions, see the complete results tables in Appendix B.

The main reasons respondents gave for not having enough money to eat were “income too low” (64%) and “rent, medicine, or other expenses too high” (49%). A full 35% of the sample reported running out of money or food stamps and not being able to buy food almost every month. For most, meeting their needs would require a modest level of additional income, with 42% reporting that \$50-\$100 more each month would suffice and an additional 31% needing up to \$200 more.

## Coping Strategies

The respondents in this sample rely on numerous strategies to secure food for themselves and their families. The vast majority look for specials (73%), sales (83%), coupons (77%), and the like. Others buy in bulk (29%) and at warehouse stores (25%) or put up abundant seasonal produce (17%). Many buy food of poor quality or out-of-date with 10% reporting doing so frequently and 31% doing so sometimes.

### How long do your food stamps usually last?

- Less than one week – 16%
- 2-3 weeks – 45%
- 1 – 2 weeks – 19%
- More than 3 weeks – 20%

Many respondents accessed various forms of food assistance programs (see Table 13), though many programs appear to be underutilized and those that are utilized may not be adequate. Take food stamps (SNAP/EBT), for example. Only 57% report receiving them and 15% believe they are not eligible. Even those that do receive them find that they do not last the whole month. Only 20% report that their SNAP benefits last more than three weeks.

Table 13. Types of food assistance accessed in the last 12 months .	
Purchased food with Food Stamps /SNAP/EBT	<b>45%</b>
Got food through the WIC program	<b>10%</b>
Used coupons for Farmer’s Markets (like Fresh Checks)	<b>15%</b>
Used Senior farmer’s market coupons	<b>6%</b>
Went to meals at a soup kitchen or shelter	<b>7%</b>
Went to meals at a community program, church, or senior center	<b>12%</b>
Had Meals on Wheels or other food delivered by a community program	<b>2%</b>
Received emergency food from a church, food pantry, or food bank	<b>41%</b>
Children between 5 and 18 received free or reduced-cost lunch at school	<b>42%</b>
Children between 5 and 18 received free or reduced-cost breakfast at school	<b>27%</b>
Children received free or reduced-cost lunch at day care or Head Start	<b>6%</b>
Children got food at a summer food program at a school or in the community	<b>7%</b>
Joined a CSA farm with Bonus Bucks	<b>2%</b>
Purchased food through Food Sense	<b>8%</b>

Among all of the food assistance programs various barriers prevent some respondents from seeking their help. These barriers include lack of awareness, transportation, quality of food, and the perception that others need help more.

Although SNAP/EBT/food stamps is the most frequently used program among respondents, many were not aware of all of the places they can be used, such as farmers’ markets (29%). In recent years more farmer’s markets have been established and they virtually all accept SNAP/EBT.

The survey ended by asking respondents about their potential interest in a variety of activities that could greatly enhance household food security. Most were either “very interested” or “somewhat interested” in learning more about budgeting, cooking, gardening and access food assistance programs.

### **Digging Deeper II: Coping with Food Insecurity in Star Lake**

In order to gain deeper insight into the experience of food insecure households in more remote areas of the county, two focus groups were held in Star Lake, a community of about 800 located in the northwest corner of

the Adirondack Park, about 30-50 miles from the nearest major town in any direction. There were two focus group sessions, with about a dozen participants in each. Both were held in a subsidized housing complex community room and one session was limited to residents of the housing complex. Focus group questions centered on the food shopping and food sources, household food security, and food assistance programs.

The overall impression was the residents of Star Lake are a resilient, resourceful, and community-minded group of people. Despite being in a severely economically-depressed area, and struggling to make ends meet, most participants seemed to be resigned to their situation and relatively content. As one person said, “We’re pretty happy around here most of the time—we have to be, don’t we?” Most had grown up in the area or were now tied to it by marriage.

Food resources in the community are limited to a small independent grocery store and two gas station convenience stores, though both of these had more product than a typical convenience store. For example, one had a small deli and a few meat and produce items and the other had surprising array of groceries in addition to the typical soda, beer, snacks, and candy. On one visit their stock included pasta, canned and frozen vegetables, baby food, yogurt, milk, cheeses, breads, and the following fresh fruits and vegetables: garlic, acorn and butternut squash, onions, potatoes, lettuce, cucumbers, peppers, two kinds of tomatoes, broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, melons, bananas, kiwis, lemons, limes, and apples.

When discussing food sources, most people agreed that these small local food stores were significantly more expensive than larger grocery stores and supercenters in large towns. Consequently, they tended to make trips once or twice a month to a large town like Potsdam or Watertown to stock up and relied on the small, local places for highly perishable necessities like milk and bread in between. This was not ideal for many of them due to the cost of transportation and/or a lack of adequate food storage space. Many lived alone in very small apartments without much refrigerator or freezer space. As a result, they tended to rely more on non-perishable, often highly-processed foods. Many expressed interest in having a local farmers’ market. Currently the nearest ones are in Tupper Lake and Gouverneur – both over 30 miles away.

Although there was a general lack of public transportation, two days per week a bus was available to either Potsdam or Canton. However, most did not utilize this option due to several barriers. They reported that it was difficult for those with disabilities to get on the bus and to handle their groceries (both at the store and on the bus) and that they were not given enough time to shop. Some also found the \$4 ticket price problematic. Most relied on rides from neighbors, friends, or family.

Focus group respondents described a variety of other barriers to accessing food including weather, the cost of car repairs and health care (insurance, co-pays, and medicines) and a lack of transportation to community meals or the food pantry. A few mentioned receiving Meals on Wheels or a community meal delivered by a church.

One significant barrier to eating well was living alone. Many of these respondents lived by themselves and had trouble eating a balanced diet. Three reported not liking to cook and eating a lot of toast, another reported eating two good evening meals a week and otherwise eating cereal. Some described cooking one large meal and eating it for many days in a row, but another noted that having a small freezer makes it difficult to store additional food or to make big meals and store it. One disabled woman living alone in subsidized housing said, “I wish I was more motivated to cook better for myself. Like, today I had a snack of like some shelled peanuts

really good roasted peanuts, and I said, ‘Well, that’s my protein now what?’ I made some baked potatoes and I said, ‘Well that’s the rest of the meal.’ And that’s really lousy food, you know, there’s no fruit or vegetable.”

On the whole, focus group participants reported spending a good deal of time managing their provisioning of food. Many traveled to a variety of stores in a variety of locations, from supercenters to meat markets, seeking the best prices for various categories of food and household supplies. Some grew some of their own food, though those living in the subsidized housing complex found significant barriers in the rules of the management company. Some hunted, fished or relied on family and friends for wild foods. Others reported gathering berries and other seasonal foods like asparagus and rhubarb. Many took part in public and private food assistance programs (SNAP/EBT, WIC, free or reduced school meals, community dinners and Meal on Wheels, food pantry, etc.). Many relied on friends and family and one woman in particular seemed like a regular source of prepared meals and baked goods among her neighbors in the subsidized housing complex. As one person put it, “There’s always someone here to help you.”

### **Recommendations**

St. Lawrence County is among the very poorest counties in New York State with poverty and food insecurity rates well above state and national averages. Anti-poverty and anti-hunger advocates argue that the major answers to these problems are the same everywhere: increasing wages, especially the minimum wage, and increasing access to assistance programs in the social safety net like SNAP/EBT. As demonstrated by Feeding America, “federal nutrition programs are not currently reaching all food-insecure people, reflecting both the important role of charitable hunger relief and the need to strengthen anti-hunger programs and policies” (2014a, 39). SNAP policies that improve program access and increase staff capacity to process applications as well as SNAP outreach can help communities, families and businesses maximize federal dollars (FRAC 2014).

In addition to these national level solutions, this report suggests a variety of solutions to be undertaken at the local level. They include improving awareness of food assistance programs and improving access to local food system solutions like farmers markets and CSAs. Hopefully this report will be useful for groups and organizations in the region in designing and directing their programming around these issues so that St. Lawrence County becomes a place, as the GardenShare mission states, “where all of us have enough to eat and enough to share—where our food choices are healthy for us, for our communities, and for the environment.”

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**Appendix A: USDA Agriculture Census NYS and St. Lawrence County Summary Highlights: 2012**

Item	New York	St. Lawrence
Farms ..... number	35,537	1,303
Land in farms ..... acres	7,183,576	356,909
Average size of farm ..... acres	202	274
Median size of farm ..... acres	93	153
Estimated market value of land and buildings:		
Average per farm ..... dollars	525,587	388,063
Average per acre ..... dollars	2,600	1,417
Estimated market value of all machinery and equipment ..... \$1,000	4,163,633	124,674
Average per farm ..... dollars	117,163	95,682
Farms by size:		
1 to 9 acres .....	2,901	42
10 to 49 acres .....	8,668	136
50 to 179 acres .....	13,544	544
180 to 499 acres .....	7,446	440
500 to 999 acres .....	1,872	92
1,000 acres or more .....	1,106	49
Total cropland ..... farms	29,273	1,122
..... acres	4,217,041	172,116
Harvested cropland ..... farms	26,569	1,008
..... acres	3,783,661	152,003
Irrigated land ..... farms	3,404	65
..... acres	59,807	557
Market value of agricultural products sold (see text) ..... \$1,000	5,415,125	187,363
Average per farm ..... dollars	152,380	143,794
Crops, including nursery and greenhouse crops ..... \$1,000	2,249,227	38,816
Livestock, poultry, and their products ..... \$1,000	3,165,898	148,547
Farms by value of sales:		
Less than \$2,500 .....	11,169	375
\$2,500 to \$4,999 .....	3,119	145
\$5,000 to \$9,999 .....	3,776	154
\$10,000 to \$24,999 .....	4,937	158
\$25,000 to \$49,999 .....	2,825	142
\$50,000 to \$99,999 .....	2,586	111
\$100,000 or more .....	7,125	218
Government payments ..... farms	9,366	270
..... \$1,000	74,511	2,569
Total income from farm-related sources, gross before taxes and expenses (see text) ..... farms	14,523	495
..... \$1,000	262,302	4,615
Total farm production expenses ..... \$1,000	4,535,138	140,793
Average per farm ..... dollars	127,617	108,053
Net cash farm income of operation (see text) ..... farms	35,537	1,303
..... \$1,000	1,216,800	53,755
Average per farm ..... dollars	34,240	41,255
Principal operator by primary occupation:		
Farming ..... number	20,400	785
Other ..... number	15,137	518
Principal operator by days worked off farm:		
Any ..... number	19,786	664
200 days or more ..... number	12,414	389
Livestock and poultry:		
Cattle and calves inventory ..... farms	13,559	709
..... number	1,419,365	74,470
Beef cows ..... farms	6,579	318
..... number	86,030	4,071
Milk cows ..... farms	5,427	319
..... number	610,712	33,604
Cattle and calves sold ..... farms	10,555	559
..... number	618,558	25,626
Hogs and pigs inventory ..... farms	1,912	93
..... number	74,671	1,253
Hogs and pigs sold ..... farms	1,629	88
..... number	337,333	2,042
Sheep and lambs inventory ..... farms	2,017	74
..... number	86,286	1,433
Layers inventory (see text) ..... farms	5,686	232
..... number	5,208,831	6,489
Broilers and other meat-type chickens sold ..... farms	914	29
..... number	2,062,445	4,668
Selected crops harvested:		
Corn for grain ..... farms	5,226	130
..... acres	677,268	13,744
..... bushels	87,677,512	1,621,764
Corn for silage or greenchop ..... farms	4,931	191
..... acres	496,885	25,871
..... tons	8,230,187	393,767
Wheat for grain, all ..... farms	1,029	6
..... acres	86,068	(D)
..... bushels	5,377,408	6,540
Winter wheat for grain ..... farms	1,021	6
..... acres	84,809	(D)
..... bushels	5,323,226	6,540
Spring wheat for grain ..... farms	31	-
..... acres	1,259	-
..... bushels	54,182	-

## Appendix B: Household Food Security Assessment Survey Results

(Total N= 208; Note: Due to rounding, totals add up to 99-101%; answers in response to open-ended questions – such as “other” - are reported exactly as written by respondents.)

The first set of questions are about your household’s shopping and eating habits.

**1a) Including yourself, how many adults are in your household? 1b) How many of these are 65+?**

1	<b>28%</b>
2	<b>44%</b>
3	<b>16%</b>
4	<b>8%</b>
5	<b>2%</b>
6	<b>1%</b>
7	<b>1%</b>
<i>% households with senior citizens</i>	<b>18%</b>
<i>% households with children &lt;18</i>	<b>49%</b>

**2) How many children are in your household in the following age groups (include children who live with you for any part of the week, as in shared custody arrangements)?**

*The total percentage of households in the sample with children in that age group is listed in top row and then broken out by the number of children in that age group in the total sample in the 2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> rows.*

a) Households with children aged 0- 6 months: <b>6%</b>	b) Households with children aged 7 mos –5 years: <b>19%</b>	c) Households with children aged 6 – 12 years: <b>24%</b>	d) Households with children aged 13-17 years: <b>20%</b>
1 child 0-6 mos: <b>5%</b>	1 child 7 mos –5 yrs: <b>15%</b>	1 child 6 – 12 yrs: <b>13%</b>	1 child 13-17 yrs: <b>16%</b>
2 children 0-6 mos: <b>1%</b>	2 children 7 mos –5 yrs: <b>3%</b>	2 children 6 – 12 yrs: <b>6%</b>	2 children 13-17 yrs: <b>3%</b>
-	3 children 7 mos –5 yrs: <b>1%</b>	3 children 6 – 12 yrs: <b>4%</b>	3 children 13-17 yrs: <b>1%</b>
-	-	4 children 6 – 12 yrs: <b>1%</b>	-

<b>Household Composition: Total Number of Children</b>	
0	<b>51%</b>
1	<b>21%</b>
2	<b>16%</b>
3	<b>9%</b>
4	<b>1%</b>
5	<b>2%</b>
6	<b>1%</b>

~

<b>Household Composition: Total Number of Adults &amp; Children</b>	
1	<b>19%</b>
2	<b>22%</b>
3	<b>19%</b>
4	<b>20%</b>
5	<b>12%</b>
6	<b>3%</b>
7	<b>4%</b>
8	<b>1%</b>

**3) Including yourself, how many people do you usually buy or prepare food for in your household?**

0	2%
1	18%
2	26%
3	20%
4	19%
5	9%
6	2%
7	3%
8	1%

**4) The following table lists various places to get food. For each type of place, please put an X in the box if you or your family members regularly get any of your food from this source at any time during the year:**

Sources of food and examples	I/we regularly get food from this source
a) Grocery store (Price Chopper, Big M, IGA, Hannaford, etc.)	95%*
b) Supercenter (WalMart)	80%*
c) Discount grocery store (Aldi, Sav-a-Lot, etc.)	87%*
d) Natural foods store (such as Potsdam Food Co-op, Nature's Storehouse, etc.)	15%
e) Warehouse Club (BJs, Sam's Club, etc.)	31%
f) Drug Store (Kinney, Walgreens)	42%
g) Gas station or convenience store (Stewart's, Kunoco, A Plus, etc.)	45%
h) Dollar store (Family Dollar, Dollar General)	60%
i) Specialty food store (like bakery, butcher/meat market, etc.)	17%
j) Restaurant or diner	34%
k) Fast food place (McDonalds, Burger King, sub shop)	54%
l) Cafeteria (include school, workplace or hospital cafeterias)	21%
m) Vending machine	11%
n) Farmer's market	44%
o) Roadside farm stand	34%
p) Community Supported Agriculture membership	3%
q) Own farm or garden	29%
r) Hunting/fishing	25%
s) Food sense program	12%
t) Food pantry	44%
u) Other? Please name: <i>Ft. Drum Commissary, local meats, food stamps, own garden, my sister gives me vegetable that she grows on her property</i>	2%

\*Top three

**5) What are the top three places in the list above that you get most of your food?**

**- A (Grocery store), B (supercenter), C (discount store)**

**6) What are the main reasons you get your foods from these sources (check all that apply):**

The prices fit my budget - <b>85%</b>	The food is healthy - <b>28%</b>
The location is convenient – <b>63%</b>	We like the taste of the food- <b>21%</b>
The quality of the food is good – <b>40%</b>	Other: <b>8%</b> - <i>No other choices, kids eat at school, like store brand, food allergies, support local farmers, don't like Wal-Mart's meat, like how grown/produced, canning, we buy in bulk when possible, good variety, only place around, we grow it, good selection, they have organic, sales, they take EBT, good selection</i>

**7) How do you usually get to the places you shop at most often? (check all that apply)**

- Walking – **15%**     Car – **82%**     Taxi **5%**     Ride from friend or family member **-19%**     Bus **1%**

8) Think of the place you shop at most often. How many minutes does it take you to get to there from your home (one way)?

<10 minutes	<b>27%</b>
10-19 minutes	<b>35%</b>
20-30 minutes	<b>29%</b>
31-44 minutes	<b>5%</b>
45+ minutes	<b>5%</b>
mean=18 mins; median =15 mins.	

9) On a scale of 1 to 5 how would you rate how healthfully you eat (whatever that may mean for you). 1 is rarely eating healthfully enough and 5 is **always** eating healthfully enough (circle the number):

<i>I rarely eat very healthfully</i>	1	2	3	4	5	<i>I always eat a healthy diet</i>
	<b>2%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>5%</b>	

10) **If you have children at home, how would you rate how healthfully they eat - whatever that may mean for your family?** Again, 1 is rarely eating healthfully and 5 is always eating healthfully (circle the number):

<i>My children rarely eat very healthfully</i>	1	2	3	4	5	<i>My children always eat a healthy diet</i>
	<b>2%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>12%</b>	

11) **If you feel you or your children do not usually eat healthfully enough, what gets in the way of eating better? Please check all that apply.**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lack easy access to a grocery store – <b>4%</b>              | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack cooking equipment (pots, knives, etc.) – <b>3%</b> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cost of food is too high – <b>53%</b>                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack physical ability to cook – <b>3%</b>               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of time – <b>20%</b>                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> I do not like to cook – <b>6%</b>                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of cooking skills – <b>2%</b>                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Taste or flavor issues – <b>14%</b>                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of cooking facilities (fridge, stove, etc.) – <b>2%</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> Other - <b>9%</b>                                       |

Responses to "Other": *I have heart problems and sometimes eat processed food that is quick, can't eat seeds, children choose unhealthy over healthy, not enough energy, only cooking for 1 is not too interesting to cook good meal, hate to cook for myself when home alone, food stamps only \$33 per month, not enough money, picky eater(s), sometimes I just want junk food, with ingredients in food being what they are it is almost impossible to eat healthfully, "junk" food is cheaper than healthy food - make healthy food more affordable, kids won't try new things, cooking propane needed is missing presently, texture issues, hard to cook for one, just like what I like and don't plan to change habitual eating, can't store healthy food, fridge sometimes freezes good veggies.*



The next set of questions are about your household's food spending and access to food.

**16) In a *typical month*, how much money does your family spend on food? Include food from the grocery stores, restaurants, gas stations, etc. Include the amount from SNAP/EBT/food stamps, if you have them.**

Under \$100	3%
\$100-\$200	25%
\$201-\$300	19%
\$301-\$400	15%
\$401-\$500	13%
\$501-\$600	9%
\$601-\$700	6%
\$701-\$800	4%
\$801-\$900	1%
\$901-\$1000	1%
\$1001-\$1100	3%
\$1101-\$1200	1%
\$1201-\$1300	-
\$1301-\$1400	1%
More than \$1400	-

**17) If your income were to go down, how would that affect your food shopping?**

**Would you: (Check all that apply)**

Look for places to get cheaper food	77%
Eat less food	44%
Buy less food	53%
Look for places to get free food	56%
Cut down on other expenses	50%
Eat more often at fast food restaurants	1%
Eat less often at fast food restaurants	38%
No change from now	4%

**18) Which of these statements best describes the food eaten in your household:**

We always have enough of the kinds of food we want to eat	21%
We have enough, but not always the <u>kinds</u> of food we want to eat	54%
We sometimes do not have enough to eat	21%
We often do not have enough to eat	3%

**19) Here are some reasons why people don't always have enough to eat. Please check all that apply to you.**

Income too low	64%
Rent, medicine, or other expenses too high	49%
Too hard to get to the store	14%
Need help carrying groceries	5%
No refrigerator available	1%
No working stove available	2%
Prefer to eat out but can't afford it	8%
Kinds of food we want are not available	8%
Not able to cook or eat because of health problems	5%
On a diet	9%
Don't know how to cook well	5%
No time to cook	14%
Too busy to shop	8%
I need special food I can't get	4%
Other: <i>loss of income, freezer too small, its complicated, hate to cook for myself, health problems, too expensive to cook for one, bills due, just not able to store food - refrigerator broken, hard to find/identify non GMO foods and fluoride free drinking fluids, too tired to cook supper that night, for 1 person always have something to eat, not a very good variety to work with, have a son that requires protein shakes no medical program covers this cost, healthy food is always more expensive than cheap food processed, too expensive - not enough money on food stamps, do not get food stamps</i>	9%

<b>20) In the last 12 months, how frequently have you run out of cash or food stamps/EBT before the end of the month and not been able to buy food?</b>	
Almost every month	<b>35%</b>
More than half of the time	<b>11%</b>
Several months in the last year	<b>9%</b>
Only once or twice	<b>26%</b>
Not once in the last year	<b>21%</b>

<b>21) Do you currently have enough money for food each month?</b>	
We do – <b>27%</b>	We do not – <b>73% ↓</b>
<b>If you could get <i>more</i> income each month in cash or food stamps/EBT, how much more would you need to give your family an adequate food budget?</b>	
\$50-\$100	<b>42%</b>
\$101-\$200	<b>31%</b>
\$201-\$300	<b>16%</b>
\$301-\$400	<b>6%</b>
\$401+	<b>5%</b>

<b>22) Many people look for ways to cut the cost of buying food. Which of the following things do you do to find lower cost food?</b>	
I don't try, I just buy what's there	<b>4%</b>
Word of mouth	<b>19%</b>
Look for specials in the newspaper or magazine	<b>73%</b>
Look for sales in the store	<b>83%</b>
Buy bulk	<b>23%</b>
Buy in bulk when prices are low and put up	<b>29%</b>
Buy seasonal produce	<b>22%</b>
Buy seasonal produce and put up	<b>17%</b>
Use coupons	<b>77%</b>
Buy at warehouse stores like Sam's or BJ's	<b>25%</b>
Buy at food auctions	<b>2%</b>
Other: <i>food pantry, Restaurant Depot (wholesale supplier), always use a shopping list &amp; never pay full price if you can get it on sale, I volunteer at the food co-op 3 hours a week to get a 20% discount on the store prices, grow it myself organic, non GMO!, Sav a-lot stores, can goods from our garden, I buy what is cheap enough to feed my family, grow my own, pantries, farmers' market, compare prices between stores, Commissary Ft. Drum</i>	<b>7%</b>

**23) Do you ever buy food that is of poor quality or out of date because it is cheaper?**

- Frequently - **10%**     
 Sometimes – **31%**     
 Rarely – **22%**     
 Never – **38%**



<b>24) People have made several statements like the ones below about their food situation. For these statements, please indicate whether the statement was true at all in the past 12 months AND in the last 30 days.</b>	<b>Never true in last 12 months</b>	<b>Sometimes true in last 12 months</b>	<b>Often true in last 12 months</b>	<b>True in last 30 days</b>
a) "We worried whether our food would run out before we got money to buy more."	37%	35%	28%	23%
b) "The food that we bought just didn't last and we didn't have money to get more."	42%	32%	26%	17%
c) "We couldn't afford to eat balanced meals."	40%	38%	22%	12%
<i>The following shaded items are for people who have children under 18 at home. If you do not, please skip to #25.</i>				
d) "We relied on only a few kinds of low-cost food to feed our children because we were running out of money to buy food."	40%	38%	22%	6%
e) "We couldn't feed our children a balanced meal, because we couldn't afford that."	53%	34%	13%	5%
f) "The children were not eating enough because we just couldn't afford enough food."	76%	16%	8%	3%

<b>Levels of Food Insecurity Among Households (based on Q24 &amp; Q25)</b>	
<b>Food secure</b> households (report 0- 2 conditions among all listed in #24 & #25)	<b>41%</b>
<b>Low food security</b> households with or without children (report <i>any</i> 3+ conditions in #24 & #25)	<b>35%</b>
Household with overall <b>low food security among children</b> (report 2+ conditions in #24 & #25 <i>among children</i> )	<b>16%</b>
<b>Very low food security</b> households without children (report 6+ conditions in #24 & #25 <i>among adults</i> )	<b>10%</b>
<b>Very low food security</b> households with children (report <i>any</i> 8+ conditions in #24 & #25)	<b>15%</b>
Household with <b>very low food security among children</b> (report 5+ conditions in #24 & #25 <i>among children</i> )	<b>3%</b>

<b>25) For these questions, please indicate whether these things happened in the last 12 months AND in the last 30 days.</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes, almost every month</b>	<b>Yes, some months, but not every month</b>	<b>Yes, in one or two months</b>	<b>Yes, in the last 30 days</b>
a) In the last 12 months, did you or other adults in the household ever cut the size of your meals or skip meals because there wasn't enough money for food?	47%	19%	20%	15%	12%
b) In the last 12 months, did you ever eat less than you felt you should because there wasn't enough money for food?	45%	18%	20%	18%	10%
c) In the last 12 months, were you ever hungry, but didn't eat, because there wasn't enough money for food?	64%	14%	13%	8%	7%
d) In the last 12 months, did you lose weight because there wasn't enough money for food?	73%	10%	8%	9%	3%
e) In the last 12 months did you or other adults in your household ever not eat for a whole day because there wasn't enough money for food?	81%	8%	6%	7%	5%
<i>The following shaded questions are for people who have children under 18 at home. If you do not, please skip to #26.</i>					
f) In the last 12 months, did you ever cut the size of any of the children's meals b/c there wasn't enough money for food?	88%	2%	4%	6%	1%
g) In the last 12 months, were the children ever hungry but you just couldn't afford more food?	90%	3%	2%	5%	1%
h) In the last 12 months, did any of the children ever skip a meal because there wasn't enough money for food?	94%	2%	1%	4%	1%
i) In the last 12 months did any of the children ever not eat for a whole day because there wasn't enough money for food?	97%	1%	-	3%	-

The next questions are about food programs. Many people today use food programs, and it is important that we let the county know which ones work and what needs to be improved. Your responses will help us do that.

<b>26) Please indicate whether you or your household members received the type of food assistance in the last 12 months AND the last 30 days.</b>	<b>Yes, in last 12 months</b>	<b>Yes, in last 30 days</b>
a) Purchased food with Food Stamps /SNAP/EBT	45%	29%
b) Got food through the WIC program	10%	9%
c) Used coupons for Farmer's Markets (like Fresh Checks)	15%	2%
d) Used Senior farmer's market coupons	6%	2%
e) Went to meals at a soup kitchen or shelter	7%	3%
f) Went to meals at a community program, church, or senior center	12%	5%
g) Had Meals on Wheels or other food delivered by a community program	2%	2%
h) Received emergency food from a church, food pantry, or food bank	41%	23%
i) Children between 5 and 18 received free or reduced-cost lunch at school	42%	18%
j) Children between 5 and 18 received free or reduced-cost breakfast at school	27%	16%
k) Children received free or reduced-cost lunch at day care or Head Start	6%	6%
l) Children got food at a summer food program at a school or in the community	7%	2%
m) Joined a CSA farm with Bonus Bucks	2%	2%
n) Purchased food through Food Sense	8%	3%
o) Other: <i>I buy my own food when I have the money, friends gave vegetables to me, from garden, just got food stamps, will take food that others offer, we are 3 adults in one home - 2 of us working and we are very fortunate, food pantry, receive monthly surplus from neighborhood center, received plants from food co-op, coupons in the paper</i>	5% (the "other" response was option not specific about time in months or days)	

People choose not to use food programs for different reasons. If you have not used any of the programs above please let us know why not. Check all that apply.

<b>27) Free Food Programs</b>	
I am not aware of all of the programs listed	34%
I would like to, but transportation is a problem for me.	7%
I do not like the food because it is not what I typically eat	6%
I cannot eat many of the items they give me for health reasons	5%
I cannot eat many of the items they give me for religious reasons	1%
I do not like the quality of the food that is given	12%
I do not care for the people who work at one of these programs	5%
I do not want help	7%
My children do not qualify for free or reduced school meals	3%
My children do not want to eat school food	3%
Other reason: <i>I believe there is more people that need help, I don't qualify or my household don't qualify, not eligible (reported by 5 respondents), food is all spoiled-wouldn't give it to my children, fit for livestock only, there is always someone out there who needs it more (reported by 8 respondents), let other people who has a hard time receive this, do not eat factory farmed foods, food sense gets me through, make too much money, we do not need it, I would feel guilty accepting free food when I can buy it myself, don't know where and when you can get food sense, try every possible way to find food, we need to be as independent as possible and if need is there go to a church or local assistance place and not rely on gov't to bail us out, do not feel the need of help, my children do not like caf. food but we have no choice - breakfast + summers they don't want to go, I am returning to a vegan diet in the next 6-8 months</i>	12%

<b>28) Food Stamps/SNAP/EBT</b>	
I do receive Food Stamps/SNAP/EBT	<b>57%</b>
I do not know how to apply	<b>3%</b>
I have not applied because I do not have a phone to call	<b>1%</b>
I have not applied because I do not have transportation	<b>3%</b>
I have not applied because I do not believe I am eligible	<b>15%</b>
I applied recently, but was denied	<b>4%</b>
I do not want to get food stamps because: <i>not necessary, able to buy own food, income</i>	<b>1%</b>
Other reason(s): <i>not eligible/ do not qualify/make too much money (reported by 8 respondents)</i> <i>I believe there is more people that need help, I am waiting on my application now, had them after surgery, only \$33/month for 3 people, just applied, people should take care of themselves, I limit the free things I could receive, I did not know about this help</i>	<b>8%</b>

29) Have you or anyone else in your household received food stamps/EBT/SNAP benefits in the past year?  
**No** (skip down to question # 36) – **43%**      **Yes** (please answer next section of shaded questions ↓) – **57%**

<b>30) How much did (you/your household) receive in the last month you got SNAP/food stamp/EBT benefits?</b>				
\$0-\$50: <b>11%</b>	\$151-\$200: <b>24%</b>	\$301-\$350: <b>3%</b>	\$451-\$500: <b>5%</b>	\$601-\$650: <b>2%</b>
\$51-\$100: <b>7%</b>	\$201-\$250: <b>6%</b>	\$351-\$400: <b>10%</b>	\$501-\$550: <b>3%</b>	\$651-\$700: <b>3%</b>
\$101-\$150: <b>10%</b>	\$251-\$300: <b>6%</b>	\$401-\$450: <b>3%</b>	\$551-\$600: <b>5%</b>	\$701+: <b>4%</b>

<b>31) How long do your food stamps usually last?</b>	
Less than one week – <b>16%</b>	2-3 weeks – <b>45%</b>
1 – 2 weeks – <b>19%</b>	More than 3 weeks – <b>20%</b>

<b>32) How much money do you spend for food each month that your food stamps do not cover?</b>			
none	<b>7%</b>	\$100-\$200	<b>25%</b>
less than \$50	<b>17%</b>	\$200-\$300	<b>8%</b>
\$51-\$100	<b>28%</b>	Over \$300	<b>16%</b>

<b>33) What types of places do you use your food stamps/EBT/SNAP benefits? Please check all that apply:</b>			
Grocery stores (including discount grocery stores like Sav-a-Lot and Wal-Mart)	<b>55%</b>	Natural foods stores (such as Potsdam Food Co-op, Nature's Storehouse, etc.)	<b>4%</b>
Warehouse Club (BJs, Sam's Club, etc.)	<b>15%</b>	Specialty food stores (like bakery, butcher/meat market, etc.)	<b>4%</b>
Dollar Stores	<b>35%</b>	Farmers' Markets	<b>11%</b>
Drug stores (Stewart's, Kinney, Walgreens)	<b>17%</b>	CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) farm share	<b>0%</b>
Gas stations or convenience stores	<b>14%</b>	Other: <i>was not aware use of snap was allowed at drug or dollar store, Healthy Way in Massena NY (a couple items), Aldi</i>	<b>2%</b>

<b>34) If you have not used your food stamp/SNAP/EBT benefits at a Farmers' Market, please indicate your reasons.</b>	
Was not aware that I could use them at farmer's markets	<b>29%</b>
I cannot make it to a farmer's market due to transportation issues	<b>6%</b>
I cannot make it to a farmer's market during their hours of operation	<b>4%</b>
I do not live anywhere near a farmer's market	<b>6%</b>
Other: <i>Still can't afford - prices too high - veges are a luxury, storage, didn't have them when FM was going on, fresh produce does not always get used, unaware of times and location, I'd like to this year, sometimes I still can't justify the expense, I just forget to do it, don't know where its located, forget that it's there, laziness, no EBT in my area FM, out of season, I moved in the last 6 months</i>	<b>7%</b>

**35) CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) is a way to buy fresh food directly from a farmer. You generally pay up front for a share of what the farm produces, and then each week throughout the season you pick up a box of food.**

	yes	no	maybe
Before reading that, had you heard about CSA?	17%	75%	8%
If cost were not an issue, does this idea interest you at all?	71%	13%	16%

To help us better understand the results and to plan future programs, the final questions will tell us more about the people who filled out the survey.

36) Your gender	37) Your age	38) Your race/ethnicity? (choose all that apply)	
Male -21%	18-29: 20%	White/ Caucasian	95%
Female – 79%	30-49: 43%	Native American/American Indian	1%
	50-64: 25%	African American	2%
	65+: 11%	Hispanic/ Latino	1%
		Asian/Pacific Islander	-
		Multiple	3%

39) Your level of education?		40) What are your sources of income or benefits? (check all that apply)	
less than 8 <sup>th</sup> grade	2%	Full time job 40 hrs/week	26%
9-11 <sup>th</sup> grade	8%	Regular job less than 40 hrs/week	17%
GED	18%	Occasional work	12%
high school diploma	25%	SSI	19%
some college	29%	Social Security	25%
2-year college diploma	8%	Food stamps	54%
4-year college diploma	7%	Child support	9%
graduate degree	4%	WIC	11%
		Help from family/friends	17%
		Other: <i>disability, pension, retirement</i>	13%

41) About how much is your yearly household income before taxes (not including public assistance/SNAP)?	
<\$10,000	32%
\$10,000 - \$19,999	23%
\$20,000 - \$29,999	21%
\$30,000 - \$39,999	9%
\$40,000 - \$49,999	5%
\$50,000 - \$59,999	4%
\$60,000 - \$69,999	1%
\$70,000 - \$79,999	4%
\$80,000+	3%
<b>Median income = \$15,000</b> [note – though this was a purposive sample targeting low-income households, 4 of the 207 respondents reported incomes over \$75,000.]	

**42) Does anyone in your family have any diet-related health problems or dietary issues? These could include diabetes, high-blood pressure, digestion problems, food allergies, weight problems and so on?**

Yes - 48%

No- 52%

<b>43) How would you describe your living situation? (check one box that best describes your situation)</b>	
In house or apartment I can afford	<b>64%</b>
In a place where I pay over 1/2 my income in rent	<b>19%</b>
Staying with family/ friends	<b>14%</b>
Staying in a shelter (including domestic violence shelter)	<b>1%</b>
Staying in supported housing (group home, halfway house)	<b>-</b>
Living in a car, on the streets	<b>1%</b>

<b>44) How interested are you in the following activities?</b>	<b>Very interested</b>	<b>Somewhat interested</b>	<b>Not at all interested</b>	<b>n/a</b>
Learning more about cooking healthy meals that taste good	<b>29%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>14%</b>
Learning to prepare new and different meals for you/your family	<b>25%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>11%</b>
Having your children learn more about how to make healthier food choices	<b>18%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>42%</b>
Having your children learn more about how to cook healthy meals or snacks for themselves	<b>17%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>43%</b>
Learning more about how you can make healthier food choices for your family	<b>26%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>14%</b>
Learning more about how to cook healthy meals for your family	<b>27%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>12%</b>
Learning how to better budget your money for meals	<b>31%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>14%</b>
Learning how to access food assistance programs for yourself or for family/friends	<b>27%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>21%</b>
Learning how to grow some of your own food/ gardening skills	<b>29%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>16%</b>