

# Charlotte Food & Social Mobility Summit



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## July 2019 Summit Report & Recommendations

*Bridging to Better Policy*



# CHARLOTTE FOOD & SOCIAL MOBILITY SUMMIT REPORT & RECOMMENDATIONS

This report was prepared by the Duke World Food Policy Center on behalf of The Duke Endowment, Novant Health, and the Winer Family Foundation.

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The opinions and comments expressed in the report are the interpretations and intellectual responsibility of the author.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

EBT	Electronic Benefits Transfer
SNAP	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
WIC	Women, Infants, and Children Program
WFPC	World Food Policy Center

*James B. Duke*

THE DUKE ENDOWMENT

The Duke Endowment is a Charlotte, NC-based philanthropic foundation working to help people and strengthen communities in North Carolina and South Carolina by nurturing children, promoting health, educating minds and enriching spirits.

**NOVANT  
HEALTH**

Novant Health is a four-state integrated network of physician clinics, outpatient centers, and hospitals. Its network consists of more than 1,600 physicians and 28,000 employees at more than 630 locations, including 15 medical centers and hundreds of outpatient facilities and physician clinics.

**WINERFAMILY  
FOUNDATION**

The Winer Family Foundation is a philanthropic organization working to build capacity and align systems to ensure all families with children aged 0-5 are healthy, educated, and empowered.

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SANFORD

Duke University's World Food Policy Center develops coordinated and inclusive food policy and practice. Our approach bridges key areas of the food system to improve human wellbeing, environmental health, and equity. We provide education to raise public awareness and understanding of food system issues to drive engagement with public policy.



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# Executive Summary

The Duke Endowment, Novant Health, and the Winer Family Foundation sponsored the Charlotte Food and Social Mobility Summit on May 15, 2019 with the purpose of understanding the impacts of Charlotte’s food system on the health and economic well-being of people living in the Charlotte metro area as well as to determine recommendations for action through a racial equity lens.

Duke University’s World Food Policy Center (WFPC) facilitated the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the summit. The event brought together more than 100 leaders from the philanthropic, government, nonprofit, business, and community perspective. Presentations and discussions included overviews of the following topics:

- Benchmarking Charlotte’s food system and access to healthy food
- Lessons learned from food justice planning in Durham, North Carolina
- Framing a community-led and institution-supported model of food justice work
- An historical perspective of the policies and practices driving the racial wealth gap and food system disparities
- Food security barriers and strategies
- Community-led examples of food justice initiatives

The WFPC conducted on-site and post-event evaluation to get feedback from attendees related to barriers and opportunities to move forward on community-led food justice efforts in the Charlotte metro area.

Based on community conversations, presentations from the summit, and summit evaluations, the WFPC recommends:

- Creating strategies to deepen a shared race equity understanding in the Charlotte metro area
- Conducting education to create a shared understanding of the national, state, and local history that has contributed to the inequities in food, business ownership, and land ownership in the Charlotte metro area
- Establishing and/or expanding a coordinating body for existing activities in the food system space
- Exploring existing and developing new mechanisms for accessing capital for entrepreneurs of color
- Collaborating as institutions and funders to support a community-led initiative



Let’s think about how we can together as a community of Charlotteans take steps to a community-led and an institution supported food system that promotes economic inclusion and racial equity. With the power of the people in this room, each of us, in our own in our spheres of influence, can start to work to make this happen.

—Ann Caulkins, President, Novant Health Foundations and Senior Vice-President, Novant Health

# Background and Purpose of the Event

On May 15, 2019, The Duke Endowment, Novant Health, and the Winer Family Foundation sponsored the Charlotte Food & Social Mobility Summit, facilitated by Duke University’s World Food Policy Center.

A number of factors motivated the summit. In Charlotte, as is the case nationally, communities of color face higher rates of food insecurity, obesity, and diet-related diseases such as diabetes, and are vastly underrepresented in land and business ownership across the food supply chain from farming to food sales. Economic mobility is another key factor. A study by Harvard economists found that Charlotte ranked last in economic mobility among the nation’s 50 largest cities.<sup>1</sup>

Charlotte’s food system is a key structure through which we can make significant health and economic gains. The City of Charlotte’s report *Unlocking the Potential of Charlotte’s Food System and Farmers’ Markets* notes that the Charlotte metro area is under-performing given the potential of its food system.<sup>2</sup> Many opportunities exist to drive economic development, provide livelihoods for farmers, and create equitable access to food.

The summit initiated many conversations to connect the health, culture, community, and economic potential of food systems with the existing economic mobility activity currently underway in the Charlotte metro area.

The event included a historical framework to understand the policies and practices that have created disparities in food and wealth and to underscore the importance of racial inequities. Detailed discussions were held on food security and community-led solutions to build wealth, increase food sovereignty, and improve economic mobility.

## Summit Goals

- Begin a conversation addressing the complexity of systemic food and social mobility issues, with a focus on how racism has driven these disparities.
- Understand barriers and opportunities in the current systems and align funding and activity strategies to address those issues in Charlotte.
- Catalyze existing strengths in Charlotte to move towards community ownership of food system solutions.





# Charlotte and Mecklenburg County: Setting the Stage

The city of Charlotte, situated in Mecklenburg County, is one of the fastest growing metro areas of the United States and the most populous city in North Carolina. Table 1 shows the demographics, by race, from the 2015 census:

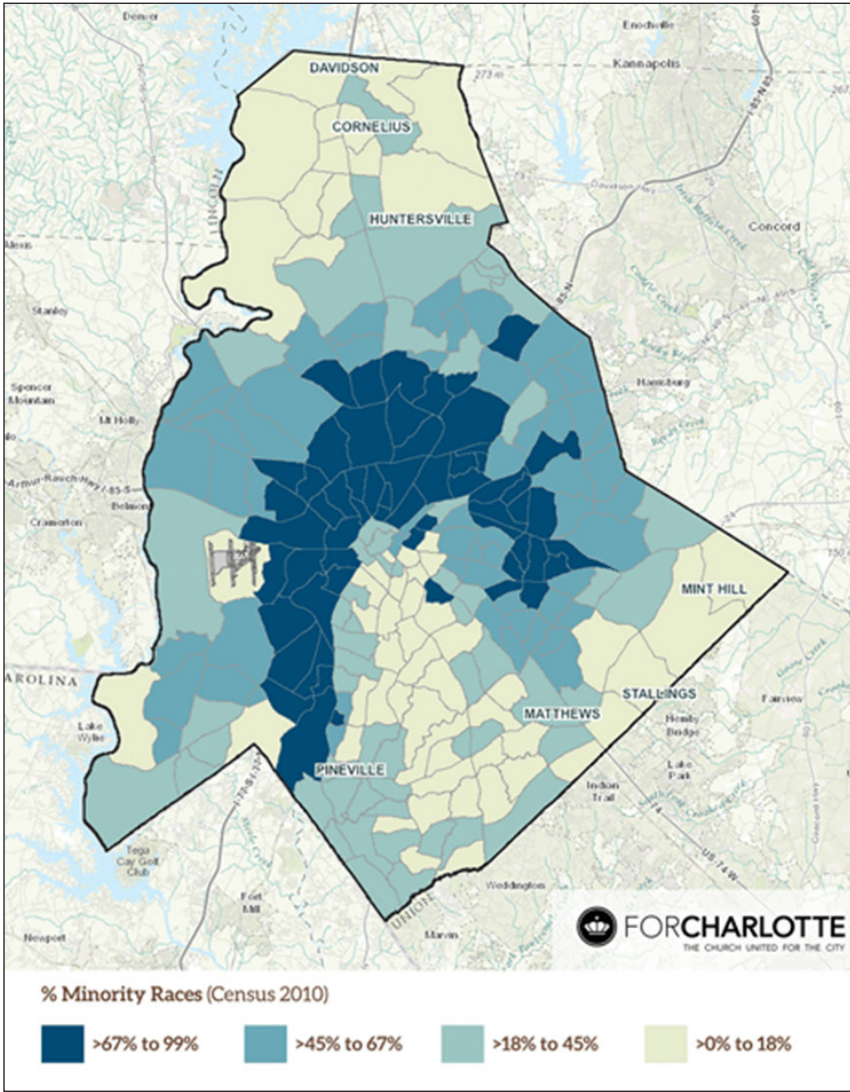
This diversity is not distributed evenly across Charlotte’s landscape. Charlotte’s neighborhoods remain largely segregated along racial lines as shown in Figure 1.

These areas of Charlotte are identified as the “crescent” due to the crescent-shaped pattern the census blocks create. The majority white communities are identified as the “wedge”. Income levels and health disparities between majority white and majority communities of color census tracks are also starkly different, following the crescent and wedge pattern with majority communities of color affected by the lowest income levels and the highest health disparities.

Table 1. Charlotte Population Demographics by Race

Population Segment	Percent of Charlotte Population
White	48.3%
African American	31%
Hispanic/Latino	5.6%
Asian	1.9%
American Indian	0.3%

Source: UNC Charlotte Urban Institute<sup>3</sup>



**Food security** is defined as having physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets people’s preferences and dietary needs for an active and healthy life at all times.<sup>4</sup> Economic access to and availability of sufficient, safe, and nutritious food is most severe in low-income neighborhoods such as in Charlotte’s crescent. The *2015 State of the Plate* report by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Food Policy Council illustrates the overlap in median-household income, lack of economic

access and lack of physical access to food in Figure 2.<sup>5</sup> Lack of economic access is shown by the enrollment rate in nutrition-assistance programs, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and physical access is shown by the percentage of households within .5 miles of a chain grocery store. The crescent appears in all figures, illustrating the concentration of economic and food security disparities in communities of color.

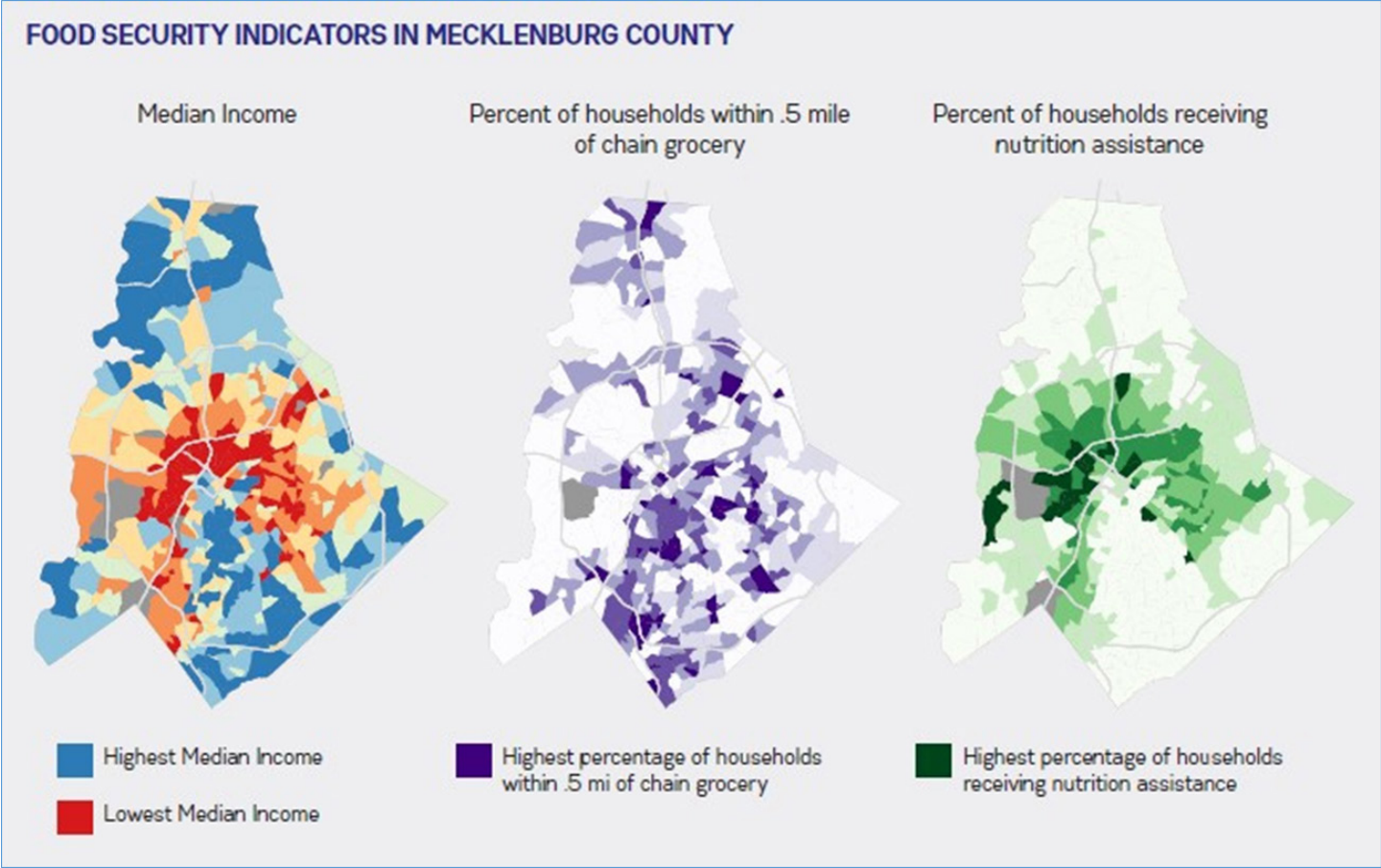
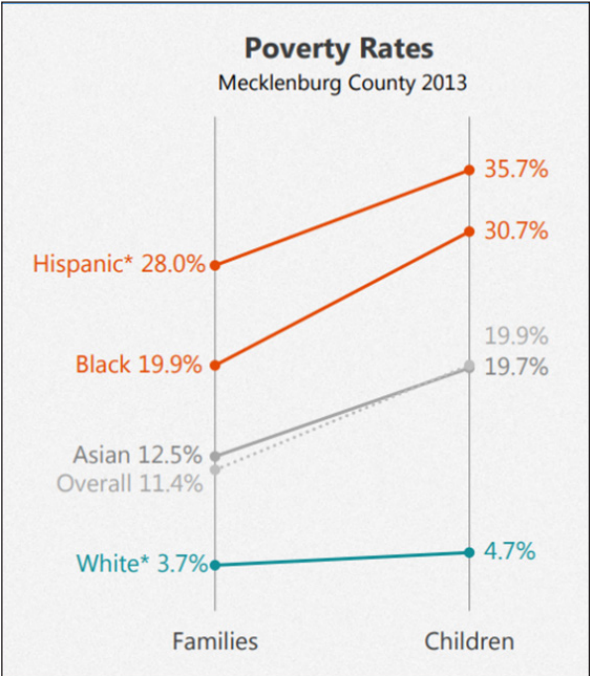


Figure 2. *2015 State of the Plate* Report showing three census tract maps of food security indicators in Mecklenburg County. Retrieved from [http://www.charlottefoodpolicy.org/uploads/6/5/3/0/65305201/2015\\_state\\_of\\_the\\_plate.pdf](http://www.charlottefoodpolicy.org/uploads/6/5/3/0/65305201/2015_state_of_the_plate.pdf)

Unfortunately, poverty and food insecurity impact many children in Mecklenburg County. Over half the people (55.5%) receiving SNAP benefits are children.<sup>6</sup> One in five children live in poverty, though there are vast differences by race and ethnicity, as shown in Figure 3.a. Whereas only 4.7% of white children are affected by poverty, over 30% and 35% of African-American and Hispanic or Latino children are living in poverty, respectively.

Figure 3.a. Poverty rates by race for families and children. Retrieved from Poverty Snapshots Mecklenburg County.<sup>7</sup> Retrieved from <https://ui.uncc.edu/sites/default/files/files/Poverty%20Snapshot.pdf> July 2019.

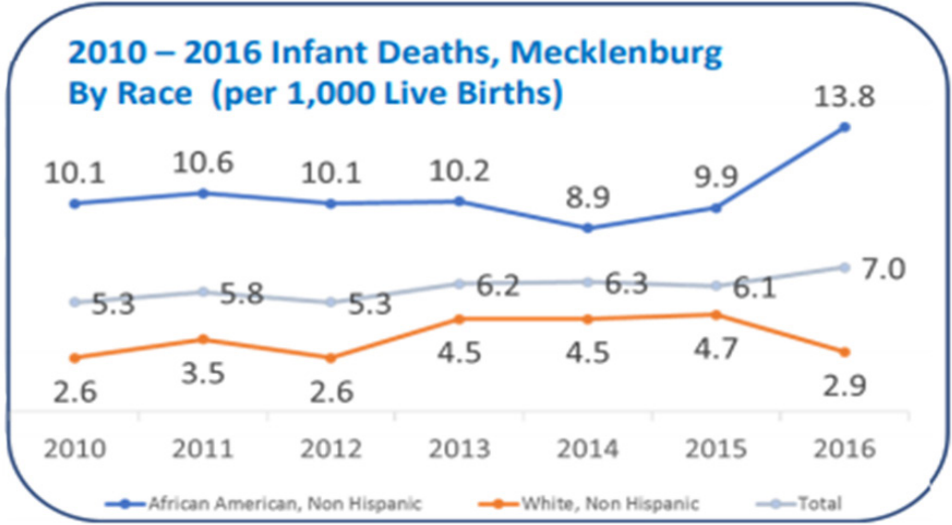




The impact of poverty and lack of access to nutritious food is evident in health outcomes. According to the 2017 Mecklenburg State of the County Health Report, residents living in the crescent have higher rates of diet-related chronic conditions, such as diabetes, heart disease, overweight/obesity, high blood pressure and high cholesterol.<sup>8</sup> The rates of infant mortality may be the starkest example of health disparities among populations, as shown in Figure 3.b.

As noted, the disparities in income and health outcomes in Charlotte’s crescent and wedge were two of the driving factors for the summit. These disparities are reflected in health and income across race nationally.

The Duke WFPC began working in Durham, North Carolina in 2017 to learn more about the impacts of income and health disparities, and potential strategies to address them.



Source: NC DHHS, Vital Statistics Data

Figure 3.b. Infant mortality rates in Mecklenburg county by race/ethnicity. Retrieved from 2017 Mecklenburg State of the County Health Report.<sup>8</sup>

## Lessons Learned in Durham, North Carolina

Jennifer Zuckerman, Director of Strategic Initiatives at the Duke WFPC grounded the summit with lessons learned from the City of Durham’s ongoing work around food justice and equitable food communities:

- Root the work in authentic relationships, which require a heavy time investment and cannot be forced.
- Resist the urge to jump to solutions, develop the skill of listening to understand, not to respond.
- Trust that community members know what they need, and often need institutions to remove barriers for them or get out of the way.
- Shift institutional roles from self-appointed leaders to listeners and supporters.
- Understand the history that has created the racial inequalities that exist in our food system, and take action from the perspective of not replicating the problems of the past.
- Identify what can be affected at the local level, understanding that the local food system is nested within a national and global food system.

**Wicked problems** are those where it’s hard to define specifically what the problem is. There are lots of opinions about what the issues are, lots of different answers that make things different in the moment—and conventional solutions may actually exacerbate the problem. Wicked problems are circular problems – not linear. When tackling a wicked problem, most people want to jump to solutions and what people most skip over is the critical first step: relationships. Vivette Jeffries-Logan on the Durham Design Team shared insight from *Emergent Strategy* that counsels us to “**move at the speed of trust.**”

—Jennifer Zuckerman, Director of Strategic Initiatives, Duke World Food Policy Center



## Community-Led and Institution-Supported Framework

Kelly Brownell, Director of the Duke WFPC, provided an overview of the food system from a global perspective, addressing health issues, climate issues, and providing examples of how often food policy in one area is pitted against policy in another area.

Emphasizing the role of food in health outcomes, Dr. Brownell highlighted a 2015 Lancet report, The Global Burden of Disease Study,<sup>9</sup> which lists the top ten risk factors for global deaths in 2013. See table 2:

Table 2: Top Ten Risk Factors for Global Deaths

1. High blood pressure
2. Smoking
3. Obesity
4. High blood sugar
5. Diet high in sodium
6. Diet low in fruits
7. Outdoor pollution
8. Indoor air pollution
9. High total cholesterol
10. Alcohol use



Source: The Lancet

Of these top ten, all but smoking and alcohol use are directly related to food. From a health perspective, food and food systems are a clear mechanism to improve individual and community health. To date, most food-based interventions have been based in a traditional model of institutional leadership.

Based on the work in Durham, the Duke WFPC is supporting an alternative model of food system change focused on community leadership and institutional support.



# Default Model of Institutional Leadership Versus Community Ownership Model

Traditionally, institutions identify a problem in a community, do research to understand the factors driving that problem, and then identify potential solutions to address that problem. The institution employs a community engagement process to gain information for informing the solutions or responding to the solutions, but rarely in developing the process from the beginning. This method of institution-led problem solving is the **default model**, positioning institutions as “knowing best” and community members as “target audiences”. A **community ownership model** establishes those most affected by the issues as the drivers of solutions for those issues. Institutional roles shift to supporting the work in community, listening to the experts which are those most affected by the issue, and taking direction from the experts to leverage institutional power and resources to remove barriers and open networks.

Default Model	Community Ownership Model
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Founded in research literature and work done elsewhere</li><li>• Needs, programs, and policies are determined from the top down</li><li>• Reductionist – focus is on fixing parts</li><li>• Focus on short term remedies</li><li>• Delivers help</li><li>• Evaluation of traditional outcomes</li><li>• Unknown long-term ownership</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Founded in the historical context of the community</li><li>• Community-determined needs</li><li>• Holistic - focus is on how parts intersect</li><li>• Focus on lasting change</li><li>• Fosters solution-building from community members</li><li>• Evaluation of outcomes relevant to community</li><li>• Sustainable community ownership</li></ul>

## Stages of a Community-Ownership Model



# Framing in History

Policies and practices at the federal, state, and local levels have contributed to the racial wealth gap and have affected food systems around the country, North Carolina included. To establish a path forward, it is critical to understand the factors that underlie food challenges and to seek new ways to address them that do not replicate the disparities created from previous legislative actions. A panel moderated by Reggie Singleton, Founder and Director of the Males Place; Dr. Bob Korstad of Duke University; Dr. Nicole Peterson of the University of North Carolina-Charlotte; and Rickey Hall of the West Boulevard Neighborhood Association addressed the inequities rooted in history, ties to food disparities in Charlotte, and examples of a community-led solution for sustainable change.

The policies and practices that have contributed to the racial wealth gap (the difference between the median wealth of blacks and the median wealth of whites) have created disparate communities. This disparity is not the result of poor personal decisions or a culture of poverty. It is the result primarily of decisions that have both created and sustained inequality.

Dr. Korstad outlined how the roots of the racial wealth gap centers on land and housing policy, as this is where most Americans establish their wealth. Several key policies invested in some groups, while actively disinvesting in others:



Most people attribute inequality to poor personal decisions or a culture of poverty. Others point to structural or institutional practices. But they are deeply embedded in history: family, individual, structural, and institutional forces are not mysterious. They are the result of decisions. Wealth inequality is one of the greatest challenges we face in the region, the nation, and the world.  
– Robert Korstad, Sanford School of Public Policy, Duke University

- **The Serviceman’s Readjustment Act of 1944 (the GI Bill)**  
This bill provided WWII veterans with subsidized higher education benefits, low-interest loans to purchase homes, businesses or farms, and medical care. It helped create the white American middle class, but left Blacks and women behind.<sup>10</sup>
- **Redlining**  
Eighty years ago, a federal agency called the Home Owner’s Loan Organization categorized neighborhoods by lending risk. They created maps to aid loan officers, appraisers, and real estate professionals in evaluating mortgage lending risk during the era immediately before the surge of suburbanization in the 1950’s. Neighborhoods considered high risk or “hazardous” were often “redlined” by lending institutions - literally red lines drawn on maps to identify areas as hazardous investment. The “redlined” areas were typically areas with high populations of communities of color, such as the crescent in Charlotte. This action denied access to capital investment that could improve the housing and economic opportunity of residents. Redlining set into motion disinvestment that increased white flight and continued segregation. For those living in redlined areas, this action impeded the ability to establish home ownership, a key element of generational wealth building.<sup>11</sup>



- **Urban renewal**

The federal policy of urban renewal, established by the Housing Act of 1949, lasted through the 1950s and early 1960s. Urban renewal (also called urban redevelopment) is a program of land redevelopment often used to address urban decay in cities. Urban renewal is the clearing out of blighted areas in inner cities to remove slums and create opportunities for higher class housing, businesses, and more.<sup>12, 13</sup>

- Because of the ways in which it targeted the most disadvantaged sector of the American population, novelist James Baldwin famously dubbed Urban Renewal “Negro Removal” in the 1960s.<sup>14</sup>

- **The Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956**

The Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956 gave state and federal government complete control over new highways, and often they were routed directly through vibrant urban neighborhoods— isolating or destroying many—since the focus of the program was to bring traffic in and out of the central cores of cities as expeditiously as possible. This resulted in a serious degradation of the tax bases of many cities, isolated entire neighborhoods, and meant that existing commercial districts were bypassed by the majority of commuters. Segregation continued to increase as communities were displaced through many mechanisms, including but not limited to eminent domain and gentrification. Black families that had their homes and neighborhoods destroyed had to find housing options deeper in the inner city as whites could then use those highways to spread further and further into the suburbs but continue to work in the city.<sup>15</sup>

Dr. Nicole Peterson noted that the history of race, housing, food and health outcomes are intertwined and demonstrated by the “two Charlottes” illustrated by the crescent and the wedge (Fig. 1) and the 13:1 division in wealth between white and black communities.

The term **food desert** is defined by the USDA as parts of the country void of fresh fruit, vegetables, and other healthful whole foods. Usually found in impoverished areas, food deserts lack grocery stores, farmers’ markets, and healthy food providers.<sup>16</sup> This term is highly misleading,<sup>17</sup> as a desert implies that the feature is naturally occurring. The disparities around lack of access to food align with the active disinvestment in these communities. Dr. Peterson outlined the term now used to describe these areas as **food apartheid**, which better represents the intentional disinvestment causing food inequities in an area.<sup>18</sup> Moving forward, Charlotte efforts need to focus on who owns and benefits from the food system. Changing food access and ownership requires investing in areas that have suffered historic and generational disinvestment and disrupting the policies that contribute to a lack of community wealth.

West Charlotte is one of the many historic black neighborhoods that have been impacted by disinvestment and threatened by urban renewal programs, noted Rickey Hall. The West Boulevard Coalition began Seeds of Change as an urban farm to employ youth and is developing a community center and food cooperative, paying homage to the three sisters who founded the community. The goals of the Three Sisters Cooperative are to:

- Provide healthy food for the 19,000 households in the West Boulevard corridor.
- Create good paying jobs.
- Build community wealth.
- Serve as a model of community self-help and self-determination.
- Improve community health.



In Charlotte during the 1950s-1960s, entire communities were erased from the map. Many of Charlotte's historic black neighborhoods have been and still are being threatened by “urban renewal” programs. This is a continuation of the historical disenfranchisement of Black communities in Charlotte. Land and housing are critically important in addressing inequity because this is where most Americans hold their wealth.

—Rickey Hall, West Boulevard Neighborhood Association

West Boulevard Neighborhood Association President Rickey Hall shared recommendations for sustainable community solutions:

- Solutions need to be driven from the community. This is the essence of community-centered design.
- Funders often have objectives that may differ from what the community believes is most important. There is an opportunity for funders to connect, listen, and adapt to be able to support the changes they strive to make.
- Communities are not looking for saviors, they are seeking sovereignty and wealth-building opportunities.
- Community owned cooperatives are a time-honored way of growing wealth and creating jobs.
- Wealth will be built through land, home, and business ownership, not through charity. We should look to land trust models to hold houses and land in perpetuity and to use as a foundation to support other community wealth-building models.

## Food Security as a Marker of Community Health: Issues and Opportunities Moving Forward

According to NC Child, 18.2% of children in Mecklenburg County were living in food insecure households in 2016. Food security is critical for forming a foundation for cognitive, health, and social development in children, and food insecurity can create a dual burden of both hunger and obesity. The World Health Organization emphasizes the need for proper nutrition in the early years, indicating that a lack of macro and micronutrients can lead to delayed development, enduring adverse health effects, and death.<sup>19</sup>

Understanding that there is a level of immediate need for emergency food assistance and government nutrition programs, the discussion outlined why food security is so critical, described the evolution of food banking and emergency food programs, and made recommendations for the future of food security.

Whitney Tucker, Research Director, NC Child led a discussion with Safiyah Jackson, Early Childhood Systems Director of Smart Start, Mike Darrow, Executive Director, Feeding the Carolinas, and Dr. Carolyn Barnes, with Duke University’s Sanford School of Public Policy.



The North Carolina Early Childhood Action Plan identifies food security as a top objective, with an emphasis on increasing enrollment in SNAP and WIC and increasing access to healthy food.<sup>20</sup>

Safiyah Jackson identified childcare as a strong intervention point as children eat up to two meals and snacks a day in care, and highlighted the following areas as potential intervention points:

- Healthy Futures Starting in the Kitchen, which provides training for child care cooks to learn to source and prepare fresh, healthy food.<sup>21</sup>
- Shape NC, a comprehensive health and wellness initiative which will start enrolling families in WIC and SNAP at child care sites.<sup>22</sup>
- Living wage initiatives for child care providers, as the childcare providers themselves are often food insecure themselves.

Interventions at the childcare level are important, but will not achieve food security independent of other support agencies, such as food banks. While the goal of food banks is to not be needed, the infrastructure currently plays an important role in meeting the nutritional needs of many families and individuals in the Charlotte metro area. Mike Darrow described food banks as distribution centers, working with community partners on a daily basis in a network of logistics. Historically, food banks focused on quantity of food, but are now transitioning to quality of food. On the horizon, food banks are seeking to evolve in a number of ways:

- Feeding the Carolinas is undergoing a comprehensive study of produce availability, opportunities, and barriers and is working to create more dignified experiences that focus on choice, centering the client as a customer.
- Food banks will integrate more with healthcare as the Medicaid 1115 waiver will allow for reimbursement of food packages, meeting people where they are and addressing their specific health needs.<sup>23</sup>
- Because of the complexity of the logistics and the number of organizations providing emergency food services, critical needs exist within food banking for increased coordination and logistics support.
- Funders and foundations have an opportunity to incentivize collaboration that would yield better service, efficiency, and sustainability.



It is our social right to make a living wage, to have a safe place to live, access to affordable health care and access to food and we need to hold the state to that standard. Nonprofits need to support those efforts, not assume that role.  
—Carolyn Barnes, Sanford School of Public Policy, Duke University

Dr. Carolyn Barnes emphasized that the work of nonprofit organizations should not supplant the role of government in providing for the basic needs of its citizens. It is our social right to make a living wage, to have a safe place to live, and to have access to affordable health care and healthy food, and we need to hold the state to that standard. SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) and WIC (Women, Infants, and Children Program) are key social programs that are key to alleviating poverty for people. Dr. Barnes notes that with these policy levers, we could make a significant impact on food insecurity, but we need to understand the barriers that reduce participation:

- According to Barnes, SNAP applicants struggle with negative interactions in the application office, as caseworkers are focused on efficiency, not relationships.
- SNAP paperwork and compliance requirements are cumbersome and difficult to navigate.
- WIC patrons often have stigmatizing and complicated experiences in stores, as it is difficult to identify which foods are WIC approved, and labeling is not consistent across stores.
- Charlotte farmers markets do not adequately accept and incentivize the use of SNAP, as highlighted in the City of Charlotte’s Report, *Unlocking the Potential of Charlotte’s Food System and Farmers’ Markets*: nationally, 1 in 3 farmers’ markets accept SNAP benefits but in Mecklenburg County, 1 in 7.

Dr. Barnes highlights that related to SNAP and WIC, there are also key programmatic assets on which we could build stronger systems:

- SNAP patrons have positive experiences using their benefits in stores, as the electronic benefits (EBT) are easy and non-stigmatizing to use.
- WIC patrons experience positive relationships with caseworkers as the program incentivizes caseload retention.

## Building Communities: How Institutions and Organizations Engage, Empower, and Include the People They Serve

Communities understand what they need to solve their own issues and there are some community-rooted solutions already taking place throughout the Charlotte metro area. For Charlotte to move to community-led and institution-supported initiatives, it will require shifts from the institution and funding perspectives. In a panel moderated by native Charlottean Nadine Ford, Cheryl Emanuel of Mecklenburg County Public Health Department, Pastor Rusty Price of the Camino Community Center, and Dr. Philip Otienoburu from Johnson C. Smith University discussed the shifts their organizations are making and recommended key ways that Charlotte can support its communities with dignity and respect.

Making this shift requires trust and a different form of relationship with the community. Key tenants to understand:

- Communities want opportunity, not handouts.
- It is important to learn the history and the lived experience of community.
- Listening first is a useful approach.
- Sitting in discomfort is an opportunity for reflection and understanding.



The transition to community-led efforts helps define how the work is approached and who is in the best position to do the work:

- **Reframe “help” from charity-based models to justice based models:**
  - Build wealth in the community as a key to sustainable change.
  - Ground work in mutual caring and sharing of benefits, and invest in ways that allow community to care for themselves.
  - Support entrepreneurial spirit in community.
  - Recognize that community members know what they need, even if it might not align with what institutions believe is best - trust is essential.
  - Cultivate local ownership and sustainability.
  - Help entrepreneurs of color expand networks and gain access to technical assistance, capital, and opportunity (e.g., government funding cycles or angel/venture capital investments).
- **Transition organizational representation:**
  - Include community members and clients that you serve as board members - have those most affected driving the services.
  - Listen to and hire clients to develop and lead programming.
  - Create a pathway for clients to connect with funders.
  - Do not assume the organization needs to lead the work.
- **Philanthropy can drive change:**
  - Transition from grant writing to being in relationship with community - good work is more than a well-written grant.
  - Create space for innovation and learn from failure.
  - Redefine metrics of success to include trust, relationship building, and capacity building.
  - Fund with patience - sustainability takes time.
  - Look internally as foundations to reinvent philanthropy and consider models of philanthropy that promote equity.

How do we help the working poor? But why are working people poor? How are we lifting up unjust tax and wage structure in our country to change situations for people so they can make their own housing/food/transportation choices? Takes real changes in government policy.  
—Tom Warshauer, Community Engagement, City of Charlotte



## Participant Feedback-REACH NC Voices

The World Food Policy Center partnered with EducationNC to use Reach NC Voices, a real-time texting platform to assess immediate response to our presenters’ ideas and recommendations. Forty-six attendees opted-in to use the Reach NC platform, representing non-profit (28%), healthcare (22%), academia (13%), government (4%), faith-community (2%), corporate (2%) and other (13%) sectors.

The majority of event participants are working towards alleviating food insecurity, whether in the form of food pantries, increasing access to nutritious produce to underserved communities, or health coaching thorough primary care settings. Several of the participants are involved with education in early childhood settings, schools, and colleges teaching about nutrition, sustainable agriculture and culinary programs. A few participants are actively involved in food policy and community engagement.



### REACH NC Real Time Feedback:

- **54% of respondents were positive about adopting a community-led approach.**
- 63% of respondents were either not familiar at all or somewhat familiar with the historical context of current issues, highlighting the need for a deeper understanding of history.
- **69% of respondents indicated that the current food security infrastructure in the Charlotte metro area is insufficient to move clients to self-sufficiency and sustainability, highlighting the need to examine the system and to identify gaps and opportunities.**
- Participants expressed interest in moving forward on organizing a broader collaboration in order to address food security across sectors, such as early childhood, colleges, churches and hospitals.
- **Participants wanted to see empowerment and engagement of the community by the institutions.**
- Participants expressed the need for funding opportunities, contacts and a directory of the organizations in the food systems space, and supports for moving towards food sovereignty.



# Evaluation Results

The World Food Policy Center sent an evaluation survey to attendees and received 45 number of responses.

- **95 % of the participants who completed the evaluation survey were either extremely or mostly satisfied with the speakers of the Summit.**
- Respondents noted that they liked the following aspects of the summit:
  - Great speakers
  - Variety of topics and learning opportunities
  - Honest discussions
- **The following aspects of the summit could have been improved:**
  - **More time to network**
  - **Expanded organizational representation**
  - **Stronger focus on solutions**
  - **Stronger focus on funding**
- Participants reflected new learning in the areas of:
  - History
  - Community-led initiatives in Charlotte
  - Data on life expectancy and children
  - Food systems
  - Barriers moving forward
- **75% of respondents indicated they are extremely or somewhat likely to take action in the next 3 to 6 months as a result of this summit. Areas in which individuals want to commit include:**
  - **Reaching out to community**
  - **Moving towards community-led and institution-supported models**
  - **Growing networks and expanding collaborations**
  - **Identifying funding for community organizations**
  - **Funding community organizations**
  - **Continuing existing work**
- 80 % of the participants who completed the survey either completely agreed or mostly agreed with the statement that the summit provided information to move towards a community-led and institution-supported food system solution that promotes economic inclusivity and racial equity.
- **60% of the participants reported that they made between 1-3 connections and 35% of the participants made 4 or more connections during this summit.**
- About 80% of the participants felt that Charlotte was very capable or mostly capable of adopting a community-led and institution-supported approach.

- **Top barriers to adopting a community-led and institution supported model were funding and a lack of common racial equity understanding, though participants noted other barriers such as:**
  - **Complexity of issues around food**
  - **Egos and ownership**
  - **Need for metrics and evidence-based interventions**
  - **Racially biased culture that does not allow transformative action to be put into practice**
- Participants noted specific data and research needs:
  - WIC/SNAP uptake
  - Impact of displacement/gentrification
  - Population health
  - Assessment of existing activities
  - History of food
  - Economic opportunity through food
- **Participants strongly supported more coordination to the existing food efforts and recommended a number of different strategies:**
  - **Coalition that meets regularly with representation from each neighborhood, focusing on neighborhood level solutions and coordination of activities**
  - **Food hub/farmers association**
  - **Oversight entity to coordinate logistics of food**
  - **More regular smaller meetings to discuss opportunities, share projects, etc.**



# Recommendations

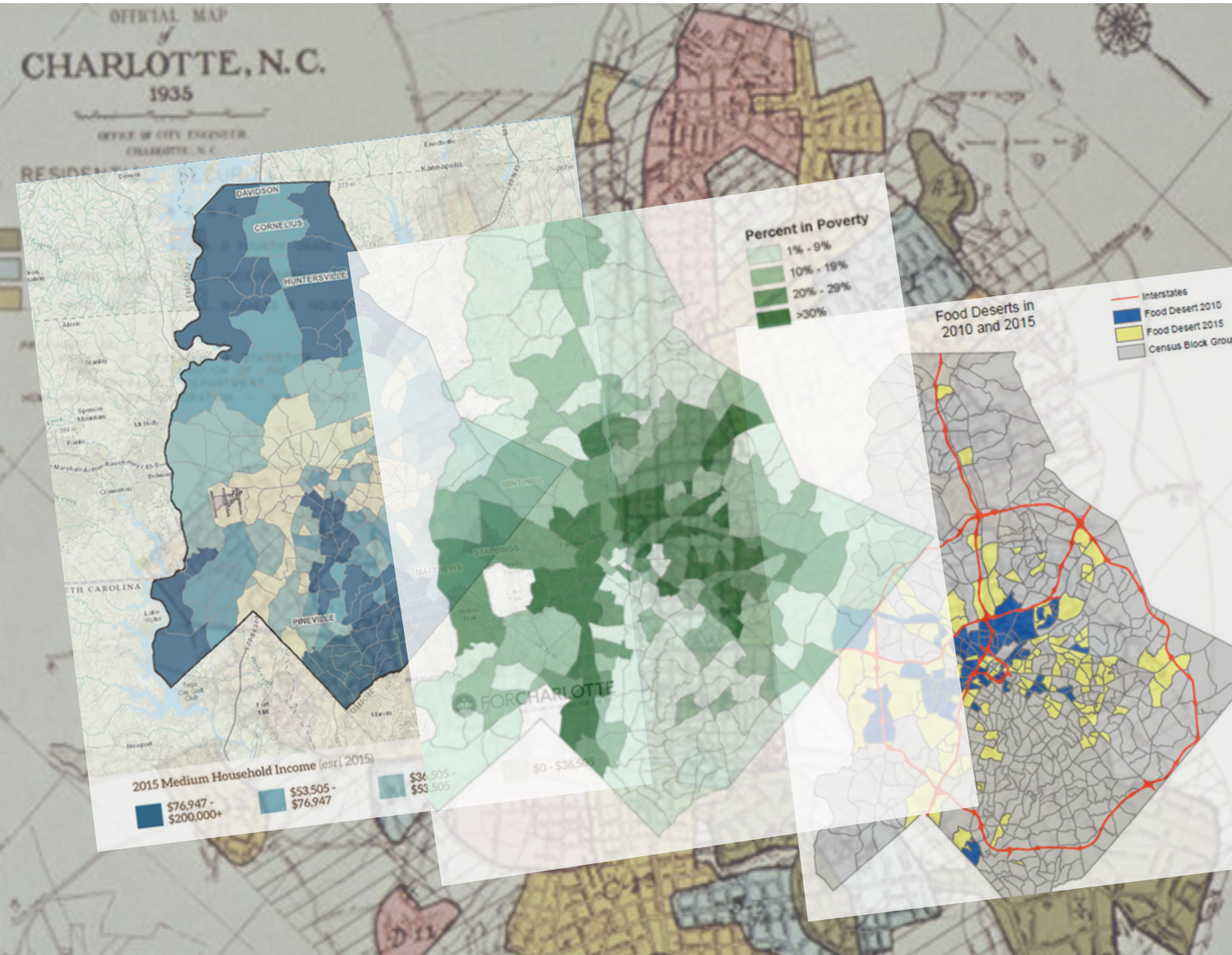
A number of recommendations follow logically from the summit. These recommendations are based on subject matter expertise, presentations and discussions from the summit, participant evaluations and recommendations, and lessons learned from similar work in Durham, NC.



## Deepen shared race equity understanding

To move towards equitable community development, it would be helpful in Charlotte to move toward a deeper shared understanding of race and equity at both the individual levels and the institutional levels.

- Funders could continue to invest in organizations such as Race Matters for Juvenile Justice and the Mecklenburg County Health Department to continue to offer racial equity groundwater trainings to establish a common understanding of inequities and race across the food and community development space. Organizations working in the food and community development space could commit that staff and leadership attend at least one racial equity groundwater training by December 2021.
- Nonprofit, philanthropic, and government institutions could invest in organizational race equity development efforts. Contract with Biwa | Emergent Equity to develop and implement individual institutional race equity analyses and action plans for their own organizations and for their grantee organizations working in the Charlotte metro area in order to create institutional depth in operating from a race equity perspective.
- Individuals could expand their own individual education through key readings such as *To Right These Wrongs* by Robert Korstad, *White Fragility* by Robin DiAngelo, *Decolonizing Wealth* by Edgar Villanueva, and *Post-Traumatic Slave Syndrome* by Joy DeGruy.



## Create shared understanding of the national, state, and local history that has contributed to the inequities in food, business ownership, and land ownership in the Charlotte Metro Area

Establish a deeper understanding of the intended and unintended impacts of policy and practice throughout history so that future policy recommendations can avoid continued displacement of black and brown communities and focus on equitable community development.

- Contract with Tom Hanchett, Community Historian, to develop/expand a comprehensive history of land and food and its racial implications in Charlotte.
- Partner with UNC-Charlotte and the Levine Museum of the New South to create an educational display and presentation that can be shared broadly across community.
- Develop video and other multimedia outreach strategies that can be used by government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), corporations, philanthropy, faith communities, neighborhood organizations, etc. to extend education as broadly as possible.





## Establish/expand a coordinating body for existing activities in the food system space

There is significant activity taking place in the Charlotte Metro area in every aspect of the food system. However, like most large metro areas, this work often takes place in silos or in groups of 2-3 organizations working collectively. An assessment of current activity and establishment or expansion of a coordinating body can help connect disparate activities and avoid duplication of efforts.

- Conduct a stakeholder mapping of existing entities in the food system space, looking at each component of the food system including agriculture, processing and distribution, retail/institutional procurement, consumption, and food waste. This work would ideally include community-rooted and volunteer-led organizations working most closely in community.
- Conduct key stakeholder interviews, centering neighborhood and non-traditional leaders, to identify key elements for connecting grassroots and institutional organizations in authentic and collaborative ways.
- Based on the mapping and interviews, either build the capacity of an existing entity, such as the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Food Policy Council to become a comprehensive coordinating body, or create a new structure to fit the specific needs and requests of the food system stakeholders.

## Explore existing and develop new mechanisms for accessing capital for entrepreneurs of color

Historically disinvested communities want opportunity and the ability to control their destiny. Focusing on increasing access to capital for entrepreneurs of color can open opportunities to begin building wealth.

- Conduct interviews with entrepreneurs of color in the Charlotte Metro area to assess their experiences with accessing capital to understand key needs and barriers.
- Identify potential funding mechanisms—grants, angel investors, Community Development Financial Institutions, traditional banks, and federal, state, and local programs.
- Convene a conversation with entrepreneurs and funding institutions



## Collaborate as institutions and funders to support a community-led initiative

This work moves at the speed of trust, and trust can be built by joint action. While many collaborative efforts have taken place in the Charlotte Metro Area, they are typically planned and coordinated by institutional leadership, engaging community as outreach. True listening to community leadership and identifying the institutional role of support can lead to new and promising ways forward. There is interest in the Charlotte Metro area to understand more deeply a community-led approach, such as the Seeds of Change project on West Boulevard.

- Funders should jointly invest in an initial Phase of the Seeds of Change project, with a focus on both collaboration and capacity building, allowing the flexibility in the work to fail forward and celebrate learning.



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