

Community Food Assessment Executive Summary

Phase One of the Community Food Assessment was an extensive 10 page survey that asked questions related to food access, cooking and eating habits and economic concerns. This survey was distributed online and by Family and Community Resource Centers across the county, generating 886 responses. The survey was open from late December 2012 through the end of April 2013.

Grocery Shopper Profile:

- 69% of Siskiyou County residents shop for groceries locally, while 22% go out of state.
- Grocery store chains followed by mass retailers are the most often shopped channels.
 - Lack of money for groceries and cost of gas make it most difficult for residents shop.
- Primarily, residents reported having their own vehicle to go shopping. Those that didn't were more likely to walk or ask for a ride rather than take the only public transportation option – which is the STAGE bus - to go shopping.

Fresh / Local Food Evaluation:

- 7 out of 10 residents find it extremely important to buy fresh food, such as produce, whole grains, dairy and meat.
 - 59% of residents find buying fresh food is too expensive.
 - 54% can afford to buy fresh food in the summer compared to only 37% in the winter.
 - 7 out of 10 said local food is available for them to purchase where they live, yet only 5 out of 10 believe they can afford it.

Food Economics:

- Residents are most likely to skip buying groceries in order to afford heat or pay for medical expenses.
 - 8 out of 10 CalFresh recipients run out of their benefits before the end of the month.

Children and Seniors in Households:

- Nearly a third of households are struggling to feed their kids during the summer break.
- 1 in 4 adults are going hungry at least once a month so that children in their house can eat.
 - 73% of Seniors are aware of meal programs and 25% take advantage of them.

Phase Two was a series of Community Food Conversations at four locations in the county and a fifth joint county wide wrap up event. At the first four meetings, residents in each area catalogued their food assets. These included: small scale food resources, people with skills and knowledge to contribute, equipment and facilities. When asked "What do you want to work on?" participants selected priority projects which they then brainstormed the goals, partners and next steps. At the final meeting residents from around the county shared stories, experience and information about projects already in progress and networked to strengthen local food vitality. Local Cottage Food Law information was presented by the first permitted cottage food business owner in the county and a county Public Health official.

Survey results and common themes were shared to inspire next steps.