



PAJARO VALLEY FOOD FARMING AND HEALTH POLICY COUNCIL FOOD MAPPING SUMMARY

SARA HOUSMAN, MPH, RD

Author
sarahousman@gmail.com
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Executive Summary

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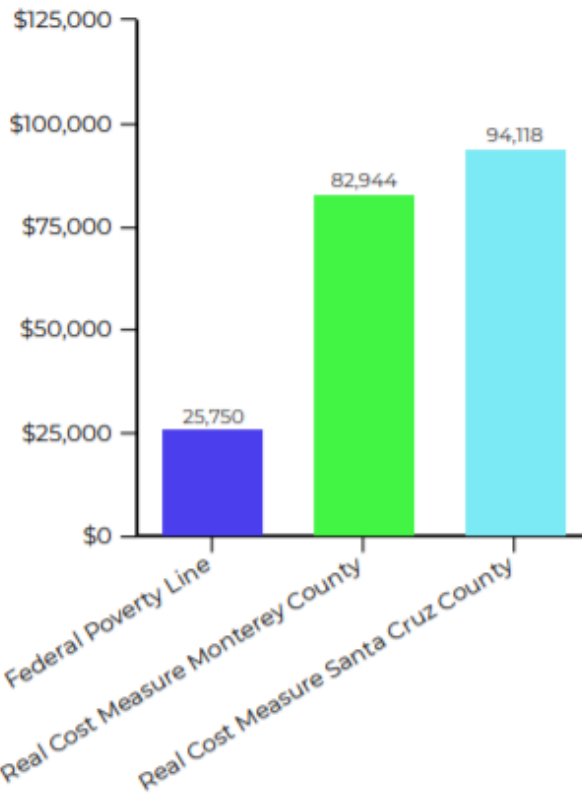
the council was
formed

Overcrowding



To relieve overcrowding an additional 45,560 units of housing would be needed in the Salinas and Pajaro Valleys

Interviews commissioned by the Pajaro Valley Community Health Trust revealed that in comparison to the rest of Santa Cruz County, Pajaro Valley residents had higher rates of obesity, diabetes and fast food consumption, lower rates of physical activity, and higher needs for food and money for utilities.



Cost of Living- Family of Four



If Pajaro Valley were a county it would rank as the 5th largest producer of agriculture in California

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Participating Organizations

- ALBA
- California Food Policy Council
- Californians for Pesticide Reform
- Catholic Charities Diocese of Monterey
- City of Watsonville
- Community Agroecology Network
- Community Water Center
- EcoFarm
- El Pajaro CDC
- Esperanza Community Farms
- Everyone's Harvest
- FarmLink
- Jovenes SANOS
- Life Lab
- Mesa Verde Gardens
- Pajaro Valley Community Health Trust
- Pajaro Valley Unified School District
- Regeneración
- Safe Ag Safe Schools
- Salud Para La Gente
- Santa Cruz Community Ventures
- Second Harvest Food Bank
- Teen Kitchen Project
- United Way of Santa Cruz County

Introduction

This project was created to form a better understanding of Pajaro Valley, its people, their health, and their access to food. While this summary serves as a mark in time of what is known in 2020, this is meant to be a living document to be updated and changed as the Council sees fit. It was undertaken on behalf of the Pajaro Valley Food, Farming, and Health Policy Council (FFHPC) with funding assistance from Kaiser Permanente Community Benefit Programs. From this shared understanding, the Council will begin to develop a set of policy priorities to support critical food system needs.

In 2018, the Council was convened by the Pajaro Valley Community Health Trust (PVCHT) to bring together agencies, farms, food producers, and individuals to organize, raise awareness, foster constructive dialogue, and assert positive influence to promote a flourishing community. Founded as a collective impact initiative, the Council cultivates cross-sector collaboration to influence food policy outcomes. By coordinating advocacy efforts, the Council leverages the member network to create lasting food system change.

An initial stakeholder survey conducted by the Council revealed questions about what factors inspire people to seek out local farmers' products, who decides what restaurants come into town, meeting the needs of the area's food insecure through locally produced foods, feasibility of public institution procurement of local products, locations of food deserts, and identifying gaps of children and families missing out on existing opportunities. Learning opportunities included cross county collaborations, existing community work, food waste and preventative strategies, policy/advocacy basics, ways to connect farms to get excess produce into school meals, and ways to give back to farms usable food waste for composting. Stakeholders identified potential Council

MISSION AND VISION OF THE PAJARO VALLEY FOOD FARMING AND HEALTH POLICY COUNCIL

The **mission** of the Pajaro Valley Food, Farming, and Health Policy Council is to cultivate equitable food systems that foster health for all.

Our **vision** is a community where culturally relevant, nutritious food is accessible and affordable for all; agriculture is sustainable, fairly produced, and a vibrant component of the local economy; and where people can be healthy and live free of preventable disease.

accomplishments as a network of food system stakeholders, learning what others with shared vision are doing to promote that vision, cohesive cross-county work, supporting and building greater food security across Pajaro Valley, strengthen the farm-to-school program, creation of a livable world in which to feed people, end poverty, integrate long term thinking about climate change into all projects, grassroots support for food and farming issues, support a healthy food and farming system, promote local policy initiatives related to healthy foods and beverages, food security etc., and development of businesses focused on low income populations as well as ways to earn income. The Council has worked since its beginning to bring in educational opportunities regarding policy and advocacy, supported local and statewide policies, and created sharing opportunities for stakeholders.

In August 2018, the Council explored opportunities for action with Tracey Patterson from California Food Policy Advocates. She facilitated a listening session to learn about local issues and concerns.

Question: *In your community, how are things going?*

<i>What's going well:</i>	<i>What's not so good:</i>
• Good supermarket coming to town in May of next year (Staff of Life)	• Can't access local food that is being grown in the area
• Collaborative mindset among nonprofits and city government, etc. • Partners for change together	• Low voter participation (people don't feel that their vote matters)
• Support from public to encourage positive behavior	• Culture of fear
• Robust food bank that provides much more than just food	• Concerns about corporate power when it comes to issues like pesticides and fast food
• Progressive and forward-thinking state legislators	• Income disparity very high
• Compassionate, giving community	

Question: *When it comes to affordable food...*

<i>Ideas/Assets</i>	<i>Pressing Concerns</i>
Large commercial kitchen that can be an incubator for local food businesses	- How to change unhealthy behaviors - Individuals - Structural behavior/unhealthy choice is the easiest choice-economics driving/change the behavior - General decline of home cooking-people don't have time - Low wage jobs/long hours-difficult to cook
Jovenes SANOS and youth groups	Cost of living one of the highest
Collaborate with brown issues/Cal Endowment, Food What, Digital Nest	- Use of services, e.g. Food Bank, are down; likely due to - Stigma - Fear of using government services
Reiter Affiliated-example of companies taking a stand for worker health or well-being	Anti-Latino rhetoric
Farmers and technology-keeping kids in the community to continue agriculture (Farm Bureau)	
Link health care and food insecurity screening	
More community gardens	
Sustainable organic farms & related initiatives e.g. ALBA, CCOF, Eco-Farm, sustainable agriculture	

Areas that the Council identified that could be addressed with advocacy were a partnership with the City Council to work on the healthy food ordinance, bringing farmers to the table, and developing mutually beneficial relationships with businesses and farms. Getting farmer involvement continues to be an issue for the Council.

Often the Pajaro Valley is looked upon as just the Watsonville area. The lack of a clearly defined area presents a challenge in gathering pertinent, recent information. Furthermore, a large portion of data is collected at the county or the zip code level. This summary of Pajaro Valley includes South Santa Cruz County and North Monterey County including Corralitos, La Selva Beach, Pajaro, Royal Oaks, Pajaro Dunes, Interlaken, Watsonville, and Freedom. Pajaro Valley is defined by the boundary to the west of the Monterey Bay, to the south by the Pajaro River

until it branches. The Corralitos Creek, Pajaro Valley Fire Station, and Pajaro Valley Memorial Park define the eastern border. The northern edge includes La Selva Beach, and Corralitos. Pajaro Valley can also be defined as a laborshed, a geographical area where labor flows, in this case the region where Salinas and Pajaro Valley draw their workers (California Institute for Rural Studies, 2018).



Figure 1. Map of the Pajaro Valley. Retrieved from: <https://pvhealthtrust.org/>

About the Region

It is difficult now to identify the different indigenous tribal groups that made up the territory of what is now San Benito, Monterey, Santa Cruz, Santa Clara, and San Mateo counties now known collectively as the Ohlone people. There are eight surviving languages that people identify with, for the Pajaro Valley region the dominant language is Mutsun (Sayers, Morgan, & Clinger, 2014). Pajaro Valley falls into a portion of the territory originally called Popeloutchom by the Amah Mutsun tribe. When the Spanish occupied their traditional lands, many were moved to the missions at San Juan Bautista and Santa Cruz. The Amah Mutsun work to regain their knowledge and protect their homeland (Amah Mutsun Land Trust, n.d.).



Figure 2. Map of Amah Mutsun land retrieved from <http://amahmutsun.org/land-trust>

Pajaro Valley's climate makes it the nation's leading region of fresh market vegetables (California Institute for Rural Studies, 2018). There were a reported 1,729 farms in Monterey and Santa Cruz counties (USDA Census of Agriculture, 2017). Approximately one third are livestock and animal producers, one third fruit crop, one seventh vegetable, nursery and floriculture, hay, and grain (California Institute for Rural Studies, 2018). More than \$280 million

a year is spent transporting this bounty around the world (the City of Watsonville, n.d.). It is less clear how much of this remains local and available for consumption.

The amount of Salinas-Pajaro Valley land used for vegetable production increased 1,560 acres between 1997 and 2013, to an estimated 201,138 acres. The Salinas-Pajaro Valleys are California's predominant berry production area, harvesting two-thirds of raspberries and nearly half of strawberries. While statewide production of both berry crops increased between 1992 and 2012, prices and yields vary from year-to-year as well as within the yearly seasons. Larger producers have a competitive edge over smaller businesses to survive this variability. Some new berry farmers were likely unable to survive these losses and were forced to leave the business creating an opportunity for larger companies to expand through acquiring abandoned land or taking over expiring cropland leases. The Salinas-Pajaro Valleys are also the nation's major center of organic crop and livestock production. Per the Santa Cruz County Crop Report (2018), vegetables (primarily head and leaf lettuce and Brussels sprouts) make up 7,627 acres of crop land, while berries account for 5,682 acres, and fruit (apples, wine grapes and miscellaneous others) make up an additional 2,926 acres. A new money-making crop, cannabis, is entering the scene. Newly legal, it has yet to be seen what impact this will have on the division of cropland in Pajaro Valley (California Institute for Rural Studies, 2018).

Beyond agriculture, the area is home to multiple manufacturers, including Fox Racing Shox, innovative businesses, public health programs and Santa Cruz County's largest school district. Pajaro Valley Unified School District (PVUSD) includes, eight charter/alternative schools, sixteen elementary schools, nine secondary schools, adult education, and the Institute of Language and Culture. There is also a Cabrillo College extension campus. For 40 years El Pajaro Community Development Corporation has helped entrepreneurs start their own small businesses and promoted equal access to economic opportunities. They provide technical assistance, help in acquiring loans, developing business plans and crafting marketing and promotion campaigns, managing employees, navigating the legal system, and more. In 1997, they opened a retail business incubator in downtown Watsonville to assist low- to moderate-income, Spanish speaking entrepreneurs with starting and operating businesses. Additionally, their Commercial Kitchen Incubator Program houses 33 food purveyors. Digital NEST teaches young people technical skills to become competitive and self-sufficient through technology centers in Watsonville and Salinas. Pajaro Valley Prevention and Student Assistance (PVPSA)

provides prevention education, training, and counseling services to children and families of Pajaro Valley, Santa Cruz, and Monterey counties. The nonprofit collaborates with Pajaro Valley Unified School District on community issues such as drug and alcohol use, gang prevention, health, education, public advocacy, and safety as well as mental health counseling at their Watsonville Counselling Center.

Reflective of area culture, Watsonville features various public art installations. Pajaro Valley Arts promotes local art including the pilot project, Movable Murals, in collaboration with the City of Watsonville. Movable Murals provides a venue for artists and community groups to showcase large-scale paintings. New murals will be showcased each year on topics such as Pajaro Valley's history, people, neighborhoods, landscape, natural resources, arts, and culture (Pajaro Valley Arts, n.d.). Another community art project, *We Are Pajaro Valley* reflects the stories, personalities, and response to questions of how participants and families came to the Pajaro Valley. Personal and family stories of their immigration to the United States were written and contributed by students from E. A. Hall Middle School and ECHO students at Watsonville High School. Their stories have been paired with photographs of Pajaro Valley youth, taken by students and teachers from Watsonville High School, Renaissance High School, and E. A. Hall Middle School. This project was done in partnership with the Pajaro Valley Arts Council exhibit *Immigration: Borders, Boundaries, Beginnings*, and the San Jose Museum of Art exhibit *Border Cantos* (Santa Cruz Office of Education, n.d.)

In 2016, Watsonville developed the City's Urban Greening Plan to identify and design projects that address greenhouse gas emissions or help residents adapt to challenges posed by climate change. The plan included six elements: a citywide pedestrian and bicycle trail system, the urban street trees program, community gardens, a native and drought tolerant landscaping guideline and policy, landscaping restoration projects, green and "cool roof" projects plus stormwater features. The City of Watsonville *Complete Streets to Schools Plan* has recently been unanimously approved by the Watsonville City Council and the Pajaro Valley Unified School District (PVUSD) Board. The plan was a partnership between the City of Watsonville, County Public Health, PVUSD, and Ecology Action. Funded through a Caltrans Sustainable Communities Transportation Planning grant, the plan includes recommendations for infrastructure improvements and programmatic changes at 15 Watsonville schools, with the goal of improving safety for families that are walking and biking to school and encouraging more

active transportation trips. It will be used by the City of Watsonville and PVUSD to prioritize future improvements around schools and to secure grant funding for project construction. Watsonville Downtown Plan will act as a blueprint for the future of downtown by setting guidelines for housing, parking, economic development, and the look and layout of streets and public spaces. In February, the Watsonville City Council approved a Health in All Policies approach that will incorporate health considerations into decision-making across all departments and policy areas. By adopting a Health in All Policies approach, the City of Watsonville recognizes that the city government has a role to play in improving health and well-being outcomes and reducing inequities (Watsonville City Council, 2020). This approach acknowledges that health and well-being are influenced by the interaction of many factors and not simply by genetics, individual behavior, or access to medical care. Social determinants of health, the conditions in the environment in which people are born, live, learn, work, play, and age, have the greatest influence on health and well-being outcomes across populations and affect chronic disease rates, mental illness, as well as injuries caused by accidents and violence. These factors may make it difficult for individuals to choose to adopt a healthy lifestyle.

The Friday evening Watsonville Farmers Market brings fresh produce to the people of Watsonville. The market participates in the Market Match™ program, California's health food incentive program which matches customer's federal nutrition assistance benefits (commonly known CalFresh), as well as the Senior and WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Programs. Second Harvest Food Bank Staff attend the market to help with CalFresh applications. The market plans to open a second, healthier location.

Community Demographics

As of the 2013 Census, the population of the Pajaro Valley was 92,016. The median household income was \$52,508 and the median age in the region was 30.29 years old (PVPSA, 2015). The city of Watsonville is the largest community in the area, and 79.9% of its residents five years and older speak a language other than English at home and 41.2% of the population is foreign born. In a survey of farmworkers, the average age at arrival was about 20 years old while the median age of workers was 37 years old (California Institute of Rural Studies, 2018). The median number of years in the U.S. is fifteen, with a median number of four years with current employer; a quarter worked for their employer for eight years or more. Two-thirds of workers were from four states in Mexico: Oaxaca, Michoacán, Jalisco, and Guanajuato, and 13% self-identified as indigenous Mixtec, Triqui, Zapotec. The Amah Mutsun Tribal Band has nearly 600 Bureau of Indian Affairs documented Indians. All of the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band are direct descendants of the tribal groups whose villages and territories fell under the influence of the Missions of San Juan Bautista (Mutsun) and Santa Cruz (Awaswas) during the 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries. Members of this tribe are not recognized by the U.S. government and therefore receive no assistance from any federal, state, or other government (Amah Mutsun Land Trust, n.d.).

Interviews commissioned by the Pajaro Valley Community Health Trust revealed that in comparison to the rest of Santa Cruz County, Pajaro Valley residents had higher rates of obesity, diabetes, fast food consumption, and lower rates of physical activity. They also were less able to afford food and utilities. Pajaro Valley respondents had used certified farmers' markets more than the rest of the county and were increasing their physical activity levels. Aspirations for youth and adults in a PVPSA focus group included opportunities to learn skills that will allow youth to be socially, emotionally, physically, and economically successful (PVPSA, 2015).

Employment

The City of Watsonville lists the city's largest employers as Pajaro Valley Unified School District, Watsonville Community Hospital, Fox Racing Shox, and the City of Watsonville. While agriculture was not mentioned, it is the largest industry in the area. In fact, if Pajaro Valley were a county it would rank as the fifth largest producer of agriculture in California (City of Watsonville, n.d.). Workers usually fall into one of three categories: self-employed workers such as farmers and ranchers; hired workers, whether directly employed by farm businesses, or employed by businesses which provide support services on farms; and unpaid family workers, most often family members of self-employed farmworkers or families of hired farmworkers (California Institute for Rural Studies, 2018). Agricultural employment is predominantly seasonal, with an average growing season of March to November. Employment fluctuates greatly, California Institute for Rural Studies estimates there were approximately 80,175 workers in July to 34,737 in January over the three-year period of 2014-2016. Average agriculture employment has increased by 24% during the past decade (California Institute for Rural Studies, 2018).

Despite this increase in employment, employers report challenges with labor shortages. This could be related to a decrease in foreign agricultural workers into the United States. Further shortages could be looming as an estimated half of California's current crop workers say they lack authorization for U.S. employment. Additionally, those who are documented are aging. To minimize the impact of labor shortages on the food supply, efforts to mechanize every aspect of production are underway. In the meantime, some employers have sought H-2A workers to supplement their domestic workforce (California Institute for Rural Studies, 2018). The H-2A program allows U.S. employers or U.S. agents who meet specific regulatory requirements to bring foreign nationals to the United States to fill temporary agricultural jobs. To qualify for H-2A nonimmigrant classification, the employer must offer a job that is of a temporary or seasonal nature, demonstrate that there are not enough U.S. workers who are able, willing, qualified, and available to do the temporary work, and show that employing H-2A workers will not adversely affect the wages and working conditions of similarly employed U.S. workers (United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2020). Utilization of H-2A workers has increased, less than five percent of workers were H-2A in 2014 (636 workers) but by 2017 that had increased to

4,300 in the Pajaro Valley/Salinas Valley laborshed. H-2A workers must be paid at the Adverse Impact Wage Rate determined regionally, currently \$14.77 an hour in California (United States Department of Labor, 2019). Employees hired by farm labor contractors also increased in the area. The average wage rate reportedly earned by labor contractor employees is nearly the same as for workers directly hired by farm operators. However, direct-hire workers are more likely to receive non-wage benefits. Overall, the proportion of farms offering housing benefits to their seasonal employees has declined significantly during the past two decades (California Institute for Rural Studies, 2018).

Cost of Living

An area's cost of living impacts an individual's quality of life, housing, and food choices. The increasing push of people out of the Bay Area raises the cost of living in areas like the Pajaro Valley making housing unaffordable for agricultural workers who cannot leave the area to do their job. While Pajaro Valley's specific cost of living is unavailable, there is information about Santa Cruz and Monterey counties. The federal poverty level for a family of four in 2019 was \$25,750 (United States Department of Health and Human Services, 2019). In an acknowledgement that this federal poverty level does not account for the variability in the cost of living across the country, United Way's Real Cost Measure (RCM) estimates the amount of income required to meet basic needs for a given household type in a specific community. The Real Cost Measure builds a bare-bones budget that reflects reasonable choices for essential expenses such as healthcare, transportation, food, taxes, housing, and daycare.

The 2017 RCM in Monterey County suggests that one adult would need to make \$29,964; two adults- \$46,404; and two adults, one preschooler, one school-age child-\$82,944- over three times the federal poverty line. The number of households in Monterey County below the measure is estimated to be 43,956 (41%), 97% percent of those households have at least one working adult. Of the households below the RCM, 29,558 are Latino. Most single mothers (79%) in the county fall below the RCM, and 67% of households with children under six struggles to get by. A family of four would need to hold more than three full time, minimum wage jobs to achieve economic security. In the county, 40% of households spend more than 30% of their income on housing (United Way, 2019).

Santa Cruz County is similarly unaffordable, with 23,930 (32%) of households below the RCM; 51% of households with children under six struggle. The RCM for Santa Cruz County are slightly higher than Monterey County. One adult would need to earn \$33,785; two adults- \$50,878; and two adults, one preschooler, one school-age child- \$94,118. High housing costs impact both counties, with an estimated 40% of all households in the county paying for than 30% of their income on housing. Of note, 61% of those that fall below the RCM in Monterey County and 58% in Santa Cruz County are foreign-born non-citizens. California Institute of Rural Studies (2018) reports farmworkers wages averaged \$13.64 an hour, with a median annual income of \$25,000, falling well below the RCM for both counties.

Housing

The high cost of housing means many people live in overcrowded situations to get by. Overcrowded housing is defined as a housing unit that is occupied by more than one person per room, excluding kitchen, hallways, and porches. Overpayment refers to households paying 30% or more of their gross income for either mortgage or rent, including costs for utilities, property insurance, and real estate taxes. Based on state legislation, the City of Watsonville is obligated to have a *Housing Element*, which is to be based on the Regional Housing Needs Plan. A 2015-2023 draft was released in 2016 (City of Watsonville, 2016). The city experienced high population growth in the 1990s continuing through the “Great Recession”. During this period, like many other areas, there was a high rate of foreclosures between 2008 and 2011. The loss of homeownership increased the need for rental homes (City of Watsonville, 2016). A total of 4,029 Watsonville households lived in overcrowded situations in 2000, approximately 35% of households (City of Watsonville, 2016). Watsonville’s median housing costs are \$1,361 per month, making it virtually impossible to afford for the city’s extremely low-income households, who only earn \$1,319 per month (City of Watsonville, 2016).

A study by the California Rural Institute (2018) suggests an additional 45,560 units of housing are needed to relieve overcrowding in Salinas and Pajaro Valleys. These housing units will need to be subsidized as 7.6% of farmworkers access subsidized housing; thus, a total of 53,000 units of permanent affordable subsidized housing is needed (California Institute for Rural Studies, 2018).

Employers of H-2A workers are required to find housing for these workers, further impacting the local affordable housing market as employers gain control of a large portion of the available, affordable housing as well as temporary lodging, such as motels. According to an analysis by the California Institute of Rural Studies, there are 26 year-round housing complexes in Santa Cruz and Monterey counties with 1,290 total units and 1,077 units that are occupationally restricted to farmworkers. The majority are in Monterey County, 19 projects (73%) with farmworker 873 units (81%). All but one of the Santa Cruz County properties is in Watsonville (California Institute for Rural Studies, 2018).

Within Pajaro and Salinas Valley there is a high rate of residences that are above the severely crowded condition of two people per room, often with more than five people per

bathroom. The housing survey by the California Institute for Rural Studies found that about 40% of respondents live in houses, 30% in apartments, and 19% live in rented rooms without kitchens either in houses or apartments. Most astoundingly, another 12% live in “other” types of dwellings. Employers are often unaware of the living situations of their workers. While many employers can identify that there is a labor shortage, they may not see the linkage to the housing shortage. While more housing is greatly needed, there are concerns about finding money to pay for it as well as land to put it on (California Institute for Rural Studies, 2018).

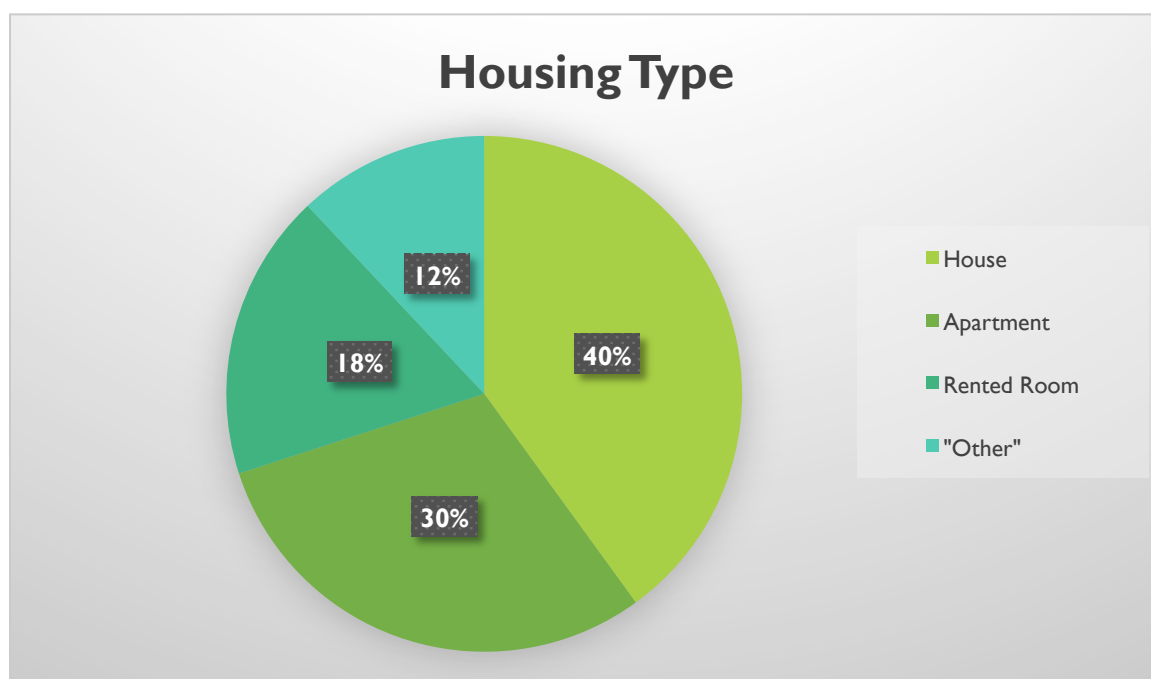


Figure 3. Data from California Institute for Rural Studies

Environment

Anthropologist Dvera Saxton spent 20 months from 2010-2013 conducting ethnographic field research in Pajaro Valley. She argues that Pajaro Valley constitutes an “extreme environment” where human, technological, and chemical interventions needed to grow strawberries and profits are naturalized as are the health and ecological consequences (Saxton, 2014). Workers and residents in the Pajaro Valley face an increased exposure to pesticides. To address some of this exposure, the City of Watsonville banned the chemical Glyphosate, also known as Round-Up, by a unanimous city council vote in 2019.

In 2017-2018, the climate action group Regeneración conducted a survey to study how the people of Pajaro Valley are being impacted by climate change. The results were analyzed by Dr. Mathur and students from California State University, Monterey Bay. Responses were grouped into those who worked in agriculture and those who did not. Both groups experience pollution in their communities, with litter and exposure to pesticides being the highest concerns. When surveyed about environmental changes, 74% of agricultural workers said that they have experienced extreme heat conditions such as dehydration or fainting at their workplace. Agricultural workers also identified heat waves in the spring and fall and more frequent droughts. Indigenous workers appear to be the most vulnerable when study results were broken down by language with 75% of respondents experiencing extreme heat conditions and 50% experiencing an unpredictable growing season/work when compared to bilingual workers who experience extreme heat conditions 67% of the time and unpredictability of work 17% of the time (Regeneración, 2019).

Priorities identified in the Regeneración survey were similar to those identified in the Council survey, for example, to increase access to local organic agriculture. Agricultural workers, Indigenous and Spanish speakers were most supportive of alternative transportation improvements such as more sidewalks and protected bike lanes. Other priorities included employer sponsored carpools, local government providing solar power, and businesses paying taxes proportional to their negative impact on the environment (Regeneración, 2019).

Water

In addition to pesticide exposure, Pajaro Valley Residents face further contaminant exposure via their water. Chromium-6 is a heavy metal that occurs naturally in the environment due to the erosion of natural chromium deposits, although it is most often produced by industrial processes. Over the long-term, chromium-6 in drinking water has been linked to an increased risk of cancer. The EPA, under the Safe Water Drinking Act, sets legal limits of contaminants allowed in drinking water or Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL). There is not a current federal limit for Chromium-6, although the previous MCL was 10 parts per billion (ppb). California can set stricter MCLs through the State Water Resources Control Board. These limits are set by considering public health as well as costs and technical feasibility. The California Environmental Protection Agency also sets a Public Health Goal (PHG) for each contaminant. For example, the PHG for Chromium-6 is 0.02 ppb. This is the level that is considered safe for human consumption based only on public health studies (Community Water Center, n.d.).

Drinking water at Ohlone Elementary School has been found to receive water from two wells that contain 12 and 16 ppb of chromium-6, which is above the former maximum contaminant level (MCL), or legal limit, of 10ppb. The water is provided by the Sunny Mesa Water System operated by the Pajaro Sunny Mesa State Water Board. Renaissance High School operates its own water system serving only its school; their well also has high levels of Chromium-6 (21-23 ppb). Long term solutions would involve consolidating these two water supplies into systems without chromium-6 should the money become available. An area organization, Community Water Center, is committed to working with PVUSD to ensure that all district schools have access to safe and affordable drinking water by advocating for emergency and long-term solutions (Community Water Center, n.d.).

Schools

The Pajaro Valley Unified School District is the largest school district in Santa Cruz County covering both north Monterey County and southern Santa Cruz County. More than 20,300 K-12 students attend the District's schools. Demographic data from students show that 81.1% are Hispanic or Latino. In 2013-2014, 46.5% were classified as English learners (Santa Cruz Office of Education). Based on 2017 demographic data, 75.5% of students within PVUSD were classified as economically disadvantaged (PVPSA, 2015). Per the California Department of Education district profile for Pajaro Valley Unified, 71.1% of students qualify for free/reduced lunch, a total of 14,289 children (California Department of Education, n.d.). PVUSD highlights local farms and procures California-grown fresh produce for its lunch program. More than 40% of its produce supply is grown locally.

Pajaro Valley students face additional challenges related to pesticide covered fields near the schools. A 2014 Department of Public Health study found that of the top ten pesticides applied near schools, six are toxic air contaminants, four are carcinogens, three are reproductive/developmental toxins, and two are neurotoxins. A majority of these, 8 out of 10, persist in the environment for a week or more. Monterey County has the highest percentage (25%) of students in the state that attend a school within a quarter mile of the heaviest pesticide use. Latinx students are 3.2 times more likely to attend these schools (Safe Ag Safe Schools, n.d.). In the 15 counties assessed, Hispanic/Latino children were 46% more likely than White (non-Hispanic/Latino) children to attend schools with any use of pesticides within a quarter mile, compared to children attending schools with no pesticide use within a quarter mile. This difference was more pronounced with increased pesticide use, as Hispanic children were 91% more likely than White (non-Hispanic/Latino) children to attend a school in the top quartile of pesticide usage, when compared to children attending schools with no pesticide use nearby (The California Environmental Health Tracking Program, 2014).

Buffer zones are one way to decrease exposure to pesticides by increasing the distance between students and pesticide application, theoretically reducing the amount of pesticide "drift". Current buffer zone restrictions prohibit most drift prone application methods on fields within ¼ mile of schools between the weekday hours of 6AM and 6PM. No fumigant pesticides can be applied within a 36-hour period before a school day. Current "buffer zones" fail to

protect kids from these chemicals since they are only active for a 12-hour period Monday to Friday. Safe Ag Safe Schools is striving for a full-time “no-spray” buffer zone of one mile around schools. While a one-mile buffer zone will not address the full breadth of pesticide usage in California, it can further protect children near the fields. In attaining a one mile “no spray” buffer zone, children can be further protected from short-term pesticide exposure and drift events.

A communications notification network is being piloted by the Monterey County Agricultural Commissioner’s Office with funding provided by the California Department of Pesticide Regulation. The network will notify Monterey County school communities of Ohlone Elementary and Pajaro Middle School in the Pajaro Valley Unified School District, Hall District Elementary and the North Monterey County Unified School District before a fumigant is applied on a farm within a quarter of a mile from school grounds. A website provides parents, teachers, students, school employees and the community with information about fumigant use on farmland near these schools. The first of its kind in the nation, the website includes information about fumigant regulations in place to ensure safety, maps of the ten schools within the pilot project and neighboring farms, a system that will send an email or text notification to parents, teachers and community members prior to a fumigant application near a pilot project school.

Food Insecurity

Producing the nation's food does not ensure that residents have access to sufficient food to meet their own needs, let alone nutritious food to provide good health. Food insecurity is the state of being without reliable access to enough affordable, nutritious food. Pajaro Valley experiences a high level of food insecurity. The USDA's Food Access Research Atlas presents a spatial overview of food access indicators for low-income and other census tracts using different measures of supermarket accessibility; provides food access data for populations within census tracts; and offers census-tract-level data on food access that can be downloaded for community planning or research purposes.

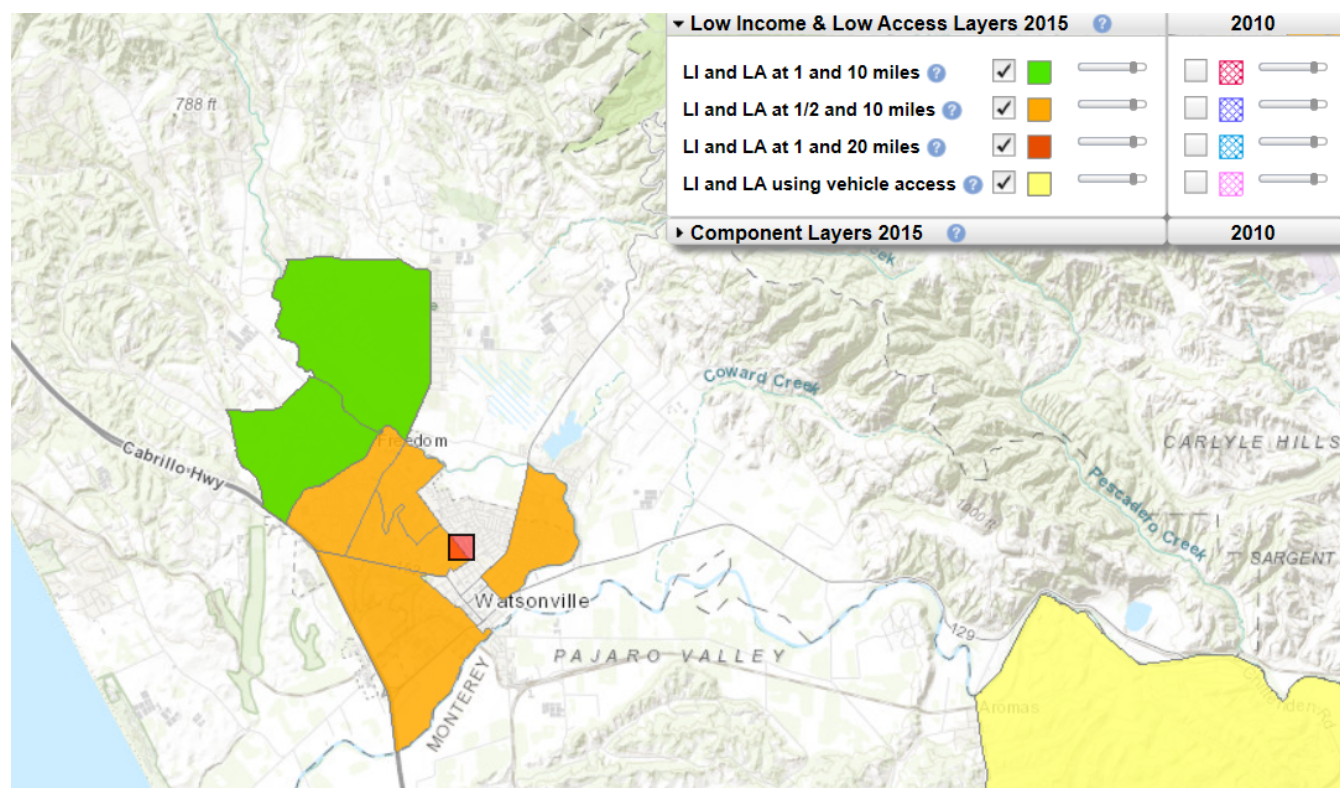


Figure 4. Data for the 95076-zip code represented by the red square. Accessed at: <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-access-research-atlas/go-to-the-atlas/>

CalFresh is California's implementation of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as food stamps. Funded by the federal government, CalFresh benefits are issued by an electronic benefit transfer card (EBT) and can be used to buy food in grocery stores and farmers markets. The amount of CalFresh issued depends on many things,

including household size, income, and costs. The average CalFresh household gets over \$300 each month. In California, there are about 4 million people who are eligible but not receiving CalFresh. For every \$5 of CalFresh spent in a community, another \$9 of local economic activity is generated, supporting jobs and businesses in the community. The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) serves to safeguard the health of low-income pregnant, postpartum, and breastfeeding women, infants, and children up to age five who are at nutritional risk by providing nutritious foods to supplement diets, information on healthy eating including breastfeeding promotion and support, and referrals to health care. Starting in February in the Central Coast region, WIC benefits will be issued via EBT as well. While both CalFresh and WIC provide access to healthy foods, CalFresh allows a greater freedom of choice by simply providing the money to buy food while WIC provides food packages allowing participants to choose healthy balanced foods from predetermined options at the grocery store. The WIC program also operates a supplemental summer program that provides a set of checks redeemable at farmers markets known as the Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP). Pajaro Valley residents can access WIC from two programs Community Bridges and Monterey County Health Department.

Subgroups within the Pajaro Valley struggle with food insecurity as evidenced by the California Food Policy Advocates county profiles:

Nutrition and Food Insecurity Profile: Monterey County

Demographic Data		
Total Population 2015	Individuals in Poverty 2014	Percent of Individuals in Poverty 2014
433,898	71,246	17%

Demographic Data: Children		
Children 0 to 5 Years Old 2014	Children 6 to 17 Years Old 2014	All Children Under 18 2014
38,482	73,900	112,382
Children in Poverty 2014	Percent of Children in Poverty 2014	Students eligible: Free or Reduced-Price School Meals 2014-15
29,944	27%	50,998

Food Security Measures	
Low-Income, Food-Insecure Households 2013-14	Percent of Low-Income Households That are Food Insecure 2013-14
	35%

CalFresh					
Individuals Participating 16-Feb	Income- Eligible Individuals 2013	Income-eligible Non-Participants 2013	County Program Access Index (PAI) 2013	PAI County Rank 1=Best 2013	Additional Economic Activity w/ Full CalFresh Participation 2013
55,202	88,821	41,829	0.52	35	\$76,800,000

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)		
Licensed Childcare Facilities 2014	Licensed Childcare Slots 2014	Children Participating in CACFP 2011-12
521	10,532	1,619

National School Lunch & Breakfast Programs	
Number of Low-Income Students Reached by School Lunch 2014-16	Number of Low-Income Students Reached by School Breakfast 2014-15
35,580	14,175
Percent of Low-Income Students Reached by School Lunch 2014-16	Percent of Low-Income Students Reached by School Breakfast
70%	28%
Percent of School Lunch Participants Also Reached by School Breakfast: Low-Income Students 2014-15	Additional Federal Meal Reimbursements That Could Be Received Per Schools Year with Increased Breakfast Participation 2014-15
40%	\$7,303,000

Summer Meal Programs	
Summer Meal Program Participation Among Low-Income Children 2015	Percent of School Lunch Participants Reached During the Summer 2015
3,093	10%

WIC	
Individual Count	Family Count
61	39

Nutrition and Food Insecurity Profile: Santa Cruz County

Demographic Data		
Total Population 2015	Individuals in Poverty 2014	Percent of Individuals in Poverty 2014
274,146	43,927	17%

Demographic Data: Children		
Children 0 to 5 Years Old 2014	Children 6 to 17 Years Old 2014	All Children Under 18 2014
18,241	35,286	53,527
Children in Poverty 2014	Percent of Children in Poverty 2014	Students eligible: Free or Reduced-Price School Meals 2014-15
11,266	21%	19,236

Food Security Measures					
Low-Income, Food-Insecure Households 2013-14			Percent of Low-Income Households That are Food Insecure 2013-14		
29,000			35%		
CalFresh					
Individuals Participating 16-Feb	Income- Eligible Individuals 2013	Income- eligible Non- Participants 2013	County Program Access Index (PAI) 2013	PAI County Rank 1=Best 2013	Additional Economic Activity w/ Full CalFresh Participation 2013
27,580	46,335	23,355	0.49	39	\$50,100,000

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)		
Licensed Childcare Facilities 2014	Licensed Childcare Slots 2014	Children Participating in CACFP 2011-12
446	8,500	7,063

National School Lunch & Breakfast Programs	
Number of Low-Income Students Reached	Number of Low-Income Students

by School Lunch 2014-16	Reached by School Breakfast 2014-15
11,497	9,084
Percent of Low-Income Students Reached by School Lunch 2014-16	Percent of Low-Income Students Reached by School Breakfast
60%	47%
Percent of School Lunch Participants Also Reached by School Breakfast: Low-Income Students 2014-15	Additional Federal Meal Reimbursements That Could Be Received Per Schools Year with Increased Breakfast Participation 2014-15
79%	\$1,021,000

Summer Meal Programs	
Summer Meal Program Participation Among Low-Income Children 2015	Percent of School Lunch Participants Reached During the Summer 2015
1,854	18%

WIC	
Individual Count	Family Count
5057	NA

Table 1. California Food Policy Advocates Monterey Santa Cruz County Nutrition and Food Insecurity Profiles accessed at <https://cfpa.net/county-profiles/>

Information from DataShare Santa Cruz County utilizing the 95076 and 95019 zip codes paint a picture for more Pajaro Valley specific information. The Watsonville zip code (95076) has the highest number of households participating in SNAP with children under 18 years old, with 75.6% (2,820 households), Freedom was similarly high with 67.3% or 233 households. Per the *Food Insecurity in Santa Cruz County* report, Second Harvest Food Bank (SHFB) provides 49% of the nongovernmental food assistance in the area. SHFB features 46 locations in the Pajaro Valley area, 19 Passion for Produce site, and 27 Food for Children sites. The report also demonstrates the “SNAP- Gap” or the difference between the percent of the population eligible for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the percent reporting participation.

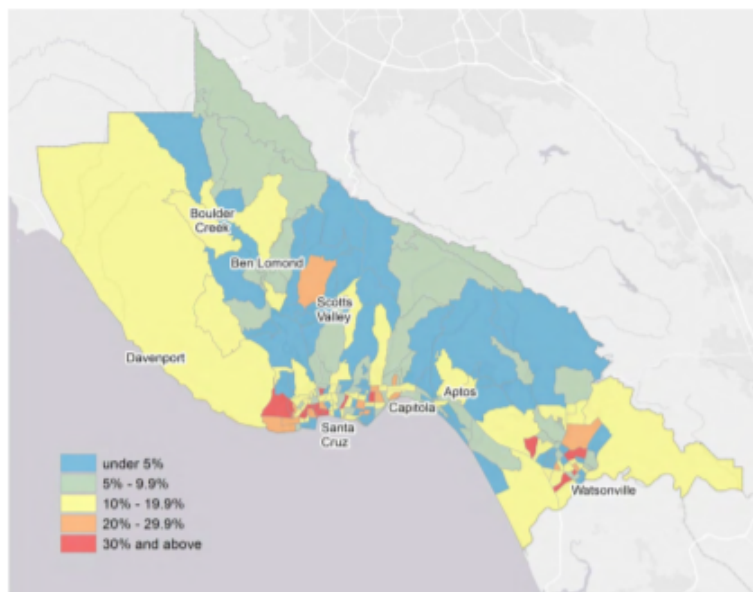


Figure 5. SNAP-Gap. Graphic from: *Food Insecurity in Santa Cruz County*

Despite numerous program efforts to address food insecurity the report concludes that approximately 20% of county residents remained at risk of food insecurity in the fiscal year 2017-18.

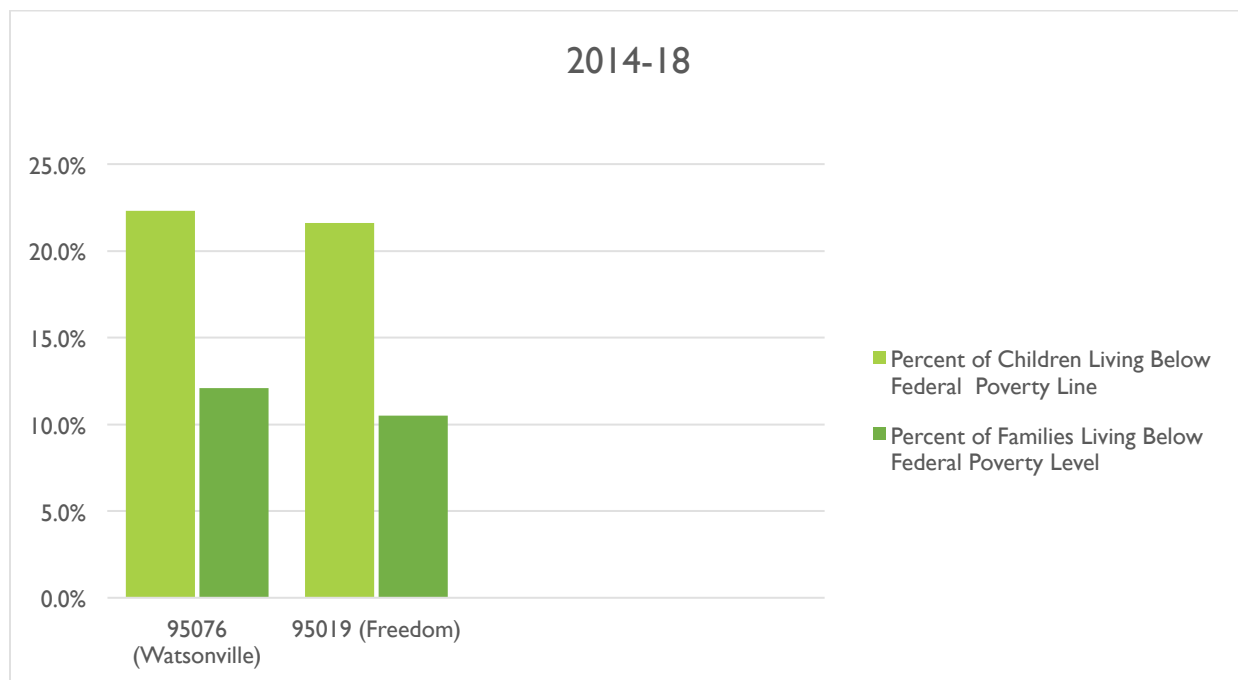


Figure 6. Data from DataShare Santa Cruz County. Accessed at:

<https://www.datasharescc.org/indicators/index/dashboard?alias=indicatorlist>

Pajaro Valley Loaves and Fishes addresses the immediate need for food, feeding more than 4,800 people a month. Clients can receive lunch five times a week, resulting in 25,380 lunches and 5,300 second helpings a month, serving more than 100 residents a day. Clients can also access the food pantry two times a month; including “No Kitchen Bags” which have pop-top, often single-serve items that do not need to be refrigerated for those living on the streets or in housing situations without a place to store or prepare food. All other bags are provided by family sizes of individual, 2-3 people, 4-5 people and 6+ member.

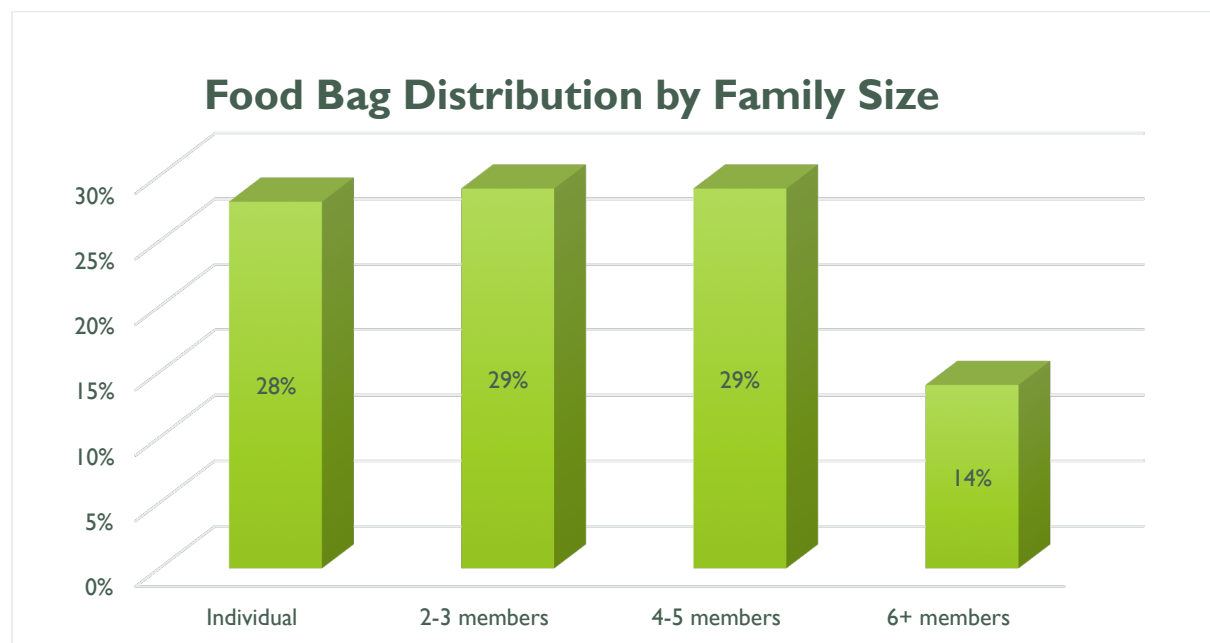


Figure 10. Data from Pajaro Valley Loaves and Fishes

More than 33,100 individuals receive groceries throughout the year resulting in approximately 417,000 meals provided through these bags. Of those receiving services 59% are children, 17% seniors, and 70% are farmworkers. Data collected shows an increase in access to pantry services from October to May or when farmworkers are out of work. Loaves and Fishes also work with a social worker and public health nurse to try and address chronic illness and provide connections to services.

To best identify what patients would most benefit from referral to services, Salud Para La Gente has integrated food insecurity screening into their electronic health record, allowing providers to give resources immediately. Their location also serves as a Food Distribution Site for Second Harvest Food Bank. Additionally, they provide food drop off through field officers funded through Central Coast Alliance for Health, a regional non-profit health plan developed to

increase access to health care for lower-income residents. Their *Fit and Healthy* programs for both diabetics and pediatrics teach cooking classes to both populations and provide work out equipment for diabetics via a shared medical appointment.

Watsonville Health Center is also addressing the issue of food insecurity with the *Receta Vegetal Program* in partnership with Esperanza Community Farms. *Receta Vegetal*, a family-focused, farm-to-door, healthy food access program, strives to educate, facilitate, and empower families and their children to make healthier food choices. Families will receive a home-delivered box of locally grown certified organic produce every other week for 6 months. Families will also receive an educational component to include visits to the farm, cooking classes and recipes, plus activities around food for children. Families eligible for enrollment are patients with one or more children ages 4 to 10 years old with Central Coast Alliance for Health as a payer source, are up to date, or have a catch up plan for vaccines with a diagnosis of overweight, obesity, diabetes, or pre-diabetes.

Health

Although the economy has improved since the recession of 2008, more than 41 million people continue to struggle with hunger (Feeding America, 2018). That means 1 in 8 individuals and 1 in 6 children live in households without consistent access to food. Calorie for calorie, refined carbohydrates, and foods with added sugars, fats, and sodium cost less than nutritionally dense foods such as fruits, vegetables, and dairy products. Food insecure adults worrying about getting adequate calories restrict these healthier, more expensive foods to meet their needs. For most families, food insecurity is cyclic, alternating between having adequate food and times without. This results in preferences for energy dense foods, increased body fat, and decreased lean muscle mass. Additionally, adults and children from food insecure households may overconsume when they have access to food. Binge eating, fat accumulation, and peripheral insulin resistance may be physiological adaptations to food insecurity resulting in a higher burden of chronic disease (Seligman & Schillinger, 2010). The costs of chronic disease result in increased financial strain on the household and complications from the diseases may make it difficult to find or maintain a job, resulting in spending tradeoffs (i.e. food vs. medications), potentially leading to a continuing cycle of food insecurity and chronic disease.

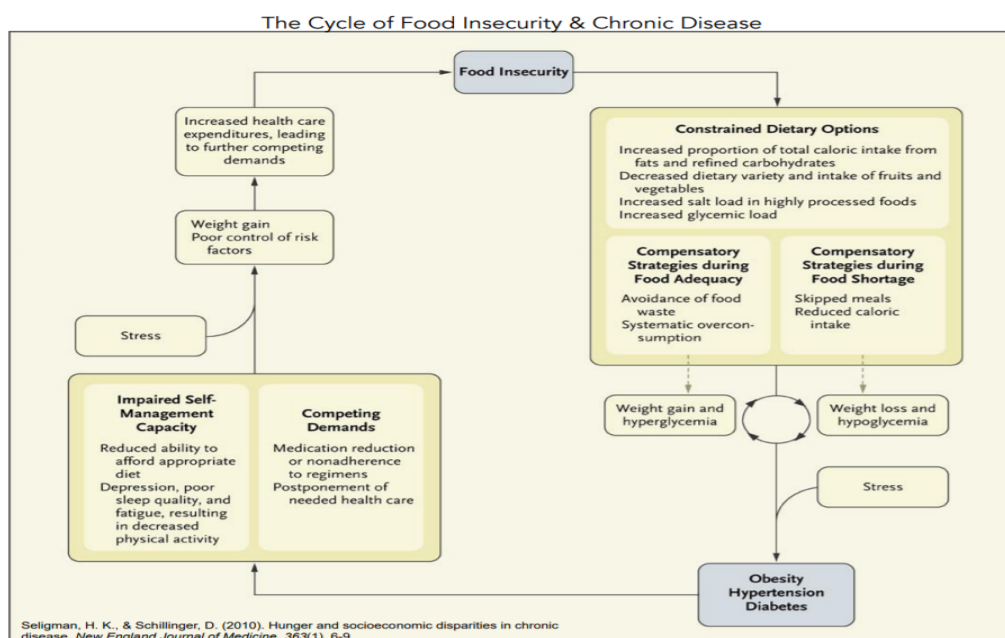


Figure 7. Cycle of Food Insecurity and Chronic Disease. Accessed at:

<https://championprovider.ucsf.edu/sites/champion.ucsf.edu/files/Seligman%20%26%20Schillinger%2C%202010.pdf>

Excessive sugar consumption has been linked with several metabolic abnormalities and adverse health conditions, as well as a lack of essential nutrients. The American Heart Association recommends that Americans drastically cut back on their added sugar, no more than 100 calories per day (about six teaspoons or 24 grams of sugar) for most women and no more than 150 calories (about nine teaspoons or 36 grams of sugar) for most men, to help slow obesity and heart disease epidemics. Based on information from DataShare Santa Cruz County the zip codes 95076 (Watsonville) and 95019 (Freedom) are the two highest zip codes in comparison to other Santa Cruz County zip codes in the expenditures on high sugar food indicator. This indicator shows the percentage of total consumer expenditures spent on high sugar foods. This includes cookies, ice cream, candy, chewing gum, jam/jelly, and sugar/artificial sweeteners.

Sugar sweetened beverage consumption has been a hot topic in public health over recent years with a recent push for a statewide sugar sweetened beverage tax to help fund preventative care. These beverages contribute calorically to the diet while providing no essential nutrients. High consumption of sugary beverages has been linked to weight gain and obesity. The Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Agriculture recommend limiting daily consumption of the added sugars found in all sweetened beverages, including fruit juices, to no more than 10% of calories per day. Information from DataShare Santa Cruz County on this indicator suggests that 11.5% of adults ages 18 years and older consume soda or sugar sweetened beverages at least one time a day in the 95076-zip code. The number is slightly higher at 12.7% in 95019. Both indicators are higher than any other zip code in the Santa Cruz area.

Fruit and vegetable consumption is consistently linked as essential for health and prevention of chronic disease. Despite this many people fall below the recommended daily intake often times related to lack of access to affordable foods. The Pajaro Valley Community Health Trust's report *Glimpse of Reality* (2013) notes that there was no significant difference in consumption of fruits and vegetables between Pajaro Valley residents and the rest of the county however Pajaro Valley residents were significantly more likely to have had fast food than the rest of the county in the past seven days.

Births Per the 2018 *Santa Cruz Births Report* 71% of teen births in Santa Cruz County were from Watsonville, and additional 10% came from Freedom. The majority, or 87% of births at Watsonville Community Hospital, were to mothers with Medi-Cal, a statistic well above the countywide average of 46.7%. An additional 0.5% had no insurance. Hospitals vary in their

ability to handle premature babies. High risk cases would likely be directed to facilities with a higher level of NICU. Of births at Watsonville Community Hospital, only 6% were pre-term or very pre-term babies. The report also indicates 4% babies were low birthweight, and 0.2% were very low birthweight.

Diabetes, a disease where the body's blood glucose, or blood sugar, stays elevated for a prolonged period of time either because the body does not secrete/create enough insulin or cannot use it well. Pajaro Valley's zip codes fall within the top areas for diabetes in the county, accounting for the three leading zip codes in the county for diabetes.

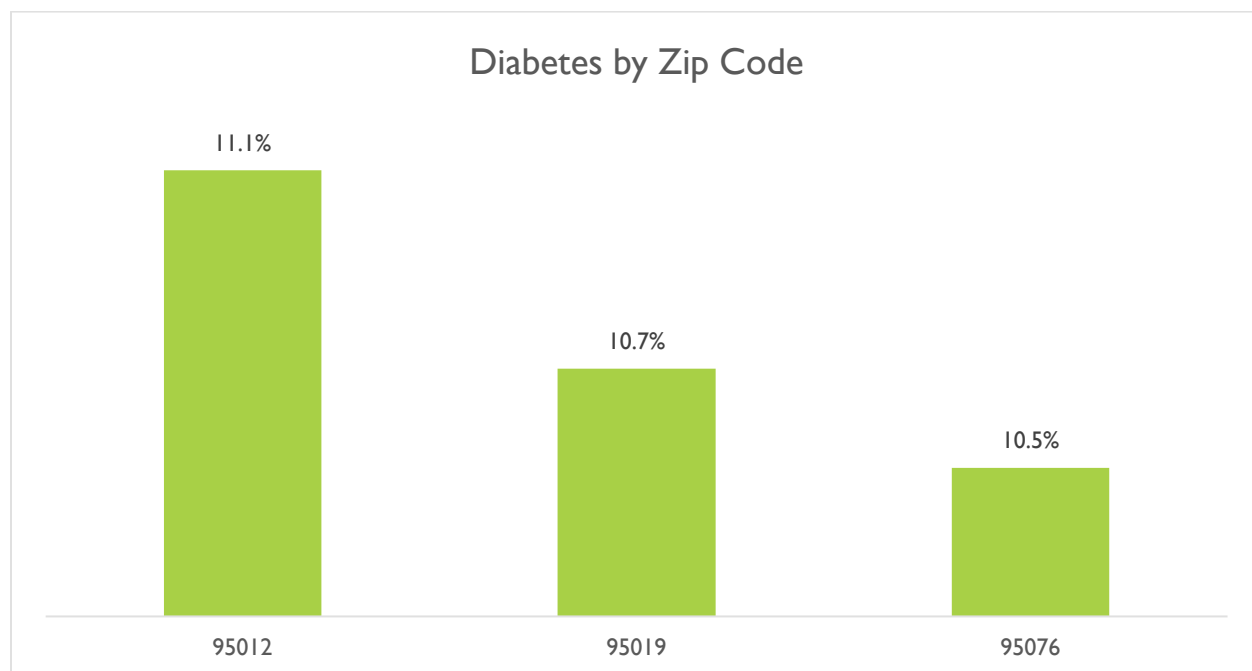


Figure 8. Data from DataShare Santa Cruz County

In 2013 19.9% of Pajaro Valley residents had been told they had diabetes or pre-diabetes in comparison to 14.4% of rest of the county (Pajaro Valley Community Health Trust, 2013). The most common types of diabetes are Type 1, Type 2, gestational diabetes, and pre-diabetes. In Type 1 diabetes the body does not make insulin (the hormone needed to get the blood sugar into cells). Type 2 diabetes results when the body does not make enough insulin and/or does not use it well. Gestational diabetes occurs during pregnancy. Pre-diabetes occurs when blood sugars are consistently above normal but not high enough to be called diabetes yet.

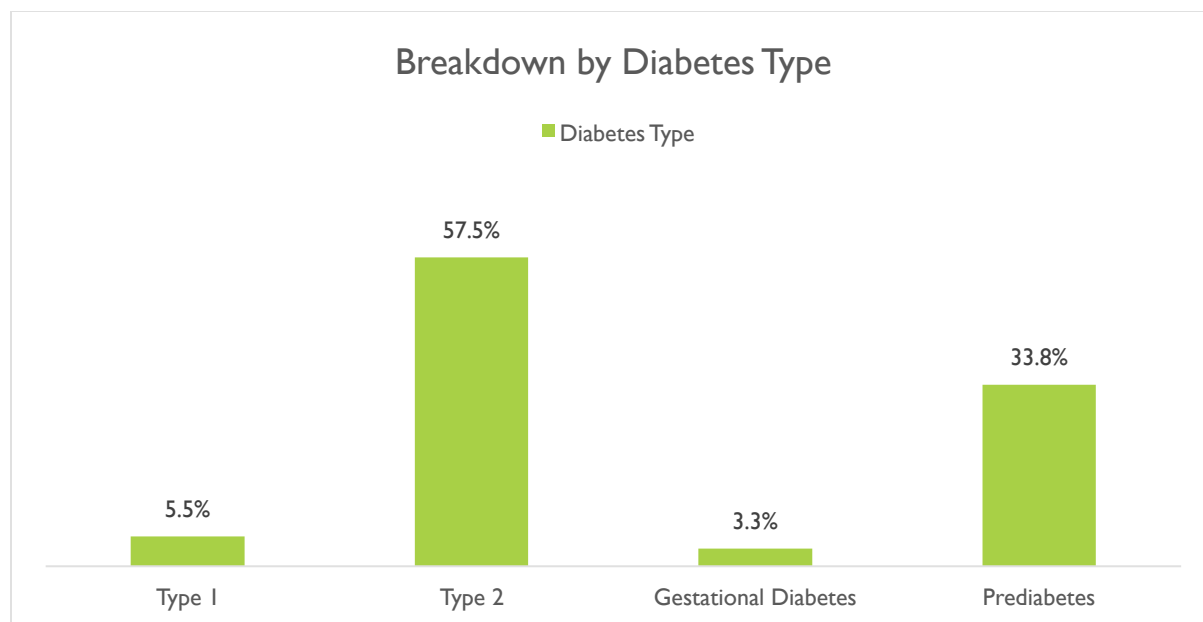


Figure 9. Data from DataShare Santa Cruz County

Obesity Of Pajaro Valley Residents interviewed by the Santa Cruz County Community Assessment Project Telephone Survey in 2013, 34% identified as obese (BMI >30 or more) and 40.7% identified as overweight (BMI of 25.0-29.9). Only 24.9% were normal weight and the remaining 0.4% were underweight. Substantially more Pajaro Valley residents were overweight or obese than their counterparts (34.3% and 20.7%, respectively) (Glimpse of Reality, 2013).

Homelessness

The 2017 Santa Cruz County *Point in Time Count and Survey* estimated that Santa Cruz County has 2,249 individuals experiencing homelessness. Homeless can be defined in several ways. For this survey the definition included individuals and families living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangement; or with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground. As noted previously 12% of farmworkers identified as living in “other” dwellings; these people may not be counted towards the homeless count. The Santa Cruz *Community Strategic Plan to Prevent, Reduce and Eventually End Homelessness* suggests that the majority of families experiencing homelessness in Santa Cruz County are in South County. Pajaro Valley Shelter Services (PVSS) is the only organization in Pajaro Valley that offers emergency shelter and transitional housing to families with children affected by homelessness. PVSS works to move families into permanent housing. PVSS helps women, children, and families find sustainable housing and overcome barriers and develop the necessary skills to reach self-sufficiency. The program partners with SHFB to get ingredients for the shelter so women can learn how to cook and develop meal plans (PVSS, 2019).

Per the *Encompass Community Services Community Assessment*, 87% of children experiencing homelessness in Santa Cruz County live in South County and attend PVUSD (2019). Additionally, 14.3% (2,917 students) were recorded as being homeless at any point during the school year in 2016. One new and innovative program to address homelessness is Watsonville Works which started in September 2019 by a group of human services leaders, the program puts homeless people to work, paying them a small stipend and giving them a sense of purpose as they work to clean the areas along the sloughs, nature trails and other areas around the city. Two months after its start, the volunteers had cleaned 675 bags of trash. The program is run by the Community Action Board of Santa Cruz County. Organizers look for potential volunteers at the Salvation Army shelter, the City Plaza, along the levees and other places where homeless people congregate. Funding comes from the Homeless Emergency Aid Program and the California Emergency Solutions and Housing Program (Guild, 2019).

Beginning January 1, 2019, all hospitals in California must have developed a plan for safely discharging patients without homes. This law prohibits hospitals from engaging in previously reported tactics, such as discharging patients in hospital gowns, leaving patients at unsafe locations, and failing to make necessary mental health referrals. Specifically, hospitals must attempt to secure a sheltered discharge location, resources permitting, or discharge a patient to the location of their choice, provide transportation to a discharge location, within 30 miles or 30 minutes of the hospital, offer the patient weather-appropriate clothes and a meal as well as provide referrals to health and mental health resources (California Legislative Information, 2019).

Current Programs

The Pajaro Valley has a wealth of resources available from innovative and passionate programs.

Whitehawk Indian Council for Children provides opportunities for children and youth of Watsonville to learn and experience the culture and traditions of indigenous ancestors. The primary focus of the nonprofit organization is to teach the ancient dances of Mexico, known as Aztec dance or Danza. By teaching aspects of indigenous identity and spirituality, the organization hopes to empower youth to have a holistic and positive view of themselves.

Pajaro Valley Community Health Trust is a locally governed nonprofit healthcare foundation with a mission to improve the quality of life and health for all residents. The organization provides small grants to nonprofit organizations that promote health and improve the quality of life for Pajaro Valley residents. The organization is also home to the Diabetes Health Center, which provides medical nutrition therapy and diabetes self-management education. Mesa Verde Gardens collaborates with local churches, PVUSD, and the city of Watsonville to co-create community gardens to improve food security and health in the community.

Grey Bears works to improve the health and well-being of seniors and the community through food distribution, volunteer opportunities, resource conservation, and recycling.

Jovenes SANOS, a youth advocacy and leadership program, strives to empower, educate, and raise awareness about childhood obesity within the community. The organization works to build an environment that embraces a culture of health by promoting access to affordable and healthy food options while growing a thriving community based on equity and justice.

California FarmLink strives to connect independent farmers and ranchers with land, financing, and information. FarmLink supports beginning, limited-resource, immigrant, and other underserved farmers throughout California but with a particular focus on the Central Coast Central Valley, and North Coast.

Central Coast Alliance for Health is a health plan that was developed to improve access to health care for lower income residents. In addition to linking residents to primary care physicians and clinics, the Alliance offers grants to community organizations including the Healthy Food Access Program which currently funds projects with Community Bridges, the County of Santa Cruz, Esperanza Farms, Food What?!, SHFB, and the Volunteer Center of Santa Cruz County.

Community Bridges, a family of ten programs across 20 different sites serving thousands of local children, families, and seniors each year, serves as a catalyst for a brighter future for Santa Cruz County residents by delivering essential services, providing equitable access to resources, and advocating for health and dignity across every stage of life. The Adult Care Food Program is a nutrition assistance program that reimburses food for licensed caregivers, providing healthy meals to support both children and adults in our community. The Child Development Division includes six centers providing nurturing and affordable early education. They staff La Manzana Community Resources in Watsonville, the Live Oak Community Resources, the Mountain Community Resources (Felton), and the Nueva Vista Community Resources (Santa Cruz). Elderday Adult Day Health Care empowers elders to live with greater independence and dignity by providing health care services, respite, and companionship. Lift Line provides door-to-door rides to seniors and people with disabilities, allowing these Central Coast residents to remain active and social. Meals on Wheels for Santa Cruz County provides healthy meals at five dining sites or delivers meals to the home. The WIC program is also housed here.

Farm Discovery is a nonprofit organization working in the Pajaro Valley community to empower youth and familiar to build and sustain healthy food, farming, social and natural systems. The organization is housed at Live Earth Farm, a 150-acre working organic farm, riparian corridor, oak, and redwood forest in the Pajaro Valley.

Life Lab, a garden classroom education center in Santa Cruz that includes the Blooming Classroom in Watsonville, promotes experiential learning for people of all ages through field trips, children's camps, and teacher workshops. They co-launched California FoodCorps and placed a service member at H.A. Hyde Elementary School in collaboration with the Community Alliance with Family Farmers. Life Lab was a major influence for the initial development of school gardens throughout PVUSD.

Go for Health! is a collaborative that brings together over 30 agencies to reduce obesity in Santa Cruz County. Go for Health! supports education, policies, systems, and environmental changes to reduce obesity by promoting healthy eating and active living for all. For 2020, the group selected action items of increasing participation in food assistance programs, aligning nutrition education and physical activity messages among the county's partner agencies, supporting state and local policy and obtaining significant and sustained funding for health programming and

continue to collect and maintain online maps of services to identify community assets and gaps and maximize efforts. Two such maps can be seen below.

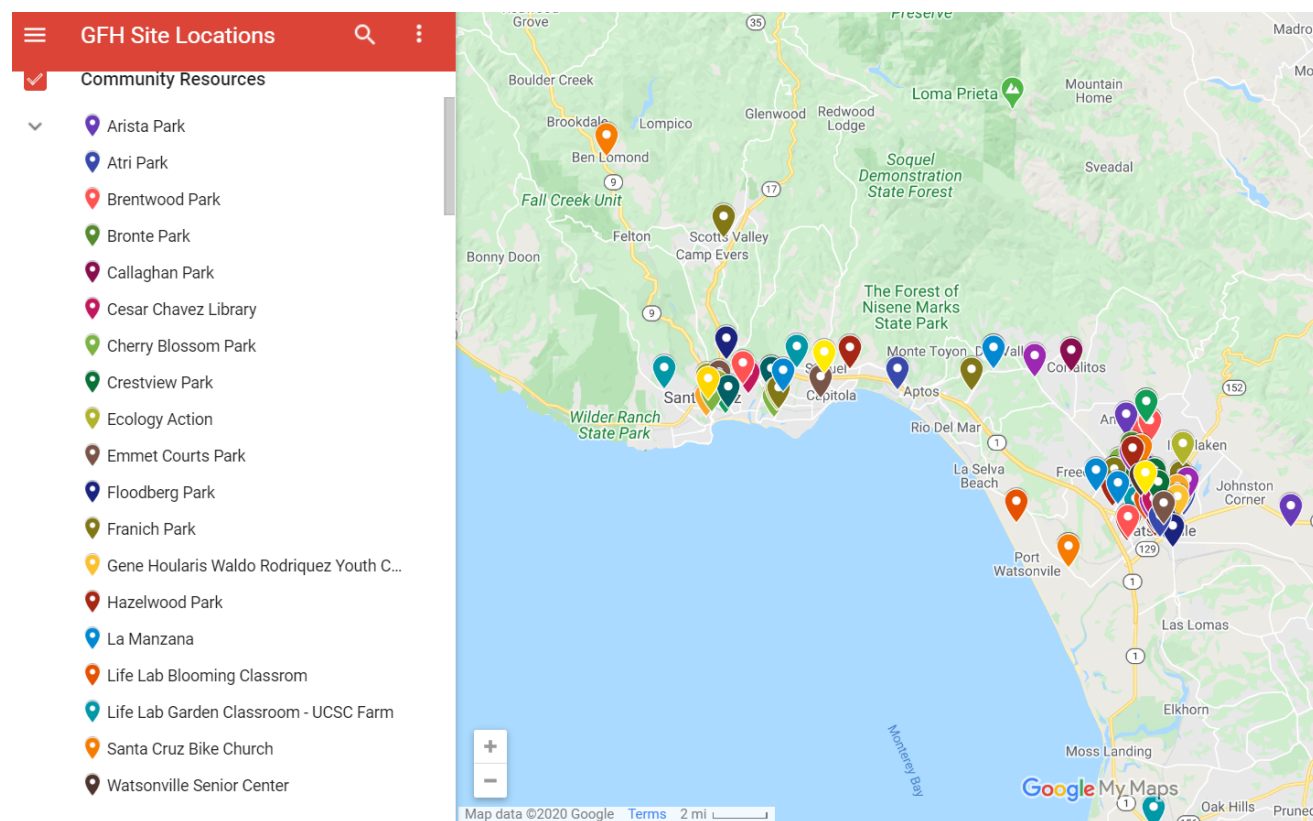


Figure 11. Community Resources Map by Go for Health! Accessible at:

https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/viewer?mid=1RP9Bbkcp7zTCb_4dvJSldjgs10AwxKFr&ll=36.955207480315075%2C-121.55975128300815&z=10

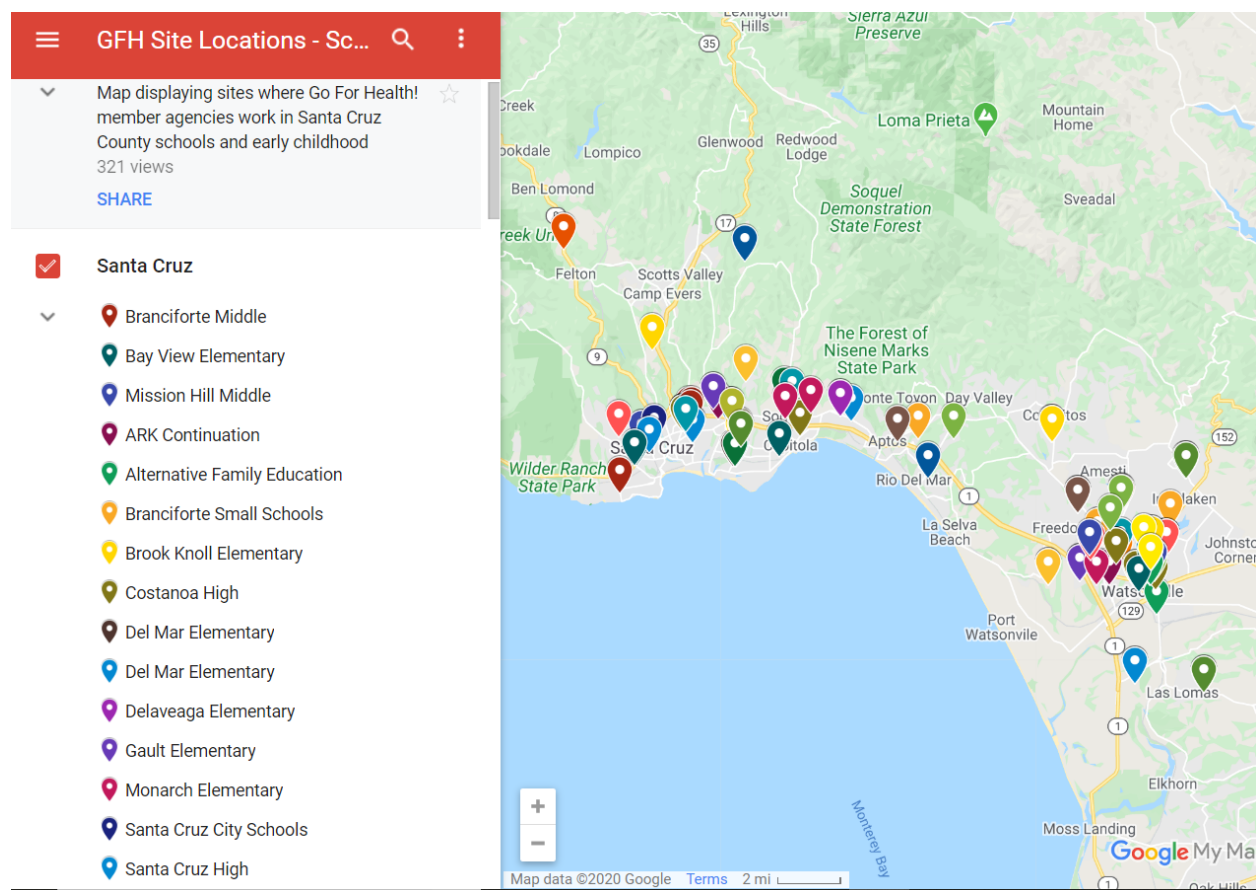


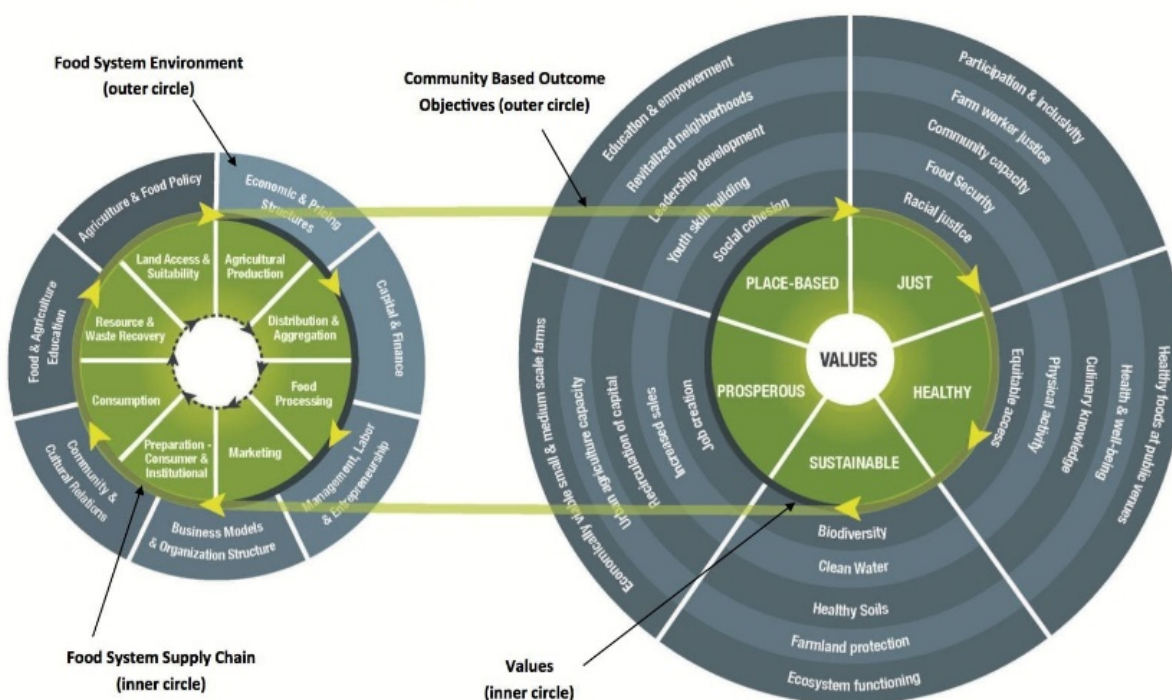
Figure 12. Go for Health! Site Locations. Accessible at:

<https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/viewer?mid=1E-ME6sEWByCy8BWAw4lNYpmover4D0m&ll=36.97522345636673%2C-121.72776985943669&z=11>

Conclusion and Next Steps

While a variety of food system frameworks exist, many only focus on the supply chain itself without acknowledging the food system environment and the community-based outcomes. The Food, Farming, and Health Policy Council seeks to challenge this thinking and create a value-based food system in the Pajaro Valley, developing a food system that is place-based, prosperous, equitable, healthy, and sustainable. As noted, there is work to be done but the area is rich with resources, and a solution exists but will take political will.

Community and Regional Food Systems Framework



Adapted from the Community and Regional Food Systems (CRFS) Project, based at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

The framework illustrates how components of the food system supply chain (inner circle, left) are related to the food system environment (outer circle, left). Activities within the food system supply chain are driven by values (inner circle, right). Values are related to community based outcome objectives (outer circle right).

Figure 13. Community and Regional Food Systems Framework. Accessible at:

<https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/EconomicsofLocalFoodSystemsToolkit.pdf>

Attention must be brought to the housing crisis and its impact, both on individual lives and the community as a whole. Housing and food insecurity are entwined. Opportunities to work with local farms need to be sought not only to recognize the living conditions of workers and

business challenges but also to fulfill the Council's commitment to unite agricultural and health sector voices to build a better food system. Both individual and community training regarding the food system for a deeper understanding beyond food insecurity and nutrition education should be continued. Lasting solutions demand change on all levels to address income inequality, overcrowded housing and homelessness, inadequate representation, structural racism, and anti-immigrants rules.

In recent years, the local food movement has catered to middle-income food consumers whose spending power shaped a growing farm-to-table food system. Recognizing that local farms rely on diversified outlets and customers for their products, promotion of "buy local" through community supported agriculture (CSA) and farmers markets should continue. At the same time, more work on increasing the food purchasing power of lower income families through nutrition incentive programs and economic opportunity to afford fresh and healthy local foods must be a priority. Leveraging the experience of food workers through business incubators, such as California FarmLink, ALBA and El Pajaro CDC, that support food entrepreneurship, workers can be lifted up the economic ladder to create a more robust local food economy. Greater food literacy empowers shifts in consumer preference and builds community pressure as levers for change. Food sovereignty includes prioritizing local agricultural production, the right of farmers to produce food and the right of consumers to decide what they want to consume and by whom it is produced, as well as communities taking part in agricultural policy choices and food prices linked to production costs. A food system based on the principles of food sovereignty increases economic opportunities for food chain workers and ultimately provides the means to choose the healthful food they labor so hard to create.

The coronavirus pandemic has increased attention to the food system and revealed its weaknesses related both to food workers and the supply chain. Consequences of not having a strong and resilient local food system bear out in escalating prices and meat shortages related to coronavirus infection among meat processing plant workers to the turning under of crops in the field. As seen in the Pajaro Valley, despite being deemed essential because they feed the nation, farmworkers (many of whom are undocumented) still face threat of deportation, anti-immigrant harassment and risk exposure to the virus in their work and housing conditions. To date a working group, the Monterey County Farmworker Protection from COVID-19 Coalition (MC-COA) has been convened including members from Lideres Campesinas, the Grower-Shipper

Association, Santa Cruz and Monterey counties agricultural commissioners, public health officials, and Center for Farmworker Families to address safety risks faced by farmworkers at this time. This group has thus far successfully advocated for increased testing and safety measures for area workers including preventative health education in the fields. Farmworkers face unique risks including crowded bus conditions on the way to work as well as overcrowded housing. Alternative housing has been set up by employers and counties to reduce the transmission of corona virus. Yet, in Monterey County, as of June 2020, 39.73% of COVID-19 cases were in agricultural workers nearly three times any other category. In Santa Cruz County agricultural workers make up 21% of COVID-19 cases. In this disruptive period of political power shifts, the Council is committed to a just recovery from COVID-19 and building a more equitable and resilient food system.

During the creation of this document Black Lives Matter protests have erupted across the nation, leading to greater recognition of food justice as racial justice. As seen throughout, racial inequity and structural racism are embedded in the food system. The impact is wide and deep from health disparities, to the racial wealth gap. While the cycle of food insecurity and chronic disease was discussed it should also be mentioned that the chronic stress endured when someone faces ongoing racism also has detrimental health effects. Public policy has played a central role in institutionalizing racism. As a core value, the Council continues to engage the underrepresented to broaden participation in conversation and decision-making. Putting racial equity at the center of policy-making prioritizes the needs of those who have been most impacted by the injustices of the current food system. The Council will be deliberate in ongoing work to address racial inequities and dismantle institutional racism wherever it is found in the food system.

In its formative years, the Council invested in member education to build individual knowledge of the food system and local advocacy experience, developing a cohesive identity. Now is the moment to shift towards action. Informed by this food mapping summary, the Council will develop a food action plan. The next step for the Council is to engage the community in a systematic assessment, establish actionable goals based on this assessment and formalize an action plan.

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