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# Food For All

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# FOOD FOR ALL

HARDWICK AREA FREE AND REDUCED COST FOOD RESOURCES

Hardwick Area Health Center, Hardwick, VT

Vicenta Hudziak, MS-III

Family Medicine Clerkship, 2016-2017

Project mentors: Sarah Morgan, M.D., McKalyn Leclerc, M.D.,

Katharine Ingram, Ruby Dale-Brown

# PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION AND DESCRIPTION OF NEED

- Problem: Food Insecurity and Food Insecurity with Hunger in Vermont
- Description of Need:

## Food Insecurity in Vermont

- **13%** of all Vermont households are food insecure  
*33,000 Vermonter households*
- **13%** of all Vermonters are food insecure  
*79,800 Vermonters*
- **17%** of Vermont children live in food insecure homes  
*20,400 Vermont Children*
- **8%** of Vermont seniors are living with food insecurity  
*11,300 Vermont Seniors*

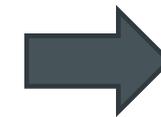
The food insecurity data here are 3-year averages, from 2012-2014, from the Current Population Survey of the United States Census.

Images source: Hunger Free VT  
2015VT Hunger Facts

## Food Insecurity with Hunger in Vermont

- **15,600** Vermont households struggle with hunger  
*6% of Vermont households*
- **31,200** Vermonters struggle with hunger  
*5% of Vermonters*
- **7,000** Vermont children live in households experiencing food insecurity with hunger  
*6% of Vermont Children*
- **4,800** Vermont seniors are food insecure with hunger  
*3% of Vermont Seniors*

The food insecurity data here are 3-year averages, from 2012-2014, from the Current Population Survey of the United States Census.

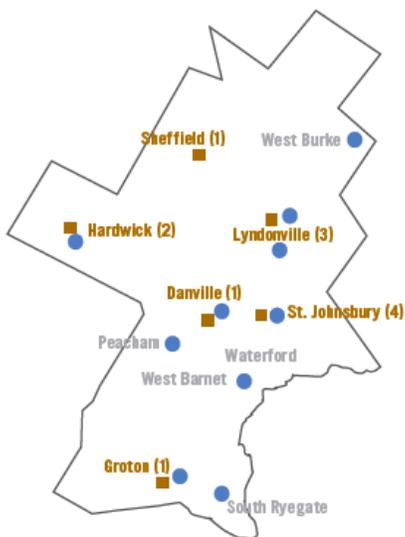


**Unacceptable  
impact on  
children =  
increased risk for  
lifetime  
emotional,  
behavioral,  
health,  
educational, and  
social problems**

# LOCAL NEED CONTINUED

Image source: Hunger Free Vermont 2015

- Senior community meal sites serving one or more meals per week
- Charitable Food Sites (number of sites)



## Hunger is on the rise in our state. How strong is the safety net in Caledonia County?

"People are so broke they can't afford the initial investment in the staples to get started eating healthier for less and their embarrassment is a barrier to their being able to take advantage of EFNEP's and other community educational offerings."

- Bernadette Besette, Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program Educator, St. Johnsbury

**1 in 4** children in Caledonia County are food insecure.

**46%** of grade school and high school students are eligible for free or reduced-price meals.

**4** afterschool meals programs (serving 4 of 8 eligible towns/cities).

**11** child care centers participate in CACFP, the Child and Adult Care Food Program, which provides nutritious meals to preschool and afterschool programs.

**10** summer food sites.

**5,518** number of county residents participating in 3SquaresVT (formerly known as Food Stamps).

**6** senior community meal sites serve meals two or more times per week.

\* Data sources available upon request

Recent surveys show that 1 in 5 Vermont children and nearly 1 in 8 Vermont households are food insecure. Join us in our efforts to end hunger. Visit [hungerfreevt.org](http://hungerfreevt.org) for more information on solutions to hunger and how you can help.

## Hunger in Caledonia County



UPDATED 5/5/15

**Vermont, and specifically Caledonia County where Hardwick lies, is no exception to the need represented nationally, where 25% of children are food insecure.**

# PUBLIC HEALTH COST AND UNIQUE COST CONSIDERATIONS IN HOST COMMUNITY

- Public Health Cost:
- Furthermore, a recent study of 67,033 people in Canada showed that individuals with food insecurity have greater annual healthcare costs than their food-secure counterparts. **Cost was highest for those with highest severity of food-insecurity.** (Tarasuk et al., 2015)

**Exhibit 2 Estimated Costs Attributable to Food Insecurity and Hunger in the US, 2014**

Source of Cost	Costs (\$Billion 2014 Dollars)
Direct health-related costs in 2014 based on new research evidence	\$29.68
Non-overlapping direct health-related costs reported by Brandeis researchers in 2011, continued in 2014 and expressed in 2014 dollars	\$124.92
Indirect costs of lost work time due to workers' illnesses or workers providing care for sick family members based on new research evidence	\$5.48
<b>Total direct and indirect 2014 health-related costs</b>	<b>\$160.07</b>
Indirect costs of special education in public primary and secondary schools, based on new research evidence	\$5.91
Total costs of dropouts reported by Brandeis researchers in 2011, continued in 2014 and expressed in 2014 dollars	\$12.94
<b>TOTAL ESTIMATED COSTS</b>	<b>\$178.93</b>

Sources described in document text.

Table from: Cook & Poblacion, 2016

- Public health concerns in the host community: Caledonia County

Table 4.3. Health and Diet in the NEK

Variable	Caledonia	Essex	Orleans
Percentage of adults who eat 3+ servings of vegetables per day*	24%	26%	29%
Pounds per capita Fruit & Vegetables	190	190	190
Pounds per capita packaged sweet snacks	118	118	118
Gallons per capita soft drinks	59	59	59
Pounds per capita meat & poultry	59	59	59
Pounds per capita solid fats	24	24	24
Pounds per capita prepared foods	299	299	299
Adult diabetes rate	7.9%	6.7%	7%
Adult obesity rate	24.6%	25.1%	24.8%
Low-income preschool obesity rate	11.5%	11.3%	10.8%
Percent adults meeting activity guidelines	73%	73%	73%
Percent high school students physically active	48%	48%	48%

Source: Food Environment Atlas, data from 2002 – 2009. Exact data sources: <http://ers.usda.gov/foodatlas/documentation.htm>. \*Data from VT Department of Health, 2008

Figure 4.2. Adult Obesity Rate in The NEK

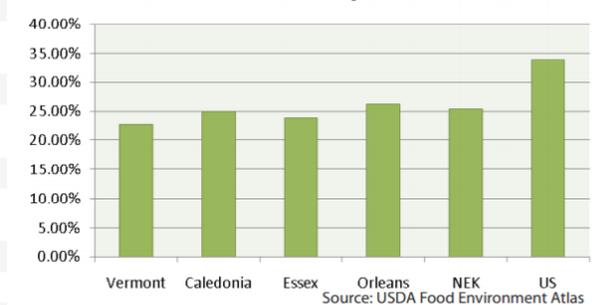


Figure 4.3 illustrates the NEK is lower than the state average for adults that report eating at least three servings of vegetables per day. About 22% of NEK adults report eating at least three servings of vegetables per day.

Table and graph from: Regional Food System Plan for Vermont's Northeast Kingdom, June 2011

# COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVE

## Interview I: Executive Director Hardwick Area Food Pantry

- ❖ Goal: Provide families with enough food to feed all members for 5 days, 3 meals/d; intended to be supplemental. Fresh veggies and USDA items unlimited with discretion.
- ❖ Grow Your Own program provides free monthly workshops on gardening, cooking, food preservation; holistic approach. Program maintains WIC benefits, also provides childcare.
- ❖ Seed distribution day every April: 800-1200 packets of seeds! Buckets and containers available so no need to commit to a garden
- ❖ Food pantry clients have priority for 1/3 of beds at Community Garden
- ❖ Best way to engage food-insecure members of the community is boots on the ground, in-person invitations and education
- ❖ Last year 370 families served in the greater Hardwick area
- ❖ Observation of clients with many health issues, especially obesity. Many clients on disability. Cost to community of poor health = inability to participate in community.
- ❖ Consistent decline in senior use of food pantry-area of concern: role for Health Center in investigating senior food insecurity?

## Interview II/Steering Committee Meeting: Members of Committee and NEK Kids on the Move Program Director

- ❖ From website: “The program offers nutrition and cooking/food storage workshops to community members specifically targeting low-income residents of the greater Hardwick area. The goal is to increase food independence, and improve health through shared knowledge and experience.”
- ❖ Discussion of possible collaboration with Hardwick schools to increase use of local foods in cafeterias and make healthy low-cost substitutions for certain food items, especially at breakfast
- ❖ New initiative to bring a winter sports program to Hardwick schools.
- ❖ How to increase children’s engagement with local food? Role for gleaning projects in local schools.

# INTERVENTION AND METHODOLOGY

- **Identified need** for comprehensive resource through conversations with healthcare providers, patients, and community members
  - Healthcare provider perspective: patients with food insecurity may not ask for help/may not identify as food insecure; no existing resource at the clinic with comprehensive guide to local food resources
  - Patients: Endorse consumption of unhealthy foods, difficulty changing habits, meals with not enough food for all family members
  - Community members: Express presence of food insecurity, desire to increase access to and utilization of fresh local produce, support for role of Health Center in increasing community engagement in healthy eating
- **Intervention:** Created a comprehensive guide to local free and reduced-cost resources for healthy eating
- Combined resources obtained from food pantry, online searches, local churches
- Includes:
  - Schedules and contact information for local food pantries
  - Schedules and contact information for local free and reduced cost meals
  - Information about local assistance programs and educational programs
  - Information about free on-line cookbook for eating well on a budget
    - Color copy of cookbook set-up in waiting room next to recipe cards for patients to record recipes they would like to try at home
- Pamphlets set-up in waiting room, all patient exam rooms, behavioral health counselor's office, and food pantry

# RESULTS/RESPONSE

- Newsletter-style 4-page pamphlet, two-sided color

**FOOD FOR ALL**

**Hardwick Area Free and Reduced Cost**

**In this guide:**

- Schedule of local free and donation-based meals
- Information about local food pantries
- Information about free, local educational programs
- Other resources to help you eat well on a budget

**Hardwick Area Health Center**  
4 Slapp Hill Road  
Hardwick, VT 05843  
Phone: 802.472.3300  
Fax: 802.472.8277

**COMMUNITY MEALS**

Meal Program	Location	Days	Hours	Notes
...	...	...	...	...

**FOOD PANTRIES**

Name	Address	Phone	Hours	Notes
...	...	...	...	...

**GET INVOLVED!**

**GROW YOUR OWN**

A collaboration between the Hardwick Area Food Pantry, the Center for Agricultural Economy, and NEK Kids on the Move. We approach hunger and food insecurity in our community in a holistic fashion by helping people learn to garden, to cook the food they grow, and to preserve the excess. All workshops of the Grow Your Own program are FREE and open to the public, usually the first Sat. of the month, schedules posted at the Food Pantry and Health Center. Children welcome. Share! meal. Please reserve a spot by the Wednesday before the gathering by calling or emailing Ruby @ 802.472.5940 or ruby.dalebrown@gmail.com

**NEK KIDS ON THE MOVE**

NEK Kids on the Move programs are primarily offered through existing after-school programs which are accessible to all school-aged children in the community. We aim to make school counselors, nurses and area health providers aware of NEK Kids on the Move programs so they may recommend them to children. Contact Katharine Ingram, Program Director at nek.kids@hardwickvt.com or 802.472.3292

- Shared pamphlet with all providers and front desk, was assisted by nursing in setting up pamphlets in exam rooms and waiting room, set-up cookbook with recipe cards and pamphlets on table in high-traffic area in waiting room
- Enthusiastic response to pamphlet containing local resources in one place; many expressed anticipated utility of meal and pantry schedules in particular

# EVALUATION OF EFFECTIVENESS AND LIMITATIONS

- Possible evaluation methods
  - Use Food Pantry and Grow Your Own records prior to the introduction of the pamphlet into the community to compare to specific variables after its introduction at different time points; e.g. overall number of clients using the pantry, attendance at GYO workshops. Consider measurements at 1 month, 6 months, 1 year to gauge effect. Alternatively, could incorporate new item into Food Pantry intake form, e.g., “Where did you hear about us?” and monitor effect of Health Center resource. An increase in clients to the pantry who learned of it through the Health Center resource would indicate potential effectiveness.
  - Similarly track meal attendance over time at community meals highlighted in the pamphlet. This would require established attendance data prior to the introduction of the pamphlet – may also consider asking meal attendees where they learned about the meal time and location and record this information.
  - For the waiting room cookbook: Ask front desk to observe patient interaction with the pamphlet and recipe materials for anecdotal gauge of success. Count number of recipe cards remaining after a certain time period, e.g. 1 month, 2, months, 6 months (implicit assumption that a recipe was recorded on the taken recipe card).
  - No pre-testing was conducted as part of this intervention, so change in provider-patient interactions would not be possible to evaluate. However, to assist in identifying at-need patients, providers could institute a log of how frequently they see patients at risk for food insecurity who they subsequently provide with the pamphlet.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE INTERVENTIONS

- Discussion with Executive Director of the Food Pantry elucidated potential decline in seniors utilizing food pantry resources with unclear reason for decline. She suggested a possible future collaboration between the Food Pantry and Health Center in which food boxes could be kept on-site at the Health Center and provided for free to seniors that come in for a visit and are identified by a provider to be at risk for food insecurity. This could feasibly be achieved with minimal paperwork and minimal personal information provided by the seniors to protect privacy. This was outside of the scope of the current project, but if implemented in the future could be featured as another resource on the pamphlet created this year.
- Initiate project to identify clinic patients with food insecurity. This could include a short 1-5 item screening questionnaire conducted by the nurses and incorporated into other screening questions asked while rooming patients, or could be done by providers at every new patient visit or as-needed thereafter.

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- Vermont Foodbank website. [www.vtfoodbank.org](http://www.vtfoodbank.org)
- WIC website. <http://www.healthvermont.gov/family/wic>

# INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

- See separate document in ScholarWorks: “Food for All/Interview Consent Form”