



Macon County
Public Health

**MACON COUNTY CHSA Board
MINUTES
3/24/2026**

- Members:** Garrett Higdon-Engineer/Chair, Barry Breeden-County Commissioner, Dr. Roy Lenzo- Veterinarian, Cortney Patrick- Pharmacist, Dr. Matt Corbin- Dentist/Vice Chair, Angela Stone- Nurse Representative, Dr. Nathan (Don) Feibelman III- Psychiatrist, Steve Grissim- General Public, Dr. Michael Toedt- Physician, Ava Ammons- General Public, Marc Hehn-General Public, Chris Hedden-General Public
- Members Absent:** Michael Toedt, Garrett Higdon, Nathan Feibelman
- Staff Present:** Kim Dills, Christina Stamey, Lisa Browning, Kirstyn Smotherman and Melissa Setzer
- Guests:** None
- Media:** Shelby Powell (The Franklin Press)
- Call to Order:** Matt Corbin called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m.
- Approval of Agenda:** Matt Corbin asked for approval of the agenda. Barry Breeden made a motion to approve the agenda. Steve Grissim seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- Welcome/Intro/
Departures/
Recognition/
Announcements:** Kim Dills only announcement was a job application for Environmental Health Technician withdrew.

Public Comment: None

Presentation: None

Approval of Previous Meeting

Minutes: Steve Grissim made a motion to approve the minutes from the February 24th meeting. Angie Stone seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Old Business: None

New Business:

a. Annual SOTCH:

Kirstyn Smotherman provided the background on the CHA, explaining it is conducted every three years in conjunction with neighboring counties to identify five priorities. Kirstyn explained the three main priorities for the 2024 cycle was mental health, food insecurity, and housing stability/affordability. Kirstyn then discussed that the CHIP is submitted during years without a CHA and includes a list of priorities, programs, interventions, task forces, and communication campaigns. The State of the County Health Report (SOCHR) is where progress on these priorities is reported. Progress on Mental Health, Housing Affordability, and Food Insecurity
Kirstyn reported the mental health communications campaign, which has ended but is being replaced by a new campaign. The Highlands Coalition for Workforce Housing presented the Macon County Housing Study at a chamber event in 2025. The Healthy People, Healthy Carolinas section funded the Healthy Little Chefs program and the Macon Produce Prescription program. The Macon Produce RX program served 1,166 individuals with food boxes, and the Healthy Little Chefs program increased children's interest in cooking at home.
Morbidity and Mortality, Emerging Changes, and New Initiatives
Kirstyn also reported no significant changes in morbidity and mortality. The closure of Amazon's distribution center in the county is noted as an emerging change that might impact employment rates. The Healthy People, Healthy Carolinas project expanded the Macon County Produce Prescription program to serve more households and individuals. Staff changes in the health education section are reported, including the loss of more than half the staff. Barry Breeden expressed how great the Healthy Little Chef's program is. (See Handouts)

b. Strategic Plan Update:

Kim Dills provided an overview of the health department's yearly strategic plan, which includes goals, priorities, and successes. Kim explained that last year's priorities

included modernizing technology, marketing and outreach, and infrastructure improvements. Kim also mentioned ongoing efforts to modernize health records and environmental health systems. The strategic plan for the next year will be presented in July for review.

c. FY27 Budget Update:

Melissa Setzer presented the requested expenses for FY 27, noting changes in salary lines to simplify the budget. Melissa explained a reduction in the requested amount for on-site wastewater. Melissa also explained the health department has applied for a community health grant that would help reduce the child health line and the possibility of renewing an agreement agenda to compensate for some salary lines is discussed. Melissa stated that there is about a \$70,000 increase. Board member Marc Hehn questioned the emergency preparedness section wanting to know if it was primarily for the health department or if it is county wide. Kim Dills elaborated on the question explaining it is county wide. Board member Ava Ammons questioned Melissa if the budget had a line for preparedness and if this line is used in case of any emergencies. Melissa explained that there is a small line but is mostly made up of AA's and state funds to pay for this program. Melissa elaborated on how funds are received during emergencies, as an example when Covid hit, these types of emergencies are funded with the AA's and state funds. Board member Barry Breeden asked Melissa to explain the increase in animal services. Melissa Setzer and Kim Dills explained the improvements being made at animal services along with the steep increase in vaccines but the biggest increase was due to staffing and salary changes. Board member Cortney Patrick asked Melissa if the expense lines would remain the same throughout the year or expect them to increase. Melissa explained that she had already figured in potential increases in the budget, also explaining the revenue lines would also increase throughout the year as other funding comes in such as Medicaid Cost Settlement and grants that get awarded throughout the year. Matt Corbin asked if there was any more discussion the topic. Board member Angie Stone replied that she has spoke with several health department staff members and reported that staff was very happy with the changes being made in the health department. (See Handouts)

Requested Agenda / Discussion Items:

None

**6. Closed Session:
(If necessary, according to
N.C. Statute G.S. 143-318.11)**

None

Adjournment:

Chris Hedden made a motion to adjourn. Barry Breeden seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously at 6:34 p.m.

Next Meeting Date:

April 28th, 2026

Minutes Recorded by:

Christina Stamey

MACON COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH FY27 REQUESTED EXPENSE BUDGET

ORG	ACCOUNT DESCRIPTION	FY26 APPROVED BUDGET	FY 27 REQUESTED BUDGET
115110	HEALTH ADMINISTRATION	542,286.00	477,969.00
115111	OPERATIONS	551,098.00	649,700.00
115120	SCHOOL HEALTH NURSE	405,466.00	403,633.00
115140	WISEWOMEN	19,920.00	18,024.00
115141	BREAST & CERVICAL CANCER	53,014.00	46,741.00
115144	ADULT HEALTH	386,008.00	376,118.00
115145	DISEASE CONTROL	386,930.00	410,077.00
115146	HEALTHY COMMUNITIES	195,146.00	184,337.00
115147	CARE COORDINATION	21,159.00	21,159.00
115148	LABORATORY	251,961.00	251,308.00
115150	EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS	113,846.00	80,051.00
115152	W.I.C.	270,441.00	275,450.00
115154	OB CARE MANAGEMENT	21,446.00	10,846.00
115155	MATERNAL	155,847.00	151,624.00
115156	CHILD HEALTH	61,226.00	85,216.00
115157	CHILD DENTAL HEALTH	566,794.00	564,192.00
115159	FAMILY PLANNING	164,456.00	166,238.00
115165	BF PEER COUNSELOR	20,523.00	21,923.00
115167	EMPLOYEE & FAMILY HEALTH	182,258.00	176,978.00
115182	ON-SITE WASTEWATER	554,259.00	606,529.00
115183	PRIVATE DRINKING WATER	280,926.00	285,127.00
115184	FOOD/LODGING INST	280,348.00	285,640.00
114380	ANIMAL SERVICES	467,883.00	584,948.00
TOTAL		5,953,241.00	6,133,828.00

COMPLETELY GRANT FUNDED

ORG	ACCOUNT DESCRIPTION	FY26 APPROVED BUDGET	FY 27 REQUESTED BUDGET
115125	NC TOBACCO SETTLEMENT	87,772.00	182,338.00
115128	REG CHRONIC DISEASE 14	438,107.00	265,023.00
TOTAL		525,879.00	447,361.00

TOTAL PROJECTED BUDGET

6,479,120.00

6,581,189.00

MACON COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH FY27 REQUESTED REVENUE BUDGET

ORG	OBJ	ACCOUNT DESCRIPTION	FY26 APPROVED BUDGET	FY27 REQUESTED BUDGET
113511	436004	EMERGENCY PREPARE - STATE	(28,766.00)	(28,766.00)
113511	436007	SCHOOL NURSE - STATE	(150,000.00)	(150,000.00)
113511	436023	WISEWOMAN REV	(6,550.00)	(6,550.00)
113511	436026	MATERNAL HEALTH - STATE	(38,883.00)	(38,883.00)
113511	437000	STATE AID TO COUNTIES/HEALTH	(82,398.00)	(82,398.00)
113511	437200	LAB FEES	(35,000.00)	(35,000.00)
113511	437201	FAMILY PLANNING FEES	(14,500.00)	(14,500.00)
113511	437204	FOREIGN TRAVEL/OTHR VACCINES	(120,000.00)	(120,000.00)
113511	437300	MATERNAL HEALTH FEES	(8,500.00)	(8,500.00)
113511	438011	ADULT HEALTH FEES	(6,000.00)	(6,000.00)
113511	438013	BCCCP - STATE	(16,350.00)	(16,350.00)
113511	438022	BF PEER COUNSELOR REVENUES	(20,013.00)	(20,013.00)
113511	438501	FAMILY PLANNING - STATE	(55,722.00)	(53,757.00)
113511	438502	WIC - STATE	(156,913.00)	(166,649.00)
113511	438504	HEALTH PROMOTION - STATE	(34,526.00)	(34,526.00)
113511	438508	TB - STATE	(2,170.00)	(2,170.00)
113511	438509	CHILD HEALTH - STATE	(9,999.00)	(9,999.00)
113511	438510	CHILD DENTAL FEES	(25,000.00)	(25,000.00)
113511	438511	ADULT HEALTH/MEDICAID	(10,000.00)	(10,000.00)
113511	438512	FAMILY PLANNING/MEDICAID REIMB	(12,000.00)	(12,000.00)
113511	438513	CHILD HEALTH/MEDICAID REIMB	(1,000.00)	(5,000.00)
113511	438514	MATERNAL HEALTH/MEDICAID REIMB	(15,000.00)	(15,000.00)
113511	438515	OB CARE COORDINATOR	(20,000.00)	(20,000.00)
113511	438518	COMM DISEASE-STATE	(10,678.00)	(10,678.00)
113511	438520	IMMUNIZATION - STATE	(12,117.00)	(12,117.00)
113511	438521	COMMUNICABLE DISEASE FEES	(1,200.00)	(1,200.00)
113511	438522	CARE COORD. FOR CHILDREN-STATE	(4,724.00)	(4,724.00)
113511	438524	IMMUNIZATIONS-MEDICAID REIMB	(7,500.00)	(7,500.00)
113511	438528	FLU VACCINE PROGRAM	(20,000.00)	(20,000.00)
113511	438533	CARE COORD. FOR CHILDREN	(20,000.00)	(20,000.00)
113511	438535	CHILD DENTAL MEDICAID	(250,000.00)	(250,000.00)
113511	438541	CMARC CMHRP	(10,000.00)	(10,000.00)
113511	438543	MEDICAID CAPITATION PAYMENTS	(70,000.00)	(70,000.00)
113511	438546	CHILD HEALTH FEES	(5,000.00)	(5,000.00)
113511	438550	COMM DISEASE/MEDICAID	(1,300.00)	(1,300.00)
113511	438551	MEDICAID COST SETTLEMENT FUNDS	(450,000.00)	(450,000.00)
113511	438554	TB FEES	(3,200.00)	(3,200.00)
113511	438561	PRIMARY CARE	(30,000.00)	(30,000.00)
113511	438563	EMPLOYEE HEALTH	(6,500.00)	(6,500.00)
113511	438567	PRIMARY CARE - MEDICAID	(10,000.00)	(10,000.00)

113511	438702	ONSITE WASTEWTR FEES	(185,000.00)	(185,000.00)
113511	438703	WELL FEES	(56,000.00)	(56,000.00)
113511	438704	FOOD/LODGING FEES	(18,000.00)	(18,000.00)
113511	438705	FOOD & LODGING - STATE	(10,165.00)	-
113511	438706	WATER TEST FEES	(22,000.00)	(22,000.00)
113511	438707	TEMP FOOD FEES	(1,200.00)	(2,000.00)
113511	438708	POOL FEES	(2,500.00)	(2,500.00)
113511	445200	CONTRIBUTIONS	(1,000.00)	(1,000.00)
113344	435013	ANIMAL ADOPTION FEES	(12,000.00)	(12,000.00)
113344	435014	ANIMAL CONTROL FINES & FEES	(2,500.00)	(2,500.00)
113344	435018	ANIMAL SERVICES MICROCHIP FEES	(250.00)	(250.00)
Total Health Revenues			\$ (2,092,124.00)	\$ (2,094,530.00)

Grant Funding

ORG	OBJ	ACCOUNT DESCRIPTION	FY26 APPROVED BUDGET	FY27 REQUESTED BUDGET
113511	426001	TOBACCO GRANT	(87,772.00)	(182,338.00)
113511	426007	MINORITY DIABETES PREV GRANT	(160,023.00)	(140,023.00)
113511	436031	HLTHY PEOPLE HLTHY CAROLINAS	(125,000.00)	(125,000.00)
Total Grant Funds			\$ (372,795.00)	\$ (447,361.00)
TOTAL PROJECTED REVENUES			\$ (2,464,919.00)	\$ (2,541,891.00)

| HNC 2030 Scorecard: Macon County (2024-2026)

ID: 91704

[Macon County 2024 CHA Video loop \(Video\)](#) by jgermain

Community Health Assessment (CHA)

 2024 Macon County Health Assessment

Executive Summary

MACON COUNTY 2024 COMMUNITY HEALTH ASSESSMENT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

COMMUNITY RESULTS STATEMENT

Macon County's health matters.

LEADERSHIP AND PARTNERSHIP FOR THE COMMUNITY HEALTH ASSESSMENT PROCESS

During 2024-2025, Macon County Public Health, Angel Medical Center, and Highlands-Cashiers Hospital have facilitated the development of this comprehensive Community Health Assessment by engaging multiple organizations and community members; by outlining the need for certain decisions and interventions; and by creating a positive environment for discussion and change. Please see page 2 for a list of participating agencies and their roles.

REGIONAL SUPPORT

Our county participates in WNC Healthy Impact. This partnership brings together hospitals, public health agencies, and key regional partners in western North Carolina to improve community health. We work together locally and regionally to assess health needs, develop plans, take action, and evaluate our progress. This regional effort is coordinated by WNC Health Network, a non-profit that exists to support people and organizations to improve community health and well-being across western North Carolina. Learn more at www.WNCHN.org.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK/MODEL

WNC Health Network supports local hospitals and public health agencies working on complex community health issues. Community Health Assessment and Improvement processes include the use of Results-Based Accountability™ (RBA). RBA is a practical approach that focuses on achieving real improvements for people, agencies, and communities. The framework relies on both primary (story and number data) and secondary data to provide a comprehensive understanding of community health.

COLLABORATIVE PROCESS SUMMARY

Macon County's collaborative process is supported on a regional level by WNC Healthy Impact. Locally, the CHA team guides our process. This team reviews the data and provides input into health issues of concern. Data summaries for the identified health issues are then brought forth to the community, where health priorities are confirmed. Phase 1 officially began in January 2024 with collecting health data.

KEY FINDINGS

The Community Health Assessment Coordinator with support from WNC Healthy Impact compiled a list of data filters to be used when viewing the data. While reviewing the data health indicators were scored and ranked based on size and severity while taking into consideration any disparities that might be noted. It was very apparent that the top ten health indicators could be grouped into health issues of concern. Once the top issues of concern were determined a data summary document was created for each.

The Community Health Assessment (CHA) Team then reviewed each data summary independently and as a group virtually to fill in any information gaps. The CHA team was also instrumental in helping to shape the community prioritization meeting.

Community members met in January 2025. During this time background information regarding types of data collected, the review process, the Community Health Assessment Teams role was provided. Community members were able to review each data summary for the health issues of concern and ask questions or provide input. Members then ranked the health issues based on impact and feasibility. The group then discussed benefits and downsides of combining issues into the health priorities, keeping capacity to address each issue in mind. Then members voted on how to structure the health priorities for the 2024 assessment.

HEALTH PRIORITIES

- Priority 1 – Mental Health
- Priority 2 – Housing Affordability & Safety
- Priority 3 – Food Insecurity

NEXT STEPS

CHA leadership and partners will work with community members to better understand the story and root causes behind our priority health issues. New and existing partners will be engaged to help to do better on these issues.

We will identify what works to do better through research on evidence-based strategies, observing what is working in other communities, and engaging priority populations. Strategies will be selected, as well as performance measures to ensure that residents are better off because of them.


The Community Health Improvement plan will be developed as an electronic scorecard and published so that teams and the community at large can monitor progress.

Priorities

HEALTH PRIORITIES

- Priority 1 – Mental Health
- Priority 2 – Housing Affordability & Safety
- Priority 3 – Food Insecurity

Mental Health

 All People in Macon County have good mental health outcomes

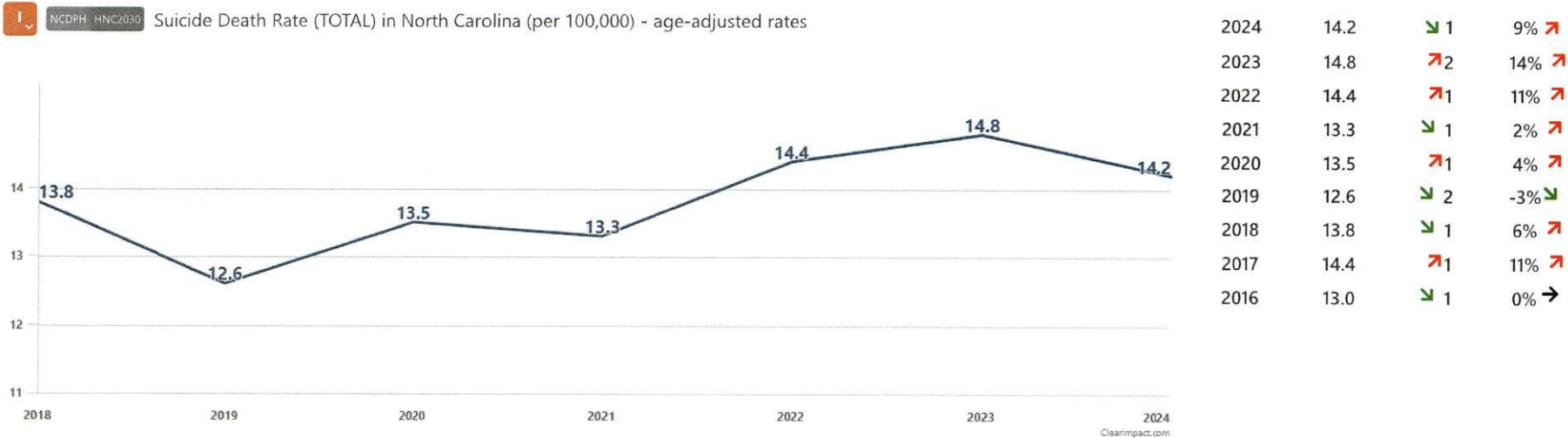
Most Recent Period	Current Actual Value	Current Trend	Baseline % Change
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Why Is This Important?

Good mental health outcomes ripple through a community in powerful ways. When individuals have strong mental health, they're better able to engage socially, contribute to their local economy, and support others. This creates a collective atmosphere of resilience, understanding, and cooperation.

Communities with good mental health outcomes often see reduced rates of crime, substance abuse, and homelessness. They also experience stronger relationships among residents, fostering trust and a sense of belonging. Schools and workplaces benefit, too, with higher productivity, better academic performance, and increased innovation.

On a broader scale, prioritizing mental health can lead to communities advocating for supportive policies, such as accessible healthcare, mental health programs, and equitable resources. It's like a positive feedback loop: healthier people make for healthier communities, and healthier communities support healthier people.



Story Behind the Curve

Rates are age-adjusted.

Deaths by suicide are defined as having ICD-10 underlying cause-of-death codes X60-X84 or Y870.

Overall, the suicide rate is trending upwards (from 13.0 in 2014 to 14.8 in 2023).

Indicator Notes

Definition:

Age-Adjusted Suicide Death Rates per 100,000 Population

Why is this Important?

The impacts of suicide are experienced at the personal and community level. Suicide burdens family, friends, and the community at large (emotionally and often financially).

Suicide is closely linked to mental health and well-being, which can be negatively impacted by trauma, financial insecurity, housing instability, or physical illness.

Insurance status may also play a role when it affects the ability of individuals to seek mental health care and treatment. [HNC2030]

Additional Information:

Rates are age-adjusted.

References and Links:

[HNC-REPORT-FINAL-Spread2.pdf](#)

TF Behavioral Health Task Force

Description

The Macon County Behavioral Health Task Force is a collaborative initiative aimed at improving mental health and substance use services across the county. It brings together a wide range of stakeholders—from public health and education to law enforcement and harm reduction specialists—to address systemic gaps and coordinate care.

- **Mission:** Ensure access to a comprehensive, integrated system of behavioral health care for all Macon County residents.
- **Vision:** A healthy community where behavioral health needs are met with dignity, equity, and effectiveness

Key Participants

- Macon County Public Health
- Department of Social Services
- Macon County Schools
- Angel Medical Center
- Appalachian Community Services
- Vaya Health
- EMS, law enforcement, and local nonprofits like No Wrong Door, HIGHTS and WNCAP.

Focus Areas

- School-based mental health services: Addressing gaps in clinician coverage and rising youth mental health needs.
- Crisis response: Improving access to urgent psychiatric care and reducing wait times for involuntary commitments.
- Substance use treatment: Tackling opioid addiction, especially fentanyl-related overdoses, through harm reduction and medication-assisted treatment.
- Veteran suicide prevention: Macon County was identified as one of five U.S. counties at highest risk for veteran suicide.
- Community coordination: Quarterly meetings foster cross-sector collaboration and data sharing.

Challenges Identified

- Shortage of mental health professionals
- Limited crisis services and inpatient beds
- Geographic disparities in service access (e.g., Highlands vs. Franklin)
- Funding instability, especially with the expiration of ESSER grants for school clinicians.

Progress in 2025

The Macon County Behavioral Health Task Force has made meaningful strides in 2025, particularly in expanding mental health support within public schools. At their April 17 meeting, the Task Force focused on the urgent need for increased funding and personnel to bolster school-based behavioral health services. This included collaboration with counselors and mental health specialists from Macon County Schools, who emphasized gaps in current resources and advocated for more robust support systems.

The emphasis on school mental health suggests a strategic pivot toward early intervention and youth-centered care. This aligns with broader statewide efforts, including North Carolina's \$835 million investment in behavioral health infrastructure and Medicaid expansion, which are helping local entities like Macon County implement more integrated, accessible care models.

P Mental Health Communications Campaign

Most Recent Period	Current Actual Value	Current Trend	Baseline % Change
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Description

The *View From Here WNC* social media campaign is a collaborative health communications initiative spanning 19 counties in Western North Carolina, including the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and community-based organization UNETE. It's designed to amplify local voices and connect residents with health and wellness resources across the region.

Campaign Goals

- Address top regional health priorities:
 - Mental health
 - Substance misuse
 - Healthy eating and active living
 - COVID and flu vaccinations
- Share hyper-local messages and resident stories to promote healthier living
- Use community-driven design, shaped by listening sessions with residents, public health professionals, and local leaders

How It Works

- Content is distributed via popular social media platforms using the hashtag **#ViewFromHereWNC**
- Materials include videos, graphics, and personal stories that are customizable and free to use
- A partner toolkit provides access to campaign assets, timelines, FAQs, and Canva templates for easy sharing

Who's Involved

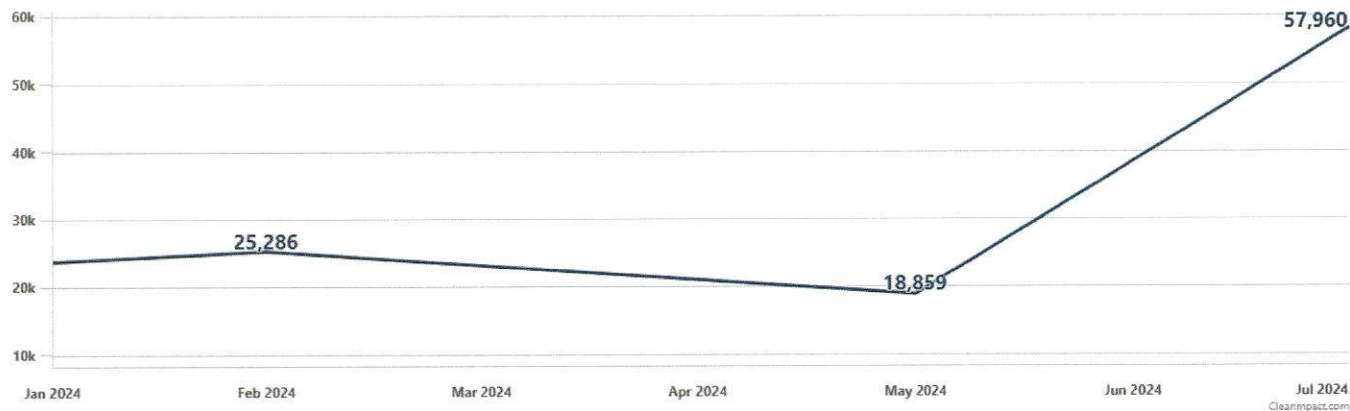
- Supported by NC Region 1 & 2 local health departments, Dogwood Health Trust, and the National Council on Aging
- Coordinated by WNC Healthy Impact, a partnership between hospitals, public health agencies, and regional stakeholders

Impact & Reach

- Campaign metrics from April 2023 to May 2024 show strong engagement across platforms
- Videos feature diverse voices from the region, including youth, elders, and health professionals

Progress in 2025

The upcoming *View From Here* campaign will focus on mental health and substance abuse. The new campaign has not started yet.



Jul 2024	57,960	↗ 1	108% ↗
May 2024	18,859	↘ 1	-32% ↘
Feb 2024	25,286	↗ 2	-9% ↘
Sep 2023	17,698	↗ 1	-37% ↘
May 2023	8,763	↘ 1	-69% ↘
Apr 2023	27,910	→ 0	0% →

Story Behind the Curve

The "Story Behind the Curve" helps us understand the causes and forces at that work that explain the data behind **Campaign Reach**.

What's Helping What We Do? *These are the positive forces at work in View From Here that influence how much we do or how well we do it.*

- Consistent communications related to our priority health topics builds resident trust in public health.
- Hyper-local, tailored, story driven messages resonates with our communities in WNC.
- Social media communications is an effective way to spread health information to even our most rural communities.
- All communities throughout regions 1 and 2 communicating the same messages builds a surround sound effect that builds trust and supports positive behavior change.

What's Hurting What We Do? *These are the negative forces at work in View From Here that influence how much we do or how well we do it.*

- Our priority health topics can be met with stigmatizing public reactions.
- While this work is incredibly successful, it's also resource intensive and lack of ongoing funding raises the question of long-term sustainability.
- Because of capacity limitations, we aren't able to engage all of the community based partners we would like to include.

Housing Affordability and Safety



All people in Macon County have access to safe, healthy and affordable housing

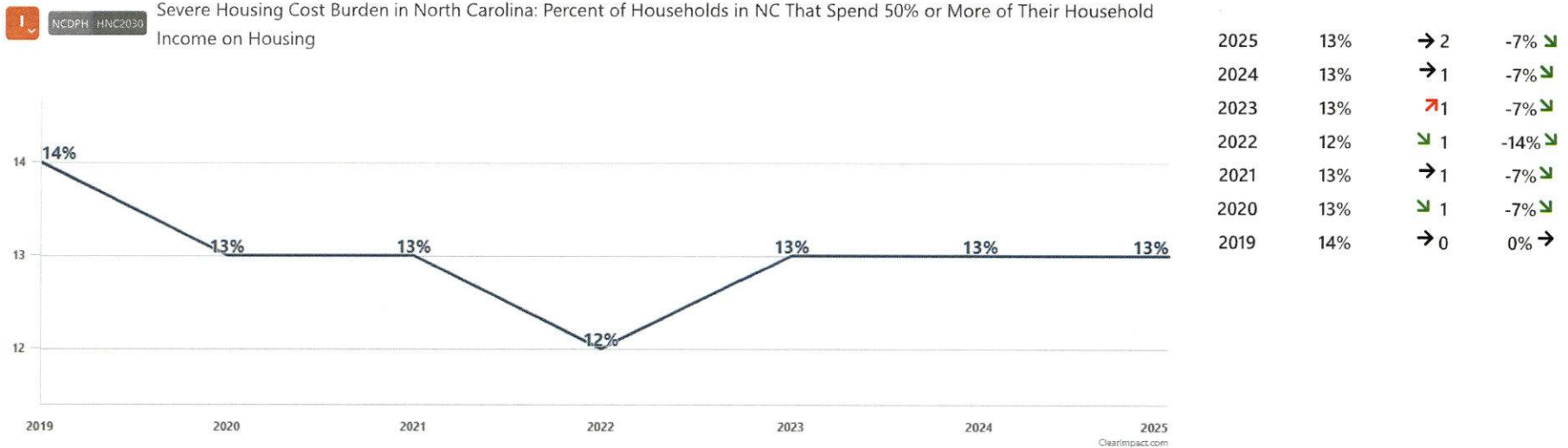
Most Recent Period	Current Actual Value	Current Trend	Baseline % Change
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Why Is This Important?

Access to safe, healthy, and affordable housing is foundational for individual and community well-being. Here's why it matters:

- **Health and Stability:** Living in secure housing improves physical and mental health. Without the stress of unsafe conditions or high costs, individuals can focus on building their lives and caring for themselves and their families.
- **Economic Impact:** Affordable housing frees up financial resources for other essentials, like education, healthcare, and savings. It also allows families to invest in their futures, breaking cycles of poverty and inequality.
- **Community Strength:** Stable housing creates a sense of belonging and security, fostering stronger communities. When people have a safe place to call home, they are more likely to contribute positively to their neighborhoods.
- **Opportunity:** Housing influences access to jobs, education, and social services. Affordable homes in healthy environments can open doors to better opportunities and improve the overall quality of life.

In essence, housing isn't just about having a roof over your head; it's about creating a foundation for growth, dignity, and connection.



Story Behind the Curve

Over the past few years, housing costs have increased faster than many household incomes which has increased pressure on individual families to meet basic needs (including health insurance, healthcare, healthy foods, utilities and transportation).

Important Note: These are five-year rolling estimates. Therefore, only compare non-overlapping years.

Indicator Notes

Definition:

Percent of Households in NC that Spend 50% or More of their Household Income on Housing

Why is this Important?

"Severe housing cost burden affects health and is linked to barriers to living long and well. Across counties in places where a higher share of households are severely cost burdened, there are also high rates of children in poverty and food insecurity, and more people in poor health." [County Health Rankings]

Additional Information:

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) periodically receives "custom" data from the U.S. Census Bureau that are largely not available through standard Census products. These data, known as the "CHAS" data (Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy), demonstrate the extent of housing problems and housing needs, particularly for low income households. The CHAS data are used by local governments to plan how to spend HUD funds and may also be used by HUD to distribute grant funds.

The *Percent of Households in NC that Spend 50% or More of their Household Income on Housing* indicator is aligned with HNC 2030.

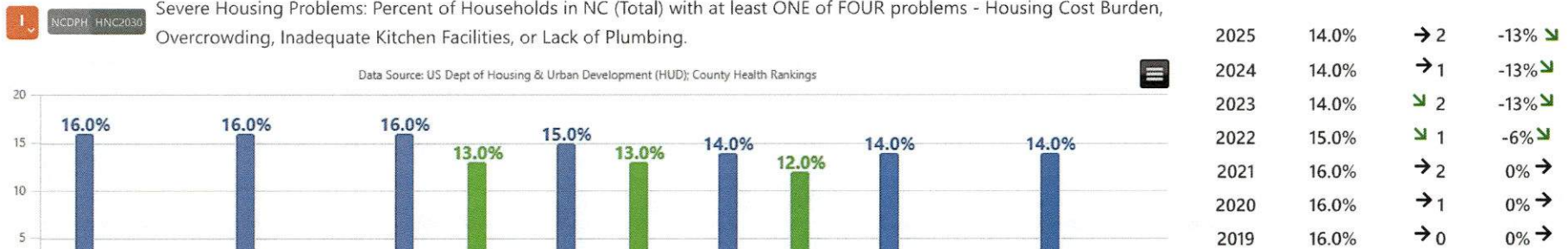
County Health Rankings and Roadmaps (CCR&R) - Business Analyst, Delorme map data, ESRI, & US Census Tiger line Files

References and Links:

https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/health-data/north-carolina?year=2025&measure=Severe+Housing+Cost+Burden*

<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/about.html>

<https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/cp.html>



- [HNC2030] Severe Housing Problems: Percent of Households in NC (Total) with at least ONE of FOUR problems - Housing Cost Burden, Overcrowding, Inadequate Kitchen Facilities, or Lack of Plumbing.
- [HNC2030] Severe Housing Problems - Inadequate Facilities: Percent of Households in NC Lacking Sufficient Kitchen and/or Bathroom Facilities
- [HNC2030] Severe Housing Problems - Overcrowding: Percent of Households in NC living in overcrowded housing
- [HNC2030] Severe Housing Problems - High Housing Costs: Percent of Households in NC with Severe Housing Cost Burden

Story Behind the Curve

Based on data from 2017-2021, 14% of North Carolina households experienced at least one of the following housing problems: High Cost Housing Costs, Overcrowding, Lack of Kitchen Facilities, or Lack of Plumbing. Percent of Severe Housing Problems ranged from 9% to 21% of households across counties in the state.

The 2025 Annual Data Release used data from 2017-2021 for this measure.

<https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/health-data/north-carolina?year=2025&measure=Severe+Housing+Problems>

Indicator Notes

Definition:

Percentage of households with at least one of four housing problems: overcrowding, high housing costs, lack of kitchen facilities, or lack of plumbing facilities.

The 2024 Annual Data Release used data from 2016-2020 for this measure. [County Health Rankings]

Why is this Important?

Safe housing is fundamental to good health, and helps to protect individuals and families from harmful exposures while providing privacy, security, stability, and control.

Inadequate, poor quality housing can contribute to health problems (e.g., infectious and chronic disease and injuries) and interfere with healthy childhood development.

Severe housing costs can interfere with other basic needs (such as health insurance, healthcare, healthy foods, utilities and transportation). [County Health Rankings]

Additional Information:

The *Percent of Households with at Least One of Four Problems* indicator is aligned with HNC2030.

References and Links:

County Health Rankings and Roadmaps (CCR&R) - Business Analyst, Delorme map data, ESRI, & US Census Tiger line Files

<https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/health-data/health-factors/physical-environment/housing-and-transit/severe-housing-problems?year=2024>

Highlands Coalition for Workforce Housing

Description

The Highlands Coalition for Workforce Housing is a community-driven initiative focused on addressing the severe shortage of affordable housing in Highlands, North Carolina—a town where home prices and rental costs have soared beyond the reach of many essential workers.

- **Mission:** To create housing opportunities for middle-income workers—teachers, healthcare staff, first responders, and service industry employees—who are vital to the town’s economy but often priced out of living locally.
- **Vision:** A thriving Highlands community where people who work in town can also afford to live there, fostering stability, equity, and economic resilience.

Key Challenges

- Homes selling for seven figures
- Rentals exceeding \$2,000/month
- Limited housing stock for middle-income earners
- Seasonal tourism driving up demand and prices

Coalition Strategies

- Phase Two Development: The coalition is advancing its second phase of workforce housing construction, aiming to build units that are affordable for working families
- Public-Private Partnerships: Collaborating with local government, nonprofits, and developers to secure land, funding, and policy support
- Community Engagement: Raising awareness and advocating for zoning reforms and sustainable housing models

This local effort aligns with statewide movements like the North Carolina Housing Table, which supports legislation to expand housing options—including workforce housing—across the state. These coalitions emphasize that housing is not just an economic issue, but a matter of justice, dignity, and opportunity

In 2025, the Highlands Coalition for Workforce Housing has been actively engaging the community and advancing the conversation around housing equity in Macon County. One of the key developments was the completion and public discussion of the Macon County Housing Study, which was spotlighted during a January “Chamber Chat” hosted by the Highlands Chamber of Commerce.

P Macon County Housing Department: Home Repair and Safety Programs

Most Recent Period	Current Actual Value	Current Trend	Baseline % Change
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Description

The Macon County Housing Department offers several programs designed to improve housing safety, energy efficiency, and livability for residents—especially those who are low-income, elderly, or disabled. Here’s a breakdown of what’s available:

Key Housing Safety & Repair Programs

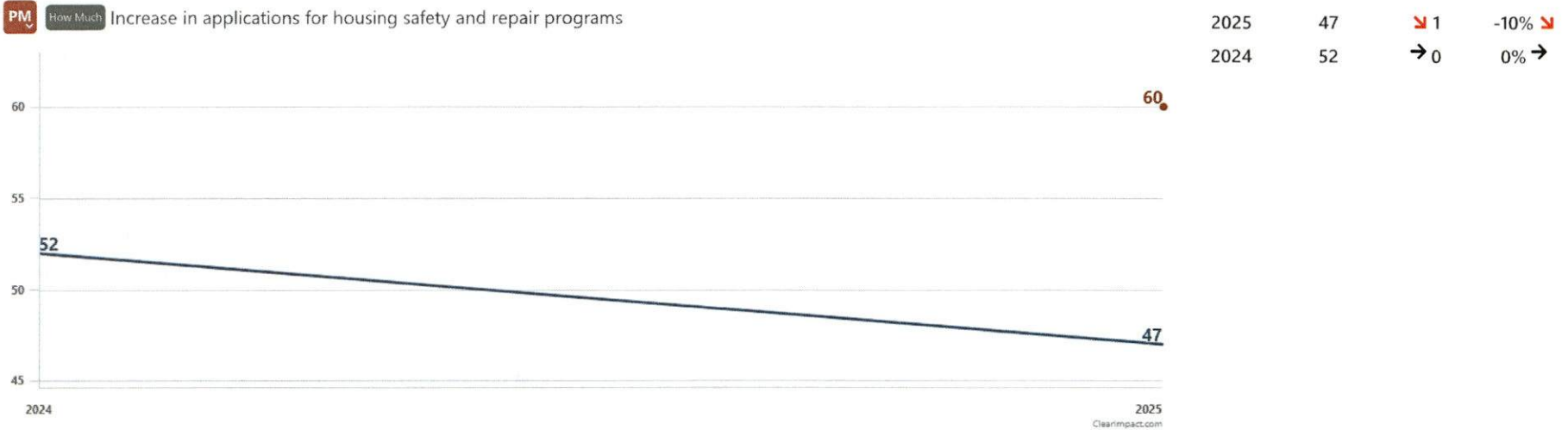
- **Weatherization Assistance Program**
 - Focuses on reducing energy costs through insulation, air sealing, and other efficiency upgrades.
 - Targets low- to moderate-income households, elderly, and disabled residents.
- **Urgent Repair Program (URP)**
 - Provides emergency repairs to eliminate conditions that are life-threatening or could cause displacement.
 - Examples include fixing unsafe heating systems, electrical hazards, or structural issues.
- **Essential Single-Family Rehabilitation Loan Program (ESFRLP)**
 - Offers no-interest, forgivable loans to eligible homeowners for major repairs and accessibility modifications.
 - Aims to extend the useful life of homes and improve safety.
- **Duke Energy Carolinas Weatherization Program**
 - Delivers energy efficiency upgrades to income-qualified households within Duke Energy’s service area.
 - Includes insulation, HVAC improvements, and appliance replacements.

Additional Support: Healthy Homes Initiative

- Sponsored by Blue Cross NC and NCCAA, this program provides up to \$2,500 in health and safety repairs.
- Services may include:
 - Mold and moisture control
 - Pest management
 - Carbon monoxide and smoke detectors
 - Handicap accessibility upgrades
 - Air purifiers and duct cleaning

Progress in 2025

In 2025, the Macon County Housing Department has made tangible progress in improving housing conditions for low- and moderate-income residents, with a strong focus on repair, energy efficiency, and housing access.



Customers

Total 2025 numbers:

Current clients on Waitlist = 121
Clients rolled over from last year = 74
New clients applied in 2025 = 47
Total Clients served in 2025 = 38

Clients by location within Macon County:

Cartoogechaye = 5
Cowee = 1
Ellijay = 3
Franklin = 19
Highlands = 1
Millshoal = 2
Smithbridge = 7

Total Projects in 2025 = 73

- Weatherization = 14
 - HVAC systems = 10
 - Ingress/Egress = 24
 - Appliances = 16
 - Bathrooms = 5
 - Misc. Projects = 5
-

Food Insecurity

R All people in Macon County have access to healthy affordable food

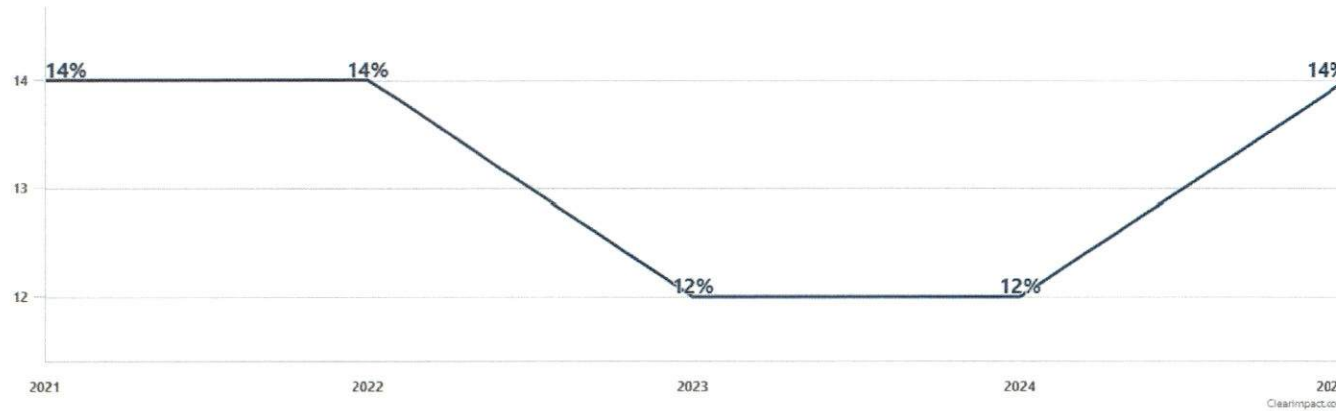
Most Recent Period	Current Actual Value	Current Trend	Baseline % Change
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Why Is This Important?

Access to healthy and affordable food is essential for maintaining individual well-being and fostering strong communities. Here's why:

- **Health Benefits:** Nutritious food supports physical and mental health, reducing the risk of chronic illnesses like diabetes, heart disease, and obesity. Healthy diets are critical for energy, brain function, and overall quality of life.
- **Economic Stability:** Affordable food allows individuals and families to allocate resources to other necessities like housing, education, and healthcare. It also alleviates financial stress, especially for those with limited incomes.
- **Equality and Opportunity:** Access to affordable healthy food promotes social equity. When everyone, regardless of income, can access nutritious food, it helps reduce disparities in health and well-being across communities.
- **Community Resilience:** A food-secure population contributes to stronger communities. Local markets and sustainable food systems benefit when more people can afford healthy options, fostering economic growth and environmental stewardship.

In essence, food isn't just fuel—it's a foundation for growth, learning, and connection.



2025	14%	↗ 1	0% →
2024	12%	→ 1	-14% ↘
2023	12%	↘ 1	-14% ↘
2022	14%	→ 1	0% →
2021	14%	→ 0	0% →

Story Behind the Curve

From 2018 to 2022, North Carolina's population food insecurity percentage remained relatively stable (ranging between 12% to 14%). [County Health Rankings 2021-2025 reported data] Access to reliable food improved slightly in 2020 and 2021, however, in 2022 the trend returned to the 2018 baseline of 14% (as reported in 2025).

*Should not compare ranked data from year to year.

* Do not compare data prior to the County Health Rankings 2021 Annual Data Release to data from more recent years due to changes in CHR calculation methods.

Indicator Notes

The HNC2030 indicator Limited Access to Healthy Food includes County Health Rankings data. Because those numbers are not frequently updated, this Scorecard includes the alternative indicator: Food Insecurity.

Definition of Food Insecurity:

Percentage of population who lack adequate access to food.

Food Insecurity measures access to a constant food supply over the past year.

It also addresses barriers to healthy eating by assessing the ability of individuals and families to provide balanced meals (including fruits and vegetables). [countyhealthrankings.org]

Why is this Important?

A lack of consistent access to food is related to negative health outcomes (including weight gain and premature mortality).

Range across counties in the state:

2025 (based on 2022 data): 11% - 22%

2024 (based on 2021 data): 8% - 18%

2023 (based on 2020 data): 9% - 20%

2022 (based on 2019 data): 9% - 20%

2021 (based on 2018 data): 10% - 21%

Addi Information:

The CHR Food Insecurity measure is modeled with the Core Food Insecurity Model (uses information from Community Population Survey, Bureau of Labor Statistics, and American Community Survey).

Numerator: population with lack of access, at times, to enough food for an active, healthy life or with uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate foods.

Denominator: total population.

References and Links:

<https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/health-data/community-conditions/health-infrastructure/health-promotion-and-harm-reduction/food-insecurity?year=2025>

https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/health-data/north-carolina?year=2025&measure=Food+Insecurity*

County level data is available at the following link: <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/health-data/north-carolina/data-and-resources>

County Health Rankings (countyhealthrankings.org)

Macon Food Council

Description

The Macon Food Council is part of a broader regional and statewide movement to strengthen local food systems, improve food access, and support agricultural sustainability in western North Carolina.

- **Mission:** To promote a resilient, equitable, and community-driven food system in Macon County.
- **Vision:** A county where all residents—regardless of income or geography—have access to nutritious, locally sourced food.

Regional Collaboration

Macon County is represented in the Western North Carolina Food Policy Council (WNCFPC), which includes seven counties: Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Swain, Macon, Jackson, and Haywood. This regional council:

- Advocates for policies that support food security and agricultural development
- Connects over 75 agencies, nonprofits, and small businesses
- Partners with the NC Sustainable Local Food Advisory Council (NC SLFAC) to align local and state-level efforts

Focus Areas

- Food insecurity: Addressing hunger among children, seniors, and low-income families
 - Local agriculture: Supporting farmers and producers through policy and economic development
 - Community engagement: Hosting meetings, sharing resources, and amplifying local voices
 - Policy advocacy: Promoting zoning, land use, and funding policies that support food access and sustainability
-

Progress in 2025

In 2025, the Macon Food Council has continued to strengthen food equity and community resilience across Macon County, building on its collaborative roots and expanding its reach through strategic partnerships and programming. Here's a synthesis of their likely progress based on regional trends and affiliated initiatives:

Expanded Community Partnerships

- The Council has deepened its collaboration with Macon Program for Progress (MPP) and MANNA Food Bank, which now moves over 70,000 pounds of food daily across Western NC.
- Monthly food outreach programs have continued to serve thousands of families in Macon County, offering not just food boxes but also dignity and connection during times of need.

Nutrition & Care Programs

- Through the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), the Council and its partners have supported nutritious meals for children in afterschool programs, emergency shelters, and adults in care facilities.
- These efforts contribute to long-term wellness and developmental outcomes, especially for vulnerable populations.

Policy & Systems Advocacy

- The Council has likely played a role in shaping local food policy discussions, especially in light of Macon County's 2025 budget priorities and the broader push for food system resilience in rural communities
 - Their work aligns with statewide goals to reduce hunger, improve access to fresh foods, and support local agriculture.
-

Pr Franklin Farm Hub

Description

The Franklin Farm Hub is a newly established nonprofit in Franklin, NC, created to strengthen the local food system by supporting farmers, improving food access, and fostering community resilience.

While detailed programming hasn't been publicly outlined yet, farm hubs like this typically aim to:

- Aggregate and distribute local farm products to schools, hospitals, and food pantries
 - Support small farmers with marketing, logistics, and technical assistance
 - Promote food equity by connecting underserved communities with fresh, local food
 - Host educational events and workshops on sustainable agriculture
-

Progress in 2025

From the get go

Franklin Farm Hub (FFH) has been committed to listening to our community, building the right relationship, and honoring the land. FFH was formed to support local farmers and address food insecurity. We acknowledge the invaluable food access work that is already being done by others in our region, we wish to uplift those efforts and help fill in any gaps. We recognize that addressing food insecurity requires collaboration and that it will take all of us working together to accomplish this goal. We are deeply passionate about building an equitable local food system because we believe that everyone deserves access to fresh local food.

Food distribution 2025

Since launching our food access programs in August, we have provided:

\$15,000 worth of local food purchased and donated to food pantries through our farmers market food recovery program.

3,000 lbs of food donated to local pantries and meal programs.

\$5,000 worth of local food sold to restaurants/retailers during our 3-month Farm Hub Market Pilot.

Ground Works

Land Updates

In 2024, Franklin Farm Hub was able to purchase 94 acres on Lakeside Drive, Franklin. Over the last year we have been exploring and mapping the property. Two of the four historic farm plots are being reclaimed from black walnut incursion. Cover crops are planted. The homestead has been stabilized and shored up. The old wagon trail is being revealed. Several mica mines are being cordoned off. All while we survey the flora and fauna of this unique property.

Soil testing is ongoing. The results will determine what kind of amendments will be needed for specific areas. Our commitment is to a regenerative approach. We are mindful of our location along the Little Tennessee River, as well as protecting stands of native plants, some of which were propagated by previous caretakers of the land.

Healthy People Healthy Carolinas

Most Recent Period	Current Actual Value	Current Trend	Baseline % Change
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Description

The Healthy People, Healthy Carolinas (HPHC) initiative is a community-based health improvement effort launched by *The Duke Endowment* in 2015. It's designed to help communities in North and South Carolina tackle chronic health issues—like obesity, diabetes, and heart disease—through local coalitions that implement evidence-based interventions and drive policy, systems, and environmental change.

Progress in 2025

In 2025, the Healthy People Healthy Carolinas (HPHC) initiative—through its regional arm, the MountainWise Partnership for Health—has made meaningful progress in addressing food insecurity in Macon County by combining data-driven strategies with community-led action.

Produce Rx Expansion

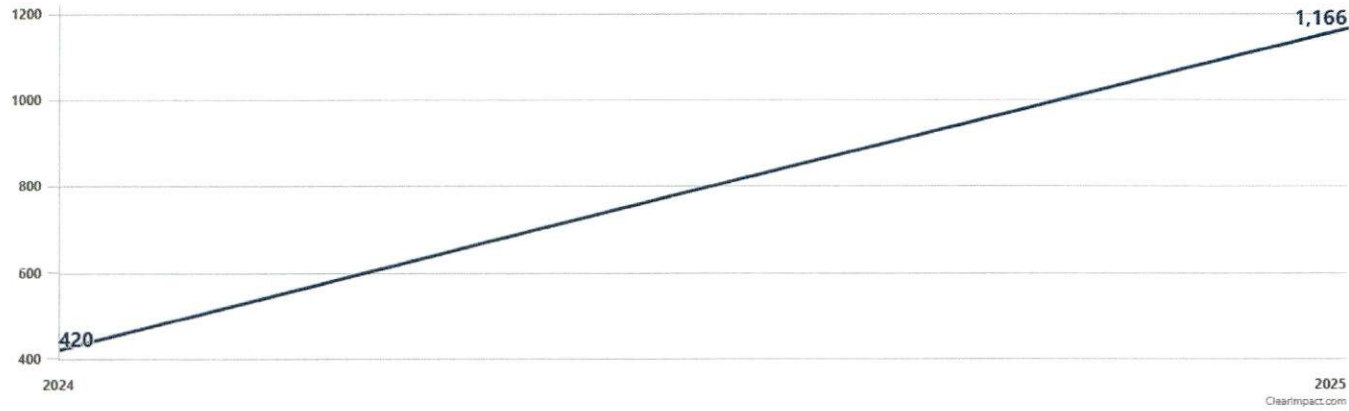
- The Produce Rx Program grew in scope, offering fresh produce to more food insecure households and individuals with diet-related health conditions.
- This program not only addressed hunger but also promoted nutritional healing, linking food access directly to chronic disease prevention.

3. Policy & Systems Change

- HPHC supported evidence-based interventions that led to improvements in local policies and environments—such as expanding eligibility for food programs and increasing access points for underserved populations.
- These changes reflect a shift from charity-based models to systemic resilience, aligning with your own advocacy for equity and structural reform.

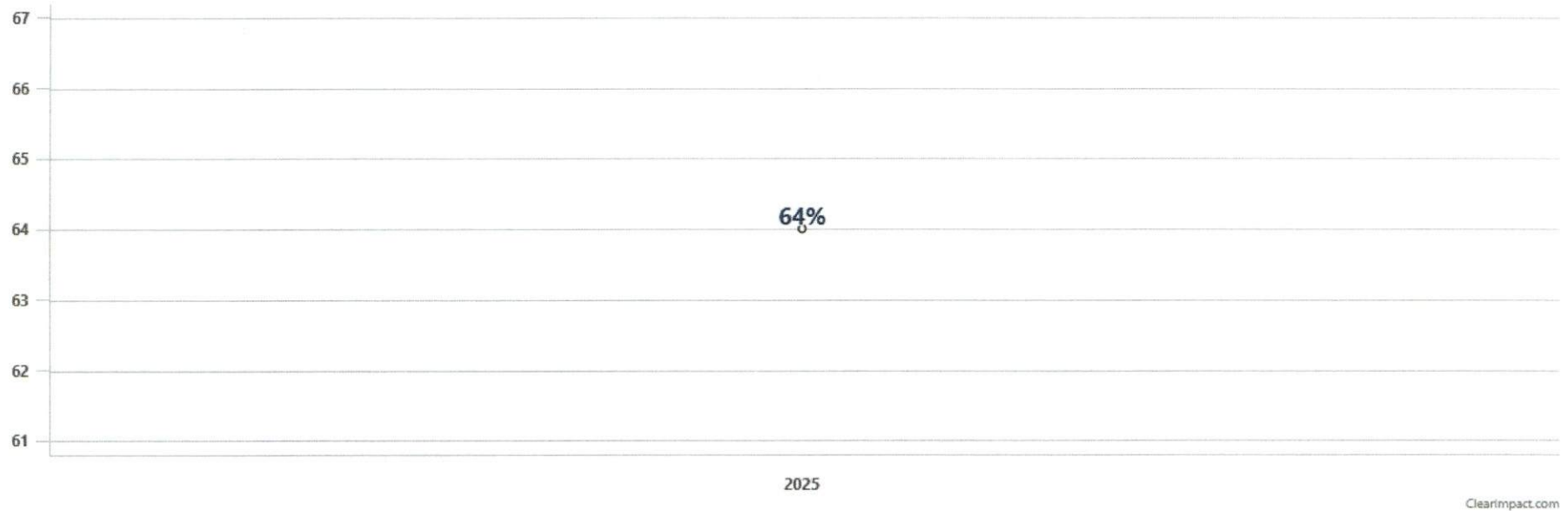
PM How Much # of people who received food boxes (Macon Produce Rx Program)

2025	1,166	↗ 1	178% ↗
2024	420	→ 0	0% →



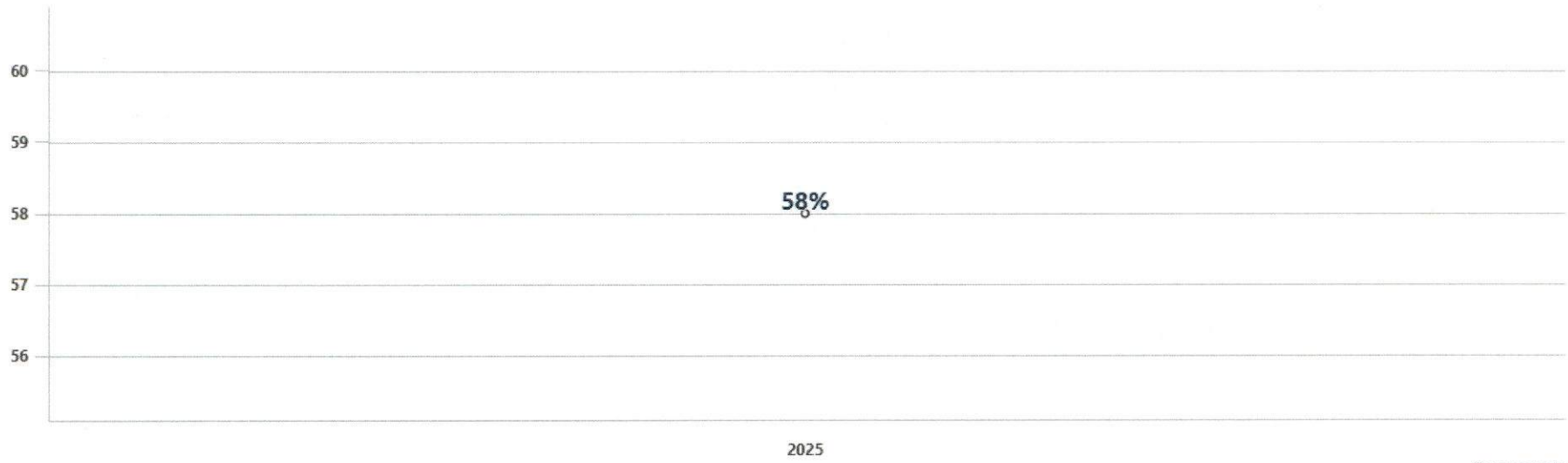
PM Better Off % of Kids who Increased their fruit intake (Healthy Little Chefs)

2025	64%	→ 0	0% →
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PM % of Kids who increased their vegetable intake (Healthy Little Chefs)

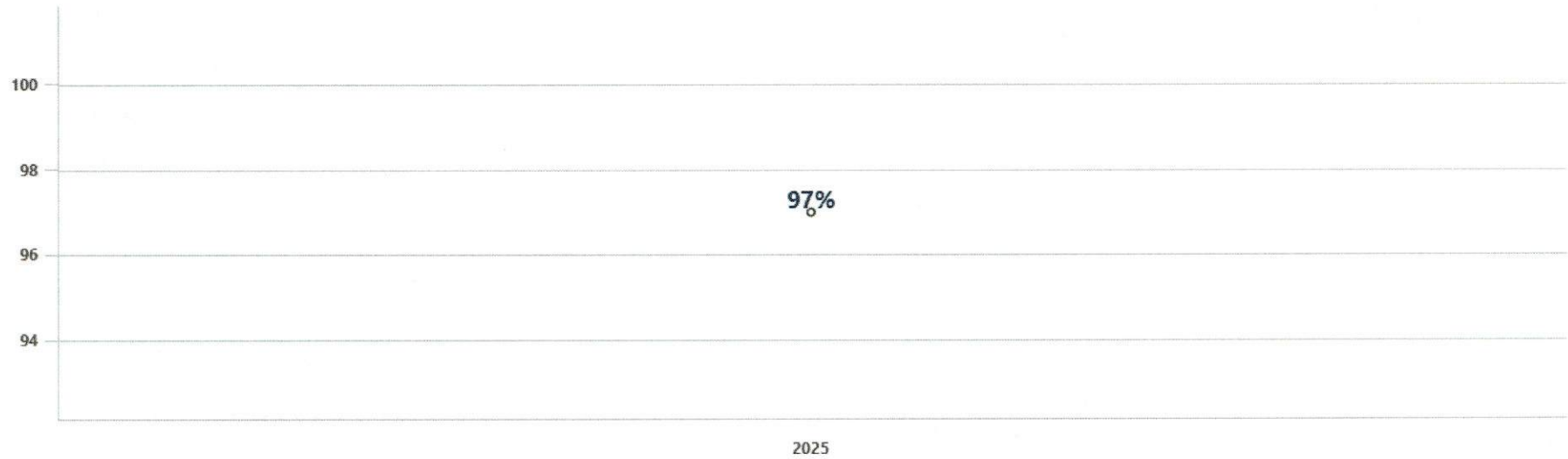
2025 58% → 0



ClearImpact.com

PM Better Off % of Kids who showed increased interest in cooking at home/ helping with cooking (Healthy Little Chefs)

2025 97% → 0 0% →



ClearImpact.com

Most Recent Period	Current Actual Value	Current Trend	Baseline % Change
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Description

The Macon County Farmers Market in Franklin, NC is a vibrant community hub that celebrates local agriculture, food access, and small business entrepreneurship. It's more than just a place to buy produce—it's a weekly gathering that fosters connection, education, and economic vitality.

Food Access & Equity

- Accepts EBT cards
- Doubles SNAP dollars through a grant program—making fresh food more accessible to low-income families

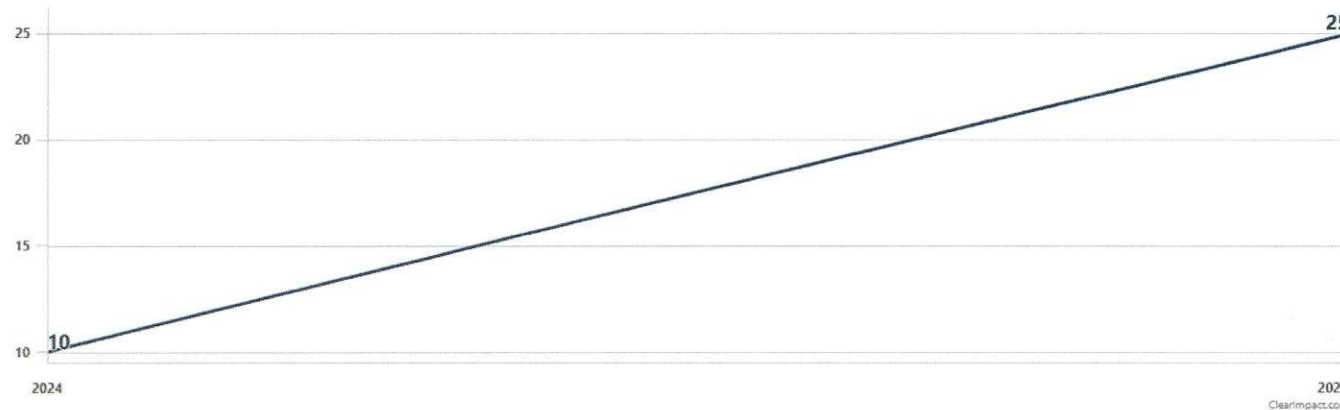
This market is a great example of how local food systems can support health, equity, and economic development.

Progress in 2025

The second season for the Macon County Farmer's Market began in May 2025. The number of SNAP vendors more than doubles from the inaugural season. There were 10 SNAP eligible vendors in 2024 and there are 25 for the current season.

PM How Much Increase of healthy food vendors accepting SNAP

2025	25	↗ 1	150% ↗
2024	10	→ 0	0% →



Clearimpact.com

Progress in 2025

Some of the local farmer vendors reported as much as a 100% increase in their sales at the market from 2024 to 2025. SNAP usage at the market certainly contributed to this substantial increase in sales revenue for local food producers. This information will encourage additional vendors that will accept SNAP to join the market for the next season.

2025 Total SNAP: \$11,246

2025 Double SNAP: \$5,267

Most Recent Period	Current Actual Value	Current Trend	Baseline % Change
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Description

The Double SNAP program—also known as Double Up Food Bucks or Double SNAP for Fruits and Vegetables—is a nutrition incentive initiative that helps SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) recipients stretch their food dollars while supporting local agriculture.

How It Works

- When a SNAP participant uses their EBT card at a participating farmers market or retailer, they receive a dollar-for-dollar match—typically up to \$20 per day.
- The matched amount (often called Farm Fresh Bucks) can be used only for fresh fruits and vegetables, including mushrooms, seeds, and plants that produce food.
- For example, if someone spends \$10 in SNAP benefits, they get \$10 extra to spend on produce—doubling their purchasing power.

Where It's Available

- Participating farmers markets, farm stands, and some grocery stores across Western North Carolina, including Macon County.
- The program is coordinated regionally by groups like ASAP Connections, MountainWise, and Blue Ridge Women in Agriculture, which together form the WNC Double SNAP Network.

Benefits

- Improves nutrition by making fresh, local produce more affordable
- Supports local farmers and strengthens rural economies
- Promotes food equity by reducing barriers for low-income families

Local Impact

- Many residents report that the program has been life-changing, helping them eat healthier and feel more connected to their community.
- It's especially valuable for people with chronic health conditions, disabilities, or limited access to grocery stores.

Progress in 2025

SNAP & Double SNAP Impact at the Farmers Market

From May to November 2024, the market processed \$4,150 in SNAP/EBT card transactions and distributed \$4,028 in Double SNAP incentives. The slight difference between these figures reflects the timing of our grant approval, which came through in mid-June 2024, limiting our ability to match SNAP purchases earlier in the season.

Once the market reached full operating capacity, they consistently saw 5–10 SNAP transactions each Saturday. It's important to note that many SNAP customers visit our Welcome Center just after their EBT cards are reloaded, often purchasing enough Market Tokens to last the entire month. As a result, weekly transaction counts don't fully capture the number of SNAP shoppers benefiting from the market.

2025 Momentum & Projections

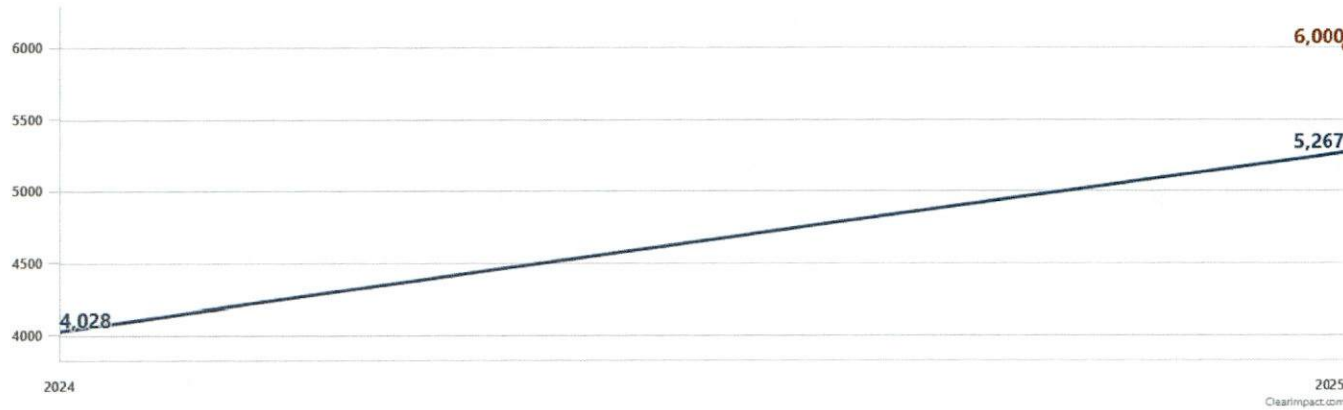
In May 2025 alone, the market processed \$812 in SNAP transactions and matched that amount dollar-for-dollar through Double SNAP. If this pace continues, we anticipate distributing approximately \$6,000 in Double SNAP incentives this year — a figure that aligns perfectly with the remaining balance in our current grant.



How Much

Increase of dollar amount matched in the Double SNAP program.

2025	5,267	▲ 1	31% ▲
2024	4,028	→ 0	0% →



Progress in 2025

2025 Total SNAP: \$11,246

2025 Double SNAP: \$5,267

SNAP had a very positive impact at the Macon County Farmers Market in 2025.

The market saw a 40% increase in SNAP usage at the market from the 2024 season to the 2025 season.

Additionally, some of the local farmer vendors reported as much as a 100% increase in their sales at the market from 2024 to 2025. SNAP usage at the market certainly contributed to this substantial increase in sales revenue for local food producers.

State of the County Health Reports (SOTCH)

S 2025 SOTCH Report

Progress on CHIPS

Click on each program/ strategy below to find and review 2025 progress/ updates in the individual "Progress in 2025" note tabs.

Mental Health

- Behavioral Health Task Force
- Mental Health Communications Campaign

Housing Affordability & Safety

- Highlands Coalition for Workforce Housing
- Macon County Housing Department: Home Repair and Safety Programs

Food Insecurity

- Macon Food Council

- Farm Hub
 - Healthy People Healthy Carolinas
 - Macon County Farmers Market
 - Double SNAP
-

Significant/Notable Changes In Morbidity and Mortality

No significant changes in morbidity and mortality since the 2024 CHA.

RWJF County Health Rankings 2025

Emerging Changes Impacting Health

These are the new or emerging issues in our community in 2025 that were not identified as priorities in our CHA.

- There have been reported increases of teen tobacco use, specifically the use of e-cigarettes and vaping products.
 - Amazon announced the closure of the distribution center within the county, which may hurt employment rates.
 - The cost of healthy food continues to increase with inflation.
-

New/Paused/Discontinued Initiatives or Activities

The following is information on new/ paused/ discontinued initiatives or activities in our community in 2025:

- Grant received from the Duke Endowment, was used to establish a produce prescription program for food insecure families. This program transitioned from the "Macon Swain Produce Rx Program" to the "Macon Produce Rx" Program.
 - Staffing changes
 - Departure of Population Health Section Administrator
 - Departure of Macon County Public Health Director
 - Departure of Community Health Promotions Coordinator
-