

# Foothills Food Access Plan

*Presented by: The Foothills Community Food Partnership  
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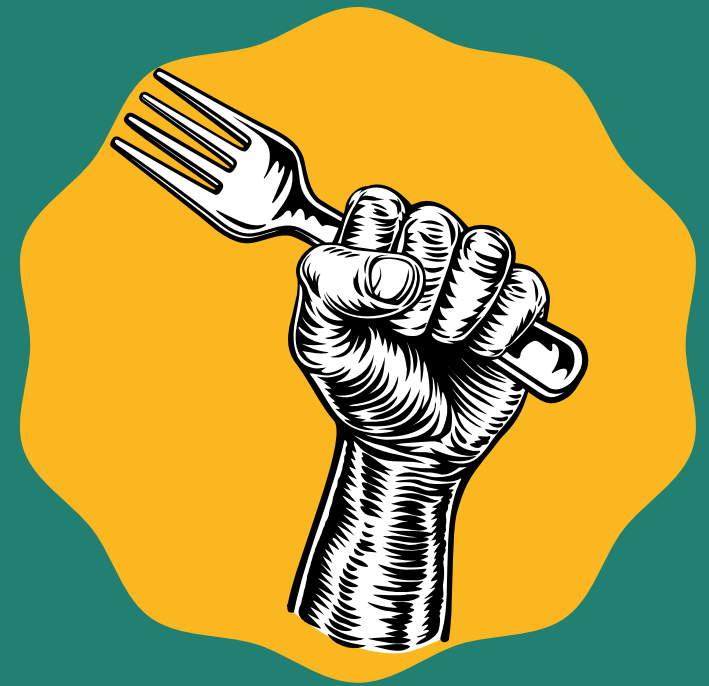


**2020-2024**



## ***What is a Food Access Plan?***

The Foothills Food Access Plan reflects the **research**, **community input**, and discussion of **visions** and **strategies** from the Foothills Food Summit. This Plan provides a framework for **community action**, highlighting the **services, facilities**, and **programs** that will help **improve food access** in the Foothills region of Whatcom County.



## ***The Vision:***

All foothills residents are fed, nourished, and have the resources to access the food they need.



opportunity  
council



Whatcom County  
**HEALTH**  
Department



SERVING WHATCOM COUNTY SINCE 2015



# Foothills Community Food Partnership

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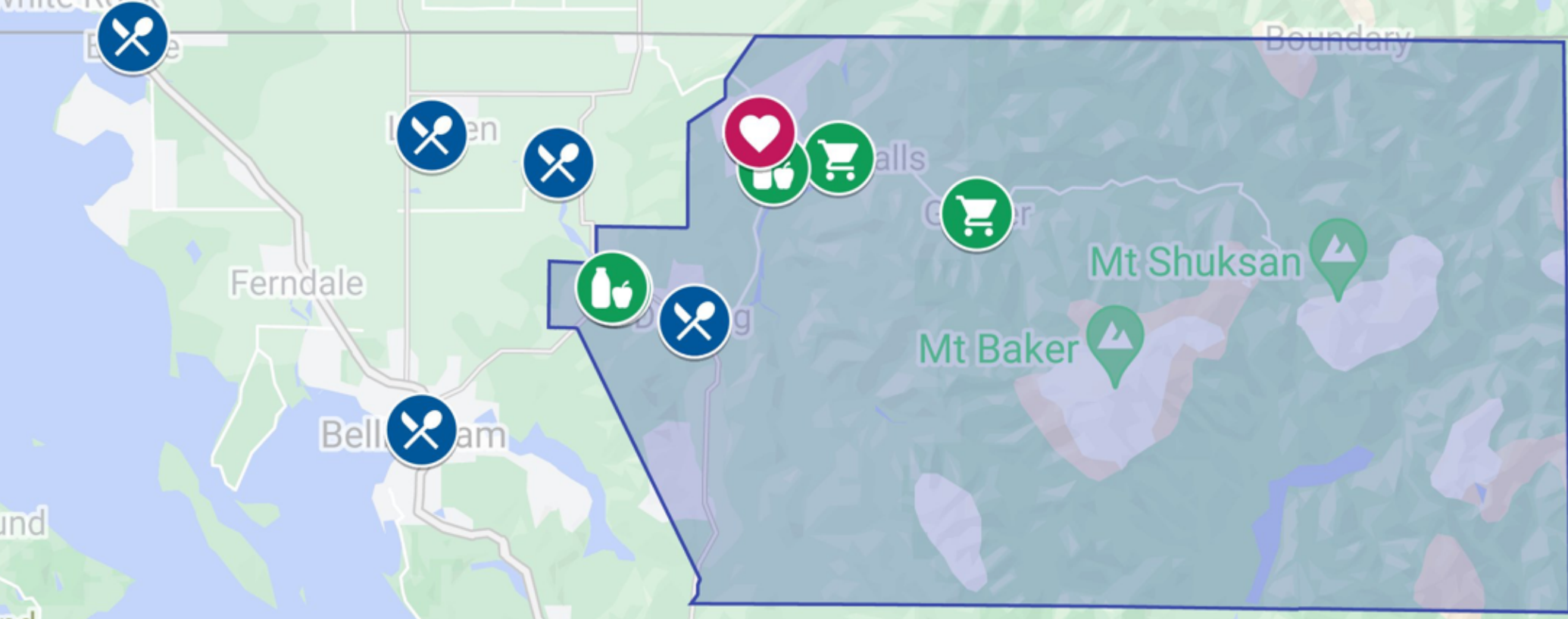
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**Food Bank Facilities/Emergency Food Providers**

-  Foothills Food Bank
-  Nooksack Valley Food Bank
-  Nooksack Tribal Food Bank
-  Project Hope Food Bank
-  Blaine Food Bank
-  Point Roberts Food Bank
-  Bellingham Food Bank

 East Whatcom Regional Resource Center

**Grocery Stores**

-  Graham's Store
-  Cross Road Grocery & Video
-  Nugents Corner Market
-  Twin Sisters Farmer's Market
-  Twin Sisters Farmer's Market

**Foothills/Mt. Baker**

 FFB Boundary

## East Whatcom Boundry Map

This map illustrates the few grocery services in the Foothills Food Bank service area, illustrating the need for a collaborative effort to address food security through a Food Action Plan.

# Our Guiding Principles: People

We believe that all people have the right to healthy food. We have long-standing traditions of neighbors helping neighbors in each of our small communities. We know that each of our communities (Nooksack Tribal Nation, Kendall, Acme, Maple Falls, Glacier, Deming) will have a unique combination of people doing this work and figuring out the best way to make it happen.



# Our Guiding Principles: Places

We work to build a system that brings more healthy food and food education to the places that are close to home. An organized network for distribution is more resource efficient, and strengthens our small local communities and economies.



# Our Guiding Principles: Partnerships

We build strong partnerships with local community groups, agencies, funders, local businesses, and non-profit organizations to achieve our common goals. With strong partnerships, more resources can flow to serve the community.



# What Makes the Foothills Food System Unique?

The Foothills region of Whatcom County is geographically vast and diverse, spanning over **600 square miles from Mt. Baker to the South Fork Valley.**

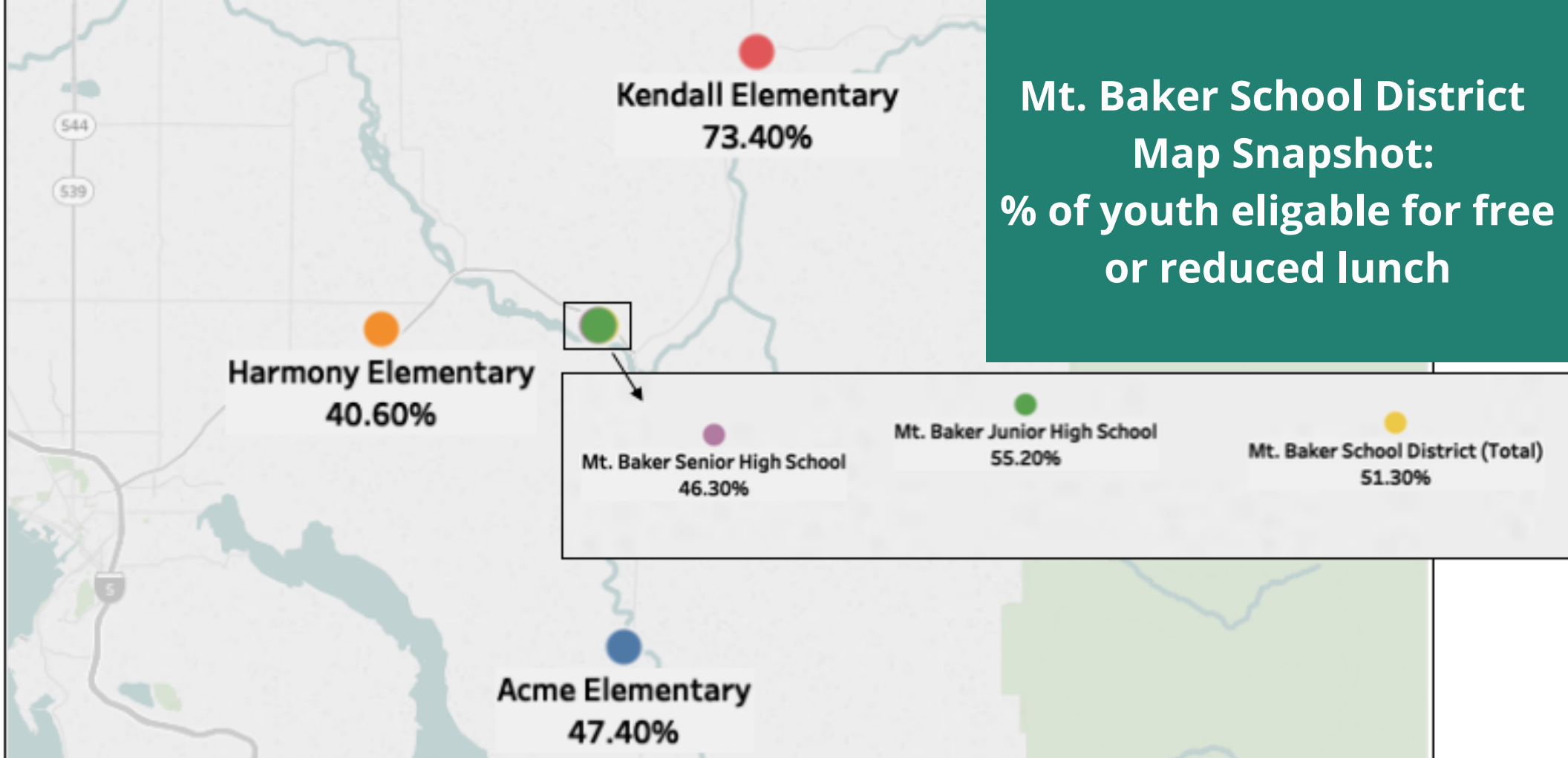
Prior to European colonization, the area was home to many indigenous communities, including the Lummi and Nooksack people. Today, this area includes the small unincorporated communities of Kendall, Columbia Valley, Maple Falls, Glacier, Acme, Van Zandt, Deming, the Nooksack Reservation, and Welcome. In total, the region is home to about **9,000** residents.



The area boasts many assets, such as **strong local partnerships, fertile land, active farming and fishing communities, facilities for residents to gather and connect, and knowledgeable, active neighbors.** Despite these strengths, the region is considered a “food desert,” meaning that is a low-income area and that at least **33% of the population lack adequate access to retail sources of food.**



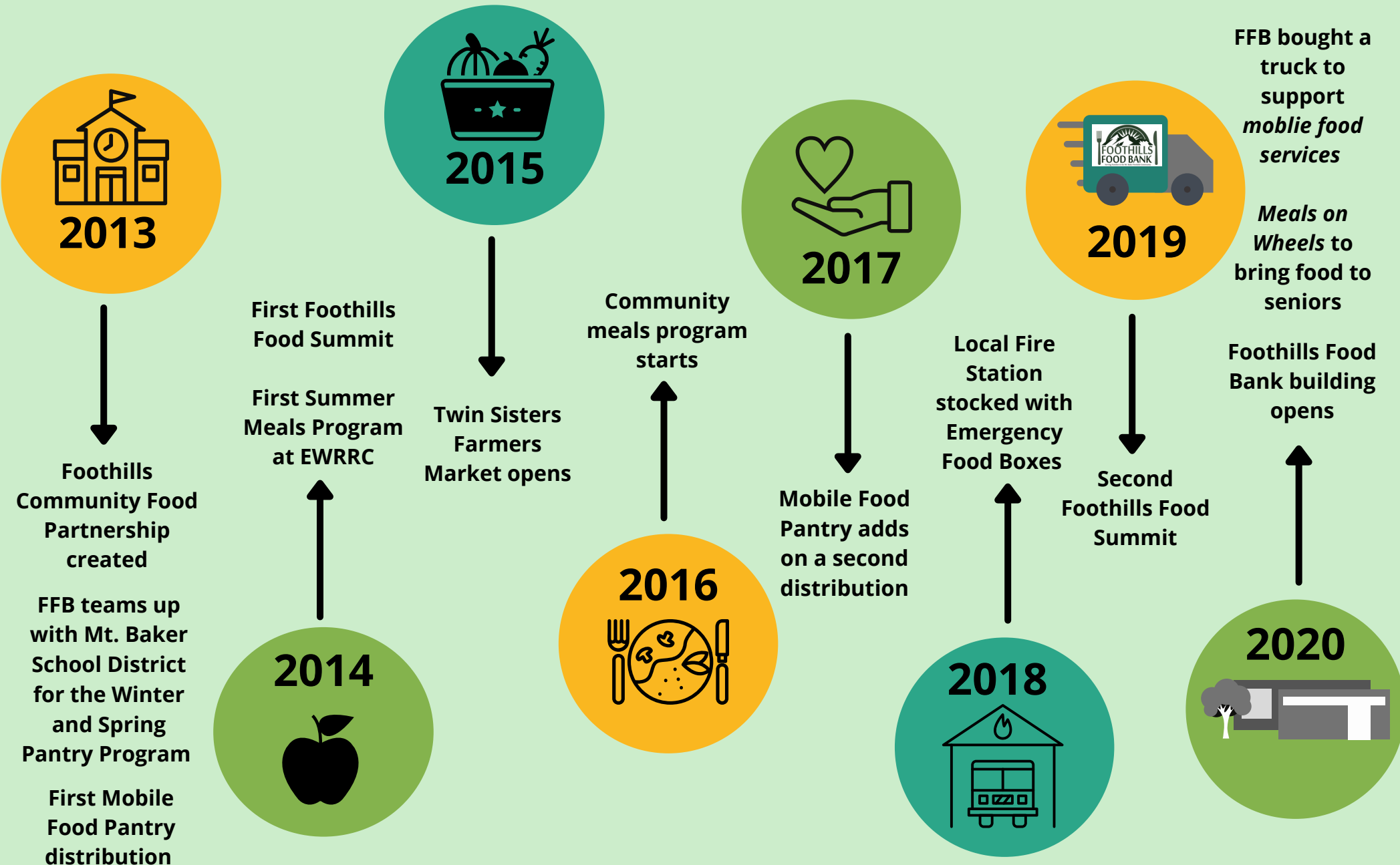
# Mt. Baker School District Map Snapshot: % of youth eligible for free or reduced lunch



1,618 households in East  
Whatcom County are  
Supplemental Nutritional  
Assistance Program  
Recipients  
(SNAP)  
*DSHS 2020*

5.53% of  
children receive  
Temporary  
Assistance to  
Needy Families  
(TANF)

# Foothills Food Action Plan Progress Timeline



# Goal 1

**Support initiatives that promote access to and education about healthy food, affordable food, and local food throughout the lifespan.**

*This goal highlights the desire for food programming to focus on our most vulnerable neighbors; the elderly and young children. In rural communities, seniors can often feel isolated and alone, especially when transportation is difficult and communication is a challenge. When youth are fed healthy meals at school and at home, they are more active, ready to learn, and set a foundation for a lifetime of good health.*



# Goal 2

**Support development, growth, and communication of food retail opportunities.**

*Provide local producers an opportunity to sell their goods or utilize shared spaces for value-added products that can help to grow and sustain small farms in East County.*

*Prioritize organization around alternative solutions to food retail.*



**Fruit orchard and  
veggie garden at  
FFB.**

**Twin Sisters  
Farmers Market**



# Goal 3

**Continue to build capacity to meet and understand emergency food need in East County.**

*Emergency food programs are essential to fill gaps for short term hunger relief in communities. However, communication about the availability of these programs and transportation can often be challenging, especially in a rural environment.*



# Goal 4

**Increase understanding of food, health, and culture through community relationships.**

*This goal builds on the community's desire to share knowledge and resources around food and celebrating cultural diversity. We value our local farmland and farmers, and are encouraged to provide opportunities to gather, collaborate, and be stewards of our local environment.*



**More weekly food distributions with a variety of foods**



# THANK YOU!

**to all of our supporters**

*Mt. Baker Foundation*

*Jerry H. Walton Foundation*

*Whatcom Community Foundation*

*Chuckanut Health Foundation*

*Whatcom County Council*

*McEachern Charitable Trust*

*WA State Department of Commerce Building Communities Fund*

*WA State Community Development Block Grant Program*

*Opportunity Council*

and all of our community members

# Appendix Table of Contents



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- **Page 3:** *Food Bank Usage During COVID-19*
- **Page 4:** *2019 Food Landscape Assessment Graphs*

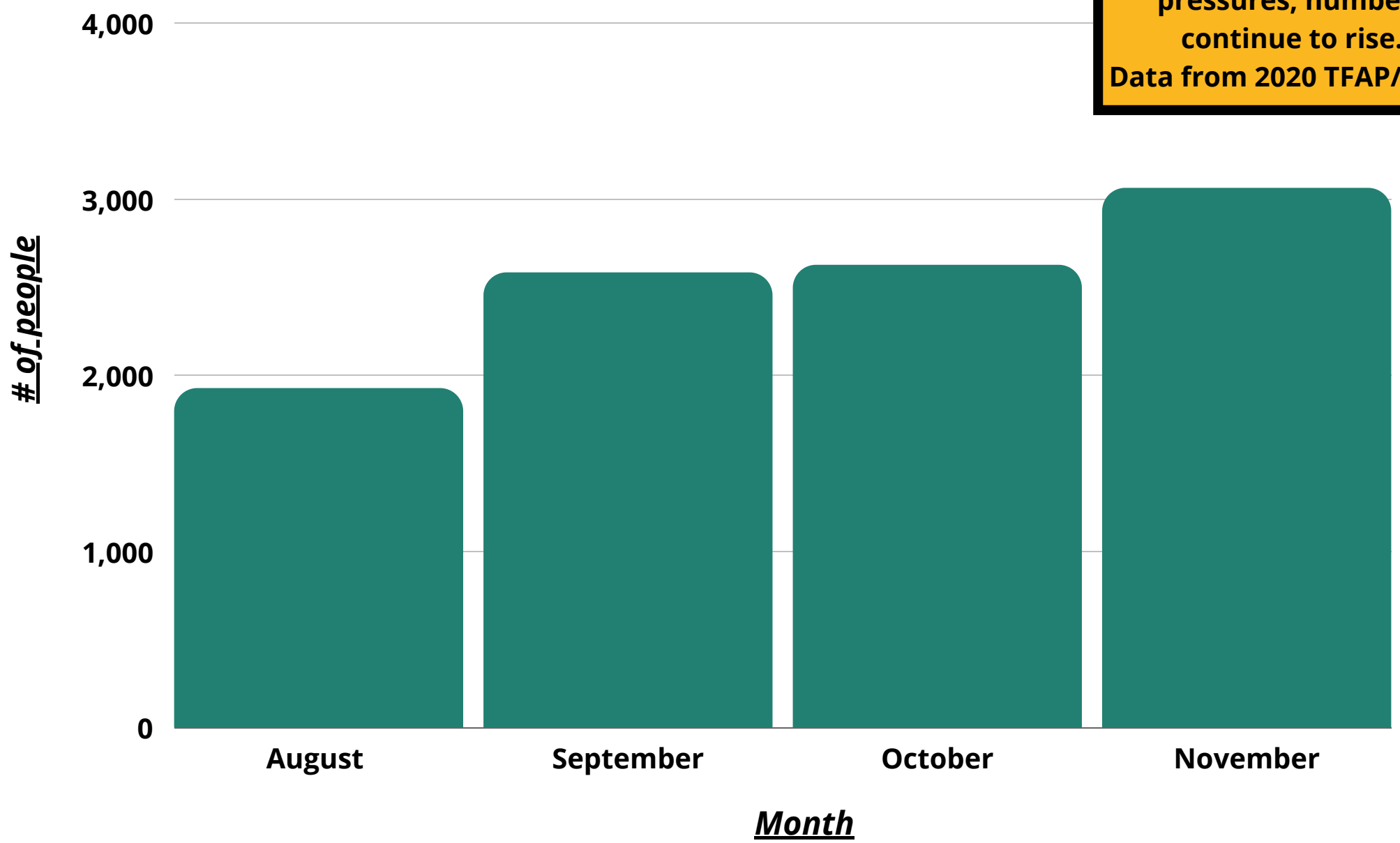


<b>Goal 1</b>	<b>Support initiatives that promote access to education about healthy food, affordable food, and local food throughout the lifespan</b>
Objective 1	Expand Senior meal programs
Objective 2	Expand geographic reach and capacity of the community meals program
Task 1	Increase frequency with consideration of other community events
Objective 3	Increase/ highlight local food in school meal programs
Task 1	continue to build connectivity between Future Farmers of America and other food programs in the school district.
Task 2	encourage and promote local foods in lunch recipes.
Objective 4	Increase food education in schools at all levels
Objective 5	Increase community nutrition education, skill sharing, meal planning, budgeting, and food prep resources/classes.
<b>Goal 2</b>	<b>Support development, growth, and communication of food retail opportunities</b>
Objective 1	Expand and support farmers' markets
Task 1	Connection information and opportunities to farmers' markets
Objective 2	Support cooperative food access models
Objective 3	Increase availability of locally grown foods as well as food for special dietary needs
Objective 4	Upgrade EWRRC kitchen space and provide opportunities for shared central kitchen use
Objective 5	Create community support for local food retailers to offer healthier and local food choices

<b>Goal 3</b>	<b>Continue to build capacity to meet and understand emergency food in East Whatcom County</b>
Objective 1	Develop a mobile food distribution system: shuttle, pop ups, delivery, and other innovative methods.
Objective 2	Support gleaning programs
Objective 3	Expand emergency food resource information - hotline, food bank and meal program list, etc.
Objective 4	Address transportation gaps to and from the Food Bank and other community resources.
Objective 5	Expand school break meal programs
<b>Goal 4</b>	<b>Increase understanding of food, health, and culture through community relationships</b>
Objective 1	Expand connection to community cultural groups to celebrate food culture.
Task 1	Invite and collaborate with local tribal nations to celebrate culture, language and traditional foods.
Task 2	Increase the availability of culturally preferred foods at the Food Bank.
Objective 2	Increase community gardens
Task 1	Identify and implement garden space matchmaking programs
Task 2	Encourage legacy planning for garden leadership and mentorship.
Objective 3	Grow partnerships between medical care and access to affordable, healthy food.
Task 1	Promote and expand food farmacia
Objective 4	Protect local farmland and encourage environmental responsibility

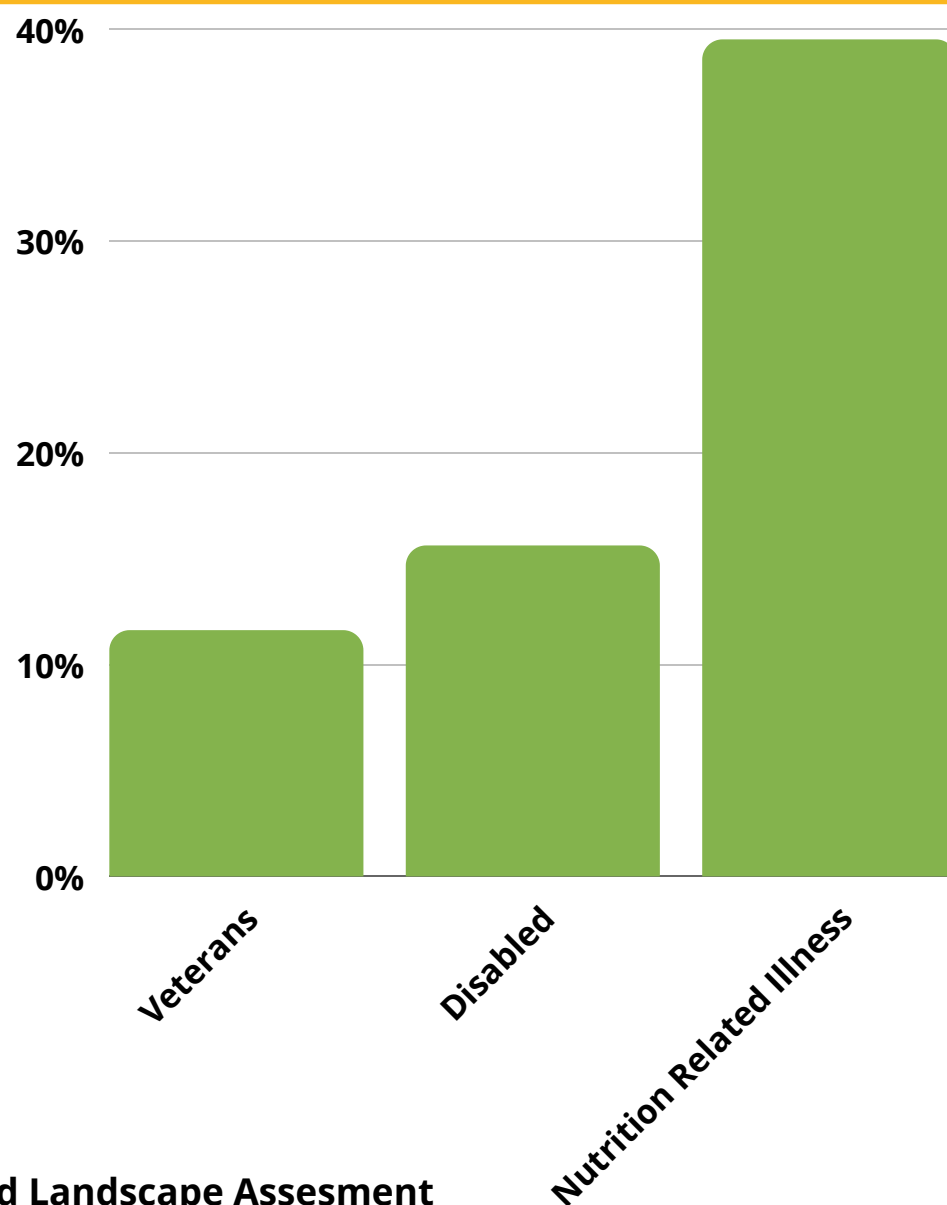
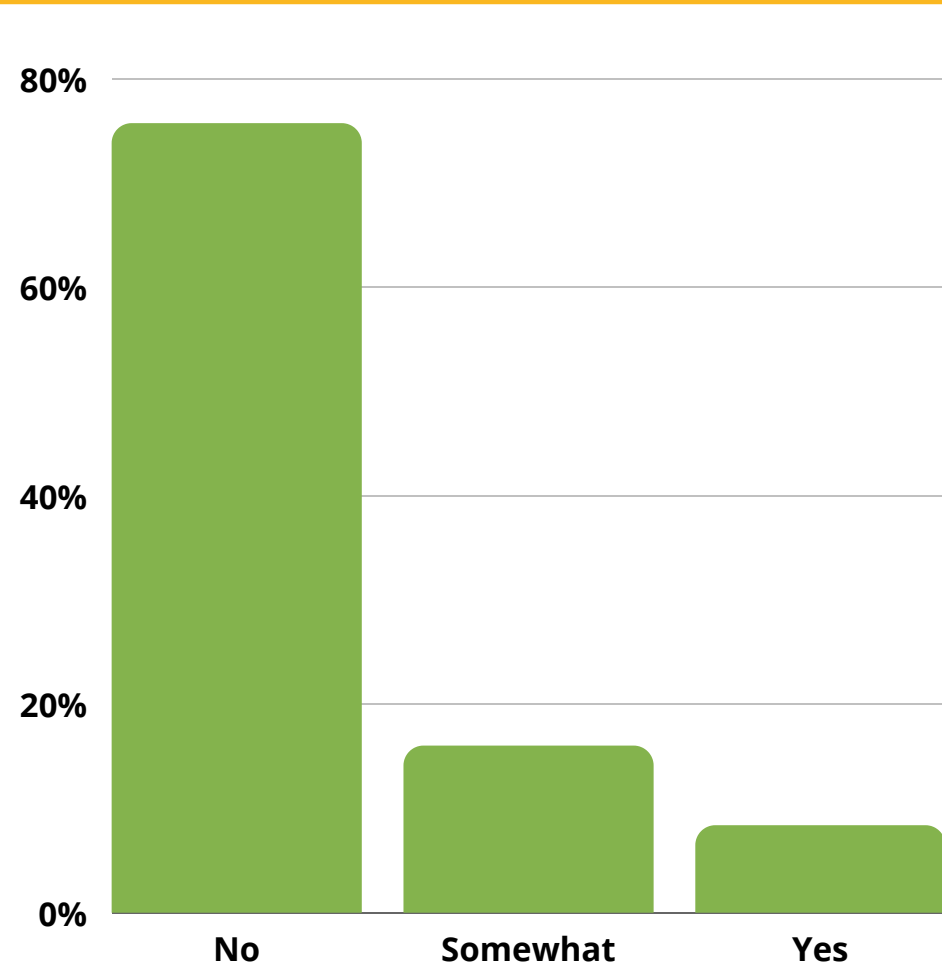
# Appendix page 3: Food Bank Usage During COVID-19

This chart reflects on the number of individuals served at the food bank monthly during the Fall of the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to systemic economic pressures, numbers continue to rise. Data from 2020 TFAP/EFAP



# Do you think healthy food is easily accessible in your community?

# Community Demographics Snapshot



Data gathered from 2019 Food Landscape Assessment