

# Food and Libraries

**NOPREN Presentation**  
**September 16, 2021**



**AUGUSTA**  
UNIVERSITY



**UNC GREENSBORO**  
School of Education

**Nicole Peritore** [nperitore@augusta.edu](mailto:nperitore@augusta.edu)  
**Noah Lenstra** [lenstra@uncg.edu](mailto:lenstra@uncg.edu)



Department of Library *and* Information Science

Design courtesy Tammy Gruer

# Prologue

(April 22, 2021) HIGH POINT, North Carolina — “The Greater High Point Food Alliance awarded more than \$58,400 in Food Security Fund grants to 17 local nonprofits. The awards [were announced] Thursday during a press conference at the High Point Public Library teaching garden, one of the grant recipients.”

[https://www.hpenews.com/news/local-nonprofits-get-food-security-grants/article\\_8ee90295-b9e8-544c-ba33-00a2275b7688.html](https://www.hpenews.com/news/local-nonprofits-get-food-security-grants/article_8ee90295-b9e8-544c-ba33-00a2275b7688.html)

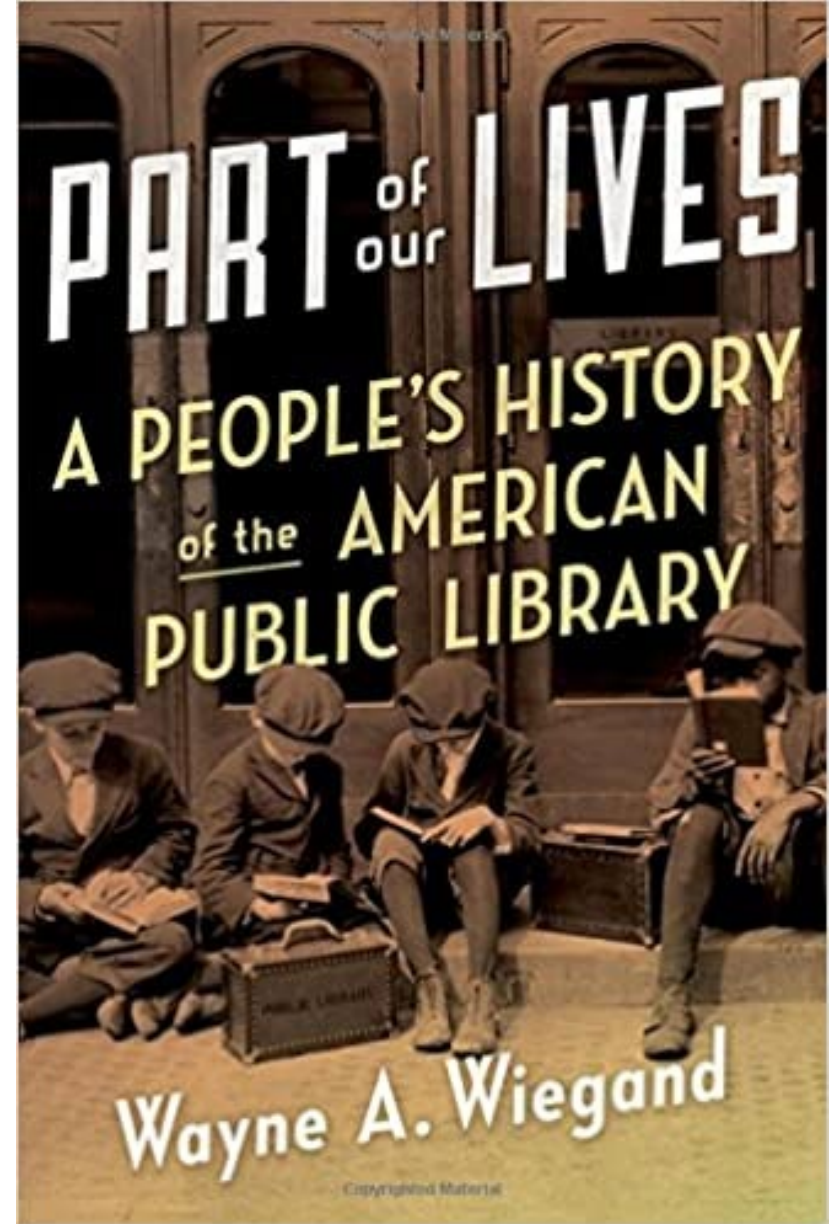


Mark Taylor, left, with the High Point Public Library, points out the garden beds in the library's teaching garden at Food Security Fund press announcement.

Up to now, what have been your experiences working with ***public*** libraries or librarians around food and food-related initiatives, of any sort?

Americans love (and fund)  
libraries for three reasons:

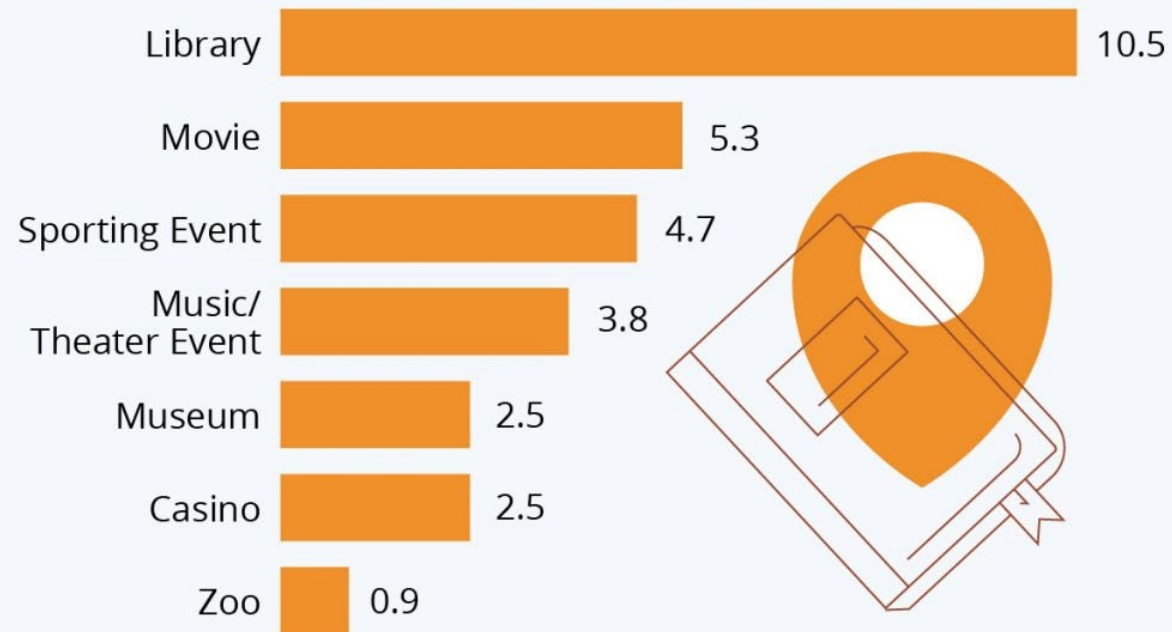
1. Transformative potential  
of reading
2. Useful nature of  
information
3. **Community building  
capacity of public space**





# When in Doubt, Go to the Library

Number of times a person said they visited/ attended each activity in the U.S. in 2019



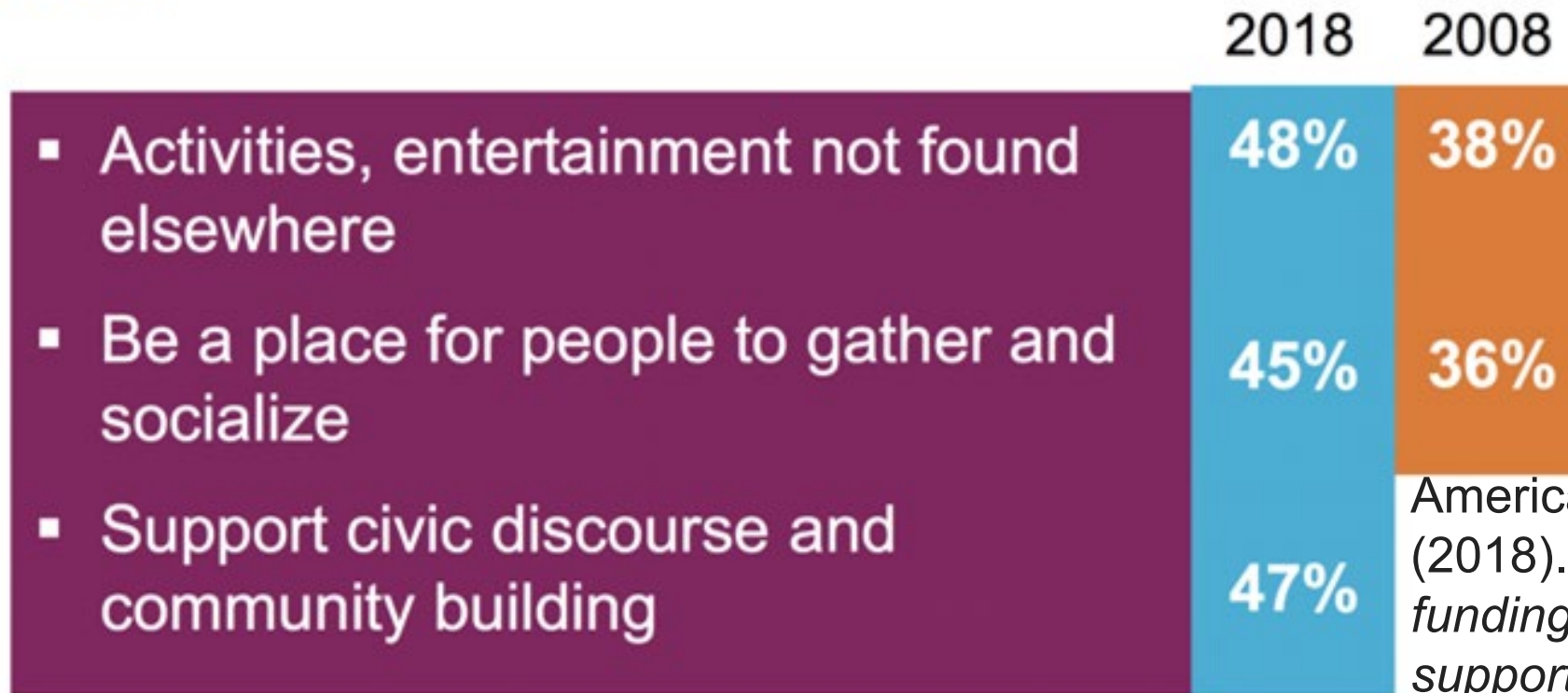
Scores are based on the average respondent's answer  
Source: Gallup



statista

<https://news.gallup.com/poll/284009/library-visits-outpaced-trips-movies-2019.aspx>

# More voters today say it's important for the library to be a community hub.



American Library Association. (2018). *From awareness to funding: Voter perceptions and support of public libraries in 2018*. <https://bit.ly/2RKJSU4>

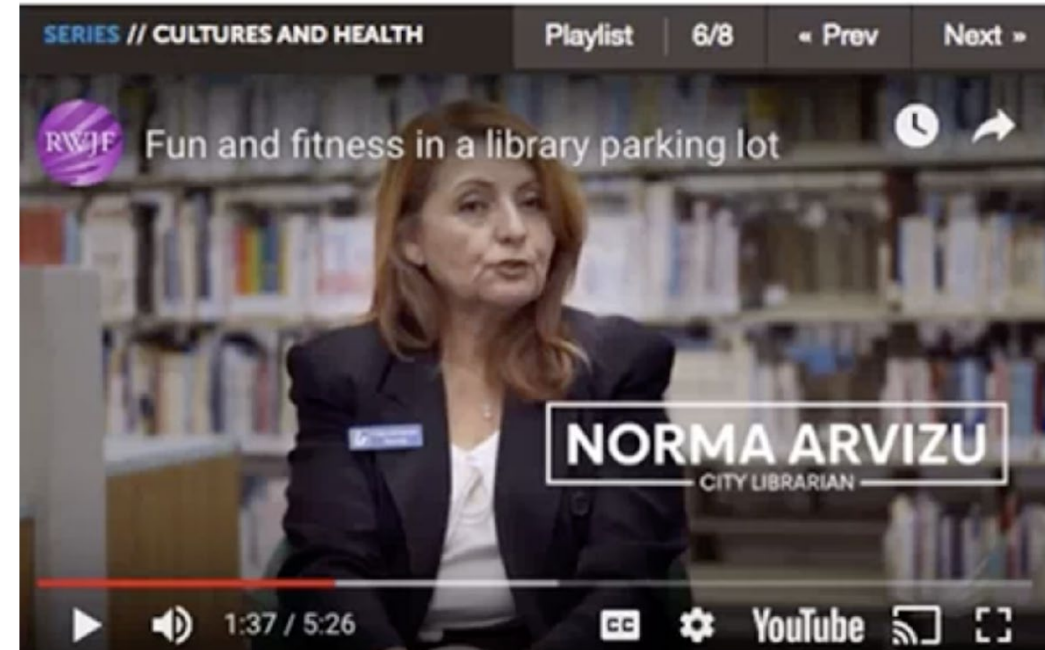


# PUBLIC LIBRARIES

- 17,000 public library locations, 9,000 administrative entities
  - e.g. Chicago Public Library is 1 entity with over 70 branch locations
- ca. 90% of funding is from local sources
- Administration
  - Municipal government – 53%
  - County or parish government – 10%
  - Library district/independent taxing authority – 15%
  - Non-profit – 14%



# Shared use of the library: An emerging model



Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. (2017).  
Achieving Health Equity: Fun and Fitness in a  
library parking lot.

<https://www.rwjf.org/en/library/features/achieving-health-equity.html>



UNC  
GREENSBORO

Department of Library *and* Information Science

[LetsMoveInLibraries.org](https://LetsMoveInLibraries.org)



# Shared use: Outside



FC Public Library  
@FCPublicLibrary

What a great day for gardening! Jessica and her son Patrick came to the Walkertown Branch library today to harvest sweet potatoes from their plot and to plant collards for the Fall. They enjoy being part of the Library Community Garden. Library is for growing!



2:13 PM · Oct 7, 2020 · Twitter Web App



# Shared use: Inside



## LUNCH *at the* LIBRARY



CBC.ca

### How Toronto Public Library branches are becoming food banks during COVID-19

The Daily Bread Food Bank's clients have increased by 53 per cent, now Toronto libraries are stepping up to open their doors and offer space ...

Apr 11, 2020





# Emerging model: Summer meals



Why More Public Libraries Are Doubling As Food Distribution Hubs  
Efforts that ramped up during the pandemic have succeeded thanks to partnerships with school districts, food banks and other ...

 nextcity.org

## WHY LIBRARIES AND SUMMER MEALS?

Libraries are free and open to all, welcome children and teens, offer engaging programs, and typically have a community meeting room or space where food may be served.



### BENEFITS TO THE LIBRARY:

Access to new groups, especially underserved and marginalized populations.



Increased visibility of the library as a community asset.

Opportunities for new partnerships.



Support for summer library program through increased attendance.



### HELPFUL LINKS

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/summer-food-service-program>  
<https://www.csllpreads.org/libraries-and-summer-food/>

### WHAT'S NEEDED?\*

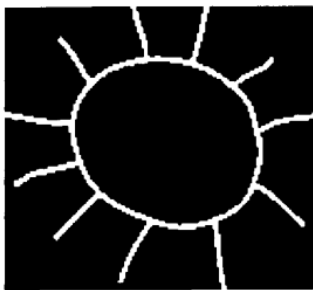
- Staff and/or volunteers.
- Designated room or space, inside or outside.
- A sponsor.

\*There are also eligibility guidelines for the USDA Summer Food Service Program. See the USDA and CSLP links for details.

### GETTING STARTED

- Establish room or space to use.
- Determine what days and hours to serve and which meals to serve.
- Find a sponsor.
- Complete training and any paperwork.





# HUNGER DOESN'T TAKE A VACATION: SUMMER NUTRITION STATUS REPORT

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
Office of Educational Research and Improvement  
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION  
CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as  
received from the person or organization  
originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to  
improve reproduction quality.

- Points of view or opinions stated in this  
document do not necessarily represent  
official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND  
DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS  
BEEN GRANTED BY

*James Weill*

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES  
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

June 2003

1

Food Research and Action Center  
1875 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Suite 540  
Washington, D.C. 20009  
Tel: 202-986-2200  
<http://www.frac.org>

*"Once you feed a hungry child,  
everything else pales in  
comparison."*

*-Public Library SFSP director,  
Nelsonville, OH*

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED477635.pdf>

031336





## Summer meals

Total library meal sites in USDA SFP was 2,018 in 2019.  
1,483 in 2021. **Source: USDA**

	2019	Library sites
	State	#
1	CA	217
2	OH	153
3	NY	133
4	FL	132
5	TX	129
6	PA	84
7	KY	81
8	IL	72
9	GA	70
10	TN	69

	Library Meal Sites Per capita
1	Vermont
2	Kentucky
3	District of Columbia
4	West Virginia
5	Kansas
6	Maine
7	Ohio
8	Alaska
9	Tennessee
10	South Carolina

# Food education through partnerships

## INCREASING ACCESS to HEALTHY FOODS via PUBLIC LIBRARIES

University of South Carolina SNAP-Ed

The University of South Carolina (USC) Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) team is recruiting public libraries to work with on implementing nutrition supports to increase access to healthy eating among customers/patrons.

Selected libraries will receive ongoing technical assistance on selecting, implementing, evaluating, and sustaining nutrition support strategies.

### What do nutrition supports look like in libraries?

- Host a **farmers' market** that accepts SNAP as a form of payment
- Create a **produce garden**
- Improve **transportation options** for customers/patrons to and from the library
- Designate a comfortable, safe **space for breastfeeding**

...and **MORE!**

If you are interested in implementing nutrition supports at your library, please complete this brief interest form:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/BRFYXK9>

For questions, please contact:

Ashley Page, MSW  
pagea@mailbox.sc.edu

SNAP-Ed is a program created to support SNAP's role in improving nutrition and preventing or reducing diet-related chronic disease and obesity among low-income populations.

This project is funded by the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program - SNAP.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

THE **CHARLIE CART** PROJECT

COOKING CLASSES IN LIBRARIES? **BEYOND BOOKS**

WAIT.

WHAT?

Charlie Cart food literacy programs teach more than just cooking at your local library.

THREE  
SUCCESS  
STORIES

For kids 8-12: cook and eat your own food!

Registration is required  
Call/email Abby Davis



# Kid Chef



Tuesdays in July,

11:00 am

\*not July 16\*







# Continuing partnerships during COVID-19



**McCracken County Public Library #HealthyAtHome Gardening Group**

Public group · 118 members

## CURB HUNGER

Free weekly food bags for individuals and families



**Library Pick Up**



Ready to eat meals for those without kitchen access will be available to pick up without an appointment on Tuesdays and Fridays from 9am-10am or by special request at the Lower Level Library Pick Up Location.

**Contact Library Pick Up services at 715-839-5066 or Community Resource Services at 715-839-5061 or [libbyr@eauclaire.lib.wi.us](mailto:libbyr@eauclaire.lib.wi.us) to schedule a food pick up**

A partnership between:



**Feed My People**  
FOOD BANK



**L.E. Phillips Memorial Public Library**  
SO MUCH MORE...

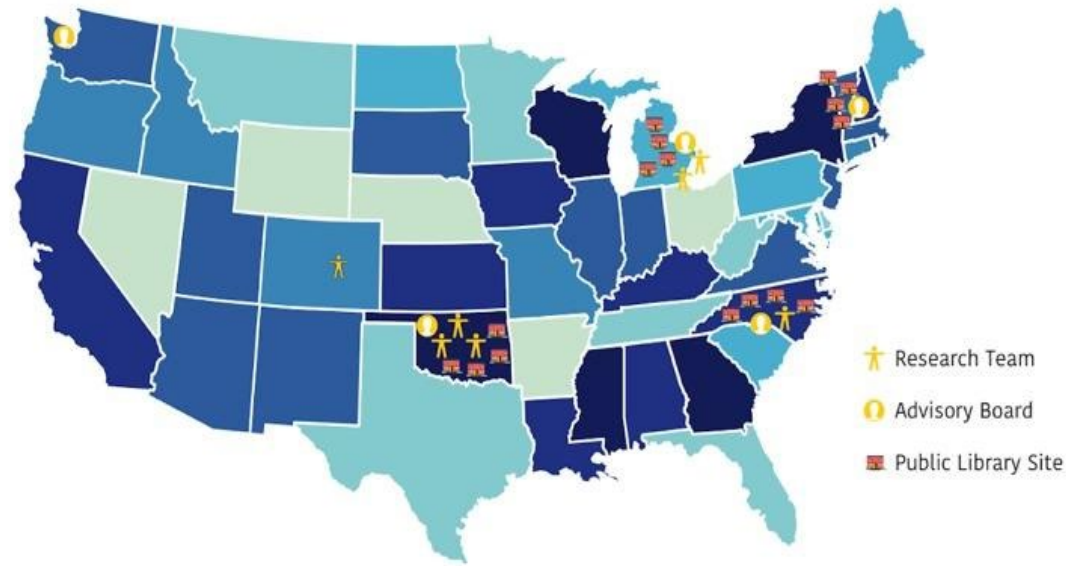


# Increasingly scholarly interest

- Porter, D. T., Liescheidt, T., & Dyuff, R. L. (1998). Partnering With Public Libraries: Interactive Nutrition Education Via Book Box. *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, 98(9), A47.
- Freedman, M. R., & Nickell, A. (2010). Impact of after-school nutrition workshops in a public library setting. *Journal of nutrition education and behavior*, 42(3), 192-196.
- Concannon, M., Rafferty, E., & Swanson-Farmarco, C. (2011). Snacks in the stacks: Teaching youth nutrition in a public library. *Journal of Extension*, 49(5), n5.
- Woodson, D. E., Timm, D. F., & Jones, D. (2011). Teaching kids about healthy lifestyles through stories and games: Partnering with public libraries to reach local children. *Journal of Hospital Librarianship*, 11(1), 59-69.
- Bruce, J. S., De La Cruz, M. M., Moreno, G., & Chamberlain, L. J. (2017). Lunch at the library: examination of a community-based approach to addressing summer food insecurity. *Public health nutrition*, 20(9), 1640-1649.
- Whiteman, E. D., Dupuis, R., Morgan, A. U., D'Alonzo, B., Epstein, C., Klusaritz, H., & Cannuscio, C. C. (2018). Peer reviewed: Public libraries as partners for health. *Preventing Chronic Disease*, 15.
- Philbin, M. M., Parker, C. M., Flaherty, M. G., & Hirsch, J. S. (2019). Public libraries: A community-level resource to advance population health. *Journal of community health*, 44(1), 192-199.
- Lenstra, N., & D'Arpa, C. (2019). Food justice in the public library: Information, resources, and meals. *The International Journal of Information, Diversity, & Inclusion (IJIDI)*, 3(4).
- Whitt, O. (2020). *Examining the Organizational Capacity of Public Libraries That Offer Obesity Prevention Programs* (Doctoral dissertation, University of South Carolina).
- De La Cruz, M. M., Phan, K., & Bruce, J. S. (2020). More to offer than books: stakeholder perceptions of a public library-based meal programme. *Public health nutrition*, 23(12), 2179-2188.
- Draper, C. L. (2021). Exploring the Feasibility of Partnerships between Public Libraries and the SNAP-Ed Program. *Public Library Quarterly*, 1-17.



# Community Health and Wellness: Small and Rural Library Practices, Perspectives, and Programs



Geographic distribution of the research team, advisory board, and public libraries participating in the research

Graphic Credit: Ginny Schneider, Abbie Rose, Rebecca Floyd



Ellen L. Rubenstein & Susan K. Burke



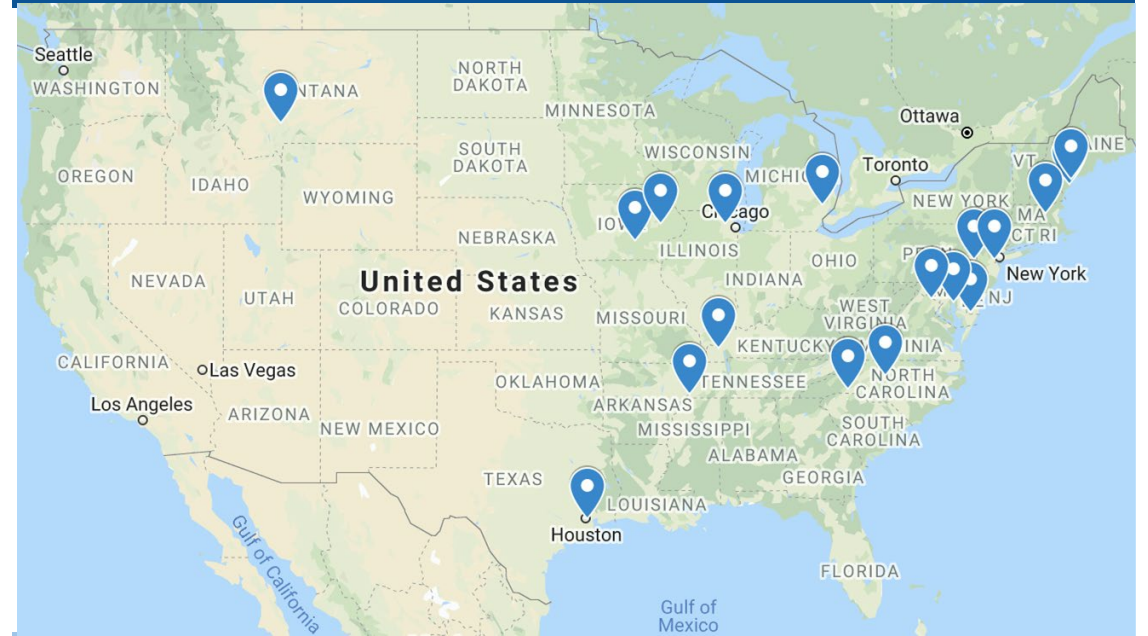
Noah Lenstra



Christine D'Arpa

This project was made possible in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services, Iq-18-19-0015-19

## HEAL (Healthy Eating and Active Living) at the Library via Co-Developed Programming



## Geographic distribution of case study communities



Noah Lenstra

This project was made possible in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services, RE-246336-OLS-20

## Methods: Food-specific partnerships

- Three rural communities
- 19 semi-structured interviews with public librarians and partners, recorded in-person or Zoom from Dec. 2019 to Nov. 2020
- Interviewees include:  
Library directors (5), Other librarians (5), School Nutrition Services (2), Extension agents (2), and (all 1) Boys & Girls Club, Health Department, Health Foundation, Parks & Recreation, Food Bank
- Open coding for themes – exploratory analysis

# Findings



## Findings: Community Collaboration, Partner POV

“If we need something accomplished, or [if] we need to fall back on somebody, **the library is always there:** They can offer a program we won't be able to [offer]. They have the ability to reach out. There is a pervasive sense in the community, that if we need something done as it concerns health initiatives or programs, they [the library] will always, always have the back of the department.”



## Findings: Community Collaboration, Librarian POV

“There is a community garden in town ... They're struggling. They don't have a lot of resources, and this grant project will help them establish their garden to where it needs to be for us [the library] to offer these [health] classes. They're going to be one of our partners on this project. We have been talking with them about what they need ... to be successful, for them to be in a position to be able to offer the foundation, or the infrastructure, to offer these classes”

## Findings: Reaching audiences, Partner POV

“COVID changed things a little bit. But typically, [the library] will run the Summer Food Program, and then move right into an after-school program, [offering] suppers .... We thought [this expansion of summer meals] was a great opportunity because it provided more opportunity for kids to get a larger portion, but also a good nutritious meal, no matter what they got when they went home [after school].”

## Findings: Reaching audiences, Librarian POV

“We had to totally revamp our summer reading program this year .... What we did was put together kits for the families to take home: Craft kits. The Market Bucks were in that kit, and I usually included a recipe that the family could make together. Each family gets five Market Bucks per child – it's basically a little business card – and then they can use that at the Farmers Market or the Fresh Food Van for fresh vegetables and things like that.”

## Findings: Daily efforts, Partner POV

“But [the librarian] kind of ignited something within me. [She showed me] that ‘Hey, libraries can do this thing!’ That was the first ‘light-bulb-going-off’ [moment], when I heard her talk [about what librarians do] .... That was the first time I thought, ‘Wow, you know, we could probably do more [with the library], because people trust the library.’”



## Findings: Daily efforts, Librarian POV

“[The role of librarians is] encouraging children and families to improve their lives as best they can. I mean really and truly, whether it's through reading, whether it's through finding new information about parenting, connecting them with resources in the community. It's really [all] about helping them improve themselves and their situation.”

## Discussion: Limitations and next steps

- This research focuses on the back-end: Th behind-the-scenes community collaboration that enables rural librarians to participate in community food systems
- More needed on outcomes from these partnerships
- More needed to assess how widespread these partnerships have become, and how they compare across geographies

# FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

- What have you heard that is ***new*** to you?
- What do you think is needed to better understand this topic?
- What do you think is needed to better integrate public libraries into community food systems research and policy?

*Other ideas? Share them in the chat window.*

# Thank you!

## **Noah Lenstra**

Assistant Professor of Library and  
Information Science at University of  
North Carolina at Greensboro  
lenstra@uncg.edu  
@NoahLenstra

## **Nicole Peritore**

Assistant Professor of Kinesiology at  
Augusta University, Georgia  
nperitore@augusta.edu  
@nicoleperitore1