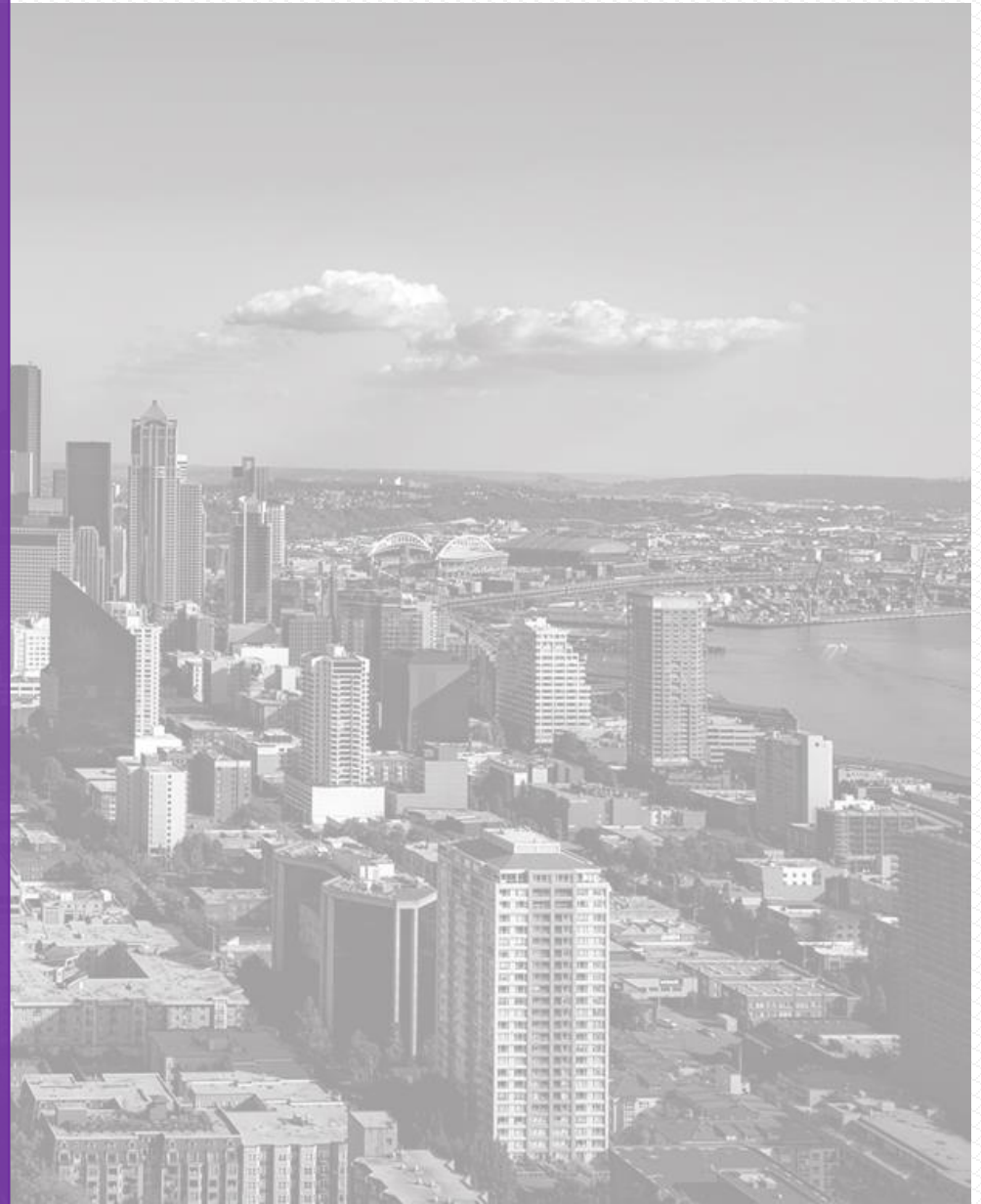# Report on healthy food availability and assessment of Seattle's Food Bank Network
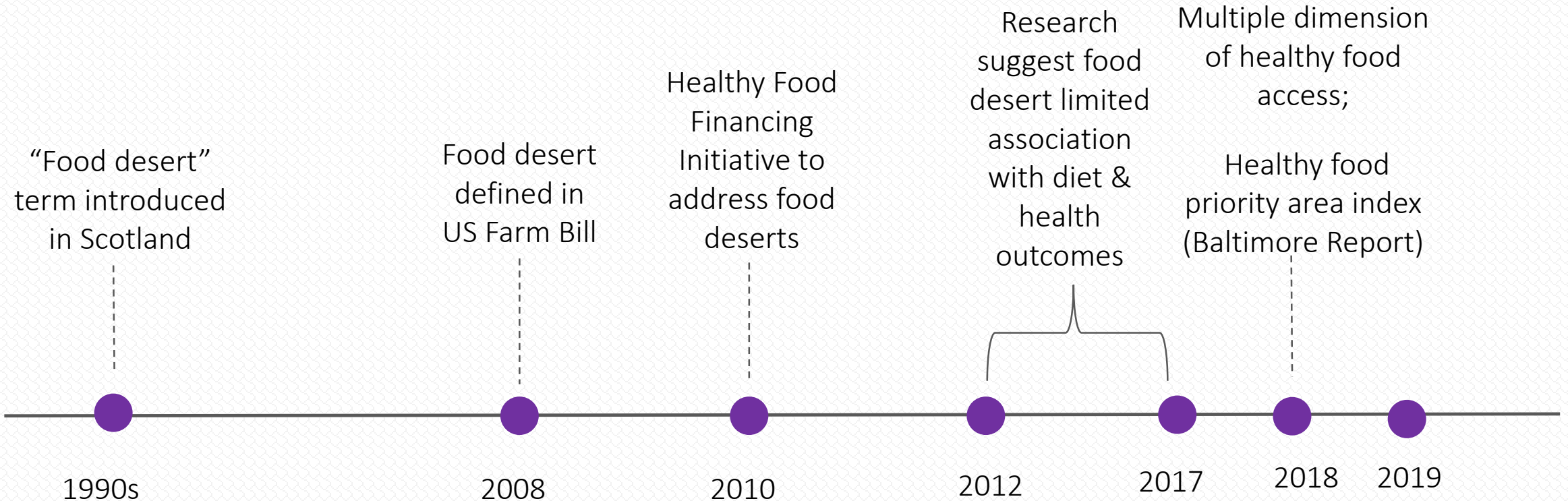
2/27/2019

Nadine Chan, PhD, MPH, Jesse Jones-Smith, PhD, MPH, and Kaylin Bolt, MPH, MSW

Overview

1. What is "access" to healthy food and what do Seattle maps show?
2. Price and availability of healthy food in Seattle stores
3. Meeting the need: the food bank network

Evolution of concept of healthy food access

"Food desert" term introduced in Scotland

Food desert defined in US Farm Bill

Healthy Food Financing Initiative to address food deserts

Research suggest food desert limited association with diet & health outcomes

Multiple dimension of healthy food access;

Healthy food priority area index (Baltimore Report)
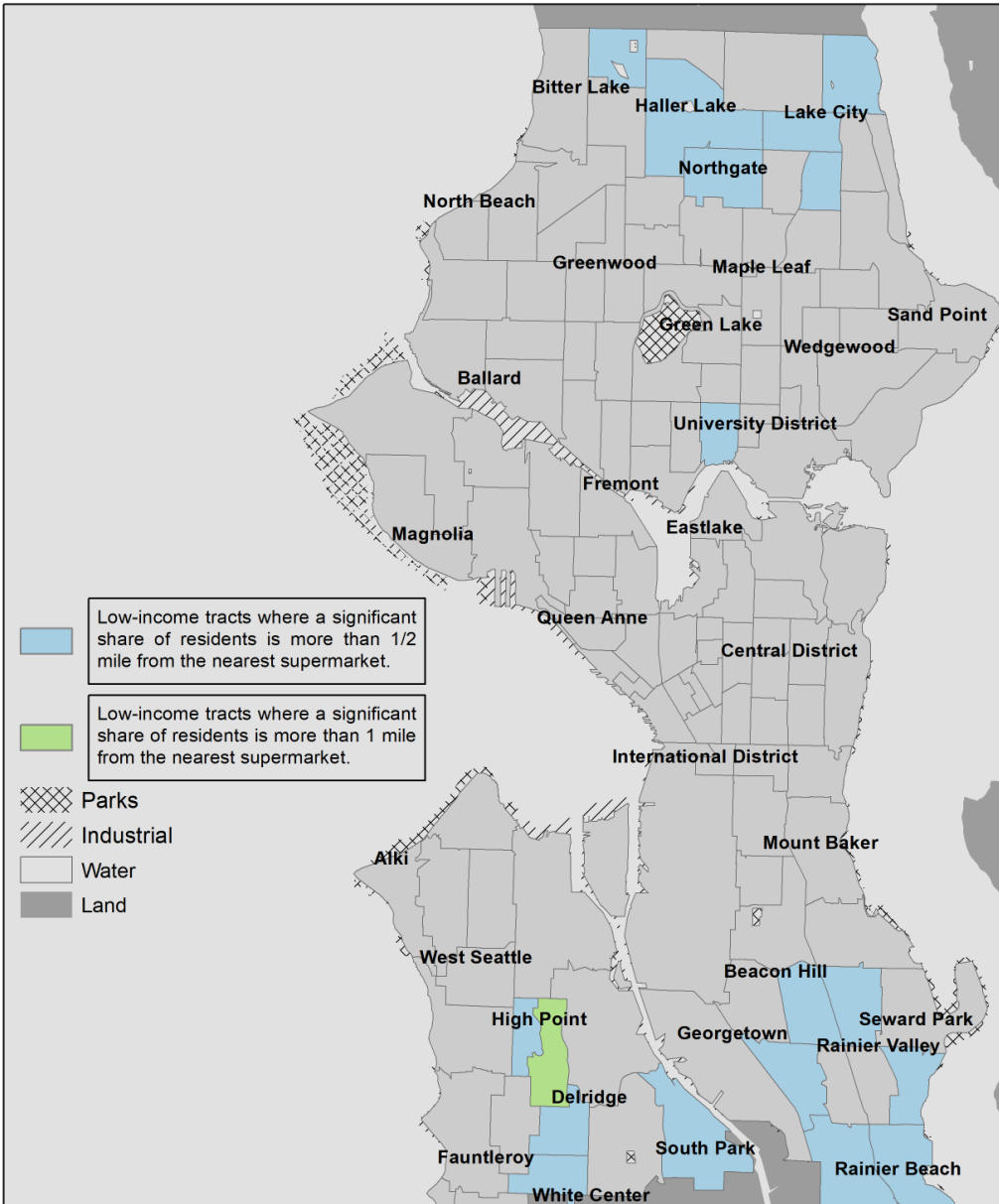
1990s　　　　　2008　　　2010　　　2012　　　2017　　　2018　　2019

It's not just physical distance to a supermarket
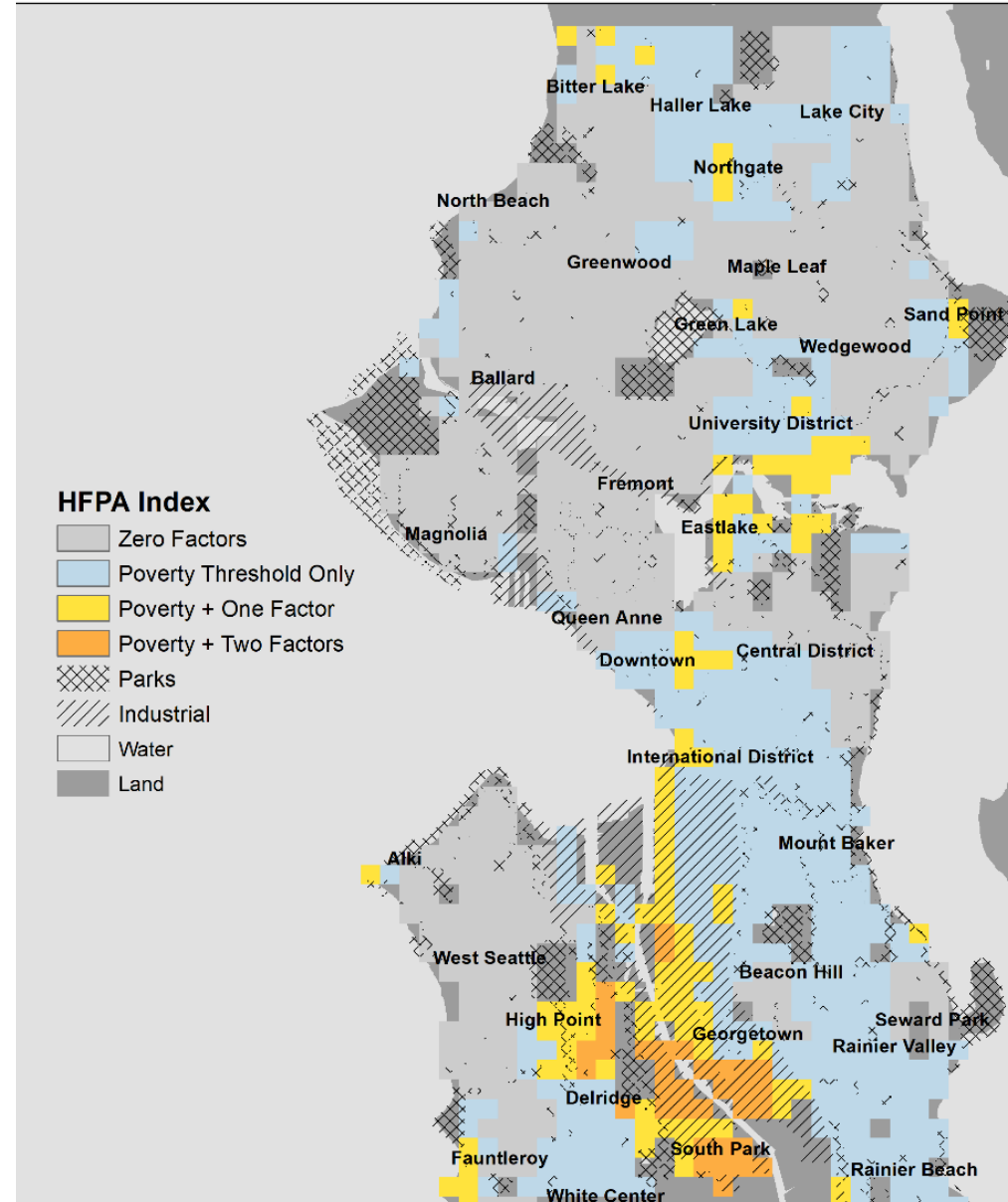
Mapping access to healthy food

Map at right: Healthy Food Priority Areas (HFPA) show where three food access factors overlap

Factors

1. At least 25% of households live below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level
2. Time to nearest healthy food retailers is at least 10 minutes
3. High percentage of food retailers without produce section

Legend (left map):
- Low-income tracts where a significant share of residents is more than 1/2 mile from the nearest supermarket.
- Low-income tracts where a significant share of residents is more than 1 mile from the nearest supermarket.
- Parks
- Industrial
- Water
- Land

HFPA Index (right map):
- Zero Factors
- Poverty Threshold Only
- Poverty + One Factor
- Poverty + Two Factors
- Parks
- Industrial
- Water
- Land

USDA 2017 https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-access-research-atlas/go-to-the-atlas/

Public Health – Seattle and King County, Assessment, Policy Development, and Evaluation, 2018

SECTION 3:
Price and availability of healthy food in Seattle stores

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FOOD PRICES AND AVAILABILITY STUDY GOALS

THE GOALS

★ **Assess the price and availability** of healthy food in Seattle **by neighborhood characteristics** (e.g., race, income).

THE BASICS

★ **In-person surveys of food stores throughout Seattle** to measure the availability and price of **healthy food items.**

FOOD PRICES AND AVAILABILITY DATA COLLECTION

Warehouses & superstores

Supermarkets

Grocery stores

Drug stores

Small stores

FOOD PRICES AND AVAILABILITY STORE SAMPLE

134
Seattle food
stores surveyed

27%
of all food
stores in Seattle

FOOD PRICES AND AVAILABILITY DATA COLLECTION

Fruit	Vegetables	Grains	Protein	Milk
Apples	Broccoli	Wheat bread	Beans	1% milk
Bananas	Carrots	White bread	Eggs	2% milk
Oranges	Green	Frosted flakes cereal	Lean meat	Fat-free milk
	Lettuce	Cheerios		Whole milk
	Tomatoes	Rice		
	Onions			

Health Food Availability Score = 1-2 points for having each of these foods

Range 0-25

FOOD AVAILABILITY AVERAGE SCORE BY STORE TYPE

20.6pts
Warehouse & superstores

19.0pts
Supermarkets

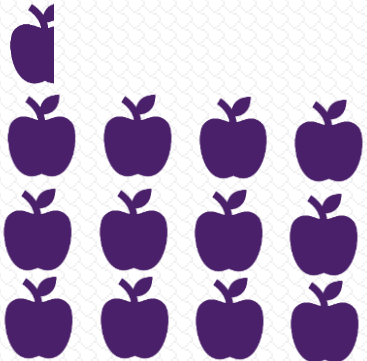**16.2**pts
Grocery stores

9.5pts
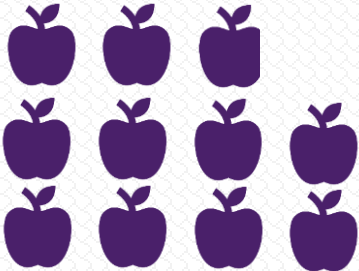Drug stores

6.8pts
Small stores

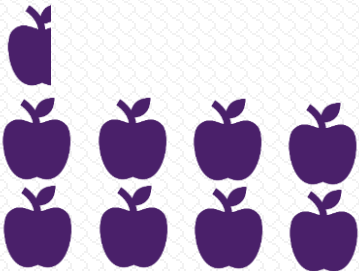# FOOD AVAILABILITY AVERAGE SCORE BY INCOME

12.80pts
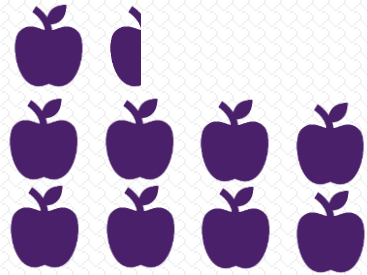Highest
income group

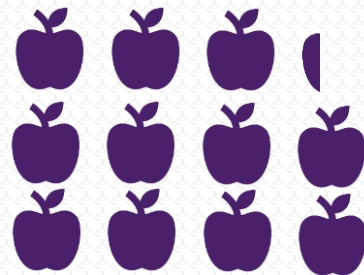**10.98**pts
Middle
income group

8.58pts
Lowest
income group

Stores in **high income neighborhoods** had **4 more** **healthy foods** on average, i.e. **50%** more healthy foods
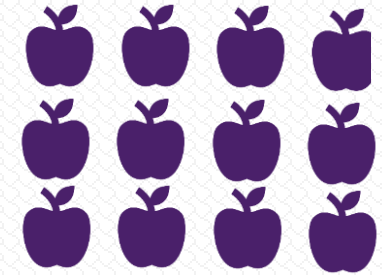
FOOD AVAILABILITY AVERAGE SCORE BY RACE

9.29pts
Highest
% Black or
Hispanic

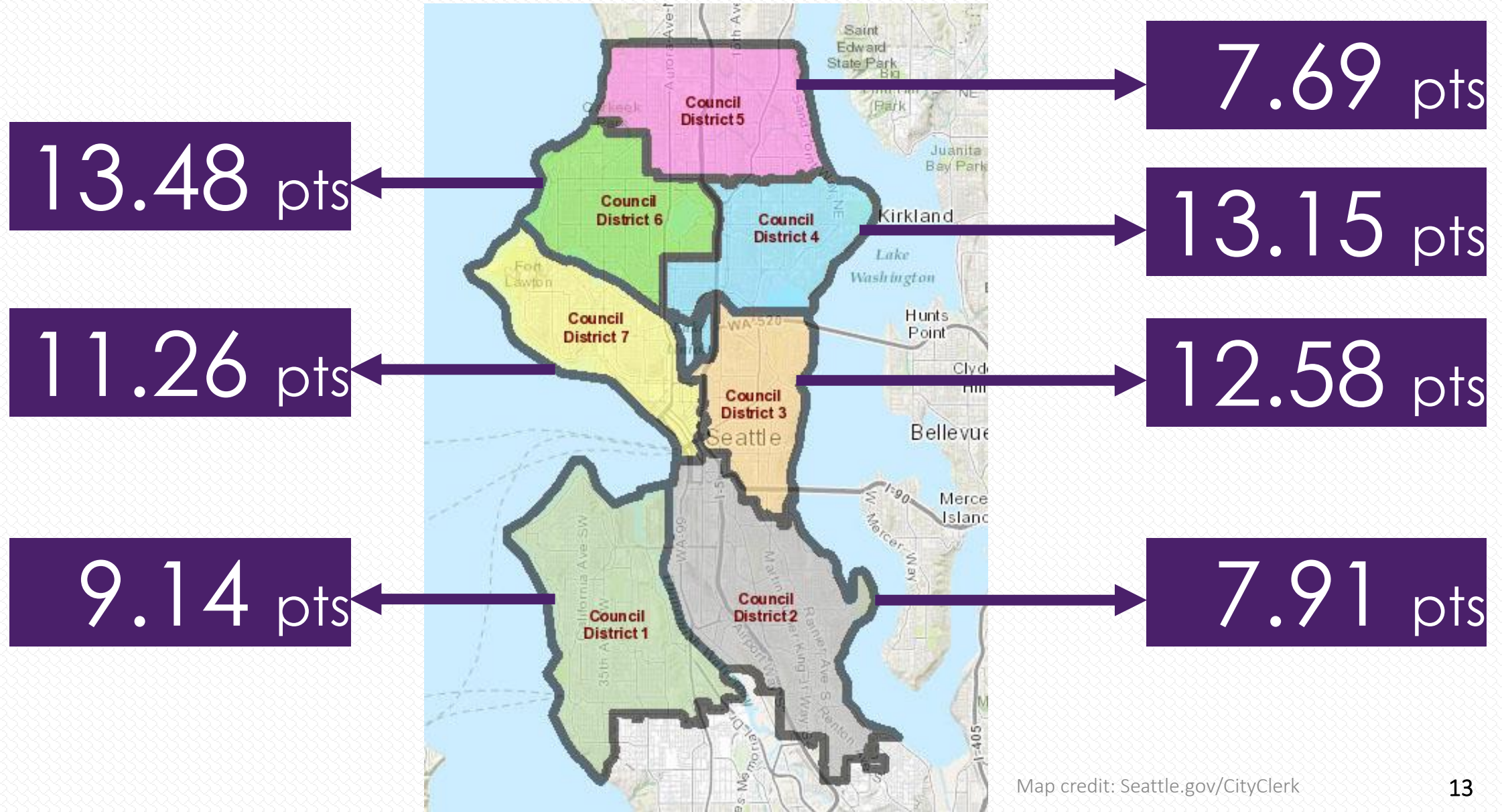**11.05**pts
Intermediate
% Black or
Hispanic

11.90pts
Lowest
% Black or
Hispanic

Stores in neighborhoods with **fewer black or Hispanic residents** had **~3 more** healthy foods, i.e. **30%** more healthy foods

FOOD AVAILABILITY BY COUNCIL DISTRICT

7.69 pts

13.48 pts

13.15 pts

11.26 pts

12.58 pts

9.14 pts

7.91 pts

13

FOOD PRICES RESULTS SUMMARY

Except for fruit, the average **price of healthy foods tended to be lower in lower income & neighborhoods with higher proportion Black or Hispanic.** Most differences likely not statistically significant

FOOD AVAILABILITY AND PRICES KEY TAKEAWAYS

Lower-income & neighborhoods with more Black or Hispanic residents had **fewer supermarkets and superstores** and **more small stores**.

There was **lower availability of healthy foods** in lower-income & and neighborhoods with more Black or Hispanic residents.

Mean **healthy food availability scores varied by Council District**, with District 5 & 2 having lowest scores

The **price of healthy foods tended to be lower or similar** in lower-income & neighborhoods with more Black or Hispanic residents. Differences likely not statistically significant.

Meeting the need:
The food bank network

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FOOD BANK NETWORK THE GOALS

1 Estimate need

2 Assess capacity

3 Identify opportunities

Who in Seattle is experiencing food insecurity?

To what extent is the food bank network able to serve this population?

How can the network improve equitable access to health food?

Who is experiencing food insecurity?

While estimates vary across data sources, we saw **consistent patterns among groups** commonly reporting food insecurity

People of color

Lower income

Less educated

LGB identified

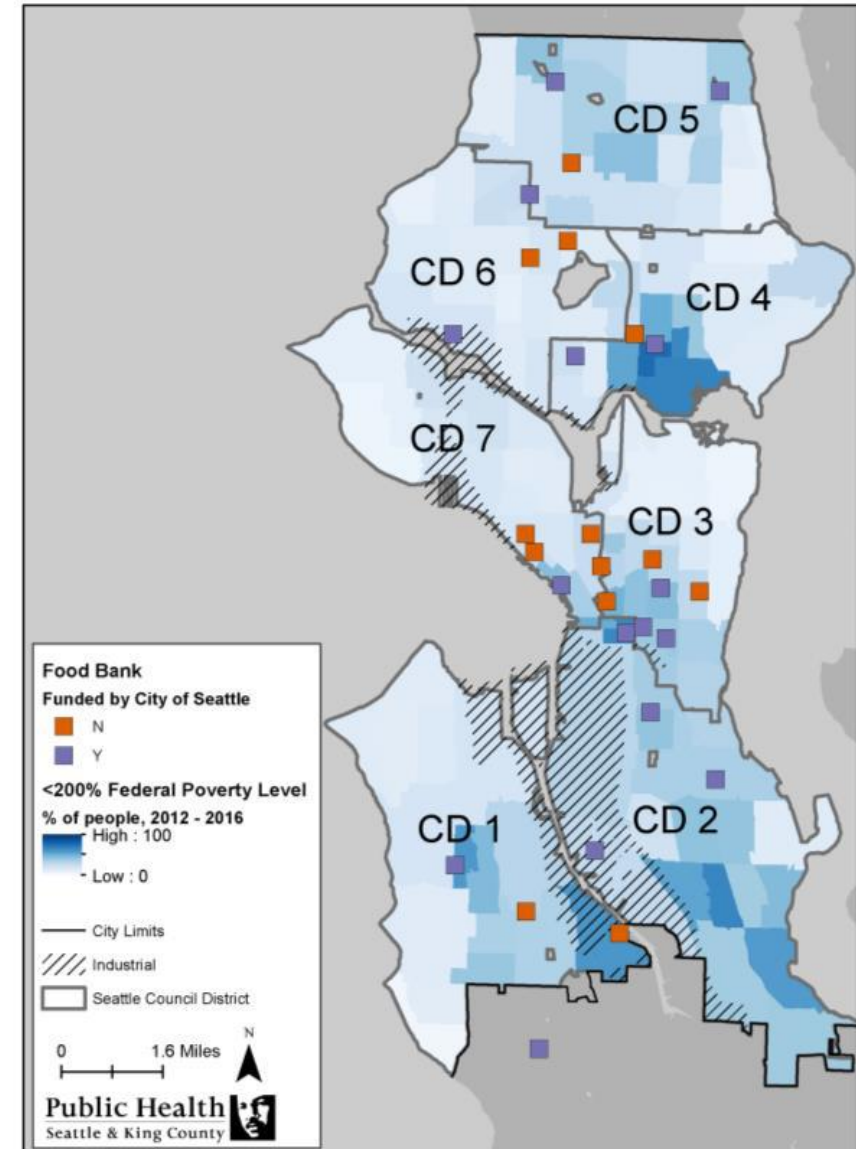Families with young children

Older adults

30 FOOD BANKS
MET INCLUSION CRITERIA

Actively operating

Distributing food on-site more than once a month

Located within Seattle limits or serving many Seattle residents

Food Bank
Funded by City of Seattle
N
Y

<200% Federal Poverty Level
% of people, 2012 - 2016
High : 100
Low : 0

City Limits
Industrial
Seattle Council District

0   1.6 Miles

Public Health
Seattle & King County

Data for basemap comes from the 2012-2016 American Community Survey. Data on location, classification, and funding status of food banks provided by City of Seattle: OSD & HSE. Current as of Fall 2018. The inclusion criteria for displaying an organization as a Food Bank for this map are: (1) Member of the Seattle Food Committee, (2) Open more than once a month for on-site distribution, and (3) Be in the Seattle boundaries or serve a large number of Seattle residents. Fall 2018 PH-SKC APDE.

FOOD BANK NETWORK DATA COLLECTION

electronic survey

25

client discussions

7

staff interviews
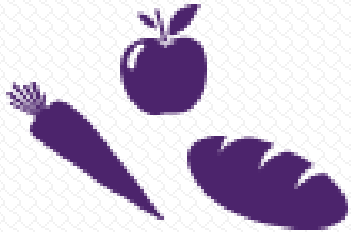
13

Non English

- Spanish
- Vietnamese
- Cantonese
- Russian

English

- Young adult
- African-American
- General

TOPICS COVERED

Resources   Sufficiency   Accessibility   Impact

Impact

The network provides **a critical food safety net**, while also providing a connection to services and a sense of community.

Each year → **15,000** individuals are served per food bank

& → **22 million** Lbs. of food provided by the network

Demand

The network is seeing **a rise in need**, particularly: older adults, homeless, and those further north and south of Seattle.

60%

FOOD BANKS REPORT

increase in client visits

> " *We're seeing an increase from rising cost of rent & healthcare, aging population, more people experiencing homelessness."*
>
> - Food bank staff member

Resource constraints result in reduced quality & quantity of food

Ability to meet demand

The food bank network lacks necessary resources to meet demand, namely **staffing, vehicles, food, funding, and space**.

average of
3 full-time

84%

FOOD BANKS REPORT

funding difficulties

- predictable long term funding
- finding opportunities
- operational expenses
- resource heavy fundraisers

Client Priorities

Food bank clients emphasize wanting a **dignified experience, food safety, quality and convenient access.**

> " *It's useful if food banks are open on Friday because then I know at least from Friday to Tuesday or Wednesday I will have food. Most places aren't open on weekends so from Friday [on], I am trying to ensure I can make it at least through the weekend if not a little longer."*
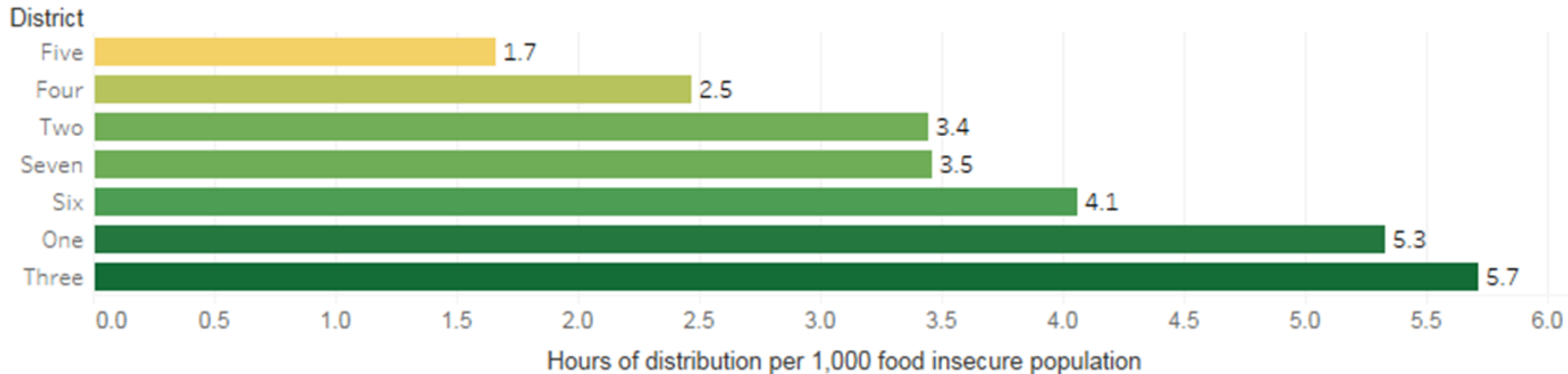>
> *-Food bank client (Council District 3)*

25

Gaps in Access

Analysis of distribution hours revealed:

o   Weekend and evenings hours are limited

- Lack of morning access in Districts 4, 5, and 6
- Lack of afternoon access in Districts 1 and 5
- Lack of evening access Districts 1, 2, 3, 5, and 7

o   Council Districts 5 and 4 have fewest hours

   (proportional to need)

FOOD BANK NETWORK GAP ANALYSIS

Comparing Council Districts by distribution availability and level of adult food insecurity

District

District	Hours of distribution per 1,000 food insecure population
Five	1.7
Four	2.5
Two	3.4
Seven	3.5
Six	4.1
One	5.3
Three	5.7

Hours of distribution per 1,000 food insecure population

Hours per 1,000
1.7   5.7

Opportunities to improve equitable access

Expand client choice	Increase purchasing power	Increase mobility	Invest in operational costs:

through the grocery store model to create a more dignified experience

to improve cultural relevancy of healthy food provided

Coordinated systems of distribution to target areas of most need

- Staffing and salaries
- Building space
- Purchasing power

Opportunities to improve equitable access

Expand client choice

The grocery style gives more dignity, [you're] not alienated. To pick out what you want and not feel like you're just a number in a line is a lot more dignified than being handed a box"

— Food bank client (CD 4)

Increase purchasing power

"It's less having enough food as it's having the right kind. When you rely on donations that's hard. Which is why we say [prioritize] purchasing budget. That's what gives the autonomy."

- Food bank staff member

Increase mobility

It doesn't have to be that everyone goes the extra mile to get [food] exactly to their door. Maybe it is just getting it someplace that's more convenient for them. Maybe a mobile Food Bank in a parking lot, or getting food to their place of worship or community center.."

— Food bank staff

Invest in operational costs:

We're open 8 hours a week to serve 1,000 visitors which makes it difficult to replenish food. Expanding hours would improve access but require more staffing and potentially more food. Our home delivery program has had a waitlist for years but we just don't have capacity."

- Food bank staff member

THANK YOU