

# GOOD FOOD REVOLUTION

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Bolivar County Good Food Revolution is a multi-sector collaboration focused on economic development opportunities and improved health outcomes for residents of Mound Bayou, Winstonville and Shelby, Mississippi. This project supports and facilitates local food growth and production for the purpose of expanding the local economy, generating jobs, and increasing access to nutrition in the three target communities. The goal is to keep food dollars concentrated in these economically distressed communities, specifically supporting enterprises that sell and make available, healthier alternatives to fast foods and processed foods. Their approach seeks to increase capacity to expand and replicate ongoing initiatives, document best practices, increase the health and wealth of communities, and provide local solutions to local challenges, and promote the health and economic benefits of buying locally grown foods, through youth and community engagement. The North Bolivar County Good Food Revolution is working to create a network of growers to scale up their food production to meet increased demand and to establish a mobile market for high needs communities to access healthy, affordable food.

## OBJECTIVE(S)

- The main goals of the Delta Fresh Food Initiative (DFFI) community-based participatory project are to:
- develop and promote a just and equitable food and farming system in the outreach area
- strengthen community
- improve health outcomes
- provide economic opportunity





## METHODS

This community-based participatory research project involved training 23 Youth Ambassadors to collect survey data from residents in Shelby, Winstonville, and Mound Bayou, Mississippi. Youth Ambassadors and trained community leaders collected survey data on 4 Saturday afternoons in the three towns, collecting 211 surveys (15% sample of households in the study area). DFFI provided gift cards to the survey participants. Data was coded/analyzed using SPSS statistical software. Youth Ambassadors received professional training and certification and a small stipend to honor their time.



## DISCUSSION

84% of respondents indicate that locally grown food is important to them. Participants in this study would welcome a mobile market to their area; 89% of respondents said they would utilize such a service. Only 30% of respondents report having access to a garden.

It is clear that food access is a concern in these three communities. The food environment is characterized by a few small convenience stores (in Shelby and Mound Bayou), a small grocery store in Shelby, and no grocery store in Winstonville or Mound Bayou. Residents travel to neighboring Cleveland for a larger grocery store.

Survey participants describe relying on others to get by (30%) and going without food in order to pay bills (medicine 81%; rent or mortgage (59%); utility/electricity/cellphone bill (70%).

54% of respondents indicated they have been told by a doctor that they have high cholesterol; 33% of respondents have been told they have Type II Diabetes. Creating linkages between the DFFI project and healthy lifestyle outcomes through cooking and accessing healthy foods may be an avenue that resonates with the three communities.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) **Build Community Capacity:** Develop leadership skills of Youth Ambassadors and ensure they remain central to the project; integrate faith-community into project utilizing kitchens and venue as drop-off points; ensure town and community leadership in outreach area remain engaged as 'champions' of the project; link this project to healthy outcomes for residents.
- 2) **Brand Good Food Revolution Program:** increase visibility of the Good Food Revolution brand; create logos, billboards, marketing materials to brand project; develop website for project and create farmer stories, consumer stories, and link to Good Food mission and vision. Make Good Food Revolution a household name.
- 3) **Create Sustainability through Community Organizing:** support and build farmer capacity; link project to economic development; create Double Bucks program and Veggie RX program; create a Bolivar Food Policy Council to support and sustain this initiative.

