

# Anne Arundel County

# FOOD environment

**Anne Arundel County is the fifth largest jurisdiction in Maryland with over 564,000 residents.**

The county has 126 public schools, approximately 80,000 students, 6,500 teachers and three major institutions of higher education. There are also two major hospitals serving county residents. The county has two state parks, over 70 county parks and more than 534 miles of linear coastline. Anne Arundel County has a lot to offer, but there are many residents and families who face challenges every day accessing healthy and affordable food.

## DID YOU KNOW?

**Approximately 69,000 Anne Arundel County residents live in a food desert.**

- Food deserts are defined by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) as urban neighborhoods and rural towns without ready access to fresh, healthy and affordable food. Typically, these areas are low-income, where the population lacks economic resources to travel for food purchases. There are 17 census tracts which are considered food deserts in Anne Arundel County located in Glen Burnie, Brooklyn Park, Linthicum Heights, Eastport, Fort Meade, Jessup and Severn<sup>1</sup>.
- Of the 69,000 county residents that live in food deserts, 54% are non-Hispanic White, 26% are non-Hispanic Black or African American, 12% are Hispanic (any race) and 4% are Asian<sup>2</sup>. Residents who live in these areas are less likely to have access to supermarkets or grocery stores that provide healthy food choices like fresh produce, low-fat dairy, whole grains and lean meat.
- Approximately 26% (18,000) of the population living in food deserts are less than 18 years of age<sup>2</sup>.

# WHAT — is a — FOOD desert?



Food deserts are defined by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) as urban neighborhoods and rural towns without ready access to fresh, healthy and affordable food.

## DID YOU KNOW?

**Lack of access to healthy foods can contribute to a poor diet and can lead to higher levels of obesity, diabetes and heart disease.**

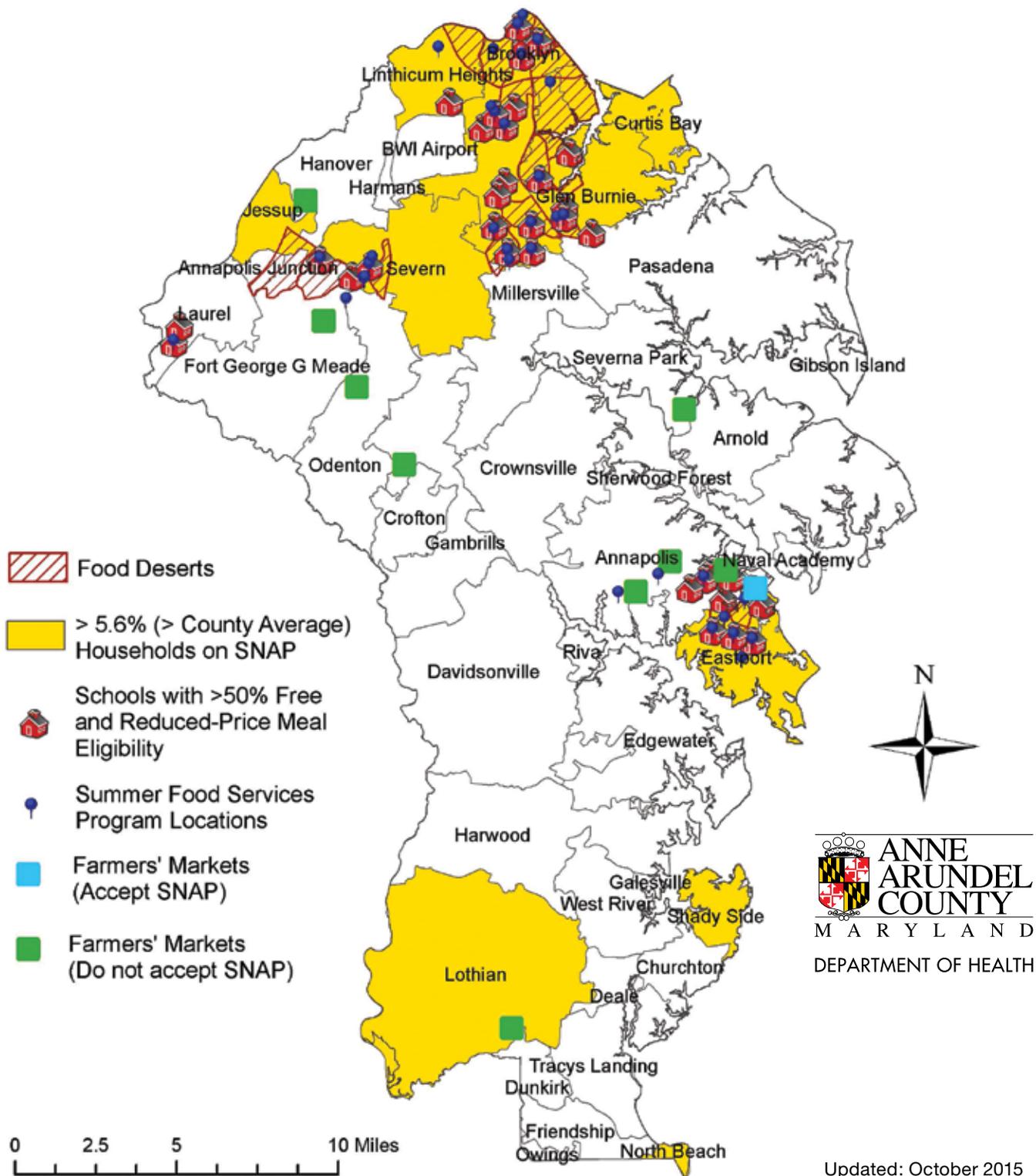
- In Anne Arundel County, approximately 283,000 residents (65% of population) over 18 years are overweight or obese and 39,000 residents (9.1% of population) over 18 years have diabetes<sup>3</sup>. An estimated 17.3% of children and adolescents ages 2 to 19 years are obese and another 15.1% are overweight<sup>4</sup>.
- The chart below shows the prevalence of chronic obesity-related health conditions among adults (18 years and over), Anne Arundel County, 2014<sup>3</sup>.

Health Condition	Prevalence %	Estimated Population
Elevated cholesterol level*	37.1%	159,344
High blood pressure*	33.0%	141,735
Diabetes	9.1%	39,097
Suffered heart attack	3.6%	15,684
Suffered stroke	1.8%	7,994
Angina or coronary disease	3.0%	12,915

Source: BRFSS, 2013\*-2014

# FOOD ENVIRONMENT

## Anne Arundel County



Updated: October 2015

Data Sources-Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Participation: 2009-2013 American Community Survey (ACS), 5-Year Estimates; Farmers' Market: Maryland Farmers Market Association, 2015; Summer Food Service Program: Anne Arundel County Public Schools; Free and Reduced-Price Meal Eligibility: Maryland Department of Education; Food Deserts: USDA, Food Access Research Atlas. The low access and distance measure, which is extracted from the Food Access Research Atlas and displayed on this map, is low income and low access measured at 1/2 mile and 10 miles.

## DID YOU KNOW?

**The percentage of households receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly food stamps) benefits in food deserts is two times higher than the county average.**

- In 2014, 15.7% of households located in a food desert received SNAP benefits compared to 6.4% in the county<sup>5</sup> overall. There are 279 SNAP retailers in the county, of which 32 (11.4%) are located in a food desert<sup>1</sup>. Encouraging smaller stores which accept SNAP to expand their supplies of fresh and healthy foods can improve access in food deserts.
- One out of 10 farmers' markets in the county accepts SNAP<sup>6</sup>. One out of 10 farmers' markets is near a food desert.
- Out of 12,902 households in Anne Arundel County which received SNAP benefits in 2014, 4,238 (32.8%) were located in census tracts which are considered to be food deserts<sup>5</sup>.

## DID YOU KNOW?

**The amount of income required for working families to meet basic needs in our county is \$71,138 for a family with two adults and two school-age children<sup>7</sup>.**

- The Self-Sufficiency Standard determines the amount of income required for working families to meet basic needs at a minimally adequate level taking into account family composition, ages of children and geographic differences in costs. This amount does not include public subsidies or private/informal assistance.
- Median annual income of households receiving SNAP benefits is \$33,973, while median annual income of all the households in county is \$89,031<sup>5</sup>.



## Actions for Anne Arundel County Community and Government:

Identifying areas of need in the county and supporting evidence-based initiatives or programs help residents access healthy and affordable food. There are many factors that play a role in health, including lifestyle and surrounding environment. Community-level changes such as implementing policy are more sustainable, have proven to impact infrastructure and aid in shifting social norms. Education of individuals and families alone is not a viable change strategy because other environmental and societal factors impede its success, including physical access or affordability.

### Examples of Evidence-based Programs:

#### **Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) Free and Reduced-Price Meal Program and AACPS Summer Food Service Program (including Mobile Meals)**

AACPS provided free and reduced-price meals to 26,610 of the county's 79,765 students in the 2014-2015 school year. AACPS provided free and reduced-price meals to 6,409 students in 20 schools in food deserts. In 10 out of 20 schools in food deserts, more than 50% of the students are eligible for free and reduced-price meals<sup>8</sup>. AACPS also has 37 summer food service program locations, 15 of which are located in food deserts<sup>4</sup>. Go to [www.aacps.org/nutrition](http://www.aacps.org/nutrition) for eligibility guidelines and how to help promote program participation.

#### **Farmers' Markets that Accept SNAP, WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) and Fruit and Vegetable Checks (FVC)**

Supplemental nutrition programs such as SNAP, WIC FMNP and FVC provide fresh, unprepared, locally grown fruits and vegetables to eligible participants, and they expand the awareness, attendance and sales at farmers' markets. Availability of farmers' markets with affordable selections of fresh foods may mitigate the role of distance in limiting healthy food access for Anne Arundel County residents. Go to [www.marylandfma.org](http://www.marylandfma.org) to find out how a market can accept SNAP and offer low-income customers additional matching money to spend at the market as part of the Maryland Market Money Program.

#### **City of Annapolis and Anne Arundel County Pedestrian and Bike Master Plans**

These plans direct those involved in design and development or improvements of the built environment to prioritize physical activity and equitable access to healthy foods. This will enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists and people with disabilities. For more information go to [www.annapolis.gov/government/city-departments/transportation/bike-annapolis/bicycle-master-plan-2011](http://www.annapolis.gov/government/city-departments/transportation/bike-annapolis/bicycle-master-plan-2011) and [www.aacounty.org/PlanZone/MasterPlans/BikePed/2012BikePed.cfm](http://www.aacounty.org/PlanZone/MasterPlans/BikePed/2012BikePed.cfm).

#### **Healthy Food Access in Local Organizations**

Organizations purchase food to sell to employees and the community (children and adults) in retail outlets, such as vending machines, cafeterias and concession stands. By establishing policies to improve the nutrition of the food available for purchase, organizations can improve health, lower overall costs and encourage other organizations to do the same. For more information go to [www.changelabsolutions.org](http://www.changelabsolutions.org) and type "healthy vending" into the search bar.

#### **Food Policy Council or Multi-sector Food Coalition**

A food policy council coordinates community efforts to address healthy food access, food insecurity and economic growth for local farmers. For more information about the benefits and structures of food policy councils, see Food Policy Networks, [www.FoodPolicyNetworks.com](http://www.FoodPolicyNetworks.com).

**Data Sources:**

- <sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)
- <sup>2</sup> U.S. Census Bureau
- <sup>3</sup> Maryland Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2014
- <sup>4</sup> Anne Arundel County Department of Health, Provider-based County Survey of Children and Adolescents, 2012
- <sup>5</sup> American Community Survey, 2010-2014, 5-Year Estimates
- <sup>6</sup> Maryland Farmers Market Association
- <sup>7</sup> Center for Women's Welfare, 2012
- <sup>8</sup> Maryland State Department of Education

**Compiled by:**

Ann Heiser Buzzelli R.D., L.D.N.  
Bikash Singh, M.P.H.

**Technical Assistance provided by:**

Anne Arundel County Public Schools  
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Anne Arundel County Department of Health

[www.LearnToLiveHealthy.org](http://www.LearnToLiveHealthy.org)

410-222-7979