

United States Department of Agriculture
Urban Agriculture & Innovative Production Grant

City of Flagstaff
Sustainability Office



COMMUNITY FOOD SYSTEMS ASSESSMENT

Flagstaff & Northern Arizona

Discussion Overview

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Project History &
Purpose

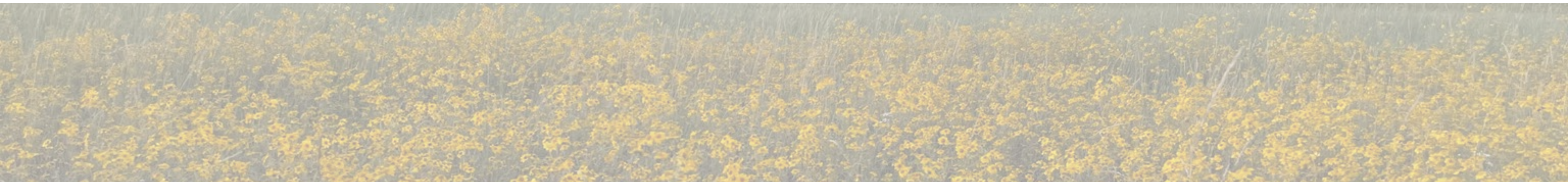
02.
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CFSA Key Findings
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Our Team & Partners



Natalie Pierson
*Food Systems
Coordinator*



Summer Grandy
*Flagstaff Foodlink /
FFFC*



Eileen Horn
Project Lead



Purpose of the USDA Grant Project: Assessing and Growing a Sustainable Community Food System



Provides primary and secondary food systems research for 5 counties across northern Arizona



Supports community involvement of Flagstaff's climate goals related to sustainable and localized food access and distribution



Determines the City's food system commitments over the next **decade** to inform and engage decision-makers, key stakeholders, and the community

ASSESSING AND GROWING A SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY FOOD SYSTEM

YEAR 1: 2023- 2024

Collect and synthesize food access, distribution, and agricultural data across NAZ into a CFSA.

YEAR 2: 2024-2025

Present CFSA findings to stakeholders and community members. Assess the feasibility of one strategic business opportunity.

YEAR 3: 2025-2026

Develop a Food Action Plan or other policy mechanism to guide improvements to infrastructure, programming, and funding for food systems over the next decade.



GOAL #1

Assess the local food system and collect data through a comprehensive food systems assessment (CFSA).



GOAL #3

Assess the feasibility of one strategic business opportunity in Flagstaff: food hub, commercial community kitchen, etc.



GOAL #2

Present CFSA findings to stakeholders and community members to increase awareness and understanding of the current state of our food system.



GOAL #4

Develop a Food Action Plan to guide City policy, programming, and investment in the local food system and urban agriculture opportunities.

2024 COMMUNITY FOOD SYSTEM ASSESSMENT



CITY OF FLAGSTAFF &
NORTHERN ARIZONA



Community Food System Assessment Process

- **Extensive secondary data collection:** NVA pulled from the key county, state, and national datasets that help us understand our food system. Sources include the U.S. Census, the USDA Census of Agriculture, CDC, County Health Rankings, Feeding America, and local community health data.
- **A Community-wide survey:** The project team received **1,041 total responses** from a variety of food system participants - consumers, growers, and food business entrepreneurs.
- **Focus Groups: 34 key food system stakeholders** participated in focus groups to share their on-the-ground insights with the project team. Focus groups covered six food system audiences:
 - Food retail outlets
 - Funders in the food system
 - Emergency food access
 - Farmers/ranchers
 - Institutional food purchasers
 - Food waste/recovery
- **Social Network Analysis:** A social network analysis (SNA) was conducted with representatives from **33 key food system organizations operating in the region** to identify central players in the local food system, understand community structures, and pinpoint bridge organizations within these networks.



What makes up Flagstaff's Food System?

- How our food gets to our table
- Where our food goes after it leaves our table
- And all the steps in between!

OUR FOOD SYSTEM VALUES

EQUITY
HEALTH
SUSTAINABILITY

FOOD JUSTICE
RESPECT
HUMAN RIGHTS

AGRICULTURAL LANDSCAPE & FOOD PRODUCTION

Where our food comes from. This includes everything from farming to ranching to backyard gardening.



FOOD SYSTEM INFRASTRUCTURE

How food is moved from the farm and then processed and distributed to places where people consume it.



FOOD RETAIL ENVIRONMENT

How and where food is purchased by consumers at stores, restaurants, or cafeterias.



FOOD CONSUMPTION & HEALTH

How the food we eat impacts the health of individuals and our communities.



FOOD ACCESS

How community members have (or don't have) access to adequate, affordable, and culturally relevant foods.



FOOD WASTE & RECOVERY

How food that doesn't get eaten is recovered and shared, composted, or landfilled.





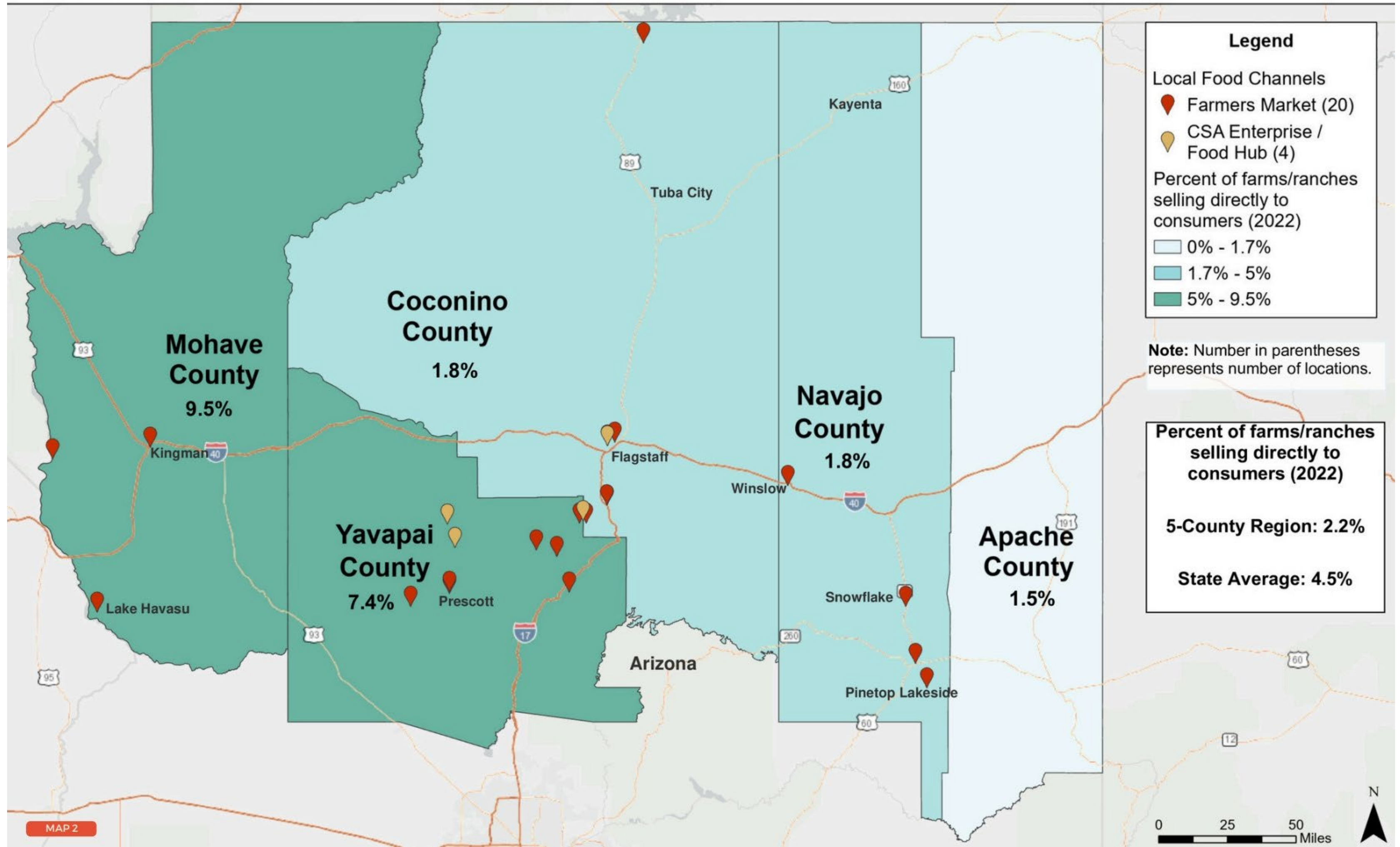
Ag Landscape & Food Production

Where our food comes from.
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to ranching to backyard gardening.

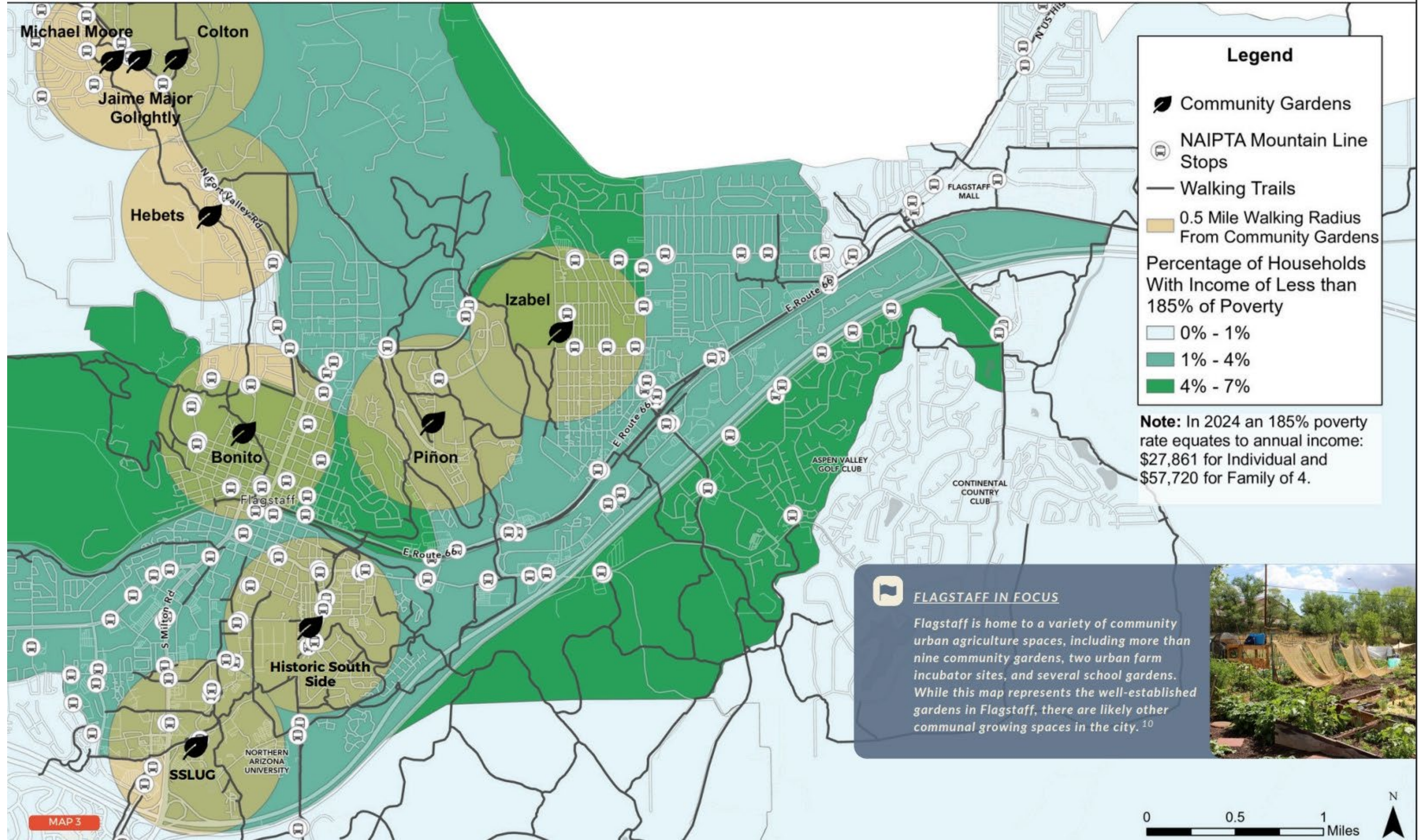


- **Local direct-to-consumer food sales in the region are growing**, which is a strong indicator of **regional demand for local foods**.
- However, the small size of farms, lack of business development resources, and sales outlets **makes it difficult for the agricultural economy in the region to grow**.
- The Flagstaff agriculture economy is very **separated from southern Arizona**, which limits the reach of the businesses.
- **Producing food is challenging in this region**. Farmers, ranchers, and gardeners noted climate variability, water access, cost of land and distance to market as key challenges.
- Food producers growing for business have a **strong desire for increased opportunities to collaborate** with other businesses such as food processors, manufacturers, distributors, retailers, buyers, and so on.
- **Most producers in northern Arizona are Native American**, and cultural differences around agricultural activities can undercount food sales and economic impact.

Local Food Channels of Northern Arizona



Access to Community Gardens in Flagstaff, Arizona



FLAGSTAFF IN FOCUS

Flagstaff is home to a variety of community urban agriculture spaces, including more than nine community gardens, two urban farm incubator sites, and several school gardens. While this map represents the well-established gardens in Flagstaff, there are likely other communal growing spaces in the city.¹⁰





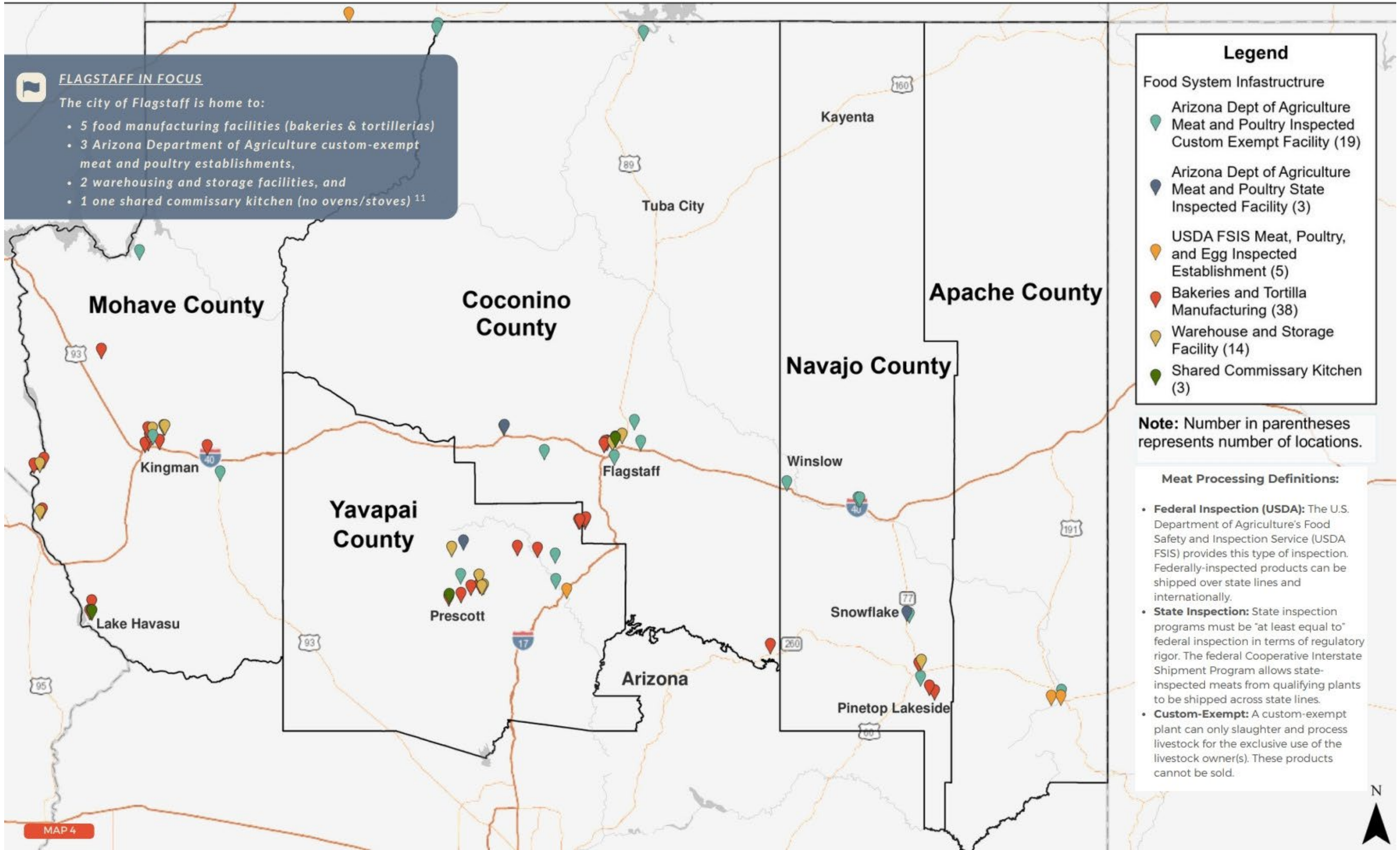
Food System Infrastructure

How food is moved from the farm and then processed and distributed to places where people consume it.



- **The lack of processing** (meat processing and commercial kitchen space) outside of the city centers **limits food producers' abilities to expand production and sales.**
- The **current lack of distribution infrastructure (e.g., food hubs) has led businesses to collaborate,** sharing deliveries, building on-farm processing, and contracting directly with farmers.
- The **distance between food producers and resources** (kitchens, processing, storage, customers, etc.) is a **significant barrier to starting and growing businesses** in the region.
- There is a need for **increased funding opportunities** to support **business development.**

Food System Infrastructure of Northern Arizona





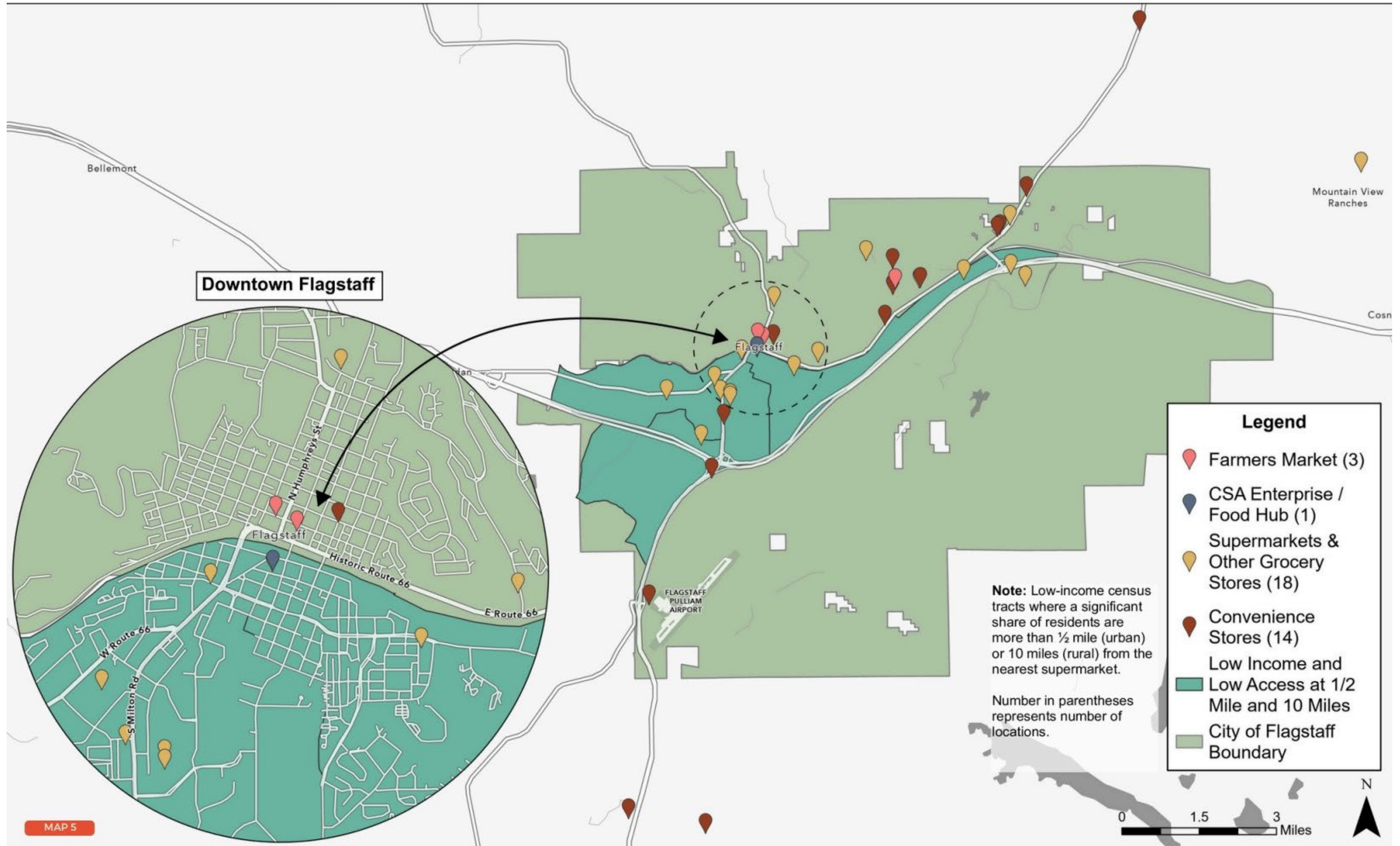
Food Retail Environment

How and where food is purchased by consumers at stores, restaurants, or cafeterias.



- **Food stores are concentrated near urban and suburban centers**, with few options in rural areas of the region.
- **Communities living on Native American reservation land have very few stores to buy from**, and the stores they do have offer only limited food options.
- The **lack of local food outlets and food distribution for local food has led to direct purchasing from farms** by restaurants and businesses who want to source and sell local foods.
- **The high cost of food is a challenge for many in the region**, and locally grown food is perceived as being especially expensive and hard to access.

Food Retail Locations in Flagstaff, Arizona





Food Consumption & Health

How the food we eat impacts the health of individuals and our communities.



- **Parts of northern AZ lack access to healthy food;** residents struggle to meet recommended intakes of fruits/vegetables. This **lack of access to healthy foods is particularly acute in rural areas and on reservation lands.**
- **Lack of access to healthy food contributes to negative health impacts in the region** (obesity /diabetes / lower life expectancy). In fact, three of the five counties in northern Arizona rank among the least healthy in the state.
- **Affordability of healthy food is a key barrier,** and the **rising cost of housing** in the region makes it even more difficult for families to afford healthy food.

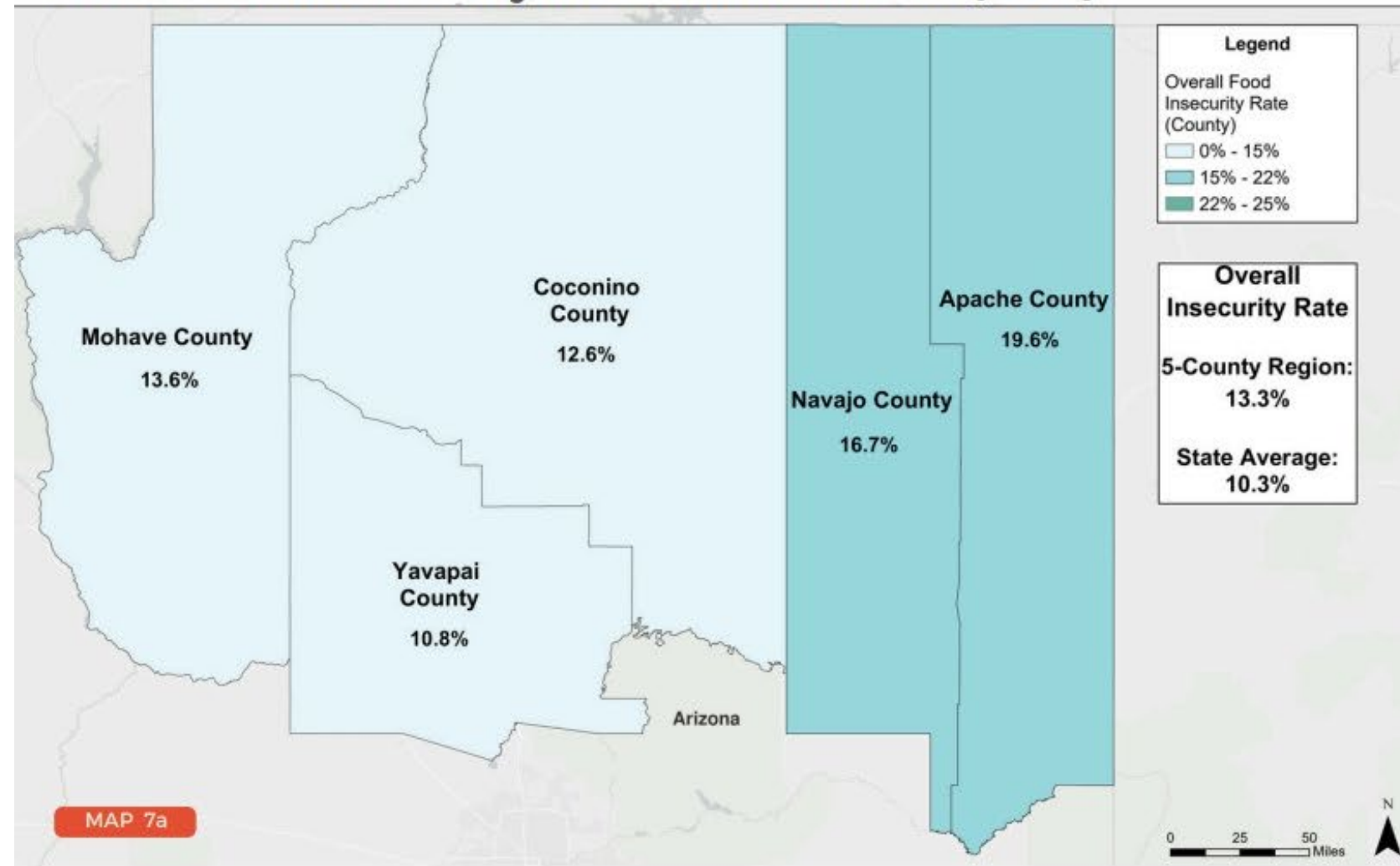
- Food insecurity rates in Northern Arizona are **higher** than the state average.
- **Children, Hispanic, Black, and Native American populations** suffer from higher food insecurity rates across the region.
- SNAP benefits are **not as widely used as they could be** based on income eligibility.
- **Housing and utility costs compete with money for food** available in family budgets.
- **Transportation challenges reduce access** to grocery stores in rural areas.
- There is **strong** interest in services that would **teach residents where and how to grow/harvest their own food.**



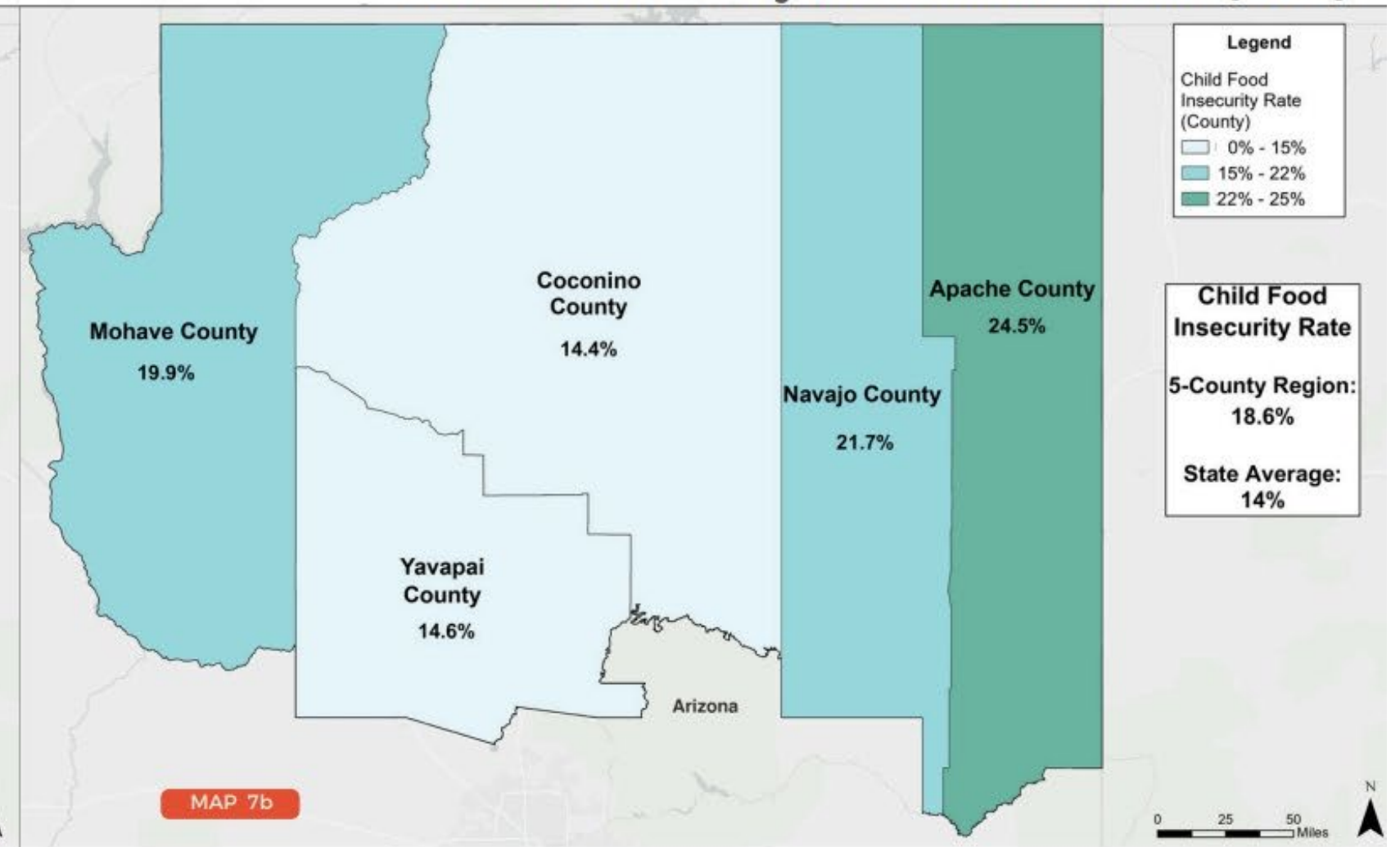
Food Access

How community members have (or don't have) access to adequate, affordable, and culturally relevant foods.

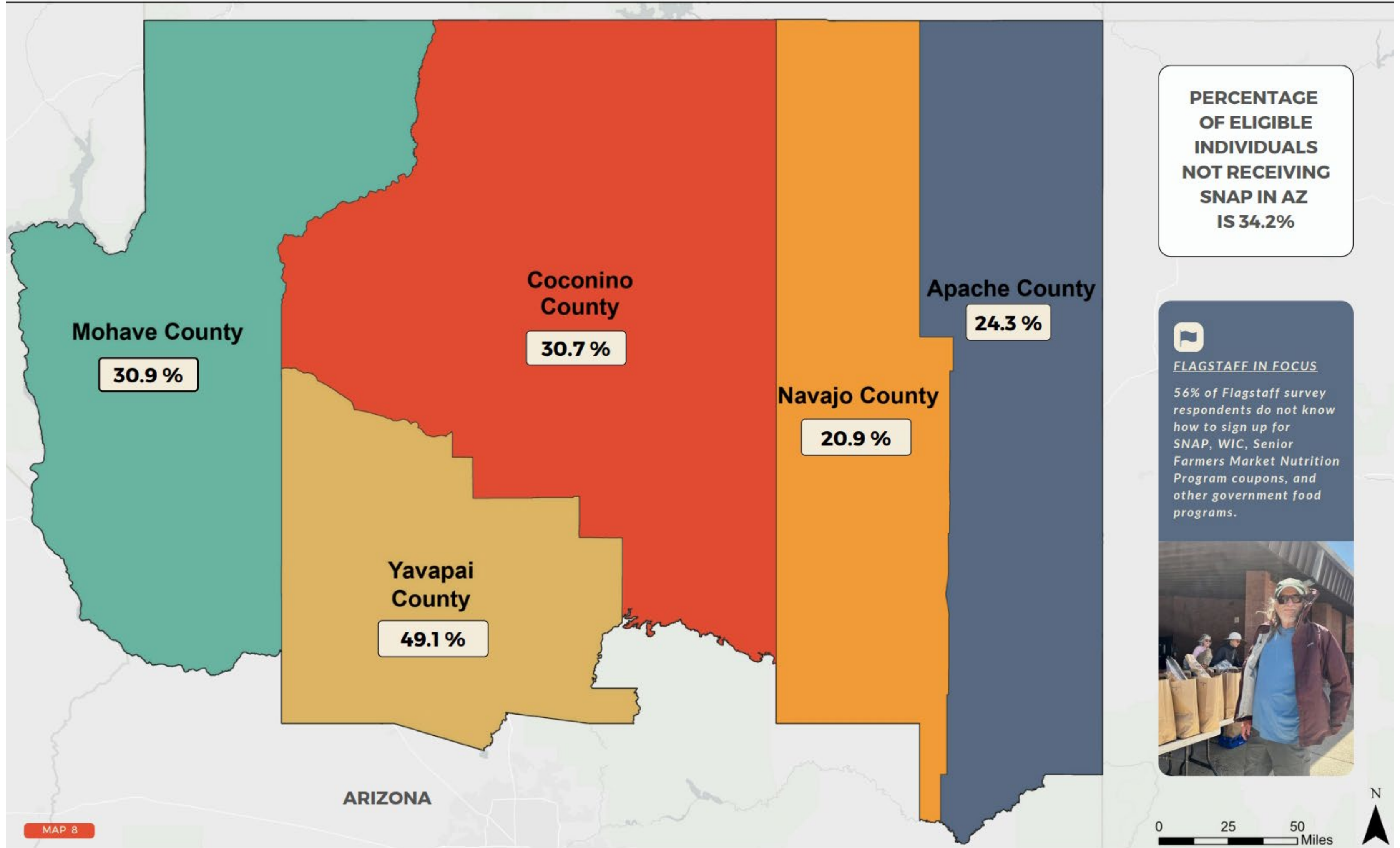
Overall Food Insecurity in Northern Arizona (2021)



Child Food Insecurity in Northern Arizona (2021)



% of Eligible Individuals Not Receiving SNAP Benefits (Northern AZ)





Food Waste & Recovery

How food that doesn't get eaten is recovered and shared, composted, or landfilled.



- While **Arizona was ranked #1 in the country for food waste**, Flagstaff has many initiatives to support the reduction of food waste.
- Significant efforts are being made in Flagstaff to **decrease food waste at the household, corporate, university, and municipal levels.**
- **Confusion about the health codes, inspection, and zoning processes around compost are restrictive** to residents and businesses looking to manage their food waste.
- Flagstaff is a leader in food recovery efforts, but the **recovery of hot food from restaurants and caterers still poses a logistical challenge.**

Partner Contributions: Stage 1



Built Relationships
Through their programs, Foodlink and FFFC have built relationships with various members of the food system.



Local Knowledge
Foodlink has an in-depth knowledge of the agricultural makeup of N. Arizona. FFFC has an in-depth knowledge of hunger & food insecurity in the region.



Outreach Strategy
FFFC & Foodlink were able to assist with interviews, manage the survey outreach, and update key stakeholders.

Where Are We Now?

Learning, Listening, and Planning



Learning: The CFSA has been published and we are sharing it as widely as we can **to educate community members about our local food system.**

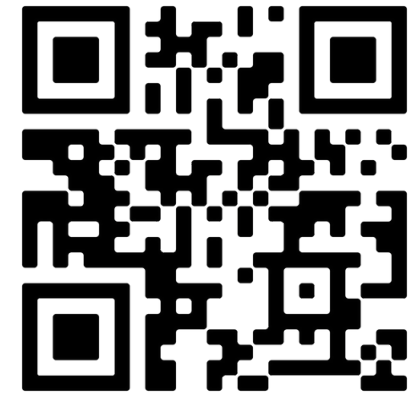


Listening: We are wrapping up our community engagement listening sessions to **better understand community needs & priorities** related to our local food system.



Planning: Using research findings and community engagement feedback to **inform future policy** for cultivating a local food system that **better serves our community.**

Scan here to
read the
CFSA report!



Or visit www.flagstaff.az.gov/NAZFSA



THANK YOU

Please send any additional questions to
natalie.pierson@flagstaffaz.gov