

Presented By:
Natalie Pierson

Flagstaff Sustainability Office



COMMUNITY FOOD SYSTEMS ASSESSMENT

Flagstaff & Northern Arizona

Today's Content

Overview

01.
Our Food System
Story

02.
Project Background

03.
Project Timeline

04.
CFSA Data & Key
Findings

05.
Northern AZ Food
Insecurity

06.
Questions &
Contact Info



What is a Food System?



How our food gets to our table



Where our food goes after it leaves our table



Entwined in our food system:

- Education
- Equity
- Sustainability

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

Community Food Systems Assessment

**Comprehensive tool
to identify the assets
and barriers for a
community's food
system**

Food Action Plan

**Roadmap for an
equitable, sustainable,
and resilient local food
system that supports
healthy, vibrant
communities**

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

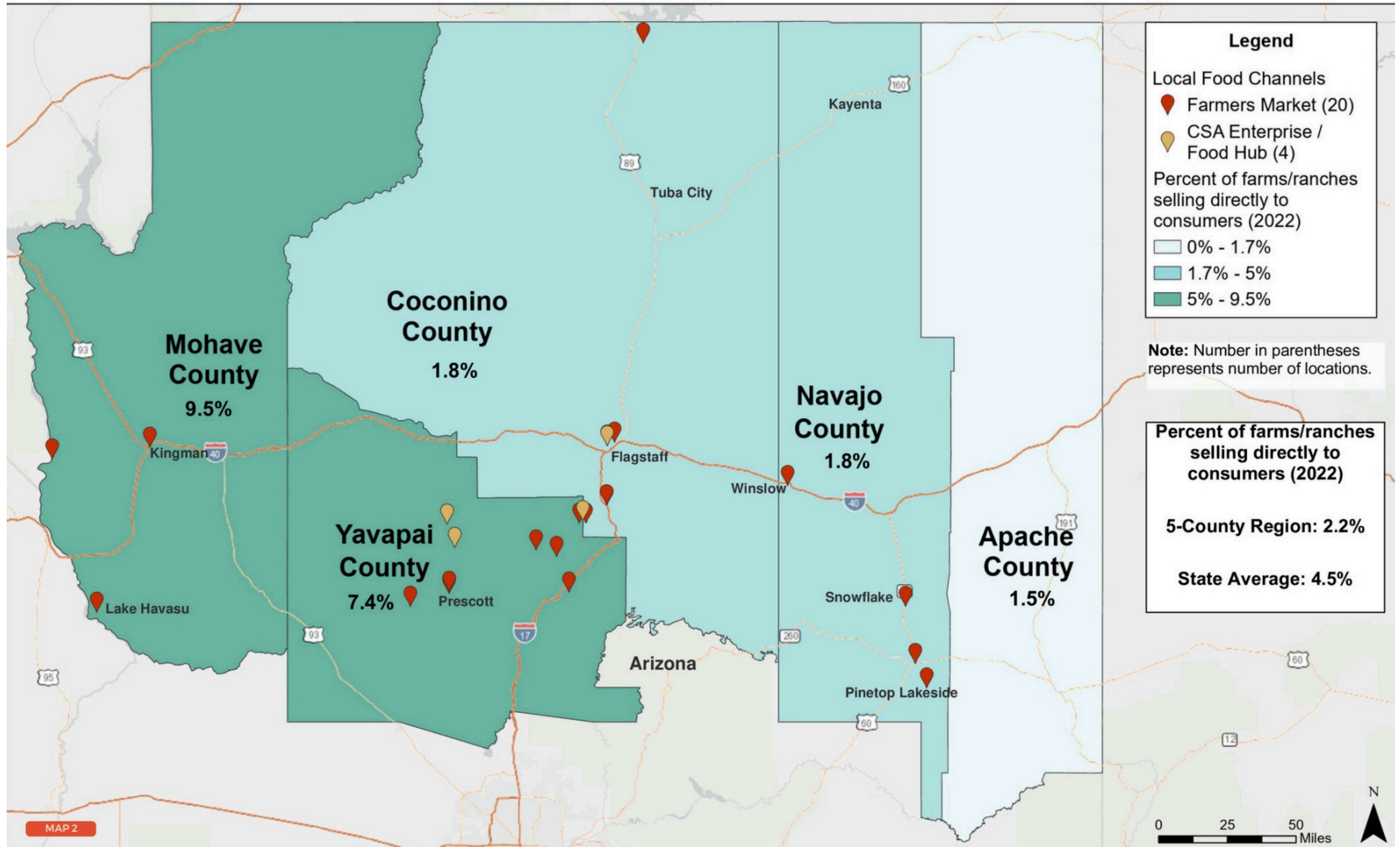
Develop a Food Action Plan to guide City policy, programming, and investment in the local food system and urban agriculture opportunities.

Food System Assessment: Local Food Channels

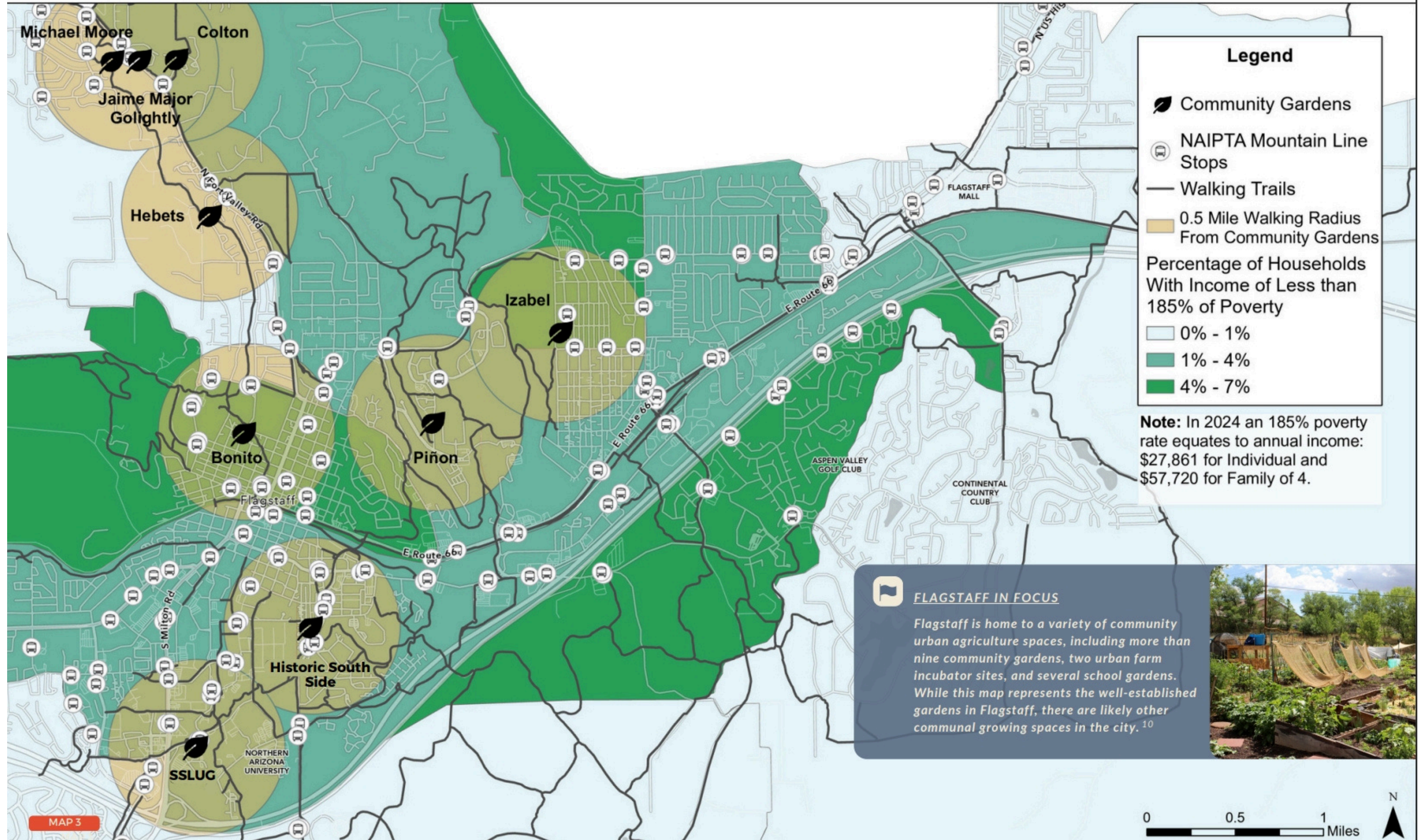
Trends & Challenges

- **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.
 - As a result, the desire to collaborate is strong!
- 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



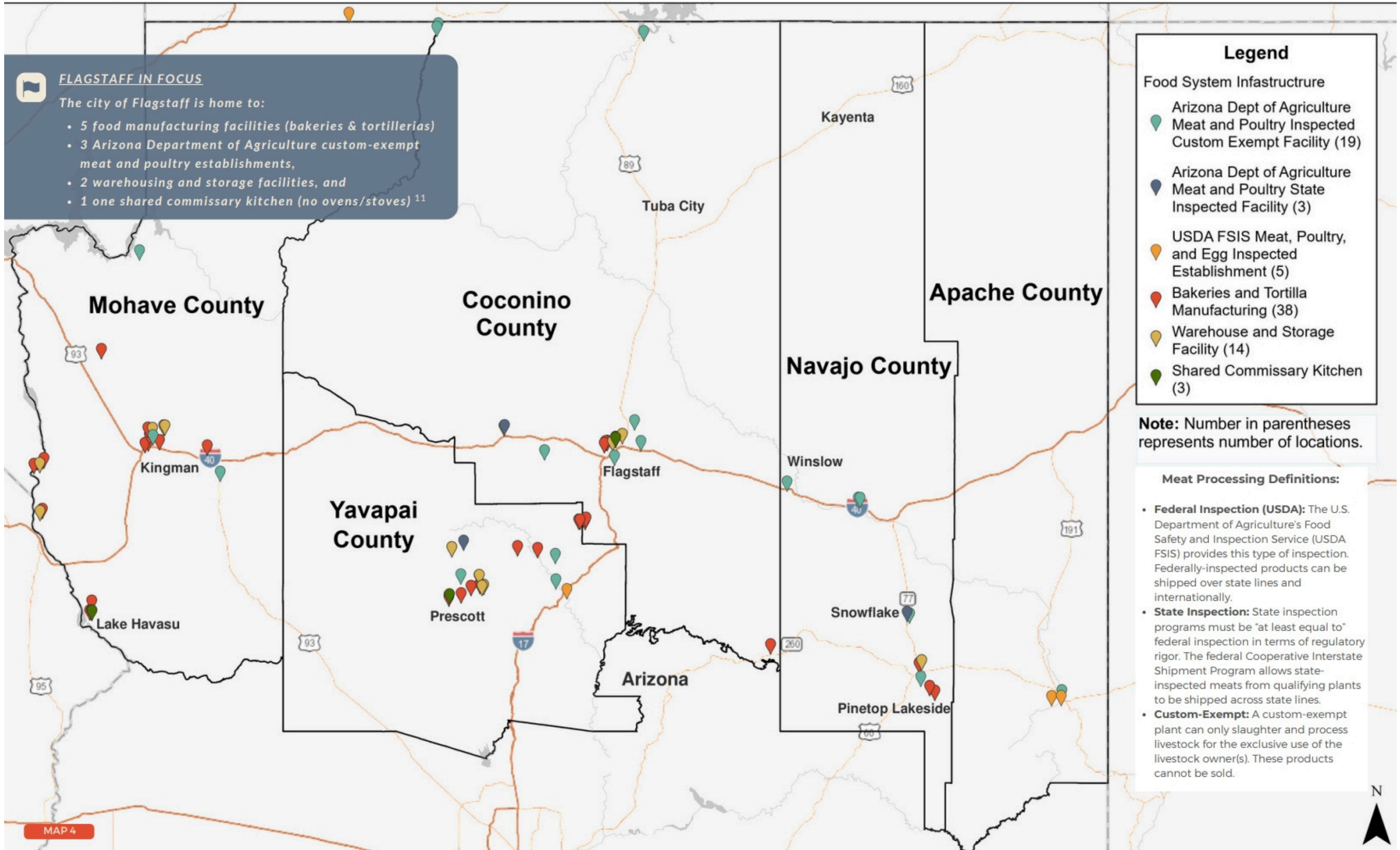
Food System Assessment: Food System Infrastructure

Trends & Challenges

- **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.**

How can Flagstaff build infrastructure that supports the region as a whole in producing more local foods?

Food System Infrastructure of Northern Arizona

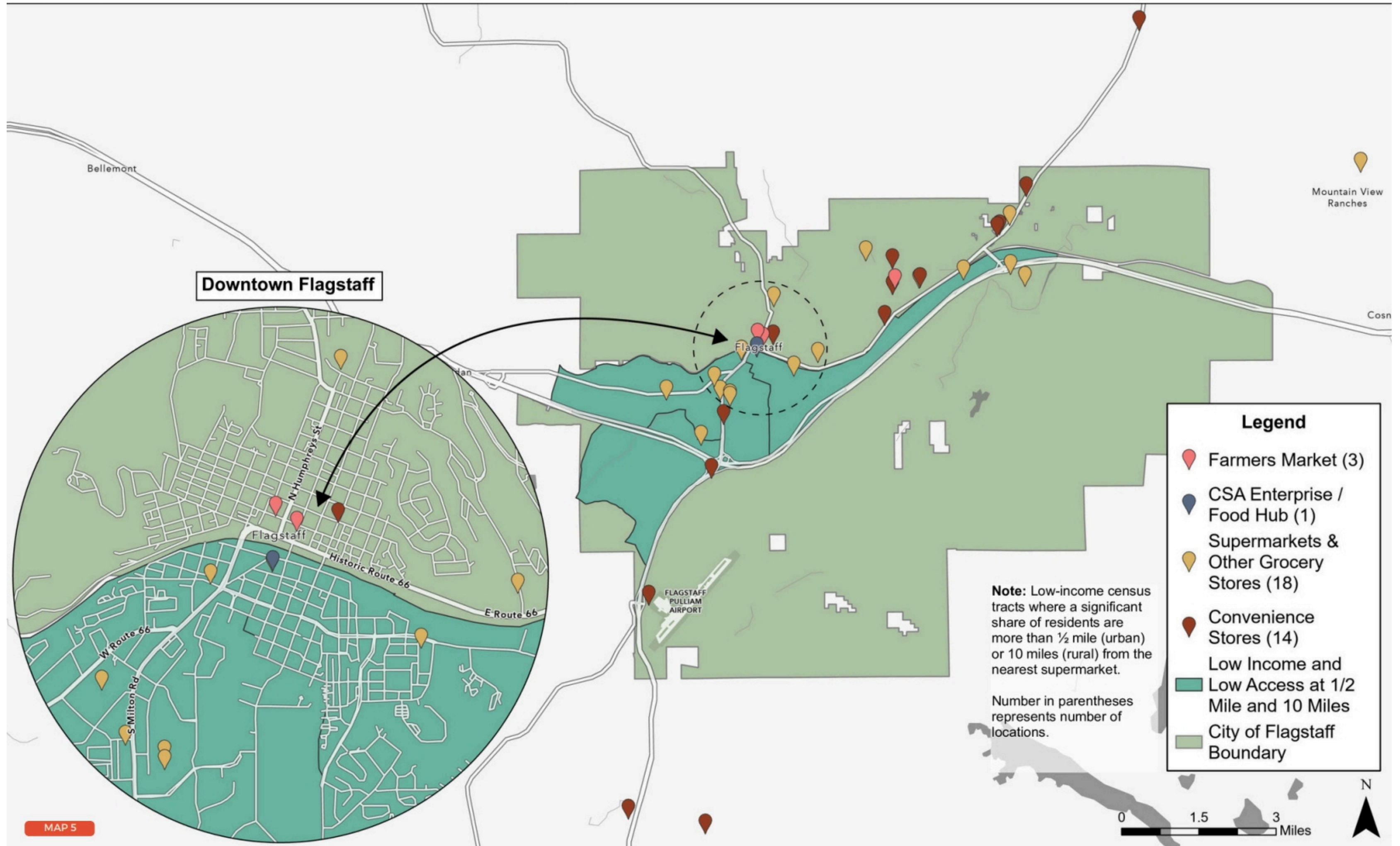


Food System Assessment: Food Retail Environment

Trends & Challenges

- **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 System Assessment: Food Consumption & Health

Trends & Challenges

- **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.

How can the City of Flagstaff and Regional leaders attract new / support existing healthy food outlets, especially in rural parts of the region?

Food System Assessment: Food Waste & Recovery

Trends & Challenges

- 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.**

How can food waste reduction efforts also increase access to food for Flagstaff and the surrounding areas?

Food System Assessment: Access to Food

Trends & Challenges

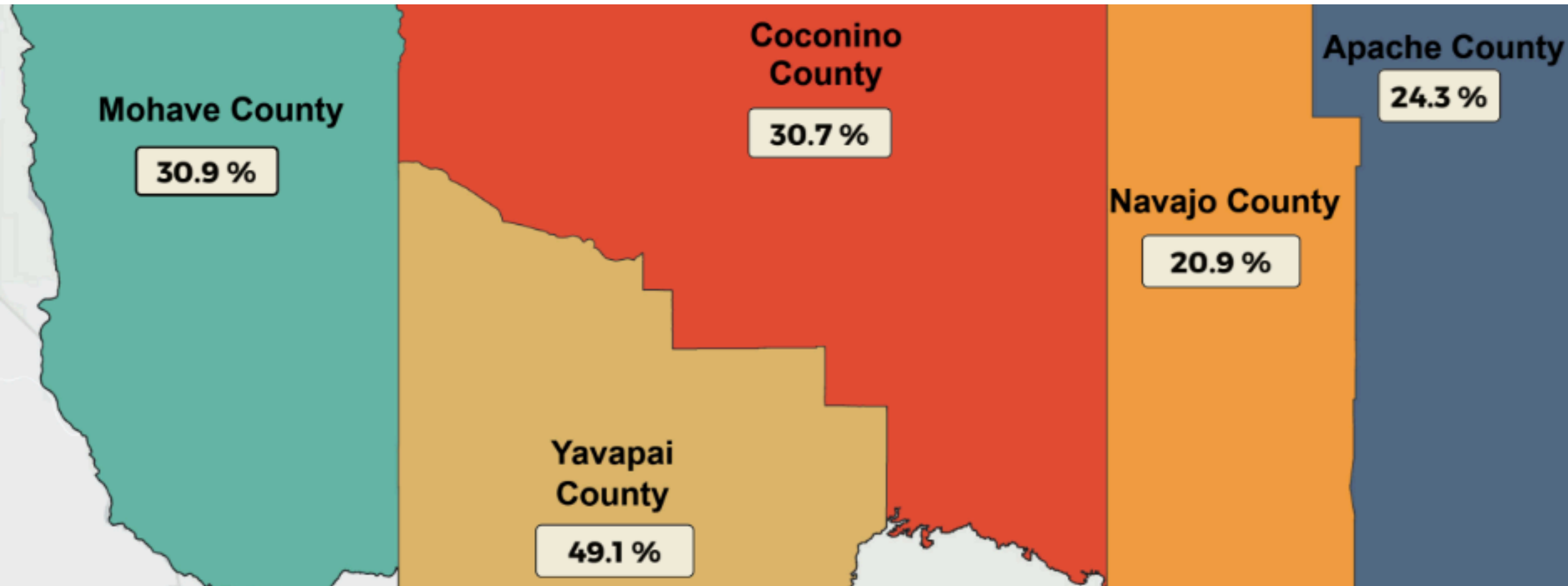
- **Children, Hispanic, Black, and Native American populations** suffer from higher food insecurity rates across the region.
- SNAP benefits are **not as widely used as they could be** based on income eligibility.
- **Housing and utility costs compete with money for food** available in family budgets.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

How can institutions in Flagstaff (government entities, schools, hospitals) increase access to healthy food?

Food Insecurity in N. Arizona

Food insecurity is a very prevalent issue in this region.

% of Eligible Individuals Not Receiving SNAP Benefits



Top 10 Client Residencies

1. **Flagstaff** | 13% of population
a.53% of total client
2. **Tuba City** | 15% of population
3. **Winslow** | 16% of population
4. **Leupp** | 73% of population
5. **Williams** | 17% of population
6. **Kayenta** | 10% of population
7. **Chinle** | 8% of population
8. **Pinon** | 31% of population
9. **Tonalea** | Census data not avail.
10. **Cameron** | 51% of population

Feeding America 2022 “Map the Meal Gap”

- 20,820 individuals in Coconino County are food insecurity
- 14.4% of the population in Coconino County is food insecure

Children

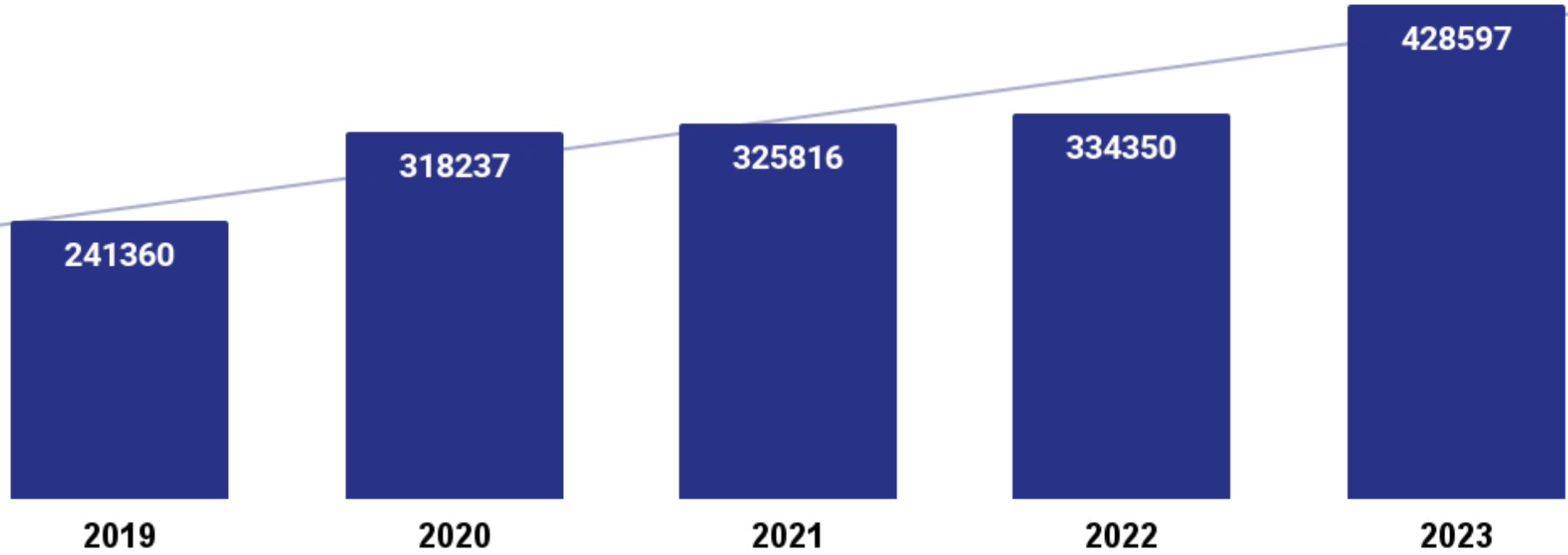
- 5,460 children in Coconino County are food insecure
- 19% of children in this county are food insecure



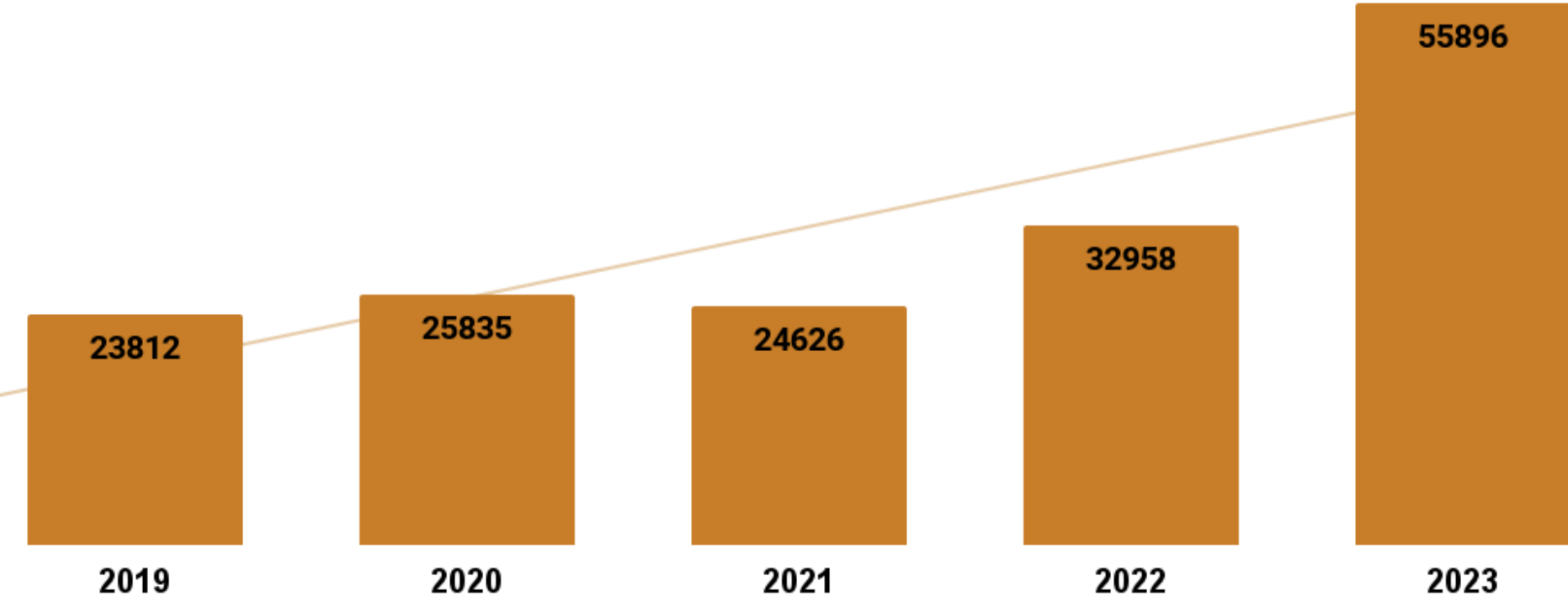
Food Insecurity in N. Arizona

Recent increased investment into food systems is a response to the frailties seen during and after the pandemic. Local, state, & federal food system experts all agree that innovative strategies are needed to combat food insecurity.

of Meals Served at Kitchen Location



of Households Served at Warehouse



What our Community has Said

“What does food security look like to you?”

A word cloud of responses to the question 'What does food security look like to you?'. The words are arranged in a central cluster, with some larger and more prominent than others. The colors of the words include blue, orange, green, and grey. The most prominent words are 'being able to cook', 'healthy foods', 'having enough', and 'time'. Other visible words include 'planning ahead', 'not worrying', 'control', 'freedom', 'gardening', 'transportation', 'money', 'choice', 'tools', 'safety net', and 'variety'.

control
freedom gardening
transportation
planning ahead
being able to cook
healthy foods
having enough
not worrying
time
money
choice
tools
safety net
variety

“Growing your own food and having your own fresh food supply”

“Having the time and money to purchase & cook balanced & healthy meals”

What our Community has Said

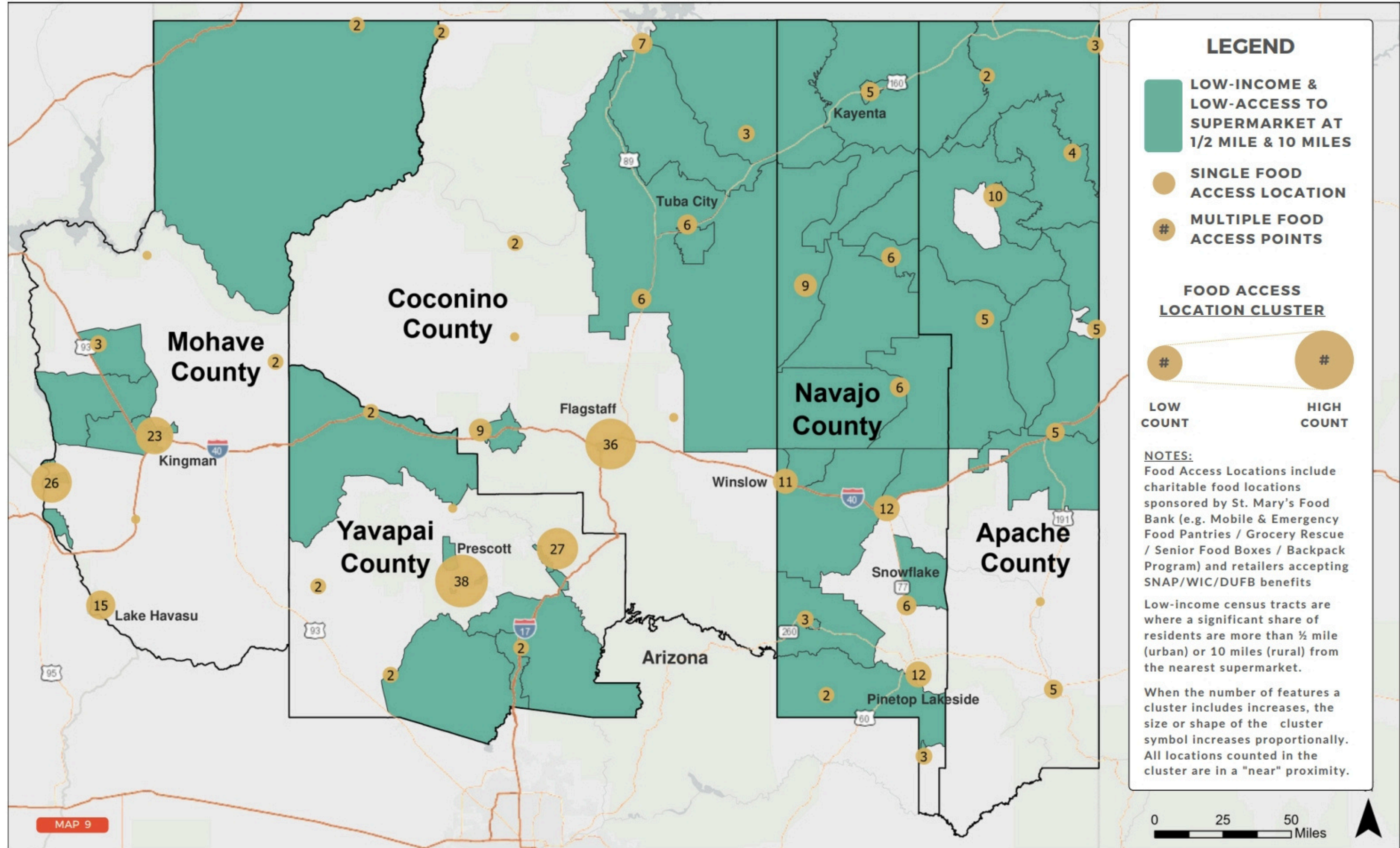
“What barriers exist that prevent you from experiencing food security?”



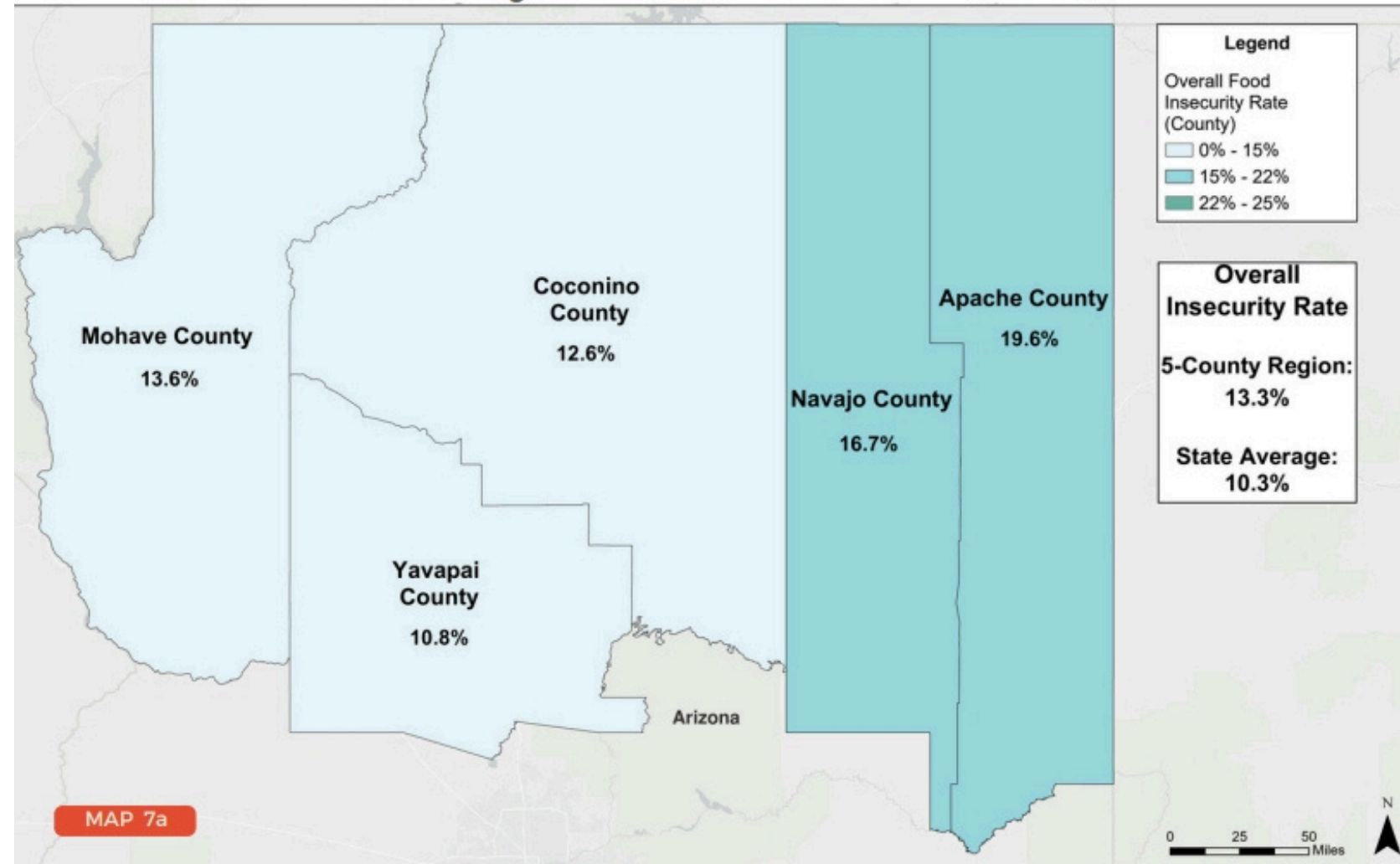
“Vegetables are really important to us and they’re really costly right now”

“More programs where [we] can connect with local farmers”

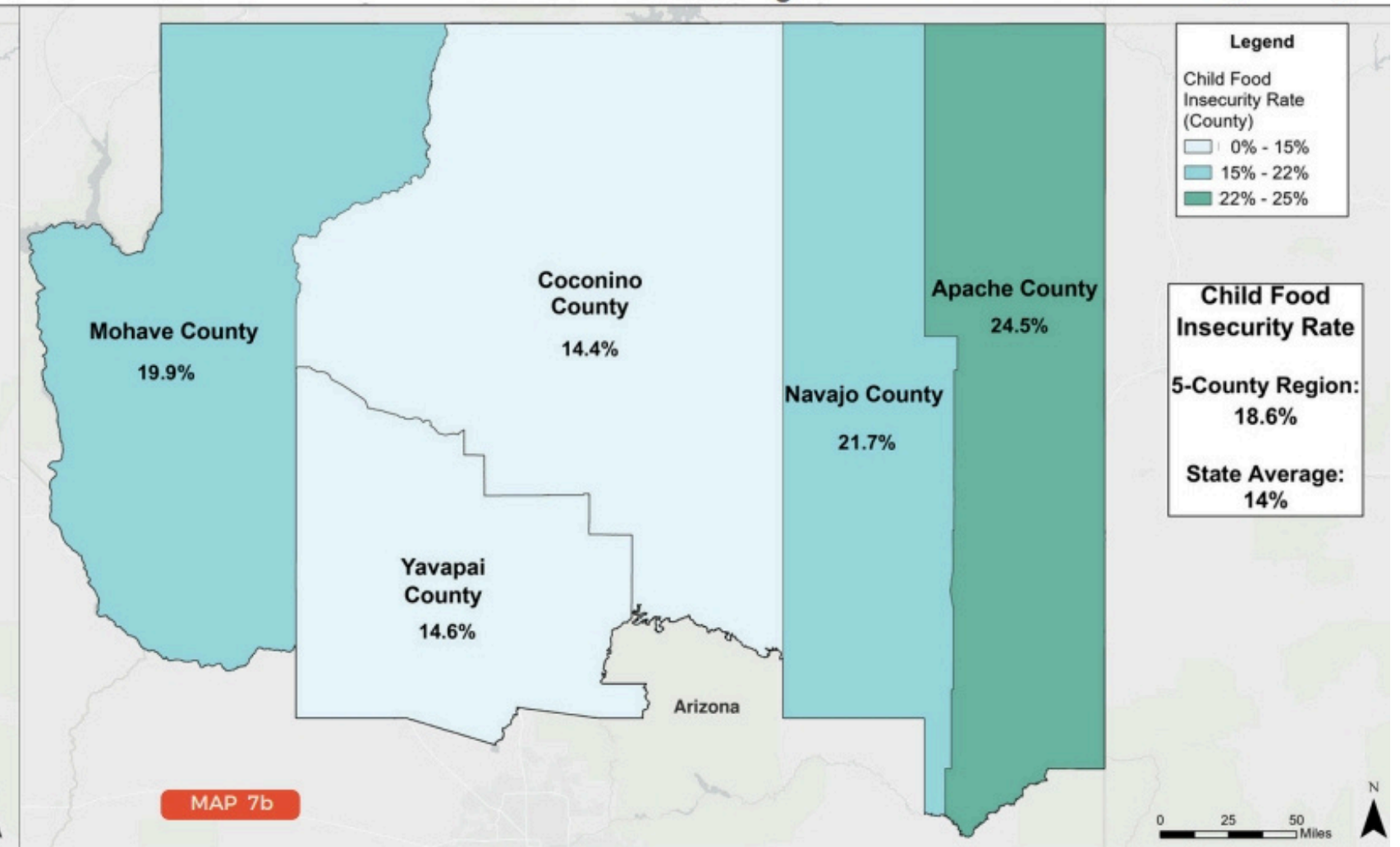
Food Access Locations in Northern Arizona Compared to Low Income / Foodstore Access Areas



Overall Food Insecurity in Northern Arizona (2021)



Child Food Insecurity in Northern Arizona (2021)



Scan here to
read the
CFSA report!



THANK YOU

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

