



CUMBERLAND COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH FORT BRAGG & CUMBERLAND COUNTY FOOD POLICY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

August 4, 2025, 6:00-7:30 pm

MEMBERS PRESENT:

*Dr. Clifton Johnson, Cumberland County Co-Chair
Shannon Gettings, Healthcare Representative
Shella Korch, Public Health Representative
Kenny Bailey, Local Government Representative
Roni Winston, Food Insecurity Representative
Melissa Pennington, Food Insecurity*

MEMBERS ABSENT:

*Alexis McClain, Farming/Agriculture
Representative
Robert Elliott, Farming/Agriculture Representative
Joyce Adams, Higher Education
Beth Maynard, Cumberland County Schools*

STAFF PRESENT:

*Dr. Jennifer Green, Public Health Director
Tamra Morris, Deputy Health Director
Martina Sconiers-Talbert, AO III
LaToya Bell, WIC Outreach Coordinator
Meredith Thompson, FPC/UNC Intern*

VISITORS

*Kyara Crocker
Demi Tucker*

Item 1. Call to Order:

Dr. Clifton Johnson welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order.

Action Items:

Approval of August Agenda.

MOTION: *Kenny Bailey* motioned to approve the August Agenda.

SECOND: *Shannon Gettings* seconded the motion.

VOTE: Unanimous Approval

Approval of June Regular Meeting Minutes.

MOTION: *Kenny Bailey* motioned to approve the June Regular Meeting Minutes.

SECOND: *Shella Korch* seconded the motion.

VOTE: Unanimous Approval

Discussion Item 3a. Legislative Updates

- a. *Dr. Jennifer Green* provided an overview of the current state and federal legislative updates with significant implications for food and nutrition programs in North Carolina. She noted that the North Carolina General Assembly had not yet passed a state budget, and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is currently under a hiring freeze. This budget delay has created uncertainty around funding for critical programs such as Medicaid and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Beginning in fiscal year 2027-2028, federal policy changes will shift the full cost share of SNAP benefits to the state, potentially requiring North Carolina to allocate up to \$420 million annually to maintain the program. If the state is unable to meet this financial obligation, it could be forced to withdraw from SNAP entirely, which would result in the loss of benefits for over 1.4 million residents and a reduction of \$2.8 billion in federal funding.
- b. Additionally, new federal guidelines will increase administrative costs associated with SNAP, shifting the cost split from 50/50 to 75% state and county and 25% federal, with projected increases of \$14 million in state and \$65 million in county spending. Work requirements for SNAP will also expand, affecting able-bodied adults without dependents ages 18–64 and parents of children over age 14. An estimated 90,000 adults in North Carolina could lose benefits as a result. Regarding Medicaid expansion, *Dr. Jennifer Green* explained that North Carolina must take legislative action to sustain the program, either by amending the hospital provider tax formula to cover administrative costs tied to work requirements or modifying the trigger law to authorize alternative financing mechanisms.
- c. At the federal level, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has proposed a redefinition of “federal public benefits,” adding 13 new programs to the list of services restricted to individuals with “qualified” immigration status. While nonprofit organizations are not required to verify immigration status when distributing benefits, implementation guidance is still forthcoming, and the policy is currently under public comment. *Dr. Jennifer Green* emphasized that the scope and timeline of these changes depend on actions taken by the state legislature in the coming weeks.

Discussion Item 3b. CCF Grant Application Submission with *Er’Body Eatz*

Dr. Jennifer Green, Public Health Director

- a. *Dr. Jennifer Green* shared that the Cumberland Community Foundation (CCF) grant application was successfully submitted for a collaborative children’s gardening initiative with *Er’Body Eatz*. The proposed program includes two eight-week urban gardening workshop series, one in the fall and one in the spring, which targeting a total of at least 96 children. Sessions will be held on Saturdays and cover composting, crop rotation, soil health, and hands-on gardening activities. Children will also receive mini lessons in healthy cooking facilitated by CCDPH nutritionists, and take-home items such as cutting boards, aprons, and garden starter kits. The \$25,000 funding request will support garden infrastructure, supplies, and program materials. CCDPH is serving as the fiscal agent but will not receive direct funds; all funds will



be distributed to support the project through *Er'Body Eatz*. The Health Department will also lead pre- and post-evaluations. If awarded, the project is scheduled to begin in October 2025.

**Discussion Item 3c. Environmental Health
Division's Food Safety Forum**

Tamra Morris, Deputy Health Director

- a. *Tamra Morris* announced that the Environmental Health Division will host the seventh annual Food Safety Forum on August 13th at Fayetteville Technical Community College. The one-day summit will bring together food safety professionals, restaurateurs, educators, and public health leaders for cross-sector dialogue. Sessions will include regulatory updates and a presentation by *Jkwan Fulmore* on community garden education, including zoning and land-use considerations. Council members were encouraged to register and attend. Additionally, ServeSafe Manager Training in Spanish will begin in September as a four-session series at the health department. This new offering meets a growing need for food safety education in Spanish-speaking communities and supports inclusive workforce development.

Discussion Item 3d. Food Desert Map

***Dr. Clifton Johnson, Cumberland County
Co-Chair***

- a. *Dr. Clifton Johnson* initiated an open discussion on developing a food desert map to drive local food access policy. He shared that local leadership, including city council members and the mayor, have expressed interest in understanding food access challenges by zip code. To support policy advocacy, he proposed creating a visual tool that highlights food access disparities. The draft map incorporates four indicators: low median household income, high SNAP participation, few full-service grocery stores per capita and limited public transportation. The Council discussed the importance of these indicators and the potential to expand the dataset. *Dr. Clifton Johnson* encouraged Council members to collaborate on refining the map and offered to coordinate efforts. The goal is to complete a Council-owned product that can be presented to local government leaders to inform policy changes.

Item 4: Conclusion

- a. Introduction of Visitors – ***Demi Tucker***: *fifth-generation farmer currently living in Wake County, with plans to return to Fayetteville in the coming years. She expressed interest in supporting the Council's work and learning more about food security efforts in Cumberland County.*
- b. Public Comment
- c. Announcements – *Dr. Jennifer Green* announced she will be relocating by the end of 2025 due to a military reassignment. *Martina Sconiers-Talbert* and *Tamra Morris* will remain points of contact. The Council also discussed a pending funding opportunity with



FRAC (Food Research & Action Center), which may support continued outreach work and administrative staffing, including potential development of a food security toolkit. The Council expressed sincere gratitude to *Meredith Thompson* for her service as the Food Policy Council Intern, which will conclude on August 15, 2025.

ADJOURN
NEXT REGULAR MEETING:

Monday, October 6, 2025, 6-7:30 pm

@ Cumberland County Public Health Department
(1235 Ramsey St, 3rd Floor Conference Room)