

Food Justice in Asheville

History and Solutions



Asheville's urban agriculture resource

C. Nicole Hinebaugh Program Co-Director

Image Credit: Getty

Food Insecurity

food in·se·cu·ri·ty

noun

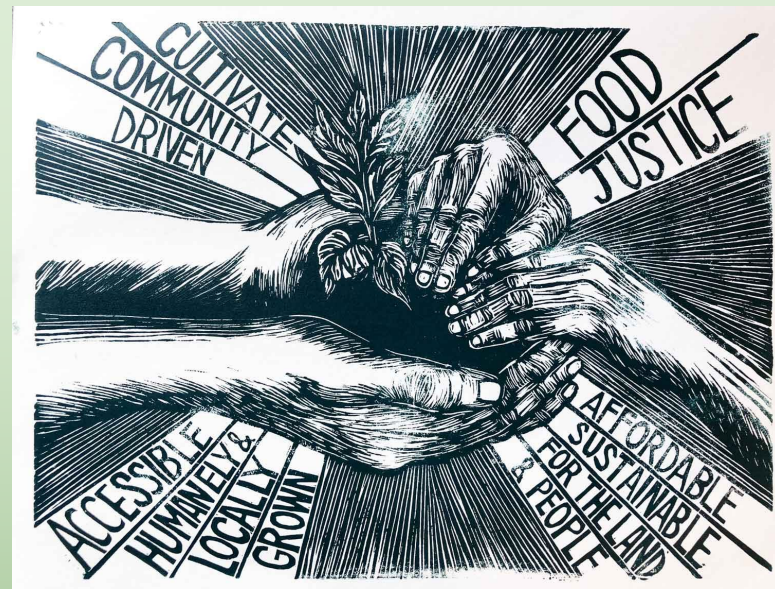
1. The state of being without reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food that meets household preferences and dietary needs.

1. Approximately 20% of the population of Asheville and Buncombe County are actively experiencing food insecurity.



What is Food Justice?

- Food Justice operates on the belief that **access to healthy food is a human right.**
- Accessibility takes into account **location, affordability, and cultural preferences.**
- Food Justice also refers to **equity within each part of the food system:** growers/farmers, farm workers, food processors, distributors and retailers
- The **Food Justice Movement** is **communities exercising their right to grow, sell, and eat healthy food.**



Urban Renewal

Urban Renewal: federal Housing Act policy enacted by local governments across the country in the name of “economic development” in the 1950’s-1980’s in US.

- **Displaced millions of predominantly African American households** around the country largely in previously red-lined neighborhoods. These neighborhoods were now declared “**blighted**”.

Blight *noun*

1. a plant disease, typically one caused by fungi such as mildews, rusts, and smuts.

Synonyms: disease · canker · infestation · fungus · mildew · mold · rot · decay

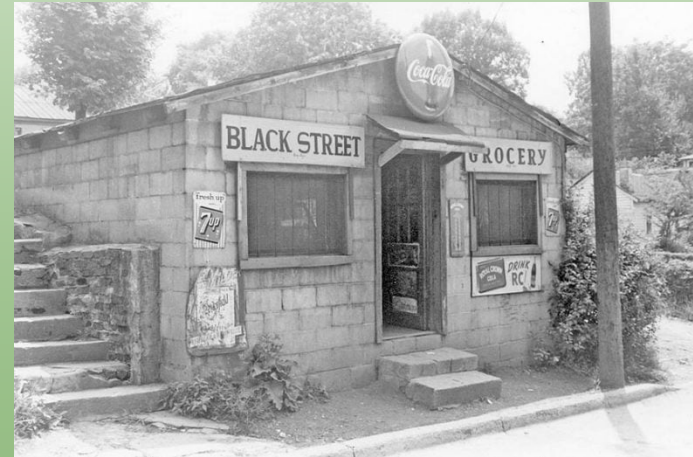
How to control Blight in plants

1. Remove contaminated material to avoid the spread



Urban Renewal in Asheville

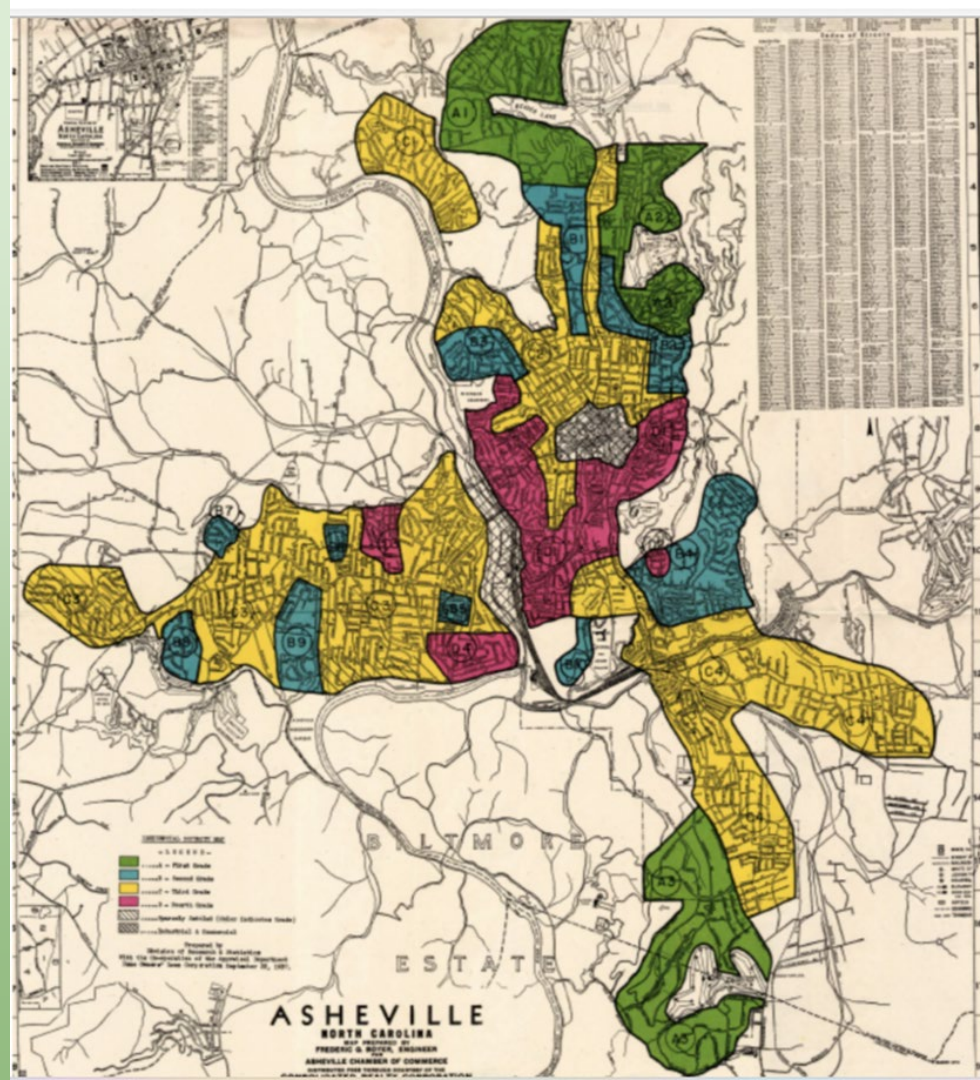
- Asheville's **East Riverside Urban Renewal Project** represented the **largest single urban renewal project in the Southeast**. This single project affected over half of the city's African American population and took place primarily in and around the Southside neighborhood (Census Tract 9).
- Urban Renewal in Asheville **removed** more than **1,100 homes**, 6 beauty parlors, 5 barber shops, 5 filling stations, **14 grocery stores**, 3 laundromats, **8 apartment houses**, 7 churches, 3 shoe shops, 2 cabinet shops, 2 auto body shops, 1 hotel, 5 funeral homes, **1 hospital**, and **3 doctor's offices** (Nickollof, 2015).



Asheville Redlining: a precursor to Urban Renewal

- 1937 HOLC and FHA residential map of Asheville.
- Southside, Hill Street, East End, Stumptown, and Burton Street neighborhoods are located within the red sections, which were designated as “blighted” or “undesirable.”

Nickollof, 2015



Urban Renewal in Asheville: images of loss



*Image Credit (above):
MountainX.com*



Depot-then.jpg

The Nantahala Hotel, with J's Bar & Grill in the background and the O. K. Cash Grocery Store at the right hand edge of the photo.



Depot-today.jpg

A rough approximation of where those businesses sat – where Green's Mini-Mart sits today.

*Image Credit (right):
PackLibraryNCRoom.Wordpress.com*

Food Security Fallout from Urban Renewal

- Many long-time residents of Asheville's Southside and Shiloh neighborhoods recount **Pre-Urban Renewal Foodtopia**: bountiful backyard gardens, public edibles, orchards, and food-based businesses mostly all lost to displacement.

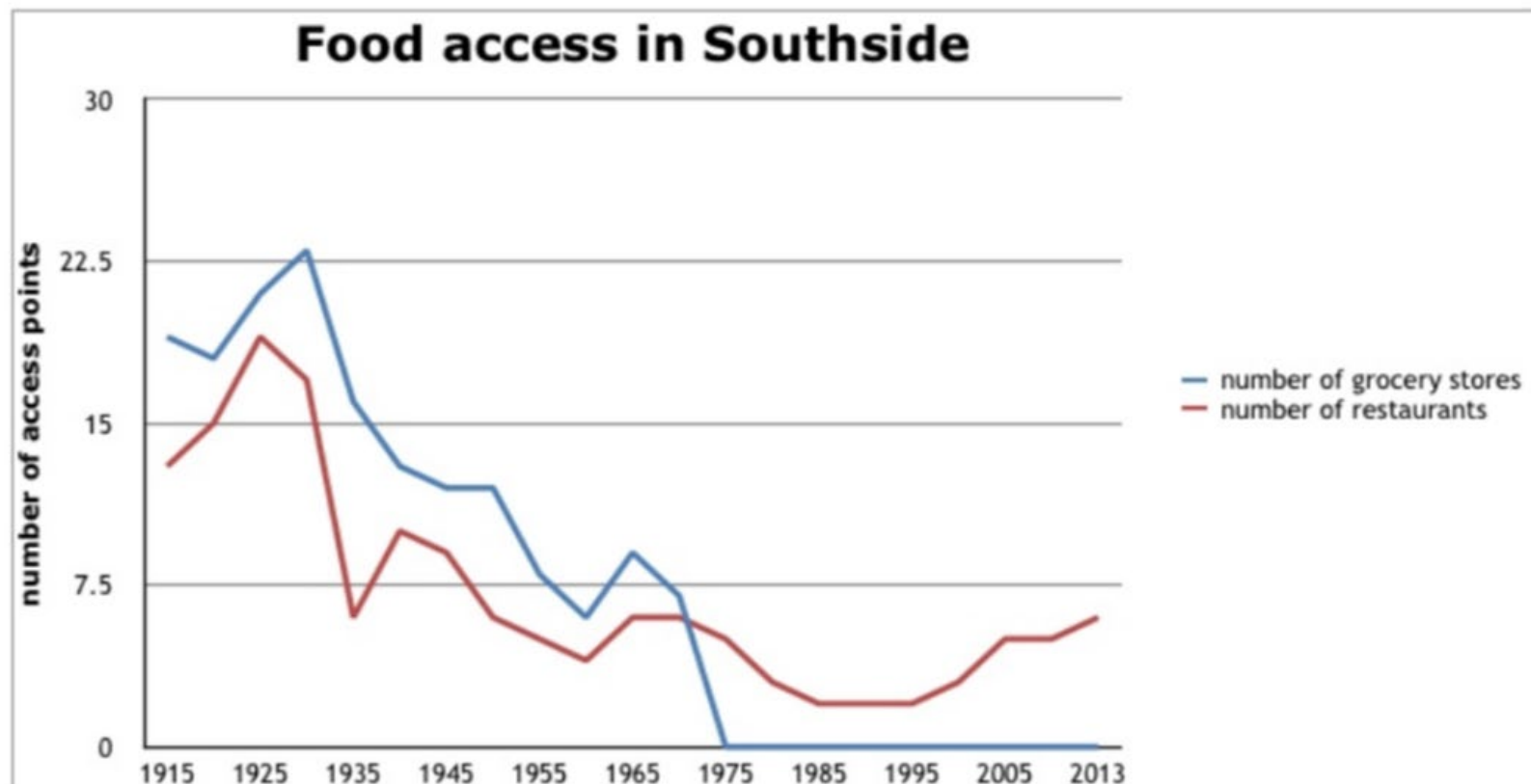
“We were food rich, money poor”

-Southside resident



- Once **thousands of residents were relocated to public housing neighborhoods** they no longer had control or ownership of the land, and in many cases were **not even allowed to grow food**.

Image Credit: Andrea Clark



(Figure 1 - Daniell, 2017)

A Growing Generation Gap



Image Credit: Haca.org

- What was intended to be “*transitional*” public housing placement became **multi-generational**, and a subsequent **Generation Gap** formed in which many of the children and grandchildren of residents displaced by Urban Renewal had no opportunity to engage in practices of growing and preserving food, thus **inextricably linking food security to financial security**, and preventing the passage of food growing skills and knowledge to future generations.

Learn More about **Urban Renewal**'s Effects in Asheville

Mountain X-Press: Legacy of loss: Food insecurity and its disproportionate impact on Asheville's black community

<https://mountainx.com/food/legacy-of-loss-food-insecurity-and-its-disproportionate-impact-on-ashevilles-black-community/>

Mountain X-Press: Uprooted: Urban renewal in Asheville

<https://mountainx.com/news/uprooted-urban-renewal-in-asheville/>

Mountain X-Press: The East Riverside Urban Renewal project

[Asheville Archives: The East Riverside Urban Renewal project | Mountain Xpress](#)

Urban Renewal In Asheville: a history of racial segregation and black activism

By Steven Michael Nickollof

<https://libres.uncg.edu/ir/wcu/f/Nickollof2015.pdf>

Food Security Reparations Coalition

- Formed in 2021 after City of Asheville's 2020 Resolution for Community Reparations for Black Asheville
- Convened by the Asheville Buncombe Food Policy Council with support from the City of Asheville's Office of Sustainability
- Advocating for reparations for the aforementioned harm related to food security to be included in the reparative actions being developed by the City/County Reparations Commission.
- Coalition is composed of neighborhood leaders and elders, community food growers, racial equity advocates and organizers, local university staff, and food security professionals.

Food-Related Reparations Policy Brief (ABFPC)

Food-Related Reparations Policy Brief



Prepared by Caitlin Tricomi,
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Photo by Andrea Clark
<https://specialcollections.uncasheville.edu/photo-exhibits/twilight-ashevilles-east-end-circa-1900/>

Reparations

Background

The researcher conducted research on various types of reparations. They looked at various examples and how it could apply to food-related reparations.

Major Types

- Scholarship
- Cash payment
- Land Back
- Erasing Black
- Funding So

What is a Scholarship form of reparation?

- A grant or payment to support an individual's education and support those whose education was affected by harm that was caused.

What is a Cash Payment form of reparation?

- Direct cash payments to descendants of enslaved people

What is a Land Back form of reparation?

- Restoring the victim back to their original land before harm occurred.

Government initiated Reparation Examples

Example of Cash Payment form of Reparations

The US Congress has a proposed bill (HR 40) which would ask for a federal commission to study slavery and its impacts on descendants of slaves today, as well as the role of the federal and state government. It requests that the commission make recommendations based on its findings, including an apology to descendants of slaves and reparations. It asks for \$8 billion but does not ask for the creation of heritage sites or monuments. [8]

How could this apply to Food Reparations?

Cash payments might be made to people who lost farm/growing land; payments to people whose grocery stores were pushed out of Black neighborhoods.

How could this apply to Food Reparations?

Erasing Black farm owner debt would increase access for Black farmers to own and control their own land. It could also look like offering loans and allowing payments to be rescheduled.

Example of Erasing Black Farm owner debt

The U.S Congress has proposed legislation called The Emergency Relief for Farmers of Color Act. This would cancel four million dollars of debt for farmers of color. It would forgive 120% of loans from the USDA or private lenders guaranteed by the USDA. [9]



This photograph shows a small wooden structure, possibly a shack or a small farm building, situated in a rural or agricultural setting. The structure has a pitched roof and appears to be made of rough-hewn wood.

Food-Related Reparations

did not reveal any food-related did find compelling food policy

reparations in Asheville, NC believe must be consistent with the United Rights Commission which are: nation, compensation, satisfaction, The findings of this policy search what is being supported and the ready begun at the city level. Elements of reparations are giving land to the Black community. Coalition believes reparations must be red and truth-telling process.



This photograph shows a street scene in Asheville, NC, with brick buildings and people walking on the sidewalk. The scene appears to be from a historical or archival collection.

Community Gardens and Orchards

- Over 30 independent community gardens and orchards operating in Asheville and Buncombe County
- 10+ are located within historically Black communities, “Legacy Neighborhoods”
- Bountiful Cities’ free **Community Garden Network** provides ongoing support:
 - Tool Library
 - Seed Libraries
 - Material and Infrastructure Resourcing
 - Technical Assistance
 - Workday Assistance
 - Educational Workshops



Elder and Sage Community Garden



Murray Hill Community Garden



Free Outdoor Pantries

The ABFPC is working with local builders to install Free Outdoor Pantries in neighborhoods experiencing higher rates of food insecurity. There are currently three located in Legacy Neighborhoods, with many more in development.



Collaborative Urban Agriculture Apprenticeship

- Six area nonprofits and community groups are working together to offer a year long apprenticeship program to BIPOC and low wealth individuals.
- Apprentices are paid a living wage for their time and are supported with class instruction, field training, mentorship, technology support, and assistance securing employment within the food system post-graduation.



Southside Rising

BURTON STREET
COMMUNITY
PEACE GARDENS



A COMMUNITY SOLUTION TO HUNGER

PATCHWORK
· URBAN FARMS ·



Food Justice: and so much more ...

- **FEAST:** in-school cooking and gardening education at local elementary schools
- **Southside Farm:** community planning and urban agriculture micro-enterprise development
- **Neighborhood Emergency Food Plan** development in Legacy Neighborhoods
- **WNC Food Justice Planning Initiative:** organizing collective impact solutions for a resilient, sustainable, equitable food system across 18 counties and the Qualla Boundary
- **We Give A Share:** local farmers and chefs collaborate to provide free meals
- **Food Connections:** reducing food waste by redistributing restaurant and catering excess to hungry people
- **Bounty and Soul:** distributing locally grown food to farm worker communities

Food Justice in Asheville: Resources to Learn More

- City of Asheville's Reparations Resolution: [Asheville reparations resolution is designed to provide Black community access to the opportunity to build wealth - The City of Asheville \(ashevillenc.gov\)](#)
- ABFPC Food Security Reparations Coalition: [Asheville Buncombe Food Policy Council – Asheville Buncombe Food Security Reparations Coalition \(abfoodpolicy.org\)](#)
- Bountiful Cities Programs: [Bountiful Cities Project - Home](#)
- Free Outdoor Food Pantries: [Asheville Buncombe Food Policy Council – Outdoor Pantries \(abfoodpolicy.org\)](#)
- WNC Food Justice Planning Initiative: [WNC Food Justice Planning Initiative](#)

C. Nicole