

Simply Local North Carolina



Simply Local Team Roster

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Abstract

The Simply Local platform modernizes the way local communities interact and conduct business by marrying a grassroots cooperative business model with modern communication technologies. The Simply Local platform is designed to empower the locally community and combat nationwide local food issues such as food deserts, obesity, affordability, and healthy food marketing to our youth. The Simply Local business plan and interface encompasses what it means to be “local” by benefiting all stakeholders in the local community.

The Simply Local interface includes a mobile application designed to help consumers quickly locate local food, and a website designed to advocate environmental responsibility and stimulate local entrepreneurship in North Carolina. The \$50,000 emerging issues prize will be used to design and develop the interface, conduct usability research, fund the Simply Local environmental student ambassador program, and implement the network within a test group. These network test groups - made up of two local food cooperative businesses in Burlington, North Carolina, and statewide local food organization, the 10% campaign - will allow our team to monitor and modify the Simply Local platform before implementing the network statewide.

The Simply Local team is made up of Elon University interactive media graduate students equipped with skills in design and development for web and mobile interfaces, allowing for a significant decrease in overall cost of the project. Prior to this proposal, our team conducted food desert research, analyzed local food networks, and performed prototype testing of the Simply Local platform. We are now seeking funds to begin development and implementation to the test group previously discussed.

Simply Local has adopted the 10% campaign’s existing mission to redirect 10% of North Carolina’s food spending to local establishments, which would generate \$3.5 billion annually for the local economy and raise the standard of living in North Carolina.

Simply Local Video - <http://youtu.be/lbgKg0tM7rE>

The Problem

The North Carolina agriculture sector does not lack profit, a solid work force, or crop diversity. North Carolina is ranked 7th in net farm profits in the nation and its agriculture sector contributes 78 billion annually to the state's economy which makes up 17% of the states overall income. Over 52,000 farmers growing more than 80 different commodities make up 16% of North Carolina's workforce.

However, the local fresh food North Carolina produces does not always end up on the tables of North Carolina homes and in the nutritional intake of its citizens. The problem lies in distribution of healthy and affordable local foods. This issue has a number of negative ripple effects on the health of North Carolinians and hinders the state's work force and economy. This issue lives at the root of North Carolina's economical, environmental and social systems.

Food Deserts

A complete food system includes resources, production, processing, consumption and the disposal of food, which are linked together by distribution and markets. When a lack of any number of these variables is present there is a risk that the local area could become a food desert, or already is. Food deserts are defined as urban neighborhoods and rural towns without ready access to fresh, healthy, and affordable food. Instead of supermarkets and grocery stores, these communities may have no food access or are served only by fast food restaurants and convenience stores that offer few healthy, affordable food options.

Simply Local research teams conducted a study in fall 2013 examining local food deserts in 9-country region in North Carolina. Using Geographic Information Systems and ArcMap data, we found similar results as [The Support Center's recently published about North Carolina food desert data](#).¹ These reports confirm more than 171 food deserts in 57 North Carolina counties and 26% on North Carolinas don't have healthy food options within a half-mile of their community.

The USDA's Economic Research Service estimates that 23.5 million people live in food deserts. More than half of those people are low-income. The USDA also estimates that farm-level value of local food sales totaled about \$4.8 billion in 2008, or about 1.6% of the U.S. market for agricultural products. However, 12.6% of American households and 7.0% of Canadian households are food insecure (Johnson

¹ "Healthy Food Resources in North Carolina." (2013). The Support Center. Web.
<<http://www.feastdowneast.org/Healthy-Food-Resource-Guide-2013.pdf>>.

& Tadlock & Aussenberg, 2012). In low income areas the lack of access to supermarkets or grocery stores contributes to a poor diet and can lead to higher occurrence levels of diet related diseases, such as obesity, diabetes, and heart disease.

Obesity

If North Carolina doesn't address food deserts and provide more healthy local food options it will significantly affect the state's future, both economically and socially. North Carolina is the 17th most obese state in the country and reports indicate that 28% of high school students in North Carolina are obese. The Trust for America's Health estimates that by 2030, health care related costs could climb in North Carolina by 17.6%. However, Reducing the state's body mass index by 5% would save 7.5% of health care cost equally 21 billion by 2030.

The obesity epidemic is apparent across the country with 34.9% of adults, and 16.9% of children reportedly obese in America. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, medical cost for the obese are \$1,429 greater than those of normal weight, and American adults cost the United States an estimated additional \$147 billion in 2008. It's estimated that the United States economy is losing 37 billion a year due to lack of productivity caused from obesity. Eliminating food deserts and increasing distribution of local healthy food in North Carolina would have an immediate effect in reducing health cost throughout the state and long-term effects in building healthy habits in children to ensure a strong workforce in the future.

"When 1/3 kids is still on track to develop diabetes, and when diet has now surpassed smoking as the number one risk factor for diseases and death in this country, we clearly have much more work to do."

- Michelle Obama

*Food marketing and
advertising speech 2013²*

Affordability and Marketing

Local food is well known for being more expensive, and this often deters the purchase of local products. Our research confirms that local farmers and consumers have observed that local food prices were more expensive compared to prices offered by larger corporations.

North Carolina's poverty rate has steadily increased from 1998- 2012 from 13.2%. North Carolina supports more SNAP recipients than the national average with 17% of total population receiving support and the Snap program in the state has a 10% average annual participant increase of 10%. Children make up the majority of SNAP recipients and 71% of SNAP families include children. While the

² Michelle Obama on Food Marketing & Advertising to Children - Speech (2013). 16 Oct. 2013. Web. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KKm_QF5KQxs>.

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price of local food does play a significant role in the purchasing of local it is the root to the overall issue or the biggest obstacle in changing our youth's perception about food.

In 2013, the First Lady of the United States Michelle Obama delivered a speech urging food marketing and advertising to reverse the trend of promoting unhealthy foods instead of healthy foods to children. Mrs. Obama explains that while 86% of food ads are for unhealthy products, children only watch an average of one advertisement for a healthy food product in a week. These advertisements shape the way children perceive food and have a major effect on the foods they request from their parents.

Families eat out at fast-food and restaurants much more than they did 50 years ago. Today, family's spend 48% of their food dollars on fast food and at restaurants. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, children consume 25% of their daily calories at fast food and other restaurants. An average of only eleven out of every 100 food retailers have healthy food options in their restaurants or stores.

Local food systems will have to be competitive, not only in their price but also in their ability to market and change the perception of food in families and children. The food dollars spent at these fast food establishments do not benefit the state of North Carolina economically, nor do they properly nourish its citizens.

Simply Local's Approach and Rationale

It is the Simply Local Mission to raise the standard of living in North Carolina and stimulate the state's local economy by promoting and facilitating the consumption of healthy, environmentally friendly, and delicious locally-produced food. Simply Local operates in collaboration with the Center of Environmental Farming System and has adopted its 10% Campaign mission statement to redirect 10% of North Carolina's 35 billion annual food spending to local establishments. Reaching this goal would generate 3.5 billion annually for North Carolina's local economy.

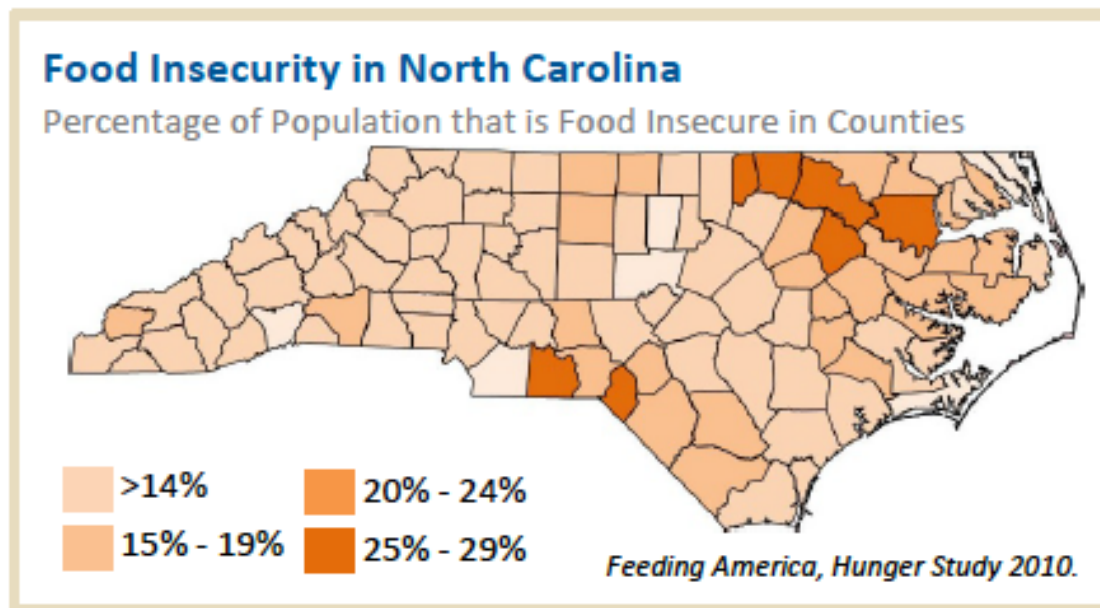
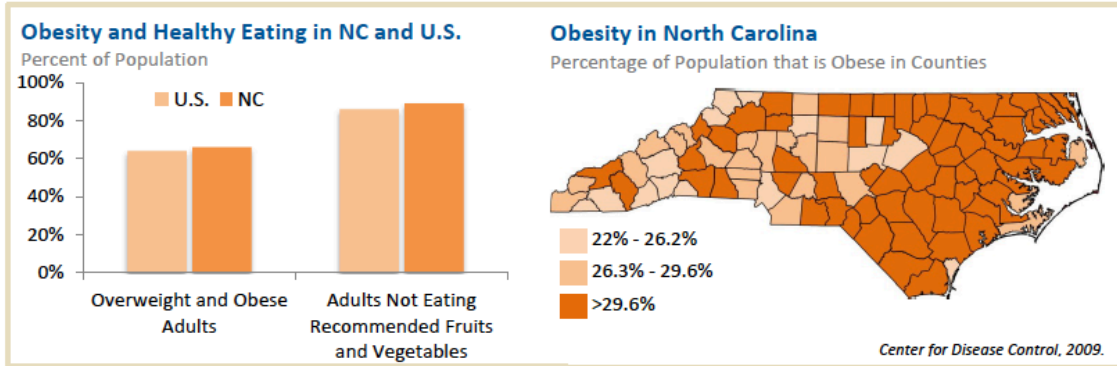
The Simply Local system modernizes and revolutionizes the way local community interacts and conducts business by marrying traditional grassroots business model with modern communication technologies. The Simply Local platform is designed to empower the locally community and combat nationwide local food issues such as food deserts, obesity, affordability, and healthy food marketing to our youth. Our business plan encompasses what it means to be "local" benefiting all stakeholders in the local community.

(skipped to appendix for online version. Interested investors may see entire proposal)

Appendix

Prior Simply Local Research –

<http://matteastman.wordpress.com/2014/04/20/environmental-research-creating-a-comprehensive-online-communication-system-for-the-piedmont-triad-local-food-community/>



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Table 3. Nutritional Quality of Children's Meals at the Top 50 U.S. Restaurant Chains (N=34)

Restaurant Chain	Participates in Kids LiveWell Program	Number of Meal Combos	Meets Standards		Notes
			Expert (%)	Kids LiveWell (%)	
Buf Wild Wings		16	0	0	Nut info for only some meals available
Carl's Jr		12	0	0	Every meal comes with fries
Chipotle		349	0	0	All meal comes with chips & < 600 cal
Dairy Queen		108	0	0	All meals exceed cal and sodium limits
Hardee's		9	0	0	Fries is only side item option
McDonald's		12	0	0	All meals come with fries (and apple slices); belongs to CFBAI
Panda Express		44	0	0	Every meal comes with cookie; only soft drinks
Perkins		133	0	0	Every meal comes with cookie
Popeye's		64	0	0	Onion rings contain 1370 mg of sodium
Whataburger		32	0	3	All meals exceeded sodium limit
Ruby Tuesday		126	0	4	No info on saturated fats
Chili's	✓	363	0	8	11 fruit or veg; 3 entrees > 1000 mg sodium
Red Robin		398	0	9	Fruit/veg sides
Quizno's		10	0	10	Every meal comes with chips and cookie
T.G.I. Friday's		90	0	12	3 entrees >1000 mg sodium
KFC		130	0	16	Every meal comes with light string cheese
Panera		6	0	16	All meals come with yogurt
P. F. Chang's		22	0	27	Entrees only (sides & bev sold separately)
Taco Bell		4	0	50	Fruit punch is only beverage option
Olive Garden		780	1	11	Whole wheat pasta option; offer fruit or vegetable as default side option
Outback Stkhs	✓	57	3	10	9 in 10 meals exceed sat fat limit
Jack in the Box		72	4	4	2% milk only milk option
Applebee's	✓	119	4	8	Offers 1% & 2% milk
Sonic	✓	45	4	2	Offers slushies separately
Wendy's		40	5	5	>50% options too high in sodium and/or sat fat
Longhorn Stkhs		32	6	25	Every meal comes with fruit or veg
Bob Evans	✓	88	10	15	No beverages with meals
Denny's	✓	110	13	14	No beverages with meals
Chick-fil-A	✓	72	18	8	Many fried chicken options
Arby's	✓	48	19	19	Offers bottled water as option
Burger King	✓	15	20	20	Belongs to CFBAI
Red Lobster		64	28	42	No trans fat information; offer fruit or vegetable as default side option
IHOP	✓	16	31	25	Meals do not include beverages
Subway		8	100	100	Only apples, apple juice & low-fat milk, no soft drinks with children's meals
Total		3,494	3	9	

Statement of Participation

Project Director: Matthew Eastman

I, **Matthew Eastman**, acknowledge my participation in the Simply Local grant proposal submitted to the **SECU Immerging Issues Institution** on **December 1, 2014**. I have read and reviewed the documents and its content entirely, and I am choosing to participate under my own will.

I understand my role as Project Director to oversee and lead all operations associated with the Simply Local grant proposal including the tracking and disbursements of funds, the monitoring of the overall development of the Simply Local platform, and ensuring fluidity in the Simply Local Business and collaboration with local partners.

If you have any questions about my role as Project Director or my willingness to participate please don't hesitate to contact me.

Thank you for your time,

Sincerely,

Matthew Eastman

Project Director:

Name: Matthew Eastman

Title: Interactive Media Masters Candidate

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Email: meastman@elon.edu

Statement of Participation

Project Manager: Jon Bucec

I, **Jon Bucec**, acknowledge my participation in the Simply Local grant proposal submitted to the **SECU Immerging Issues Institution** on **December 1, 2014**. I have read and reviewed the documents and its content entirely, and I am choosing to participate under my own will.

I understand my role as Project Manager to manage the development and implementation of the Simply Local platform. I will assist the Project Manager in carrying out Simply Local Objectives as stated in the Simply Local Objective timeline in the budget section of the IEI proposal.

If you have any questions about my role as Project Manager or my willingness to participate please don't hesitate to contact me.

Thank you for your time,

Sincerely,

Jon Bucec

Project Manager:

Name: Jon Bucec

Title: Interactive Media Masters Candidate

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