**Analysis of Data to Determine Food Access Tiers**

Data analyzed included: Montachusett CHA 2015, Worcester County Food Bank data, USDA food maps, Dept. of Labor unemployment statistics, MASSCHIP Health Status indicators

Based on USDA Economic Research Serviced and the American community survey, Indicators used to determine tiers were based on population density, income, unemployment rates, poverty rates, and level of education (ers.usda.gov, 2012). Not included in tier determination were race/ethnicity and vehicle ownership status

**Tier One Cities and Towns**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| City/Town | Population (2010 census) | Unemployment rates (%) (2015) | Poverty rate ≤ 100 fpl (%) (2013) | Household income (2013) | Level of Education no HS diploma (%) (2014) |
| Athol -R | 11,584 | 6.3 | 15.8 | 47,122 | 15.3 |
| Clinton- NR | 13,606 | 5.9 | 9.4 | 60,000 | 9.5 |
| Fitchburg -NR | 40,398 | 6.9 | 15.6 | 46,600 | 17.3 |
| Gardner - NR | 20,200 | 7.0 | 14.4 | 46,500 | 15.9 |
| Leominster - NR | 40,759 | 5.8 | 10.2 | 59,000 | 13.2 |
| Winchendon - R | 10,300 | 5.5 | 10 | 58,000 | 12.9 |

R=rural; NR=Non rural

All five cities have children under 18 living below 100% FPL by 10% or more (Fitchburg 32%)

The school districts serving the larger cities/towns in the Study Area reported higher percentages of students receiving free lunches than the State. Fitchburg had the highest percent of students receiving free lunches at 70.3% (up from 49% in 2008-2009), followed by Gardner at 51.4% (up from 32% in 2008-2009), Leominster at 41% (up from 28% in 2008-2009), and Clinton at 39.5% (up from 31% in 2008-2009).

**Tier Two Cities and Towns**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| City/Town | Population (2010 census) | Unemployment rates (%) (2015) | Poverty rate ≤ 100 fpl (%) (2013) | Household income (2013) | Level of Education no HS diploma (%) (2014) |
| Ashburnham -R | 6,081  | 4.7 | 7 | 72,525 | 10.1 |
| Ayer - NR | 7,472  | 5.6 | 10.8 | 42,126 | 9.9 |
| Barre -R | 5,398 | 4.8 | 3.4 | 30,915 | 1.6 |
| Orange -R | 7,518 | 8.5 | 10.5 | 38,565 | 10.7 |
| Templeton -R | 8,013  | 4.9 | 13 | 66,588 | 20.6 |
| Westminster -R | 7,277  | 4.1 | 3.1 | 79,324 | 11.6 |

R=rural; NR=Non rural

The town of Shirley has high unemployment and poverty rates, and is one of the most diverse towns in our region. Further investigation as to how data is obtained would be beneficial secondary to MCI location.