

# Fulton Fresh: Addressing Food Insecurity, Nutrition, and STEM Education during a Pandemic

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## Summary

UGA Extension Fulton County's Fulton Fresh program is a multigenerational nutrition education program which integrates youth, agriculture, and family and consumer science programming in an urban community. To meet the additional needs of Fulton County youth, Fulton County 4-H launched the Fulton Fresh Kids' Market in the summer of 2020 to provide healthy living and STEM educational programs coupled with access to fresh fruit to youth in K-12<sup>th</sup> grade.

## Fulton Fresh Kid's Market Program Components

- STEM and healthy living activity kits
- 3-4lbs bags of fresh produce
- Fulton Fresh Kitchen Science videos
- Fulton Fresh Recipe videos
- Agricultural Farm Tour videos

## Situation

Access to healthy, fresh food is an ongoing challenge for some Fulton County residents, and this problem has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2015, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) identified 34 low food access areas within Fulton County, Georgia. Living in a low food access area may lead to a higher consumption of foods higher in fat, sugar, and salt and a decrease in consumption of fruit and vegetables. A diet low in fruit and vegetable consumption is associated with an increased risk of developing chronic diseases.

## Response

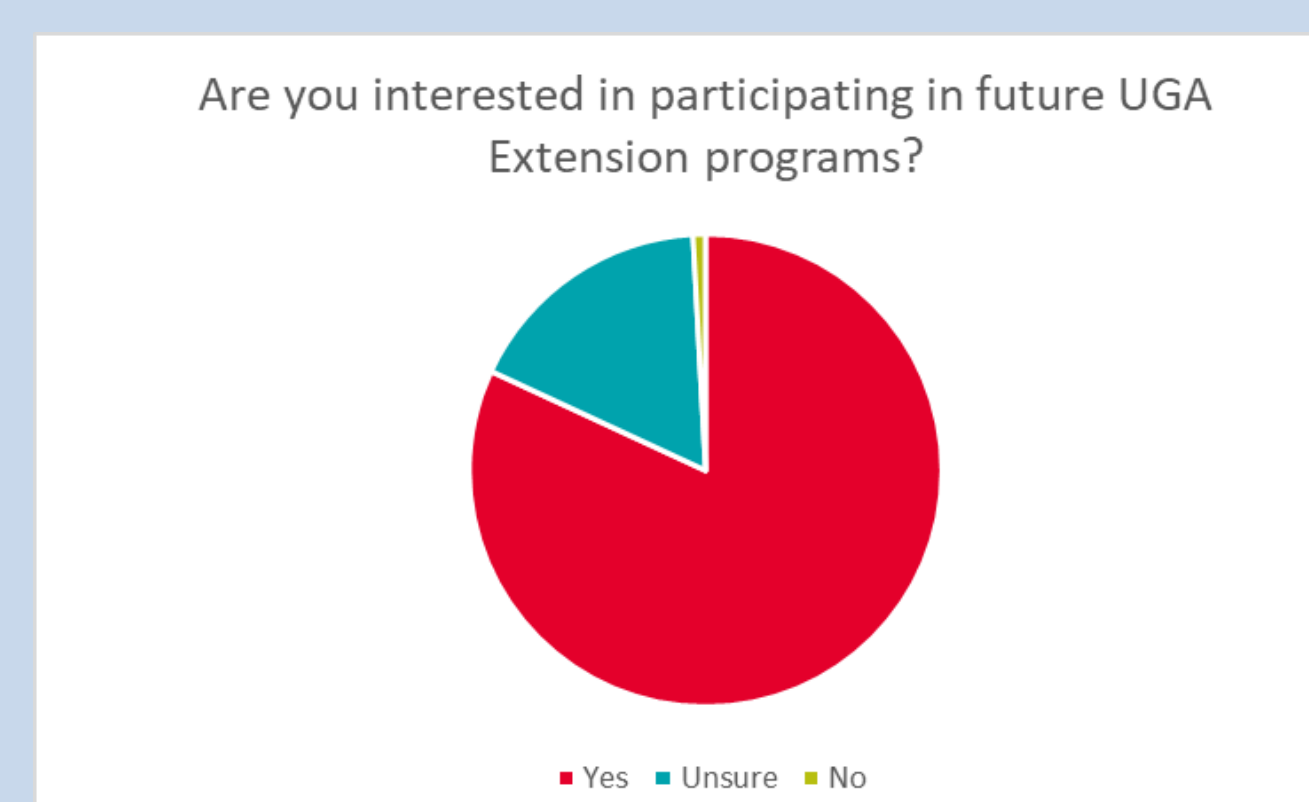
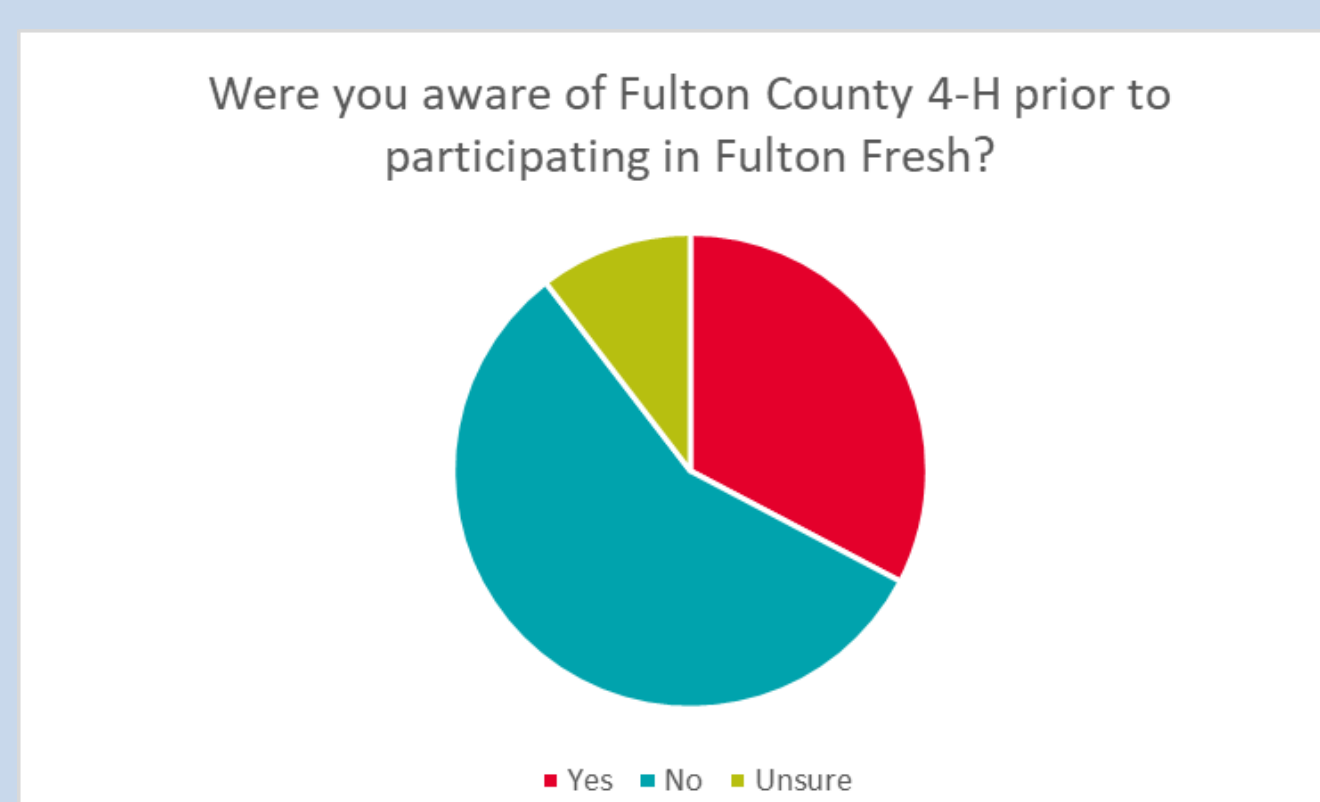
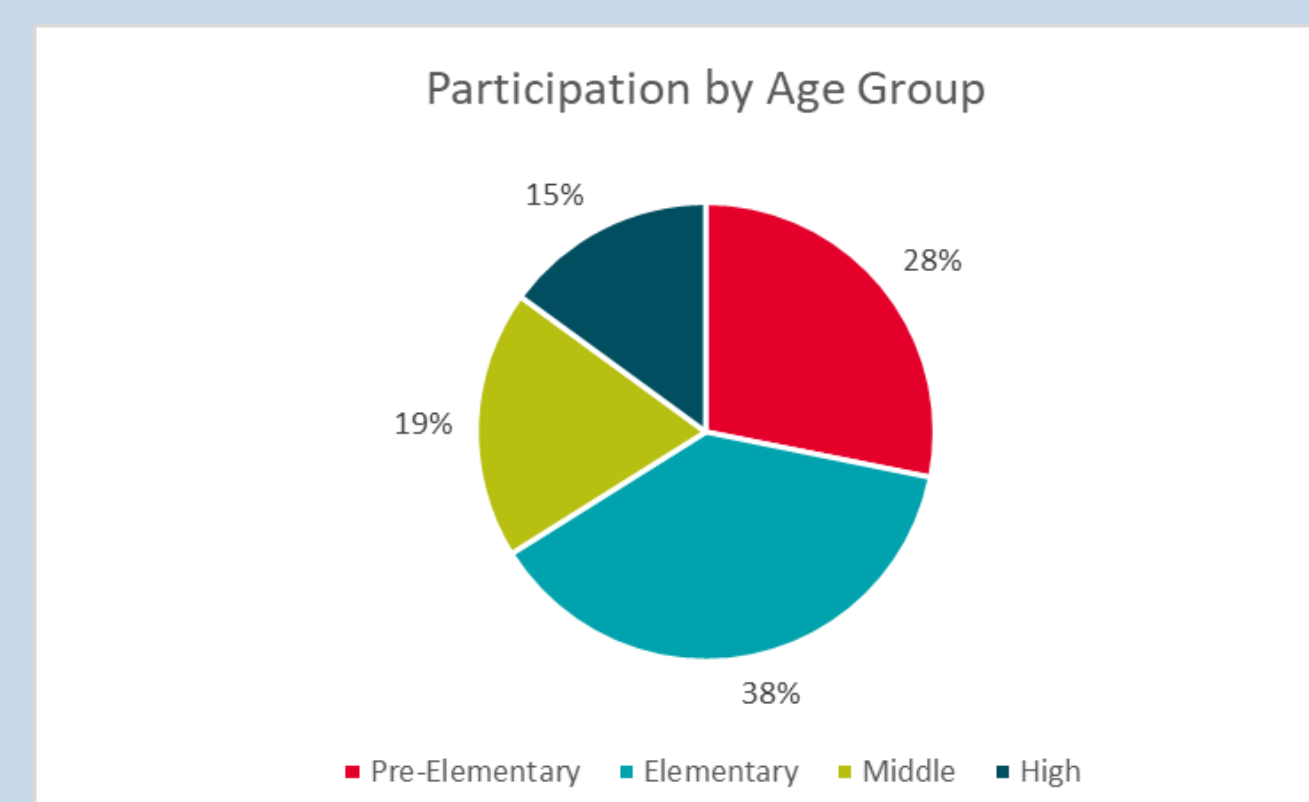
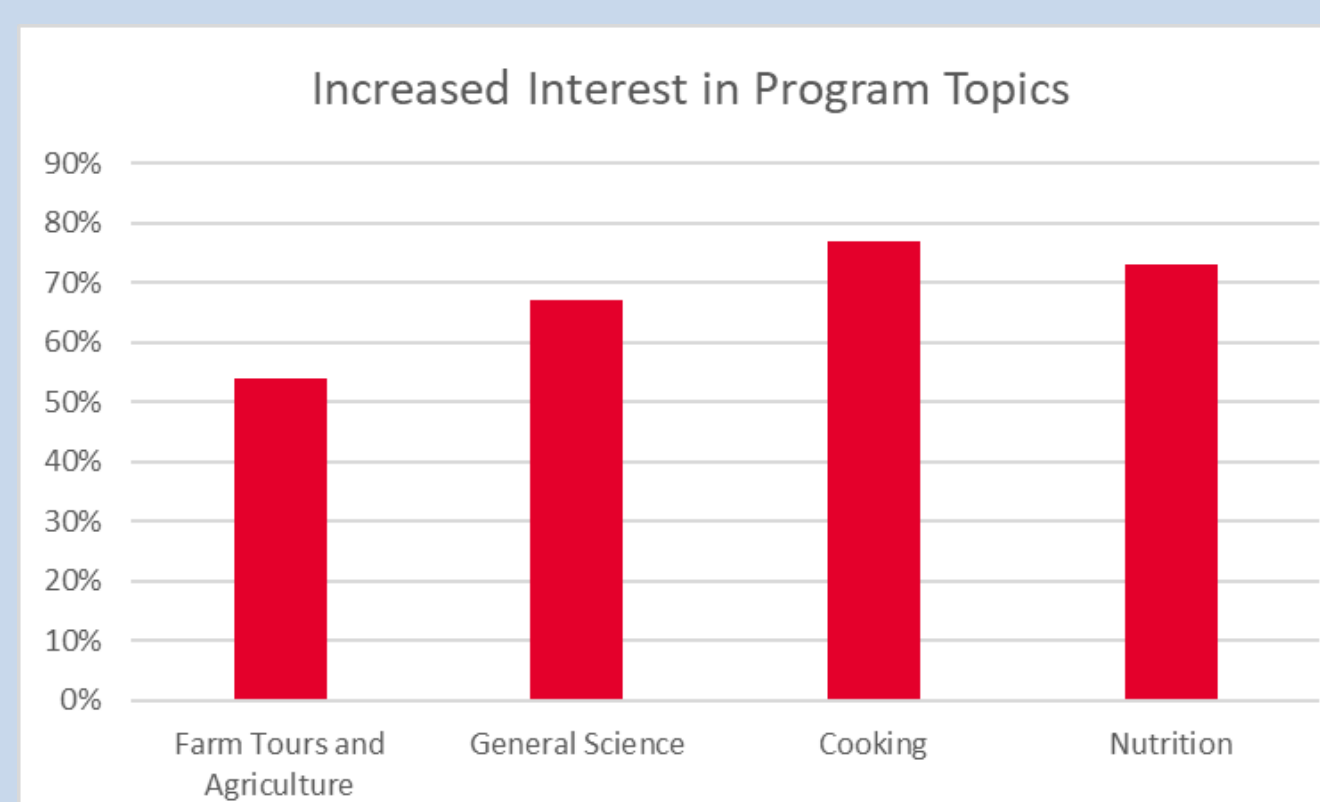
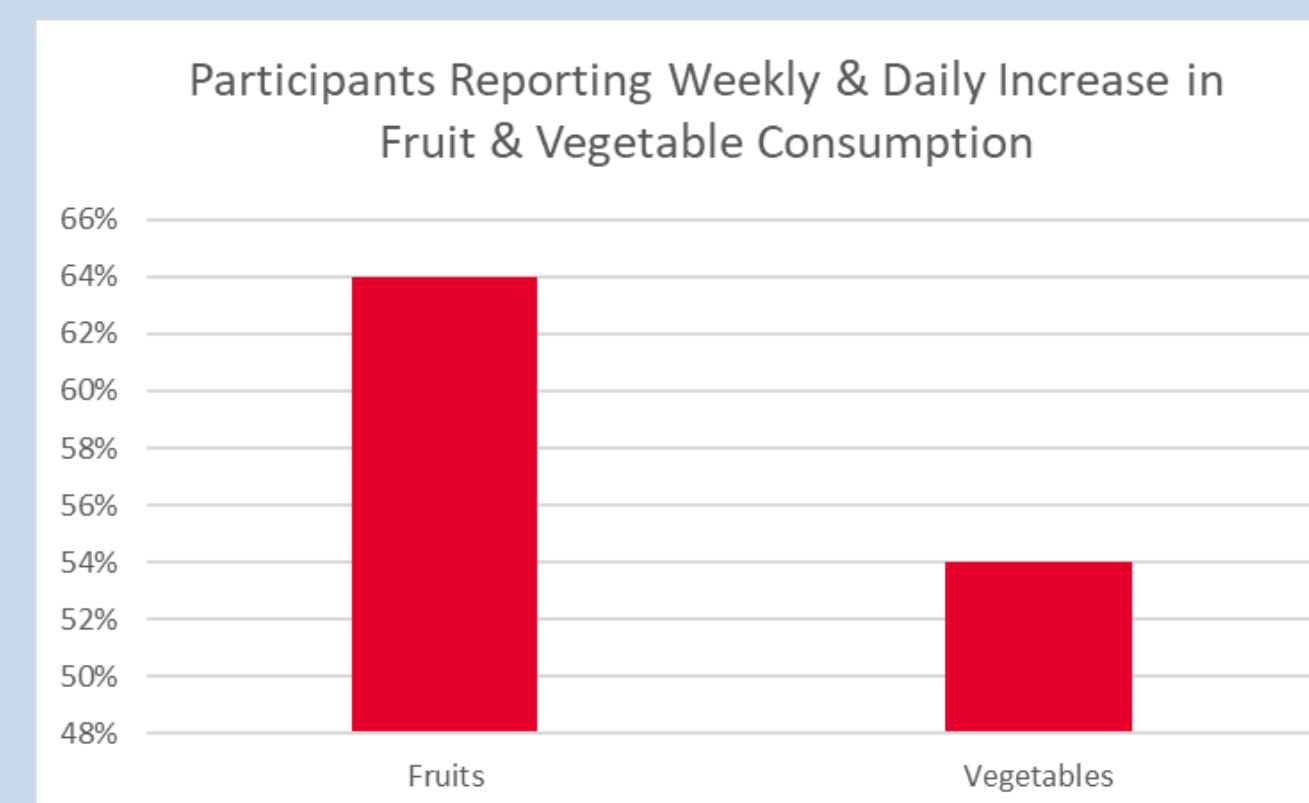
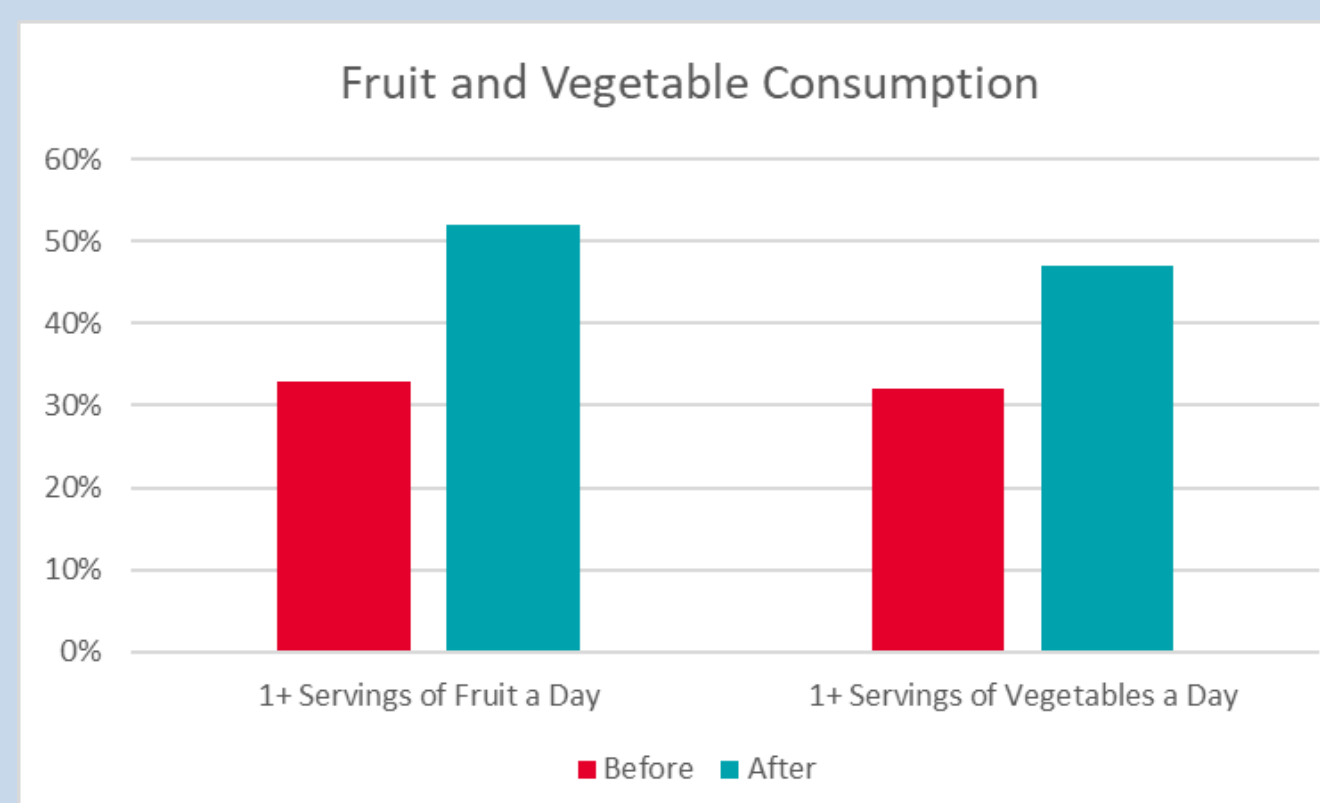
The Fulton Fresh Kids' Market consisted of five weeks of educational programming. Each week included three educational videos – one healthy recipe, one science experiment, and one farm tour – each focused around a highlighted produce item, which were shared on social media platforms. Each participating youth received a three to four pound bag of fresh produce and an activity kit. Activity kits included recipe cards, instructions for a science experiment, supplies for the science experiment, a digital Fulton County Library resource sheet, and healthy living activity sheets from USDA. The program included two five-week program sessions for the summer of 2020 (for a total of 10 weeks of STEM and healthy living programming). The Fulton Fresh Kids' Market distributed **9,597 pounds of fresh in-season produce** and **2,650 STEM and healthy living activity kits** to youth and reached approximately **1,500 households** in **40 different zip codes**.

## Evaluation and Results

A program evaluation was distributed to program participants via text message using Qualtrics software. A total of 648 participants completed the evaluation questionnaire. Evaluation results suggest that participation in the Fulton Fresh Kids' Market led to increased consumption of fruits and vegetables and interest in STEM and agricultural activities.

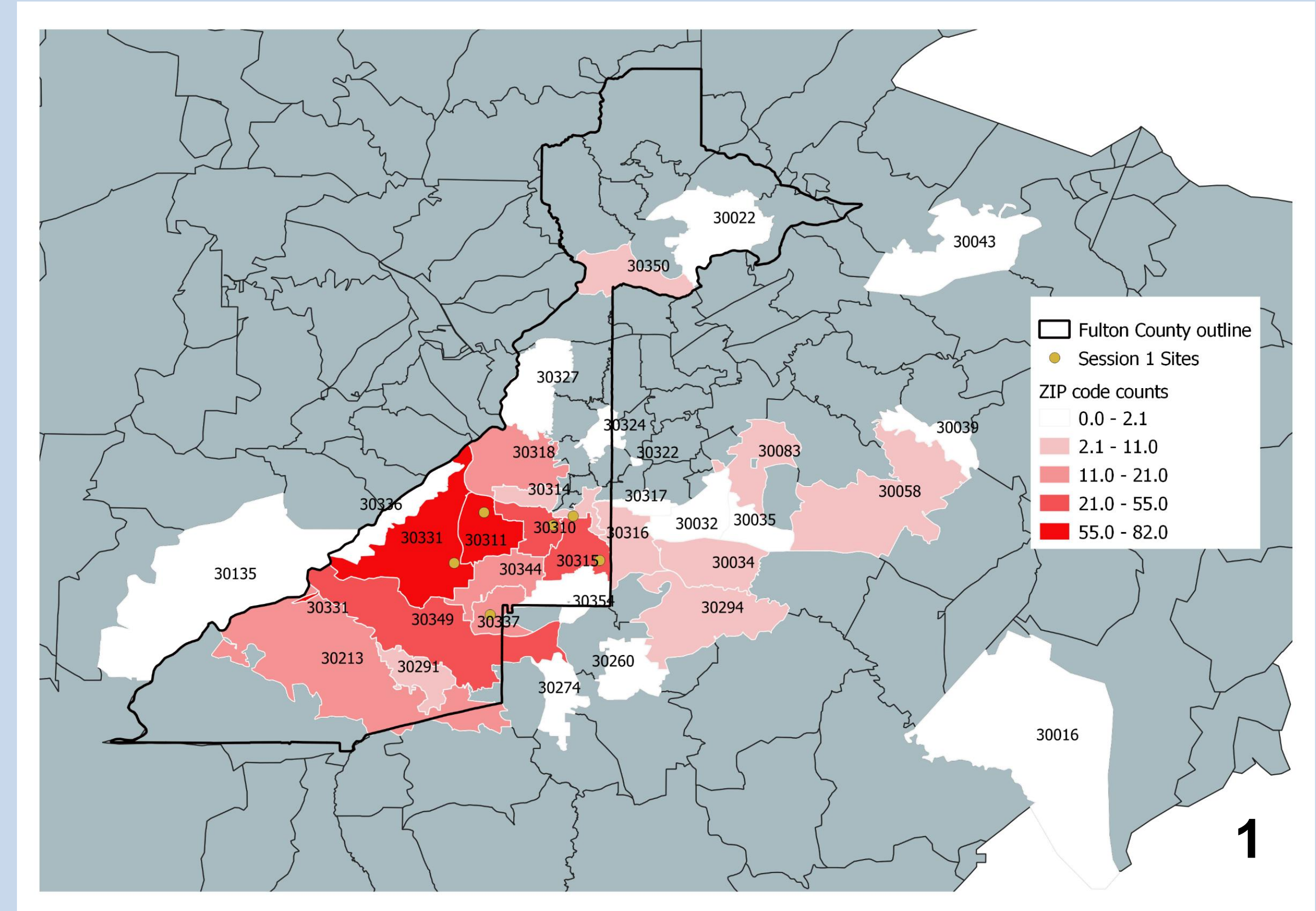
- **After** participating in the market, daily fruit consumption increased by 19% and daily vegetable consumption increased by 15%
- 86% percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their child was more willing to try new foods or recipes after participating in the Fulton Fresh Kids' Market.

*"My family loved the fruits and vegetables. This workshop definitely helped change their eating habits."*

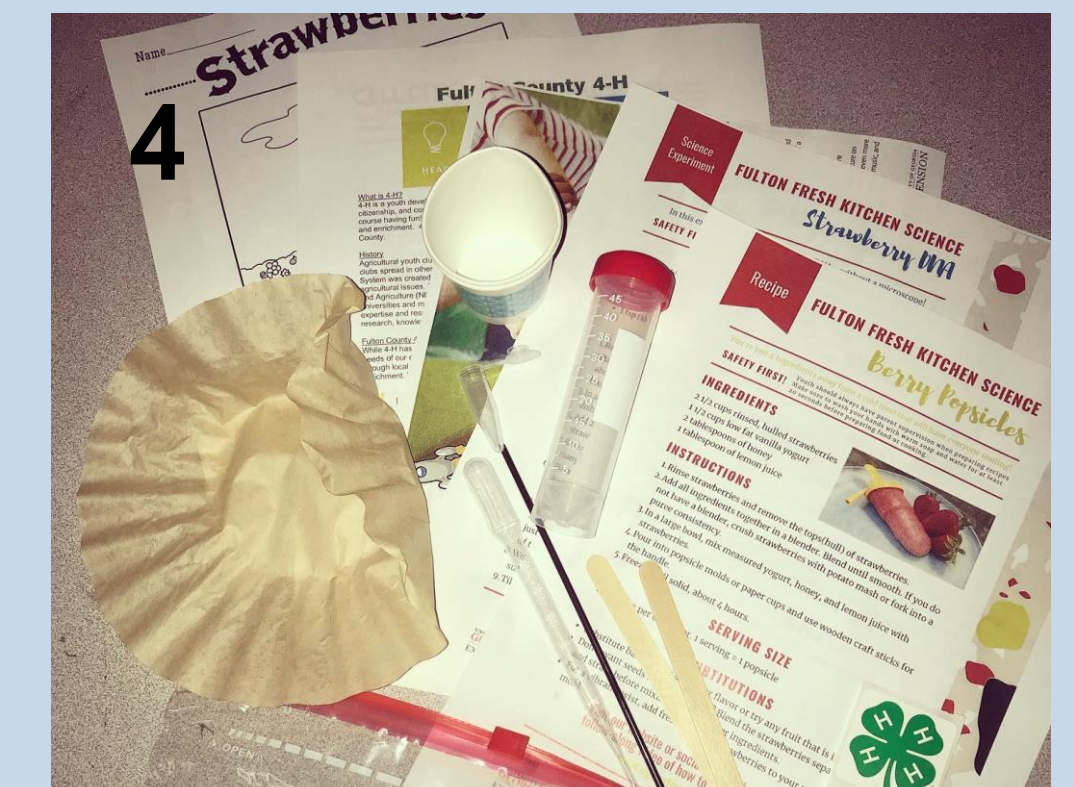


*The program was great for my 13-year-old. As a result of the activities, she started growing herbs and vegetables. Some items were sprouted from seeds. She really enjoyed learning from the digital library resources.*

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1. Map of zip codes served by the Fulton Fresh Kids' Market
2. Program kit recipe
3. Cars line up to receive bags and kits
4. Kit contents including handouts and activity supplies
5. Staff members hand out produce bags and kits
6. Virtual farm tour shared on social media
7. Staff members pack produce into bags



## Impact and Future Implications

The Fulton Fresh Kid's Market Program not only increased consumption of fruits and vegetables along with interest and involvement in STEM and agricultural activities, but the programming has increased awareness of Fulton County Extension in the local community. After participating in the program, 82% of respondents indicated that they would participate in UGA Extension Fulton County and Fulton County 4-H programs in the future. The Fulton Fresh Kid's Market was a proven success and will continue to be implemented during the summer to address food insecurity and to meet the need of STEM education in Fulton county's urban communities.