North Hartford Health Report: Data to Action

A report by the Community Action Task Force (CATF), UConn Health Equity Lab for the People, and DataHaven

June 2025

HEALTHY HARTFORD HUB

COMMUNITY ACTION TASK FORCE

UCONN COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, HEALTH AND NATURAL RESOURCES — ALLIED HEALTH SCIENCES

HEALTH EQUITY LAB for the PEOPLE

DataHaven

About the CATF

The Healthy Hartford Hub Community Action Task Force (CATF) advocates for equitable, mixed-use development in North Hartford's Arrowhead Gateway, the area surrounding the intersection of Main Street and Albany Avenue, including the "Arrowhead block," just north of Hartford's downtown. The CATF connects residents with decision-makers to ensure community voices shape local development and policy.

The Healthy Hartford Hub (HHH) is a place-based initiative led by the CATF, focused on transforming the Arrowhead Gateway into a hub for health, food access, economic opportunity, and community wellness.

While HHH centers on the Arrowhead Gateway, CATF's impact spans Hartford. As a coalition of residents and partners, we mobilize resources and influence policy to improve outcomes in underserved neighborhoods. We believe empowered residents are essential to building a healthier, more just, and thriving city.

About this document

This report supports advocacy for health equity in North Hartford. It begins with a demographic overview, followed by findings aligned with the CATF's four pillars: expanding access to healthy food options via the establishment of a full-service grocery store, supporting locally owned small business growth, attracting health-promoting services, and increasing the number of owner-occupied and rental housing options. Grounded in community input and informed by data on health disparities in North Hartford, the CATF's four pillars reflect the interconnected drivers of health equity in the region.

Understanding the Geography and Demographics of North Hartford

Study Area[1]

This map shows the neighborhoods of Hartford and West Hartford. In this report, community conditions in North Hartford are compared to those in the entire city of Hartford, the town of West Hartford, and/or to the State of Connecticut. The CATF currently focuses on North Hartford, which is defined here as the **Northeast**, **Upper Albany**, and **Clay Arsenal** neighborhoods on the north side of the city. For orientation purposes, the Arrowhead Block, at the intersection of Main Street, Albany Avenue, and High Street, is indicated with a star.
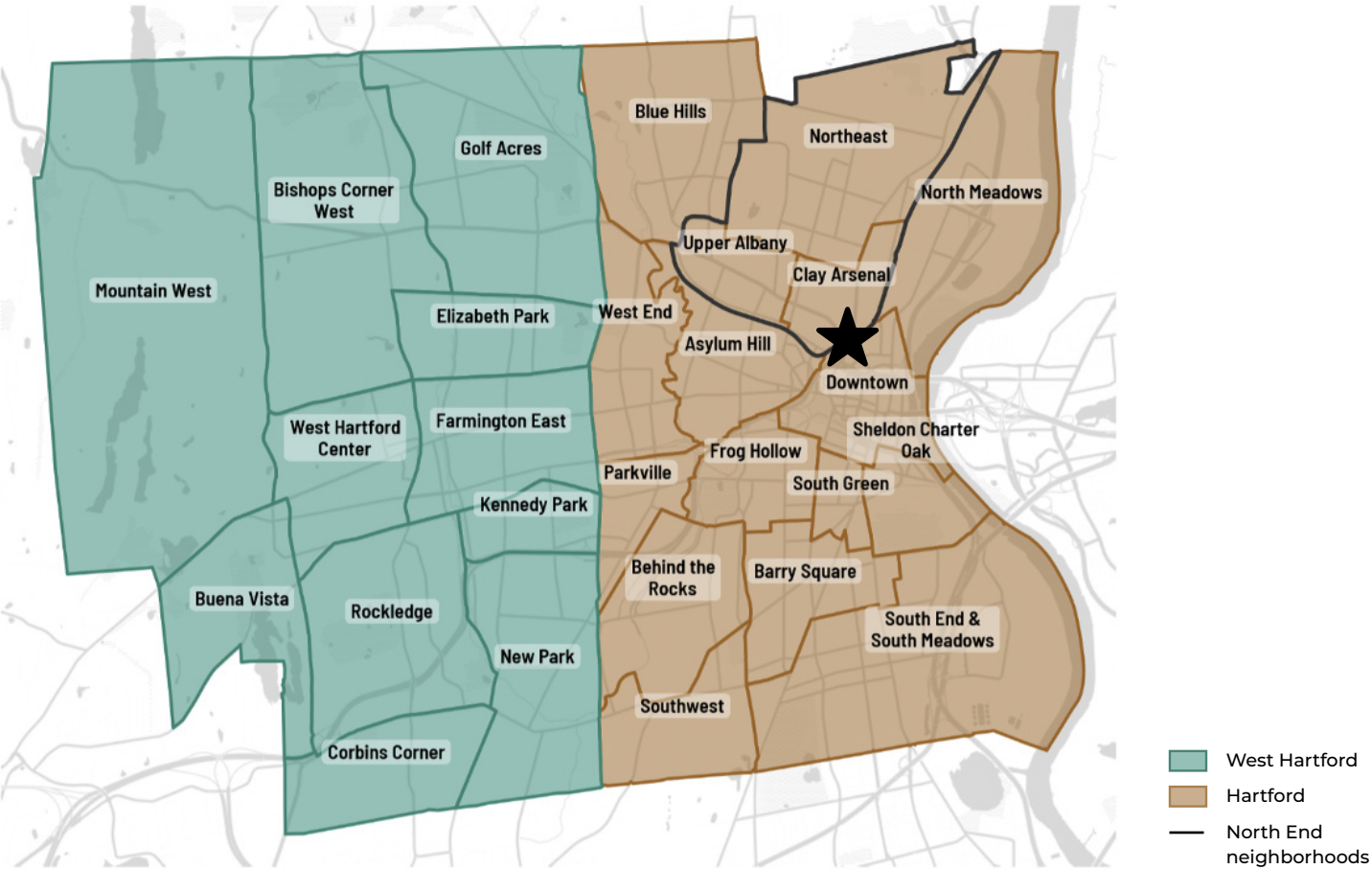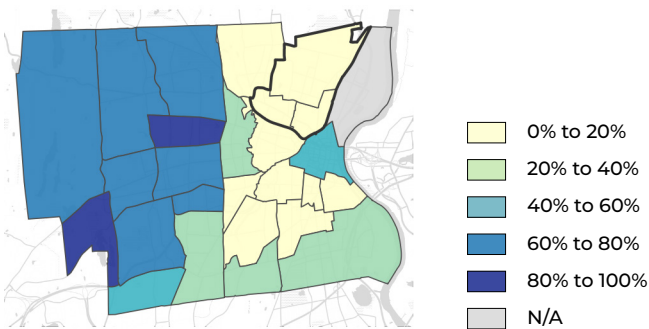

[1] Map source: DataHaven neighborhood profiles for Hartford and West Hartford. Basemap © Stadia Maps © Stamen Design © OpenMapTiles © OpenStreetMap contributors.
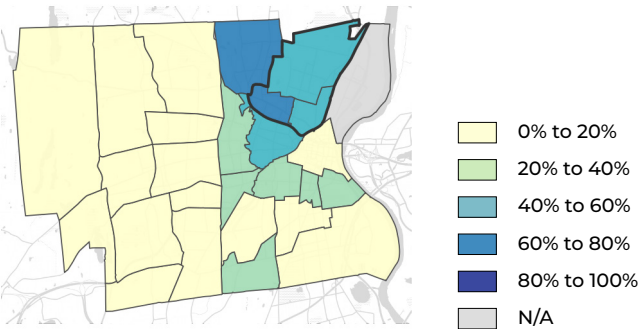
Fig 02

Demographics of the Study Area[2]

These maps display the demographics of the study area. North Hartford is predominantly Black, and has a substantial Latino population. For example, Upper Albany is 71 percent Black, and Northeast is just under 60 percent Black (see Appendix B). In West Hartford overall, 69 percent of residents are Non-Hispanic White. In some neighborhoods within West Hartford, such as Elizabeth Park and Buena Vista, more than 80 percent of residents are Non-Hispanic White.
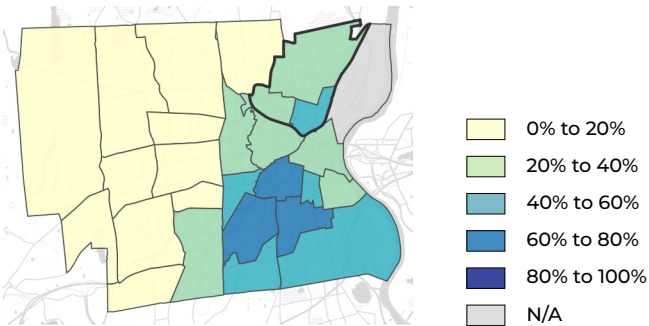
WHITE POPULATION
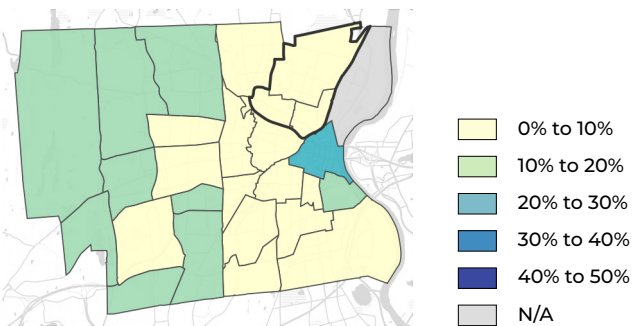
0% to 20%
20% to 40%
40% to 60%
60% to 80%
80% to 100%
N/A

BLACK POPULATION

0% to 20%
20% to 40%
40% to 60%
60% to 80%
80% to 100%
N/A

LATINO POPULATION

0% to 20%
20% to 40%
40% to 60%
60% to 80%
80% to 100%
N/A

OTHER RACE POPULATION

0% to 10%
10% to 20%
20% to 30%
30% to 40%
40% to 50%
N/A

CATF Pillar 1:
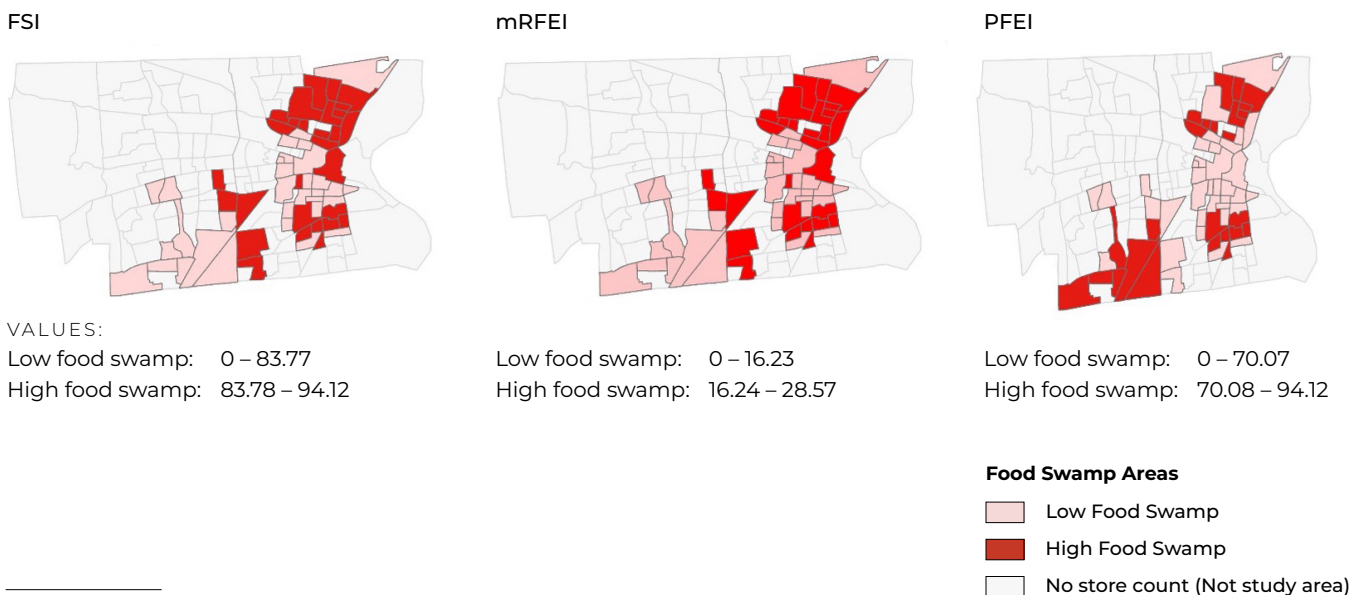# Bringing in a full-service grocery store

1

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

Establishing a full-service grocery store that's easy to get to for all North Hartford residents is vital for improving access to healthy and affordable food options. This pillar addresses food swamps, and aims to ensure that all community members have convenient access to a diverse range of food products that meet their nutritional needs. Based on several independent market studies conducted between 2017 and 2024, the Arrowhead Gateway was determined to be the best location for a sustainable full-service supermarket accessible for North Hartford residents. A local grocery store not only provides essential services but also acts as a community hub, enhancing social interactions and community cohesion. North Hartford residents face a severe lack of healthy food options, with much of the area considered to be a food swamp, that is, an area with too many unhealthy food outlets compared to healthier food options. For example:

- The DataHaven Community Wellbeing Survey finds that only 34 percent of adults in North Hartford believe there is access to affordable, fresh produce in the area, compared to 45 percent in Hartford citywide, and 71 percent in Connecticut as a whole (see Appendix A). Related data on food insecurity, transportation barriers, and other issues are shown in Appendix A.

- **Figure 3** is a map of different food swamp measures within the study area. These describe the food environment in ways that relate to food access and community health. The maps show that North Hartford has particularly high food swamp scores.

Fig 03

Food Swamp Areas by Measure in Hartford and West Hartford[3]

FSI

mRFEI

PFEI

VALUES:
Low food swamp: 0 – 83.77
High food swamp: 83.78 – 94.12

Low food swamp: 0 – 16.23
High food swamp: 16.24 – 28.57

Low food swamp: 0 – 70.07
High food swamp: 70.08 – 94.12

Food Swamp Areas

Low Food Swamp

High Food Swamp

No store count (Not study area)

[3] Map source: UConn Health Equity Lab for the People.

CATF Pillar 2:
Attracting health promoting services
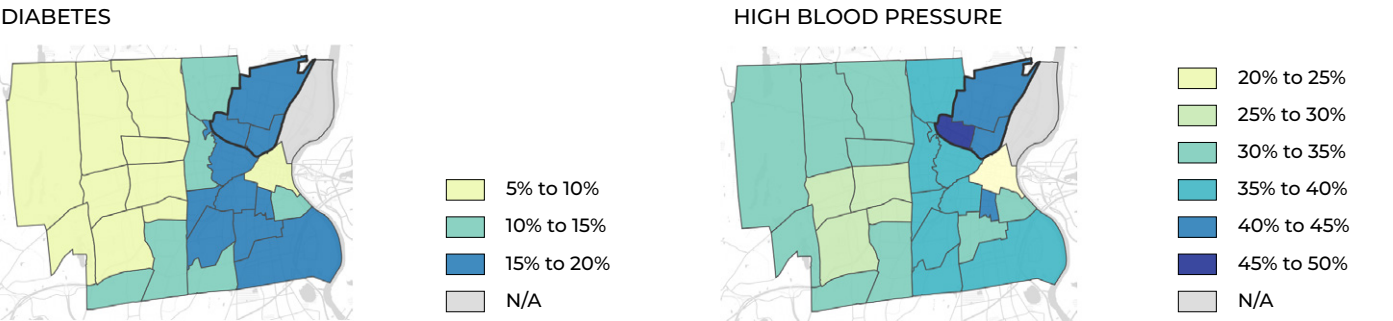
WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

This pillar focuses on increasing awareness and utilization of available community services. By effectively promoting services such as healthcare, education, and social support, the CATF aims to improve overall community welfare. Ensuring that residents are well-informed and can access these services is crucial for enhancing quality of life and supporting vulnerable populations.

Affordable and accessible health services are important for North Hartford, especially given the area's status as a food swamp. Food swamps are associated with disparities in obesity[4], food quality, exposure to unhealthy food marketing and salty snacks[5], diabetes-related hospitalizations[6], neighborhood blight[7], and deaths from breast cancer[8]. For example:

- **Figure 4** shows high rates of diabetes and high blood pressure in North Hartford. The diabetes rate in the Clay Arsenal neighborhood is 20 percent, compared to 9 percent in Connecticut overall, and the hypertension rate in the Upper Albany neighborhood is 45 percent, compared to 30 percent in Connecticut overall (Appendix B).

- The annualized, age-adjusted rate of hospital encounters for uncontrolled diabetes was 253 per 10,000 Hartford residents from 2018 through 2021, which was 2.5 times higher than the rate in the Greater Hartford region overall.[9]

Fig 04

Diabetes and High Blood Pressure in Hartford and West Hartford[10]

DIABETES

- 5% to 10%
- 10% to 15%
- 15% to 20%
- N/A

HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

- 20% to 25%
- 25% to 30%
- 30% to 35%
- 35% to 40%
- 40% to 45%
- 45% to 50%
- N/A

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[4] Cooksey-Stowers, K., Schwartz, M. B., & Brownell, K. D. (2017). Food swamps predict obesity rates better than food deserts in the United States. International journal of environmental research and public health, 14(11), 1366.

[5] Cooksey Stowers, K., Jiang, Q., Atoloye, A. T., Lucan, S., & Gans, K. (2020). Racial differences in perceived food swamp and food desert exposure and disparities in self-reported dietary habits. International journal of environmental research and public health, 17(19), 7143.

[6] Phillips, A. Z., & Rodriguez, H. P. (2020). US county "food swamp" severity and hospitalization rates among adults with diabetes: A nonlinear relationship. Social Science & Medicine, 249, 112858.

[7] Mui V, Gittelsohn J, Jones-Smith JC. Longitudinal Associations between Change in Neighborhood Social Disorder and Change in Food Swamps in an Urban Setting. J Urban Health. 2017 Feb;94(1):75-86. doi: 10.1007/sll524-016-0107-0. PMID: 28074429; PMCID: PMC5359167.

[8] Living in a Food Swamp Tied to High Breast Cancer Mortality - Medscape - December 11, 2023.

[9] DataHaven (2023). Greater Hartford Community Wellbeing Index 2023. Table 7G, Comparative Hospital Encounter Rates.

[10] Map source: DataHaven analysis of CDC PLACES data, 2023. Basemaps © Stadia Maps © Stamen Design © OpenMapTiles © OpenStreetMap contributors.

CATF Pillar 3:
Improving small business development

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

Supporting small locally owned businesses is essential for economic development and sustainability in the Arrowhead Gateway area and adjacent North Hartford neighborhoods. This pillar aims to foster a thriving local economy by providing support through resources, networking opportunities, and possibly financial assistance with a focus on health-focused businesses. Prioritizing these types of businesses enhances community health and wellness, making the Arrowhead Gateway area a model for healthy urban living. Encouraging entrepreneurship and local business ventures not only generates employment but also increases economic opportunity for North Hartford households. This strategic focus is aimed at creating a community that values and actively promotes the health of its residents. Investments in small business development are needed to help address the barriers to job access among residents of North Hartford. For example:

- Over 60 percent of North Hartford residents live in low-income households, compared to 51 percent in the City of Hartford as a whole, and 13 percent in West Hartford (Appendix B).

- The DataHaven Community Wellbeing Survey finds that 24 percent of adults in North Hartford say that residents in their area have good or excellent access to employment, compared to 52 percent of Connecticut adults (Appendix A).

Figure 5 shows that most neighborhoods within Hartford and West Hartford have moderate scores on a general measure of racial/ethnic diversity, indicating that multiple racial/ethnic groups live in each neighborhood. However, the neighborhoods have very different scores on a measure of income inequality. The low scores in North Hartford indicate that families with low incomes are extremely concentrated in that area. Meanwhile, families with high incomes are extremely concentrated in most of West Hartford. Although many Hartford neighborhoods have low scores on the income inequality measure, the neighborhoods of North Hartford have the lowest scores in the city. These differences are partly the result of housing policies and racial covenants that have excluded Black and low-income residents from West Hartford and many other areas.[11]
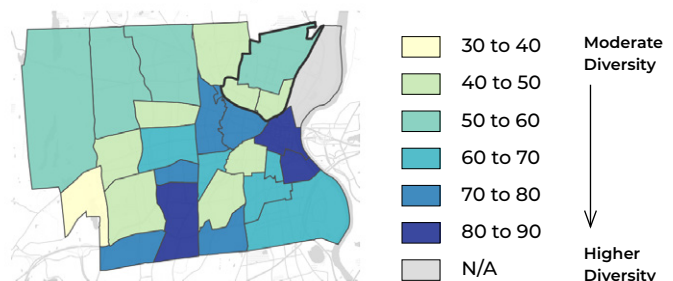
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[11] DataHaven (2019). Greater Hartford Community Wellbeing Index 2019. Page 32.

[12] Map source: DataHaven analysis of U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2022 5-year estimates via the City Health Dashboard (cityhealthdashboard.com). Basemaps © Stadia Maps © Stamen Design © OpenMapTiles © OpenStreetMap contributors.
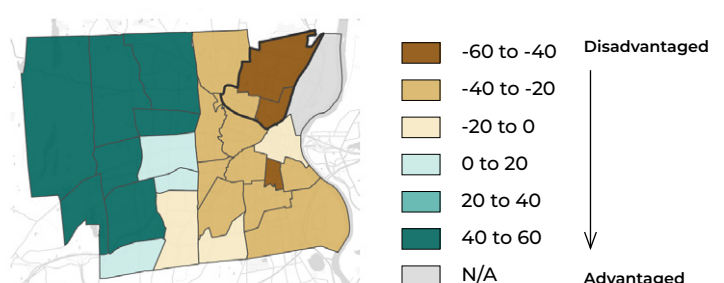
Fig 05

Income Inequality and Racial/Ethnic Diversity in the Study Area[12]

RACIAL/ETHNIC DIVERSITY INDEX (0-100) SCORE

30 to 40	Moderate Diversity
40 to 50	
50 to 60	
60 to 70	
70 to 80	
80 to 90	
N/A	Higher Diversity

INCOME INEQUALITY INDEX (0-100) SCORE

-60 to -40	Disadvantaged
-40 to -20	
-20 to 0	
0 to 20	
20 to 40	
40 to 60	
N/A	Advantaged

CATF Pillar 4:
Increasing the number of owner occupied homes

4

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

Providing both owner-occupied and rental housing options ensures diverse housing solutions that cater to different needs within the community. This pillar is crucial for stability and growth, offering residents the opportunity to invest in their community while also ensuring accessible housing options for all socioeconomic groups. Promoting sustainable and affordable housing contributes to the long-term health and vibrancy of the area.

Figure 6 shows that housing is an overwhelming need in North Hartford. For example:

- Homeownership rates in North Hartford are very low. In Clay Arsenal, for example, only 9 percent of households own their homes, while in the Elizabeth Park neighborhood of West Hartford, the homeownership rate is 94 percent (Appendix B).

- Over 60 percent of households in some neighborhoods of North Hartford are considered cost burdened, compared to under 30 percent in most of West Hartford (Appendix B). The housing cost burden rate is defined as the percent of households that pay more than 30 percent of their income towards housing costs.

- The DataHaven Community Wellbeing Survey finds that 25 percent of adults in North Hartford ran out of money to pay for housing from 2015 through 2024, compared to 17 percent in the City of Hartford as a whole, and 10 percent in Connecticut (Appendix A).

- The DataHaven Community Wellbeing Survey finds that 34 percent of adults in North Hartford feel safe walking in their neighborhood at night, compared to 44 percent in the City of Hartford as a whole, and 69 percent in Connecticut (Appendix A).

- Average rents in the Hartford area rose from $1,300 in 2018 to $1,700 in 2022[13]. Statewide, housing insecurity rates rose from 6 percent in 2015 to 12 percent in 2024, and from 12 percent to 19 percent within the City of Hartford during that time period[14].
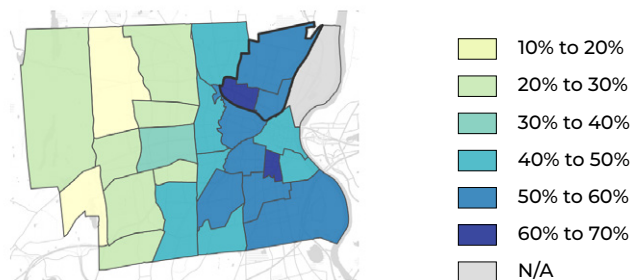
Fig 06

Homeownership and Housing Cost Burden in the Study Area[15]

HOMEOWNERSHIP RATE

- 0% to 20%
- 20% to 40%
- 40% to 60%
- 60% to 80%
- 80% to 100%
- N/A

HOUSING COST BURDEN RATE

- 10% to 20%
- 20% to 30%
- 30% to 40%
- 40% to 50%
- 50% to 60%
- 60% to 70%
- N/A

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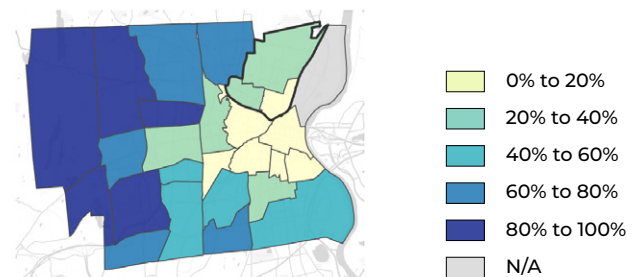
[13] DataHaven (2023). Greater Hartford Community Wellbeing Index 2023.

[14] DataHaven (2024). DataHaven analysis of DataHaven Community Wellbeing Survey data.

[15] Map source: DataHaven analysis of U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2023 5-year estimates. Basemaps © Stadia Maps © Stamen Design © OpenMapTiles © OpenStreetMap contributors.

WE NEED YOUR HELP

The CATF is powered by residents, partners, and advocates working together. Together, we can build a healthier, more resilient, and more equitable North Hartford—one rooted in shared responsibility, opportunity, and care.

- We now call on **city officials** to champion policies that align with this vision and remove barriers to implementation.

- We urge **funders** to invest in this community-led effort and provide the resources necessary to realize these goals.

- We invite **community members** to stay engaged, share their voices, and continue leading from within.

- And we ask our **partner organizations** to deepen collaboration, leverage their strengths, and walk alongside us in making this vision a reality.

Connect With Us

Follow **healthyhartfordhub** on Facebook and Instagram.

Visit the website at **communityactiontaskforce.org**

The Community Action Task Force (CATF) meets the 2nd Thursday of each month. To get involved, email **healthyhartfordhub@gmail.com**.

Join a working group, volunteer your skills, attend events, or partner with us to advance equitable development. **Your voice matters**— be part of the change.

Data Sources

This report uses data sources that are described in the footnotes on each page, as well as in the following report appendices. These appendices may not be attached to printed copies of this report, so they are also available on the CATF website or from DataHaven.

- **Appendix A.** *DataHaven Community Wellbeing Survey 2024 9-year MRP estimates for North Hartford (ZIP Code 06120)* and comparison areas. From DataHaven (2025), DataHaven Community Wellbeing Survey 2024 9-year MRP estimates. More information at https://www.ctdatahaven.org/reports/datahaven-community-wellbeing-survey.

- **Appendix B.** *Neighborhood profile tables from DataHaven Connecticut City Neighborhood Data Viewer.* From the DataHaven Connecticut City Neighborhood Data Viewer, for Hartford and West Hartford, at https://ctdatahaven.org/data-dashboard. Accessed in June 2025.