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HUNGER STUDY



SEPTEMBER 2010

The problem of hunger sometimes seems so immense – especially with the struggling economy. It would be easy to just throw up our hands in despair and think there are no answers. I believe, however, that when “things get tough, the tough get going!” I believe at Marion-Polk Food Share that is evidenced in the resolve to not only “feed the Need” but to “eliminate the need.” I believe when we “imagine no hunger,” we not only imagine it, but we believe we can achieve that goal.

-MPFS Staff Member

Acknowledgements

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*Leading the fight to END hunger in Marion and Polk counties
...because no one should be hungry.*

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Executive Summary

As a result of a \$50,000 capacity building grant from Kaiser Permanente Community Fund of the Northwest Health Foundation, Marion-Polk Food Share (MPFS) has conducted a project to collect baseline community data addressing food security, which is *access by all people at all times to enough nutritious food for an active, healthy life.*ⁱ

This is the first time such a public engagement effort has taken place in Marion and Polk counties. Our goal was to develop a plan that would focus on reducing and preventing food insecurity, hunger and poverty to improve community health and nutrition outcomes. The assessment included a sampling of food insecure individuals and families, community representatives from key sectors and groups including education, public health, nutrition, food distributors and growers, corrections, medical, social service providers, pantry leaders, community action groups and the faith community, and MPFS staff and Board of Directors.

Our reason for this community engagement effort is our recognition that we need to do more as a regional food bank than simply provide food to meet immediate needs. As a primary leader in the fight to END Hunger, we needed to look at all the complex factors that contribute to a person or household having inadequate food resources.

Although food security is itself a social determinant of healthⁱⁱ, there are others, including income and social status, social support networks, education levels, employment, social and physical environments, gender and culture that we consider to be closely linked to food security.

Social determinants of health are the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age, including the health system. The social determinants of health are mostly responsible for health inequalities – the unfair and unavoidable differences in health status.

This report is to be used by community members and organizations to understand the status of the community and utilize the information to improve partnerships, develop creative programs, and foster

community support to address hunger and poverty to improve our community's food security.

The following is a brief outline of what we discovered and our recommendations to improve food security in our two-county area.

Hunger in Marion and Polk Counties^{iii, iv}

When individuals and families do not have enough food to feed their families, emergency food services are available through an 86-member direct service network that distributes food largely supplied to them by MPFS. Families may pick up an emergency food box with enough food for to live on for 3-5 days. MPFS is distributing more emergency food boxes than ever before.

- During the last fiscal year (2008-2009), 77,462 food boxes were distributed to individuals and families in Marion and Polk counties; nearly 5.1 million pounds of food worth more than \$6.5 million
- On average, there has been a 5.3% increase in food box distribution every year since 1987, when MPFS was founded
- Within the last fiscal year (2008-2009), increases in food box distribution was double the average increase (10.8%). The number of food boxes distributed has increased 170.8% since 1987

ⁱ United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service. Retrieved from: www.fns.usda.gov/fsec.

ⁱⁱ World Health Organization (2010). Retrieved from: www.who.int/social/determinants/en.

ⁱⁱⁱ Marion-Polk Food Share internal data.

^{iv} United States Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service (2008). *Household food security (ERR-83)*. Retrieved from: www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/ERR83/ERR83b.pdf.

SNAPSHOT OF FOOD INSECURITY IN OREGON AND THE U.S.

- Oregon has the second highest rate of very low food security in the nation, with 6.6% of Oregon residents experiencing *very low* food security (2006-2008 average).
- MPFS is trending toward the distribution of more than 6 million pounds of food for FY 2009-2010.
- Hunger rates are on the rise, and currently 49.1 million Americans are experiencing food insecurity. This amounts to nearly 1 in 6 Americans struggling to put food on the table.

METHODOLOGY

The assessment focused on receiving community input from households experiencing hunger, community stakeholders, MPFS staff and Board of Directors, and community advocates. Individuals and households experiencing hunger were defined as people utilizing emergency food services, namely emergency food boxes from MPFS member agencies.

MPFS hired community members, most of whom had prior or current experience with hunger, as community advocates/peer mentors to interview food pantry customers and stakeholders and assist with survey dissemination. Community stakeholders represented leadership in Marion and Polk counties within the private, public and nonprofit sectors. In order to gain a

comprehensive understanding of hunger-related issues, a variety of methods were used for the assessment. These methods included:

- Literature review of food security studies and regional assessments
- Food pantry customer survey
- One-on-one interviews with food pantry customers
- One-on-one interviews with community stakeholders
- Feedback from MPFS staff and Board of Directors
- Feedback from community advocates

MAIN FINDINGS

CHARACTERISTICS OF INTERVIEW AND SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

- 45.1% of survey participants lived in urban areas, and 54.9% lived in rural regions.
- Interview participants: 61.2% urban, 38.8% rural.
- Food pantry survey customers: 74.1% women, 25.5% men, .4% both male and female.
- The average household size was four, with the average household composition including 2 children (under 18 years old) and 2 adults (ages 18-64).
- The majority of households had children (67.1%), and 17.0% of survey respondents belonged to single parent households.
- Average age of survey participants: 41.72; nearly half of food box recipients (45.5%) were children (under 18 years old).
- White (Non-Hispanic), 61.1%; Hispanic/Latino, 34.0%
- Survey respondents: 74.4% spoke English at home; 36.9% spoke Spanish at home.
- Interviewees: 75.0% completed interview in English, 25.0% completed interview in Spanish.
- 62.6% high school diploma/GED; 31.2% graduated from higher education; about 37.5% did not have at least a high school diploma/GED.
- 62.9% employed at least part time; 22.6% employed full-time; 39.1% unemployed and looking for work; 5.7% unemployed and not looking for work. Potentially unable to work due to a disability, 19.6%; staying at home with a child or disabled person, 10.0%.
- Household monthly income below \$1,250, about 71.8%; monthly income below \$2,083, 89.9%.
- 49.9% of food pantry recipients received their current main source of income from a job, while 51.1% received their main source of income from another source, primarily government programs, such as social security and unemployment.

WHY ARE PEOPLE HUNGRY?

Food Pantry Customer Perspective. Food pantry customers viewed hunger and poverty as a result of external factors beyond an individual's control. Key reasons why people experience hunger and poverty discussed by food pantry customers:

- No jobs/unemployment (66.4%)
- Economy (24.6%)
- High cost of living/inflation (13.6%)

Among these key reasons, Spanish speakers discussed the lack of jobs more often, and English speakers discussed the economy and high cost of living/inflation to a higher degree when compared to other language speakers.

Community Stakeholder Perspective. Community stakeholders tended to weigh individual choices more heavily when considering the reason why people are experiencing hunger and poverty. The most common responses from community stakeholders included:

- No jobs/unemployment (46.9%)
- Economy (25.1%)
- Lack of education (22.4%)
- No money, income (16.3%)
- Spending unwisely, not budgeting (16.3%)
- Attitude toward work, unmotivated, bad choices (14.3%)

MPFS Staff Perspective. As with community stakeholder responses, discussion points made by MPFS staff included both internal and external factors. However, there was less variation in responses among MPFS staff on common themes, which may be attributed to the much smaller number of MPFS staff than pantry customers and stakeholders that were interviewed. The most common responses supplied by MPFS staff:

- Unemployment/lack of jobs/job loss (93.8%)
- Lack of education (43.8%)
- Low wages (37.5%)
- Cost of living/high cost of goods (37.5%)

WHAT WAS THE SITUATION THAT LED FOOD PANTRY CUSTOMERS TO SEEK EMERGENCY FOOD ASSISTANCE?

The most common reasons why food pantry customers were seeking emergency food assistance:

- Unemployed or job loss (38.1%)
- Income and low wages were not enough to support their families (32.0%)
- SNAP benefits did not last (19.7%)

A higher proportion of Spanish speakers discussed job unavailability. In addition, more English speakers and

urban customers discussed SNAP benefits not lasting as a reason why they sought emergency food assistance.

Other common responses had implications for the perpetual need for emergency food boxes, such as having a disability, health/medical concerns, high cost of goods, and living on a fixed income, as these responses cannot be addressed through increasing economic capital through employment.

FOOD ACCESS

Food Security

Even with emergency food resources available, over half of survey respondents, who were food pantry customers, reported that their households were food insecure. Furthermore, households with children reported higher rates of food insecurity, and the older

food pantry customers were, the more they reported being food insecure.

Food Procurement

- Grocery stores, food stamps, dollar stores, and grocery outlets were the most common sources of food.

- Rural areas used SNAP benefits, soup kitchens, school breakfast/lunch and churches less often than food pantry customers in urban areas.
- Hispanic/Latino survey participants, in general, used fewer sources of food than food pantry customers of other races and ethnicities. They used some of the most common sources of food, like grocery stores and grocery outlets, less often.
- Hispanic/Latinos, Spanish speakers and customers with lower educational attainment tended to use WIC more often than other demographics.
- Federal food programs, such as SNAP benefits and school breakfast/lunch programs, were used less often by rural customers.

Food Pantry and Meal Site Visits

The average number of food pantry and meal site visits from survey findings was 6.14 over a 12-month period.

SNAP Participation among Survey Respondents

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as food stamps, is a program implemented by the federal government to help low-income households supplement their monthly nutritional intake. SNAP is not meant to provide families

with their full nutritional needs; instead, SNAP is used as a supplement.

About 40.8% of survey respondents did not receive SNAP benefits. Of those that did not receive SNAP benefits, the main reasons why they were not receiving SNAP included:

- Applied but ineligible to receive SNAP (35.0%)
- 27.8% did not think they would qualify

Hispanic/Latino respondents were more likely to report:

- Being unsure how to apply and not knowing where to apply as a reason for not receiving SNAP.
- Being worried about their immigration status as a reason for not receiving SNAP benefits.

White (Non-Hispanic) respondents reported being embarrassed to apply more often than other races and ethnicities as a reason for not receiving SNAP benefits.

Rural respondents reported *unsure how to apply* as a reason more often than urban areas. However, urban respondents reported applying for SNAP benefits but not qualifying more often than participants living in rural areas.

BARRIERS TO FOOD

For food pantry customers, the most common barriers to getting the food they wanted were cost (80.2%) and transportation (28.5%). English speakers reported cost as a barrier to getting food more often than their counterparts, while households with children were more likely to say that transportation was an issue to getting food.

Getting to the Grocery Store

The most common modes of transportation pantry customers used to get to the grocery store were their own car (66.9%) and walking (24.9%). Customers walked more often to the grocery store than used public transportation (11.0%). The average amount of time to get to the grocery store one-way was 20.9 minutes.

NUTRITION

Knowledge of Nutrition. When food pantry customers were asked to rate their knowledge of nutrition, the majority of customers rated it as *I know a little about nutrition* (56.3%).

- Hispanics/Latinos were more likely to report that they knew a little about nutrition.
- A higher proportion of Spanish speakers did not know very much about nutrition.

- Whites (Non-Hispanics) and English speakers were more likely to report that they knew a lot about nutrition, accounting for nearly every response in this category.
- Females were more likely to say they knew a lot about nutrition

How Nutritious is Your Diet? The majority of customers rated their diet as *somewhat nutritious* (66.5%). Among those that reported that they did not know how nutritious their diet was, Hispanic/Latino respondents, Spanish speakers and males reported this more often than their counterparts.

Are You Getting Enough Fresh Foods in Your Diet? Most customers (61.0%) felt that they were not getting enough fresh foods in their diet. English speakers, households with children, and the lower educational attainment customers had, the more likely they were to say that they were not getting enough fresh foods.

Of the customers that felt they were not getting enough fresh foods, the majority stated it was because fresh foods were too expensive (84.3%). Rural customers were more likely to say that fresh foods were too expensive.

BARRIERS TO GETTING AHEAD

The most common barriers that impeded pantry customers to getting ahead were:

- Unemployed (52.0%)
- No credit/bad credit history (40.0%)
- Health concerns (37.0%)

Unemployed. The older customers were, the *less* likely they were to report not being employed as a personal obstacle to getting ahead. Of the demographics that reported unemployment, Hispanic/Latino respondents, Spanish and Russian speakers, households with children, and respondents with lower education discussed the barrier of unemployment more often than their counterparts.

No credit/bad credit history. Urban residents, White (Non-Hispanic) participants and English speakers were more likely than their counterparts to report no credit/bad credit history as a barrier to getting ahead. In addition, higher educational attainment was correlated with experiencing no credit/bad credit history as an obstacle to getting ahead.

Health concerns. A higher proportion of White (Non-Hispanic) respondents and households with children discussed health concerns as a barrier to getting ahead more often than their counterparts. The higher the educational attainment, the more likely survey respondents reported health concerns as a barrier.

OVERCOMING BARRIERS

When customers were asked about what they would like to see happen to help them get ahead, they responded with:

- Jobs (49.6%)
- Education (11.4%)
- Transportation (8.3%)

- Better health and/or healthcare (6.2%)

When responses were separated by whether the interview was conducted in English or Spanish, more than 4 out of 5 (81.3%) Spanish speakers discussed employment as a way for them to get ahead, compared to 39.2% of English speakers.

RESOURCES

MPFS Resources

MPFS implements community programs in addition to providing emergency food. Customers expressed the most interest in receiving support from MPFS in:

- Connecting them to other resources (34%)
- Making recipes available (23%)
- Food budgeting classes (21%)

Rural residents and English speakers were more likely to want MPFS to connect them to other resources.

With regard to making recipes available, a higher proportion of English speakers and households with children were interested.

Lastly, a higher proportion of households with children wanted MPFS support with food budgeting classes.

In addition to asking pantry customers about how MPFS can better support them, 41.4% of pantry customers provided their contact information to get involved with MPFS programs. Of those interested, they wanted resources for the following:

- Recipes (55.5%)
- Cooking classes (54.9%)
- Gardens (37.3%)
- Kitchen (25.3%)
- Other (11.7%)

Available Resources

About half of food pantry customers (51.3%) had used a social service program over the course of the past year, the most common of which included:

- Food/hunger (42.4%)
- Utility assistance (33.8%)
- Housing (24.3%)

Hispanic/Latino respondents reported using food/hunger and housing *less* often than other races and ethnicities. They used utility assistance more often than other races/ethnicities.

Whites (Non-Hispanics) used housing resources more often than other races and ethnicities.

Households with children were more likely to use food/hunger, utility and housing assistance than households without children.

The more education food pantry customers had, the more likely they were to use housing resources.

Unavailable Resources

In addition to asking customers about the types of resources they had used in the past year, they were also asked about resources they needed but were unable to find. About 41.3% of customers encountered this issue, and the most common resources that customers were unable to find were:

- Healthcare (31.0%)
- Job placement (28.2%)
- Housing (26.9%)
- Utility assistance (22.6%)

Urban customers reported needing resources that they were unable to find more often than rural customers.

Utility assistance was a resource that Whites (Non-Hispanics) and households with children reported needing but were unable to find more often than their counterparts.

Reasons Why Resources Are Being Unused

Both food pantry customers and stakeholders were asked their perspectives on why people may not be using certain community resources or services.

Pantry customers cited the following for reasons why resources are being unused:

- Ineligibility (26.6%)
- Being unfamiliar with resources (17.9%)
- Lack of transportation (12.3%)

Common themes discussed by stakeholders included:

- Being unfamiliar with available services (61.2%)
- Pride/embarrassment (49.0%)
- Cultural/language barrier (24.5%)
- Lack of transportation (20.4%)

Best Features of Programs and Services

Food pantry customers described the best features of the programs and services that they use as:

- Providing help for a need (39.7%)

- Friendly non-judgmental staff and volunteers (23.6%)
- Quality of the service provided (22.3%)

Service and Program Suggestions for MPFS

MPFS staff and Board of Directors provided input on MPFS program ideas to address hunger-related issues in the community. Most program ideas centered around expanding existing programs as opposed to creating new ones.

The most common responses included: gardens, expanding emergency food box distribution, food processing, cooking and nutrition education, budgeting/life skills education, farming, culturally-specific program development, community education, develop relationships/partnerships, No Hungry Child Free Lunch Program expansion, and enhancing Women Ending Hunger (a grassroots coalition working to end hunger).

Service and Program Suggestions for the Community

Because many community stakeholders were involved with community programs and are familiar with existing resources and potential gaps in services, they were asked specifically: *What kinds of services or programs would you like to see offered in the community that are not already available? Why?*

Common themes in services that stakeholders felt were missing but should be available in the community included:

- Life skills (20.4%)
- Cooking/nutrition classes (16.3%)
- Community support (14.3%)
- Career training (14.3%)
- Resources in a central location (12.2%)
- Outreach/education on services (12.2%)

- Community gardens (10.2%)

Even though the interview question asks about programs that were not offered in the community, most of the service suggestions involved existing programs.

Collaboration and Partnership Opportunities

Community stakeholders and MPFS staff were asked about how collaborations between different community sectors can be achieved and improved. MPFS staff responded to this question by discussing opportunities to improve partnerships specifically with MPFS and the community, and not necessarily with other organizations. Collaboration ideas discussed most often by staff included:

- Staff and volunteers need to get involved with other agencies (21.4%)
- Partner with the private sector (21.4%)
- Foster communication, relationships (21.4%)
- Community presentations (14.3%)
- Continue with what MPFS is already doing (14.3%)
- Volunteering (14.3%)

Contrary to MPFS staff, stakeholders responded to this interview question by discussing collaboration opportunities for the community as a whole versus for MPFS alone. The most common collaboration ideas discussed by stakeholders included:

- Already doing a lot/already doing a good job (25.5%)
- Outreach/community education about issues (25.5%)
- Communication (21.3%)
- Government/political involvement or reform (21.3%)
- Central community service response/coordination/pool resources (21.3%)
- Community solutions and discussion (21.3%)

CULTURAL INFLUENCES

Culture, with regard to race/ethnicity and language, seems to be a pervasive theme in the assessment results, especially because most of the responses to

assessment questions varied by race/ethnicity and language. This has implications for the influence of culture on food access, community involvement, use of

resources, ideas about solving and preventing hunger, and the method by which to address food security through an action plan.

Cultural/Language Barriers

Community advocates shared that during their experiences interviewing at food pantries, they found that bilingual volunteers were lacking at pantries, creating a communication barrier for Spanish or other language speakers seeking assistance.

In addition, nearly a quarter (24.5%) of stakeholders discussed how people may not be using certain community resources because of a cultural or language barrier. A few stakeholders discussed how language barriers prevented the elimination of hunger and poverty. Still, other stakeholders discussed how cultural mores may prevent the Hispanic/Latino population from receiving assistance.

Differential Attitude

There appears to be an underlying theme among interviews and observations in the field by community advocates. This theme was a level of unawareness on how to communicate cross-culturally, and differential attitudes toward cultural/ethnic groups, namely the Hispanic/Latino population. Community stakeholders, pantry customers, and food pantry volunteers and staff were observed by community advocates demonstrating these thoughts and perceptions.

Both community stakeholders and food pantry volunteers/staff separated themselves from the Hispanic/Latino population through language characterizing an *us* versus *them* mentality. Furthermore, some stakeholders believed that hunger and poverty were caused by the Hispanic/Latino population through illegal immigration and specifically, what one stakeholder coined as *Hispanic poverty*.

This unawareness and differential attitude toward the Hispanic/Latino population has, according to a community advocate, *created an underclass*.

A few pantry customers felt that reverse discrimination was an issue because they felt they could not get jobs because they were not Spanish-speaking.

Aside from culture, community advocates observed and experienced differential attitudes and behaviors toward food pantry customers in general while conducting interviews. Food pantry customers were sometimes treated with less respect than staff and volunteers.

Undocumented Workers

Whether or not individuals knew if someone was an undocumented worker, there was differential attitude toward and treatment of individuals who might have undocumented worker status by community stakeholders and pantry customers.

When discussing barriers to preventing hunger and poverty, many stakeholders attributed obstacles to undocumented worker status. As previously discussed, while some stakeholders believed that hunger and poverty are caused by the Hispanic/Latino population, some stakeholders discussed how being undocumented was a barrier to overcoming hunger and poverty, and not necessarily a cause.

Some pantry customers felt that undocumented workers were the cause of hunger and poverty and negatively associated Hispanics/Latinos and/or undocumented workers with this sentiment.

On the other hand, pantry customers who were undocumented felt that hunger and poverty could be prevented and solved through immigration reform by helping undocumented workers become legal. They felt that, in order to get ahead, gaining legal status was needed in order to gain access to more employment opportunities.

This demonstrates that there is a disconnect between perceptions of undocumented workers and what undocumented workers present as their hardships in finding work and resources.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND ASSETS

The majority of food pantry customers participated in community groups, with over two-thirds of survey respondents (68.3%) involved with church groups. Almost half (44.6%) of participants had volunteered in the community, and 27.8% have held a leadership position.

Educational attainment was correlated with having a leadership position and volunteer experience; customers that had higher educational attainment were more likely to have held leadership positions and also were more likely to have volunteered in their community.

Volunteering with MPFS

Nearly one-third of survey respondents (32.4%) provided their personal contact information to volunteer with MPFS programs. Among respondents

that expressed interest in volunteering with MPFS-related programs, they were specifically interested in:

- Sorting food donations (47.8%)
- Office work (38.6%)
- Helping distribute food at food pantries (37.2%)
- Serving brown bag lunches for No Hungry Child program (28.7%)
- Volunteering at special events (26.3%)
- Community garden volunteer (25.9%)
- Sorting book donations (23.9%)
- Volunteer driver (19.8%)
- Participating in Women Ending Hunger (19.1%)
- Teaching nutrition and cooking classes (14.7%)
- Other (12.3%)

Among survey respondents, a higher proportion of English speakers and urban residents indicated interest in volunteering with MPFS programs than their counterparts.

SOLUTIONS TO HUNGER

Food pantry customers and community stakeholders were asked to provide input on solutions to hunger and poverty. Pantry customers and stakeholders shared a few common solutions, including: jobs, sense of community, less waste and share excess, and government reform and assistance.

For pantry customers, hunger solutions involved mostly systemic efforts by the community to address hunger and poverty, as opposed to individual-level efforts and change. The most common themes described by customers for hunger solutions included:

- Jobs (25.3%)
- Increase resources, reduce eligibility requirements (12.0%)
- Do not know (9.7%)
- Community (7.4%)
- Less waste, share excess (7.2%)
- Support food banks (6.9%)
- Gardens (6.1%)
- Help others, share (5.6%)
- Government help and/or reform (5.4%)

Solutions varied by language. Spanish speakers discussed jobs to a higher degree than English speakers as a solution to hunger and poverty. English speakers discussed increasing resources/reducing eligibility requirements as a solution idea more often than Spanish speakers.

Community stakeholders discussed both systemic and individual-level solutions to hunger and poverty. Furthermore, many stakeholder solutions involved a food system response, while pantry customers focused on overall resources.

Common solutions discussed by stakeholders included:

- Education (20.4%)
- Jobs (20.4%)
- Community (16.3%)
- Donations (16.3%)
- Outreach/community education (14.3%)
- Food production and harvesting (12.2%)
- Attitude, motivation (10.2%)
- Higher wages (8.2%)

- Community engagement, involvement (8.2%)
- Less waste, share excess (8.2%)
- Government and tax reform (8.2%)
- Job search assistance/job skills (6.1%)
- Nutrition/cooking classes (6.1%)

HUNGER PREVENTION

Ideas for hunger prevention also were solicited from pantry customers, stakeholders, and MPFS staff. Food pantry customers, community stakeholders and MPFS staff agreed upon many aspects of hunger prevention, of which the most common theme discussed by every group was education. Customers, stakeholders and MPFS staff also expressed common prevention ideas involving life skills and community themes.

The most common responses by pantry customers regarding hunger prevention included:

- Education (40.4%)
- Jobs (15.5%)
- Life skills (14.7%)
- Community (7.0%)
- Do not know (6.7%)
- Government reform (5.1%)
- Teach values (5.1%)
- Maintain current resources (5.1%)
- Motivate, counsel, give advice (5.1%)

For community stakeholders, the most common prevention themes included:

- Education (65.3%)
- Nutrition and cooking education (16.3%)
- Life skills (12.2%)
- Self-sufficiency (12.2%)

Stakeholder themes tended to emphasize personal liability and life choices, which pantry customers described to a lesser extent.

For MPFS staff, the most common responses to hunger prevention were:

- Education (53.3%)
- Life skills (40.0%)

Common themes presented by MPFS staff included both individual and community-wide prevention ideas, similar to stakeholders and pantry customers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based upon the results of this community-wide assessment, MPFS believes that over the next year a collaborative strategic plan can be developed to reduce food insecurity. This plan will not only address identified community needs related to hunger and food insecurity, but also draw upon community capacity to address these issues through individual and community assets.

Recommendations were made, based on the assessment results, to implement action strategies within the following categories:

- MPFS resources
- Community resources
- Collaborations and partnerships
- Access to food
- Economic development
- Education

- Health
- Transportation
- Sense of community
- Advocacy
- Cultural resources

MPFS will determine which recommendations will be the most effective to incorporate into the organization's Strategic Plan, and also in Women Ending Hunger's action plan. Women Ending Hunger is a grassroots coalition of more than 700 women and men who work *to end hunger by exploring and eliminating its root causes because <they> passionately honor the worth and dignity of every member of our community.* The group identifies and implements projects to make an impact on hunger.

While many of the strategies will be implemented by MPFS, its member agencies, and Women Ending Hunger, the implementation plan will incorporate a collaborative community approach to solving hunger. Therefore, it is critical to prioritize the recommendations and determine the most effective methods through which the community may address a comprehensive approach to hunger and poverty.

Below are the set of recommendations that MPFS will use as a starting point to establish a community-wide implementation plan to impact food security.

MPFS Resources

Recommendation	Rationale
<i>Prepare, educate and give out more recipe instructions and live demonstrations of how to prepare and cook food.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 23% of customers expressed interest in receiving MPFS support with recipes; 19.0% of customers gave their contact information to receive more information and/or get involved with receiving recipes.
<i>Connect pantry customers to other resources by providing information and referrals. This can be done through resource advocate volunteers at pantry locations, resource lists to disseminate with food boxes, etc.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customers expressed interest in receiving MPFS support in connecting them to other resources (34%). • Community advocates found that, while interviewing customers, rural areas had less information regarding available resources in the community, and less referral and information sharing regarding these resources; however, these customers wanted to receive information about these resources. • Community advocates also observed that information about community resources were readily available at food pantries, but resource books were extremely difficult to find at pantries, and volunteers/staff at a couple of pantries were unwilling to help pantry customers locate resource books or help them with finding resources.
<i>Offer food budgeting classes so individuals and families can learn how to stretch food resources.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 21% of customers expressed interest in receiving MPFS support in food budgeting classes. • MPFS is serving more people than ever before, and helping people stretch their food resources may prevent the need for emergency food boxes in addition to making food box resources last longer. • 19.7% of pantry customers attributed seeking emergency food assistance to being unable to make their SNAP benefits last through the month. • The majority of customers felt that they were not getting enough fresh food in their diet, mostly because they felt fresh foods were too expensive (84.3%).
<i>Expand the community garden program.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12.7% of food pantry customers gave their contact information to receive more information/get involved with community gardens. • Both the Board of Directors and MPFS staff discussed expanding community gardens, especially to additional communities and rural areas, as an MPFS program expansion idea. • 10.2% of community stakeholders described community gardens as a service or program they would like to see offered in the community that was not already available.

MPFS Resources

Recommendation	Rationale
<i>Expand emergency food distribution by MPFS to member agencies, with a focus on rural areas.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As an idea for MPFS program expansion, both the Board of Directors and MPFS staff (but a higher proportion of Board of Directors) discussed expanding emergency food distribution, especially in rural areas.
<i>Expand and create MPFS opportunities for food processing to supplement and enhance MPFS' ability to distribute nutritious food to member agencies.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A popular program creation idea discussed by the Board of Directors and MPFS staff included food processing. Food processing involves processing, canning, packing and freezing raw food for the purpose of distributing it to food pantries as an additional food source.
<i>Expand land resources to procure additional food for emergency food distribution.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board of Directors (33.3%) and MPFS staff (12.5%) discussed expanding land resources as a MPFS program development idea. Land resources described by the Board of Directors and MPFS staff included farming and food donations, such as an MPFS farm, land trust, sharecropping, and the Farmers Ending Hunger program.
<i>Ensure that all MPFS programs are inclusive of the diverse population that MPFS serves.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12.5% of MPFS staff and 33.3% of the Board of Directors discussed cultural-specific program development when discussing program expansion ideas for MPFS. This includes specific recruitment and program provision catered to the Hispanic/Latino population, seniors and children, and females. • Interest in MPFS programs varied by urban or rural residence and language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ English speakers and households with children were more likely to respond with wanting additional support with recipes. ○ Rural residents and English speakers were more likely to report wanting MPFS to connect them to other resources. ○ Community advocates found that, while interviewing customers, rural areas had less information regarding available resources in the community, and less referral and information sharing regarding these resources; these customers wanted to receive information about these resources. ○ A higher proportion of English than Spanish speakers expressed interest in and gave their contact information to get involved with community gardens.

Community Resources

Recommendation	Rationale
<i>Expand the No Hungry Child program, especially to rural areas.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25% of the Board of Directors wanted MPFS to expand the No Hungry Child free lunch program to include additional communities in Marion and Polk counties, especially in rural regions.
<i>Expand Women Ending Hunger efforts and membership.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MPFS staff (12.5%) and the Board of Directors (8.3%) discussed expanding Women Ending Hunger. Most discussion points about Women Ending Hunger were to expand and continue with Women Ending Hunger efforts.
<i>Reduce eligibility requirements for resources and/or increase resource capacity to serve additional people in need. This may include a coordinated response and community partnerships to ensure a safety net of services.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For pantry customers, the most common reason why they felt people were not using resources was because of ineligibility (26.6%). • Customers (12.0%) felt that reducing eligibility requirements and increasing resources was a solution to hunger and poverty. This was the 2nd most discussed solution idea. • One of the barriers customers felt stood in the way of them getting ahead was not eligible for community services (6.8%).
<i>Streamline resources by offering resources in a centralized location and pooling existing resources together.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholders felt that resources need to be offered in a centralized location (12.2%), and that this was a service not offered in the community that should be available. Stakeholders also felt that existing programs should be more efficient (6.1%) and that resource access should be increased (6.1%). • In order to streamline resources to make the community more effective in responding hunger and poverty issues, stakeholders discussed the need to centralize community services by location, increase resource coordination, and pool existing resources together (21.3%). • Customers discussed services being too far away as a barrier to getting ahead (5.5%).

Collaborations and Partnerships

Recommendation	Rationale
<p><i>Increase involvement and relationship development with other community agencies, including the private sector. This includes volunteering with other organizations, encouraging community involvement with other agencies, and working together to create strategies to improve the community.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MFPS specific: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ MPFS staff (12.5%) and Board of Directors (25.0%) felt that developing relationships and partnerships with different sectors of the community was an important aspect of programs that MPFS should expand. ○ When MPFS staff were asked how to improve collaborations and partnerships, the most common response was for MPFS staff and volunteers to get involved with other community organizations (21.4%), such as serving on another organization’s Board of Directors, and volunteering with other organizations. ○ MPFS staff (21.4%) also felt that partnering with the private sector to develop relationships with local businesses was important to improve collaborations. Partnership suggestions with the private sector included paid volunteer time, developing economic development strategies to build livable communities, and encouraging businesses to hold local food drives. ○ MPFS staff (21.4%) described how they felt it was important for that the community, and namely employees in the private sector, get involved by volunteering with MPFS. • Overall community: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ About 21.4% of MPFS staff also felt that fostering communication and relationships with community organizations was a method of increasing collaborations with organizations, government and businesses. ○ When the Board of Directors was asked about how to improve collaborations, 21.3% felt that communication was key. ○ Stakeholders also felt strongly that communication needed to be improved, especially communication across different organizations. Furthermore, stakeholders discussed how communication is important to help the general community understand issues surrounding hunger and poverty.
<p><i>Evaluate community interest in and effectiveness of a regional or community food policy council with representatives from a variety of sectors, including individuals who are currently and/or have experienced hunger.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food pantry customers have many demonstrated needs that they are unable to find resources for, and are preventing them from getting ahead, which has implications for needing a variety of sectors (e.g. – housing, employment department, farmers, social service agencies, etc.) to come to the table to discuss comprehensive solutions to address hunger and food insecurity. • A policy-level approach to addressing food insecurity, with the input of a variety of community members, would be effective in funneling additional resources to address food insecurity and its related community issues.
<p><i>Give community presentations to enhance public understanding of MPFS and its role in the community.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About 14.3% of staff felt that staff and volunteers should give community presentations in order to increase collaborations in the community. Community presentations involved speaking to the community about how to become a volunteer and monthly sustainer (monthly giving program to provide MPFS with a sustainable funding source), and also educate the community on MPFS and the people we serve.

Collaborations and Partnerships (cont.)

Recommendation	Rationale
<i>Improve inter-agency communication among MPFS staff.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some MPFS staff expressed the desire to increase inter-agency communication between MPFS staff and leadership.

Access to Food

Recommendation	Rationale
<i>Enhance SNAP education, outreach & application assistance, and ensure that efforts are inclusive of our community's diverse population. This will not only reduce the stigma of receiving SNAP, but also increase SNAP participation among individuals who are eligible but are not receiving SNAP.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most of the respondents in the survey reported their households as being food insecure, meaning that either sometimes or often there was not enough food to eat (57%). About 40.8% of survey respondents did not receive SNAP benefits. Of those that did not receive SNAP benefits, 27.8% did not apply because they did not think they would qualify. Rural customers, Spanish speakers, and Russian speakers reported using SNAP benefits less often than their counterparts. Hispanic/Latino respondents were more likely to report being unsure how to apply and not knowing where to apply as a reason for not receiving SNAP. Rural respondents reported "unsure how to apply" as a reason more often than urban areas for not receiving SNAP. White (Non-Hispanic) respondents reported being embarrassed to apply more often than other races and ethnicities as a reason for not receiving SNAP benefits.

Access to Food (cont.)

Recommendation	Rationale
<p><i>Access to fresh and nutritious food can be enhanced through increasing locations of food vendors of all types, including grocery stores, healthy options offered at corner stores, farm stands, and mobile food vendors and pantries. This may also include partnering with existing organizations to deliver groceries to community members, such as partnering with the library and grocery store to deliver food to residents in a central location (e.g. - Virtual Supermarket Project in Baltimore).</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transportation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The most common modes of transportation pantry customers used to get to the grocery store were their own car (66.9%) and walking (24.9%). Customers walked more often to the grocery store than used public transportation (11.0%). ○ The average amount of time to get to the grocery store one way was 20.9 minutes. ○ 28.5% of pantry customers described transportation as a barrier to getting the food they want. • Nutrition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The majority of customers felt that they were not getting enough fresh food in their diet, mostly due to the high cost of fresh foods. ○ 66.5% of customers felt that their diets were “somewhat nutritious,” while 10.6% and 11.0% described their diets as “not nutritious” or “don’t know,” respectively.
<p><i>Programs that keep the cost of fresh food down and/or affordable should be implemented, such as subsidized CSA’s, SNAP, seed and garden programs, etc., especially in rural areas.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of customers felt that they were not getting enough fresh food in their diet, mostly because they felt fresh foods were too expensive (84.3%). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rural customers were more likely to say that fresh foods were too expensive. • The largest barrier to food for pantry customers was cost (80.2%). • Most of the respondents in the survey reported their households as being food insecure, meaning that either sometimes or often there was not enough food to eat (57%).
<p><i>MPFS and local food pantries should recruit nutritious food donations and expand upon MPFS’ core food program. The core food program ensures that pantries receive foods necessary to maintain a healthy diet.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of customers (61.0%) felt that they were not getting enough fresh food in their diet, mostly due to the high cost of fresh foods. • 66.5% of customers felt their diets were “somewhat nutritious,” while 10.6% and 11.0% described their diets as “not nutritious” or “don’t know,” respectively. • Food pantry customers access food pantries and/or meal sites on an average of every other month. • The number of food box customers and food boxes has increased.

Access to Food (cont.)

Recommendation	Rationale
<p><i>Conduct a food basket survey in each community.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To better understand the unique needs of each community and better understand food access since food prices vary by area, conduct a food basket survey to determine each community’s needs with access to food and availability of nutritious food at affordable prices. • This is important because the majority of customers felt that they were not getting enough fresh food in their diet, mostly due to the high cost of fresh foods.

Economic Development

Recommendation	Rationale
<p><i>Enhance employment opportunities and availability of jobs. This can be done by partnering with economic development agencies, the employment department, the private sector, and creating/supporting micro-enterprise opportunities for pantry customers.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A large percentage of pantry customers reported being unemployed and looking for work. More pantry customers were unemployed and looking for work than employed full-time. • The most common barrier that impeded pantry customers to getting ahead was not employed (52.0%). • About half of customers reported that jobs would help them get ahead. • The #1 solution to hunger and poverty, as cited by pantry customers AND stakeholders, was jobs (25.3% customers, 20.4% stakeholders). • The 2nd most common prevention idea by pantry customers (15.5%) was jobs.
<p><i>Ensure that employment resources are inclusive of the diverse population that resides in Marion and Polk counties.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Among responses from pantry customers regarding jobs, a higher proportion of Spanish speakers discussed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Jobs as a reason why people experience hunger and poverty. ○ The unavailability of jobs as a reason behind why they sought emergency food assistance. ○ Employment as an asset that would help them get ahead. ○ Jobs were discussed as both a solution and prevention tool to hunger and poverty. • Similar to Spanish speakers, a higher proportion of Russian speakers discussed how unemployment was a barrier to getting ahead.
<p><i>Job skill development and career training.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12.2% of stakeholders felt that lack of job skills and work experience was a reason why people experience hunger and poverty. • Stakeholders (14.3%) wanted to see career training offered in the community and felt that this resource was not available. • Job search assistance/job skills was an idea put forth by 6.1% of stakeholders as a solution to hunger and poverty; job skill development also was described by 10.2% of stakeholders as a strategy to prevent hunger and poverty.

Economic Development (cont.)

Recommendation	Rationale
<p><i>Develop programs and resources that extend the economic capital of individuals unable to gain employment or have difficulty accessing employment opportunities. This includes micro-enterprises, etc.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some common responses as to why people were seeking emergency food assistance had implications for the perpetual need for emergency food boxes. Such themes included having a disability, health/medical concerns, high cost of goods, and living on a fixed income. While most of the other common responses can be addressed through increased employment opportunities for sustainable, living wage jobs, these responses cannot be solved through employment resources. • Some of the reasons why people sought emergency food assistance included reasons that might make traditional employment challenging to do or maintain: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Disabled (8.4%). ○ Living on a fixed income (7.9%).
<p><i>Subsidies should be available for all basic needs. If goods necessary for survival were more affordable, such as housing and food, then customers would not need to utilize emergency food services.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For customers and MPFS staff, the 3rd common reason behind why people experience hunger and poverty was the high cost of living, goods, and/or inflation. Stakeholders (12.2%) also felt that the high cost of goods and inflation was a reason behind why people experience hunger and poverty. • For 8.2% of customers, the high cost of living, inflation and/or high cost of goods was a reason behind why they were seeking emergency food assistance. • The largest barrier to food for pantry customers was cost (80.2%).
<p><i>Address barriers to getting ahead to expand economic opportunities. This may include increasing access to and availability of classes to: learn how to improve credit scores, address rental history to gain better access to rent housing, and increase opportunities to rent housing with evictions on record, etc.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No credit/bad credit history was a barrier that 40.0% of pantry customers described as a barrier to getting ahead. • Barriers to employment were a reason that 5.4% of pantry customers felt people experience hunger and poverty. For stakeholders, barriers to employment and barriers to getting ahead were discussed by 8.2% of stakeholders as a reason why people may be experiencing hunger and poverty. • Stakeholders also felt that people experience hunger and poverty for the following reasons: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Criminal record (15.9%). ○ Poor rental history, evictions (8.2%).
<p><i>Expand opportunities and availability of fair family wage jobs, either through advocacy, partnerships with the private sector to connect pantry customers to good paying jobs, etc.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12.2% of stakeholders felt that people experience hunger and poverty due to low wages. • For 32.0% of pantry customers, no income/low wages/not enough income was a reason behind why they sought emergency food assistance. • Pantry customers also described wages being too low (24.6%) as a barrier to getting ahead.

Education

Recommendation	Rationale
<p><i>Educational resources need to be more accessible and available to food pantry customers to improve educational attainment rates, which impact economic conditions. This includes GED classes, literacy programs, English as a second language, access to higher education, financial assistance, etc.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When compared to overall county rates, food pantry customers demonstrated lower educational attainment than Marion and Polk county residents as a whole. • Community stakeholders & MPFS staff believed that lack of education is one of the main reasons why people experience hunger and poverty. • Even though higher educational attainment increased the likelihood of particular obstacles, higher educational attainment was also linked to a decreased likelihood in many other obstacles, including unemployment and lack of job skills. • When customers were asked what would help them get ahead, educational opportunities were the 2nd most common response (11.4%). • Tied with jobs as the most discussed strategy to solve hunger and poverty, 20.4% of stakeholders discussed education as a solution to hunger and poverty. • Education was the most common prevention strategy for hunger and poverty discussed by MPFS staff (53.3%), pantry customers (40.4%), and stakeholders (65.3%). • For pantry customers, barriers to getting ahead included not having a college degree (15.7%) and/or not having a high school diploma or GED (10.9%).
<p><i>Ensure that education resources are inclusive of the diverse population that resides in Marion and Polk counties.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As discussed in prior rationale, education was discussed by pantry customers as a hunger prevention strategy. Customers also expressed interest in MPFS support with attaining a GED. Among both of these findings, a higher proportion of Spanish speakers discussed education than other language speakers, and Hispanic/Latino participants expressed interest in MPFS support in GED attainment.
<p><i>Increase community education and outreach on hunger and poverty.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25.5% of stakeholders discussed how community education and outreach will foster and improve collaborations. • Stakeholders identified community education and outreach as a solution (14.3%) and prevention (10.2%) strategy.
<p><i>Enhance access to life skills education, including financial literacy.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The most common response from stakeholders on services and programs they would like to see offered in the community that were not already available was life skills (20.4%). • One of the reasons why stakeholders felt people were experiencing hunger was because they felt people were not spending wisely and not budgeting (16.3%). • For pantry customers, one of the barriers standing in the way of getting ahead was the inability to manage money (10%). • For 14.7% of pantry customers and 12.2% of stakeholders, life skills were described as a way to prevent hunger and poverty; in addition, 12.2% of stakeholders felt that self-sufficiency was a prevention idea. • The Board of Directors and MPFS staff discussed budgeting/life skills education as a suggestion for MPFS program development.

Health

Recommendation	Rationale
<p><i>Increase access to comprehensive, affordable healthcare through advocacy. This can be done through developing partnerships with other organizations that conduct advocacy for affordable healthcare, forming grassroots advocacy to address health-related issues, MPFS volunteer-led advocacy campaigns to local and federal political representatives, increasing awareness of issues through editorials, etc.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 3rd most common barrier that pantry customers described as standing in their way to getting ahead was health concerns (37.0%). • White (Non-Hispanic) respondents reported health concerns as a barrier to getting ahead more often than other races and ethnicities. • Better health and/or better healthcare was one of the most common responses by customers as to what they would like to see happen to help them get ahead (6.2%). • Healthcare was a resource that 31.0% of customers described as being unable to find or use. • One of the reasons that led up to why customers sought food box assistance was because of health/medical concerns (8.4%). • 8.2% of stakeholders felt that health/medical concerns were a reason behind why people experience hunger and poverty.
<p><i>Expand access to mental health resources.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health concerns were a barrier to getting ahead for 10.2% of pantry customers.

Transportation

Recommendation	Rationale
<p><i>Conduct a needs assessment and efficiency evaluation of the public transportation system in each community. As an alternative or a supplement to public transportation (especially in rural communities where public transportation may be inefficient), develop a carpool/rideshare system.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The most common modes of transportation pantry customers used to get to the grocery store were their own car (66.9%) and walking (24.9%). Customers walked more often to the grocery store than used public transportation (11.0%). • The average amount of time to get to the grocery store one way was 20.9 minutes. • 28.5% of pantry customers described transportation as a barrier to getting the food that they want. • Transportation was one of the most common responses by customers as to what they would like to see happen to help them get ahead. • For 12.3% of pantry customers, lack of transportation was a reason why they were not using certain resources. About 20.4% of stakeholders felt that lack of transportation was behind why people were not using certain resources. • Lack of transportation was a reason why 8.2% of stakeholders believe people experience hunger and poverty. • For 16.8% of pantry customers, lack of transportation was a barrier to getting ahead. Urban customers reported lack of transportation more often as a barrier. • Transportation was something that 8.3% of pantry customers said they would like to see happen to help them get ahead. • The convenient location of resources was described by 7.4% of customers as one of the best features of programs and services.

Sense of Community

Recommendation	Rationale
<p><i>Develop a sense of community, where neighbors can count on one another for support and community connections. This can be done through community events, hosting community gatherings, developing alternative currency programs, community potlucks to share food resources, etc.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholders (12.2%) felt that people experience hunger and poverty because of the lack of community, stressing the importance of community support from our neighbors to connect for personal outreach and community resources to those who need them. • About 14.3% of stakeholders also felt that community support was a community service that they would like to see offered that was not already available. • Community as a solution to hunger and poverty. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Pantry customers described community (7.8%) and helping others and sharing (5.9%) as solutions to hunger and poverty. ○ Similarly, community stakeholders discussed community (16.3%), community engagement and involvement (8.2%) and sharing excess resources and reducing waste, such as food (8.2%) as solutions to hunger and poverty. • Community as prevention to hunger and poverty. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Customers also felt that community and helping one another was a prevention tool for hunger and poverty (7.0%) ○ Community support was described by 13.3% of MPFS staff as a way to prevent hunger and poverty.
<p><i>Increase opportunities to mentor pantry customers and their families. Women Ending Hunger may be a good platform to begin looking at models of mentorship and interest from pantry customers in participating.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentoring and/or different aspects of mentoring were described by pantry customers and stakeholders as a tool to prevent hunger and poverty. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Pantry customers felt that teaching values to the next generation (5.1%) and motivating/counseling/giving advice to the next generation (5.1%) were ways to prevent hunger and poverty. ○ For 10.2% of stakeholders, they felt that work ethic, community and motivation were hunger prevention tools ○ Mentoring was described by 6.1% of stakeholders as a way to prevent hunger and poverty.
<p><i>Continue to develop a network of volunteers, with a specialized focus on developing a grassroots volunteer base.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Of the 902 food pantry customers that participated in the survey, 32.4% gave their contact information to volunteer with MPFS programs. • Each customer described their skills in the survey; these skills and assets need to be evaluated to determine how to enhance volunteer programs among pantry customers, and how to mobilize people according to their assets. • 14.9% of stakeholders felt that community involvement and volunteerism was a strategy to improve community collaborations and partnerships. • Stakeholders also felt that volunteerism (6.1%) was a tool to prevent hunger and poverty.

Advocacy

Recommendation	Rationale
<p><i>Develop a grassroots advocacy network of pantry customers to address a variety of concerns at the policy and legislative level. Women Ending Hunger members have demonstrated some interest to work on advocacy.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pantry customers and stakeholders discussed the desire for government/political reform in a variety of contexts. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Government and political reform was discussed by 21.3% of stakeholders as a way to improve collaboration and partnership opportunities. ○ Government and political reform as a solution to hunger and poverty: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pantry customers described government help and/or reform as a way to solve hunger and poverty (5.6%). ▪ Stakeholders discussed government and tax reform as a strategy to solve hunger and poverty (8.2%). ○ Government and political reform as a way to prevent hunger and poverty. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pantry customers discussed government reform (5.1%) as a way to prevent hunger and poverty. ● Many customers expressed the need for additional resources in order to meet their needs, which are impacted by policy and legislative decisions. By developing a grassroots action network, food pantry customers can voice their concerns and participate to advocate for increased resources.
<p><i>Increase voter registration in rural areas.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rural pantry customers were less likely to be registered to vote (44.6%) than urban customers (58.8%).
<p><i>Evaluate interest in a grassroots coalition led by and consisting of members that are currently experiencing hunger and/or food insecurity. These members should volunteer and represent communities experiencing hunger by serving on Advisory Committees, Board of Directors, etc., for nonprofit organizations working with populations experiencing food insecurity.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In order to understand and address how to effectively address hunger and food insecurity concerns, people experiencing hunger need to be represented on movements addressing this issue. ● Many community providers do not have a current food pantry customer or others populations that they serve volunteering on their Board of Directors, although a few of the Board of Directors, themselves, have experienced hunger personally. Having leadership representation of the population a nonprofit organization serves can help guide the organization in ways that may make services more effective, and can assist other Board of Directors in understanding the situation that they are helping.

Cultural Resources

Recommendation	Rationale
<p><i>Cross-cultural communication training for MPFS, MPFS partner agencies, and the community at large.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community advocates observed that some community stakeholders and food pantry volunteers/staff were unaware on how to communicate cross-culturally, and community advocates felt that some community stakeholders and pantry leaders held differential attitudes toward cultural/ethnic groups. For some, this translated to an <i>us versus them</i> mentality, with negative attitudes toward different cultural/ethnic groups and the potential of differential treatment. • Pantry staff/volunteers and pantry customers were observed communicating with Spanish speakers and/or Hispanic/Latino pantry customers in a negative manner, and made negative comments in front of customers and behind their backs. Some stakeholders and customers discussed how Spanish speakers and Hispanics/Latinos were the cause behind hunger and poverty.
<p><i>MPFS should expand volunteer and staff capacity to more effectively connect with and reach out to the diverse population that MPFS serves.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hispanic/Latino and Spanish speaking pantry customers differed in many of their responses during interviews and on the survey from other language speakers and races/ethnicities. This has implications for the need for a culturally specific approach in working with diverse populations in order to reduce hunger and poverty. • In general, MPFS staff, Board of Directors, and volunteers represent the majority population; increasing the capacity of MPFS to communicate with the diverse population that MPFS serves or could potentially serve would help MPFS impact the community more effectively. This is especially important as various groups of people have different needs and interests.

BACKGROUND

Hunger is a pervasive social and economic issue that impacts many Americans, and in particular, Oregonians. More and more households are experiencing food insecurity, which the U.S. Department of Agriculture defines as the *limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate or safe foods or the uncertain ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways*.ⁱ

Rates of hunger and food insecurity are on the rise, with 14.6% of households currently experiencing food insecurity.ⁱⁱ This translates to nearly 1 in 6 Americans struggling to put food on the table.

The state of Oregon is especially impacted by the negative effects of hunger. Even with rich agricultural resources, Oregon has the 2nd highest state rating for very low food security, affecting 6.6% of Oregon residents (2006-2008 average). About 5.7% of American households experience very low food security.ⁱⁱⁱ However, Oregon's rates of low food security were comparable to other states, with 13.8% of Oregonians experiencing low food security.^{iv}

In other words, when Oregonians face food insecurity, they are impacted more critically since a higher proportion experience higher degrees of food insecurity than every state except one.

This need transfers to the use of emergency food services. Marion-Polk Food Share (MPFS), the local food bank serving Marion and Polk counties, is distributing more emergency food boxes than ever before. To learn more about MPFS and its programs, see Appendix A.

Emergency food services are not meant to solve hunger, but to provide supplemental help in the event of an emergency when an individual or family has no access to food. However, this service is being utilized more often and at higher rates, indicating that individuals and families are increasingly unable to meet their nutritional needs.

During the last fiscal year (2008-2009), 77,462 food boxes were distributed to individuals and families in Marion and Polk counties. On average, there has been a 5.3% increase in food box distribution every year since 1987, when MPFS was founded. However, within the

last fiscal year (2008-2009), increases in food box distribution was double the average increase (10.8%). The number of food boxes distributed has increased 170.8% since MPFS was founded in 1987.^v

Additionally, the global economy is currently experiencing an economic recession that began in late 2007. Oregon is especially affected by the recession, with some of the highest unemployment rates in the nation at the height of the recession.^{vi}

Even though the economic recession may have an impact on the increased need for emergency food services, food distribution rates have, on average, increased prior to the impact of the current economic recession. Regardless, the increased need in emergency food assistance highlights the importance of understanding why people are hungry and what the community should do to address it.

What are the Costs of Food Insecurity and Hunger?

Hunger and food insecurity are social determinants of health that can be prevented to improve the overall health and quality of life within a community. According to the World Health Organization, *Social determinants of health are the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age, including the health system. The social determinants of health are mostly responsible for health inequalities – the unfair and unavoidable differences in health status...*^{vii}

Food insecurity comes with many social and economic costs, such as *reduced cognitive development and learning capacity in children, impaired work performance and earnings potential in adults, and lower intake of food energy and key nutrients leading to increased medical costs, disability, and premature death due to diet-related illnesses.*^{viii} In addition, the presence of food insecurity decreases overall quality of life.^{ix}

Although food security is itself a social determinant of health, there are others, including income and social status, social support networks, education levels, employment, social and physical environments, gender and culture that are closely linked to food security.

Community Assessment

As the community's primary hunger relief organization, MPFS conducted a comprehensive community assessment in order to effectively understand how hunger has impacted Marion and Polk counties. This assessment and report aims to identify how to enhance food security and reduce poverty through community-derived solutions. This includes identifying barriers to getting ahead, availability of community resources, and community assets to help address these issues.

The community assessment was made possible with the generosity of the Northwest Health Foundation Kaiser Permanente Community Fund. The Fund is supporting the project's goal to strengthen community food security and reduce poverty in Marion and Polk counties through the development of community-based partnerships and programs.

The assessment incorporated perspectives on how to solve and prevent hunger from the following groups:

- Community stakeholders
- Food pantry customers
- Community advocates (hired staff to conduct surveys and interviews for the assessment)
- MPFS staff
- MPFS Board of Directors

This report is to be used by community members and organizations to understand the status of the community and utilize the information to improve partnerships, develop creative programs, and foster community support to address issues surrounding hunger and poverty in response to improve our community's food security.

ⁱ United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service. Retrieved from: www.fns.usda.gov/fsec.

ⁱⁱ United States Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service (2009). *Food security in the United States: Key statistics and graphics*. Retrieved from: www.ers.usda.gov/Briefing/FoodSecurity/stats_graphs.htm#food_secure.

ⁱⁱⁱ United States Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service (2009). *Measuring food security in the United States: Household food security in the United States, 2008 (ERS Report No. 83)*. Washington, D.C.: Nord, M., Andrews, M., Carlson, S. Retrieved from: www.ers.usda.gov/publications/err83/err83.pdf.

^{iv} United States Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service (2008). *Household food security (ERR-83)*. Retrieved from: www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/ERR83/ERR83b.pdf.

^v Marion-Polk Food Share internal data.

^{vi} Bureau of Labor Statistics. Retrieved from: www.bls.gov/lau/.

^{vii} World Health Organization (2010). Retrieved from: www.who.int/social/determinants/en.

^{viii} United States Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service (2002). *Community food security assessment toolkit (FAN No. 02-013)*. Washington, D.C.: Cohen, B. (2002). Retrieved from: <http://www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/EFAN02013/>.

^{ix} Yeh, M. & D.L. Katz (2006). Food, Nutrition, and the Health of Urban Populations. In N. Freudenberg, S. Galea & D. Vlahov (Eds.), *Cities and the Health of the Public* (pp. 106-128): 113.

METHOD

A variety of methods were used for the assessment in order to gain a comprehensive perspective on hunger and our community. By using multiple methods, we were able to learn from a variety of perspectives and different groups about food insecurity and poverty in our community, and, more importantly, gather ideas on what to do about it.

Methods used in the assessment include:

- Literature review of food security studies and regional assessments
- Food pantry customer survey
- One-on-one interviews with food pantry customers
- One-on-one interviews with community stakeholders
- Board of Directors and MPFS staff feedback
- Focus group with community advocates

Community advocates, many of whom currently or have experienced hunger, were hired as MPFS staff to conduct the one-on-one interviews and assist with surveys. In addition, an advisory committee of university professors and nonprofit leaders reviewed and approved the assessment instruments.

Instead of a needs-based approach, the assessment used a capacity-oriented approach. History has demonstrated that community development happens from the bottom-up and that there are limited resources available for outside help.ⁱ Furthermore, community projects must be centered on the community and its residents through a bottom-up approach in order to be successful in the long-term.ⁱⁱ Therefore, in order to create an effective plan to improve community health, the plan needs to identify and utilize the capacity of residents and the community who are directly impacted by the plan.

However, using an asset-based approach does not imply that community issues are completely ignored. An asset-based approach *leads* the community to think of solutions and capacity for action in different ways, but it must acknowledge community issues otherwise the identified community assets cannot be mobilized to improve quality of life.

Many community issues already have been identified through regional assessments. However, this assessment also identifies and expands upon community needs and gaps pertinent to food insecure households (a more specialized population than what most previous assessments focused on) and includes recommendations to reduce hunger and poverty in our community.

Literature Review

A comprehensive literature review was conducted to investigate methods and results of other food security assessments conducted throughout the U.S. The methods used for the current assessment were informed by this literature review.

In addition, a literature review was conducted on community assessments conducted in Marion and Polk counties. A summary of this review can be found in Appendix B. The results of these assessments were used to define gaps in knowledge on issues related to hunger and poverty in the region in addition to identifying baseline data on our community.

Community Surveys

The community survey (Appendix C) gathered a large cross-section of data from food insecure households (namely food pantry customers) regarding: demographics and participation in programs; availability, affordability and access to food; community resources; community involvement/civic participation; and individual and local assets.

Surveys were disseminated by community advocates and were also sent to most MPFS member agencies for food pantry customers to fill out while receiving a food box. Participation was voluntary and there was no incentive to complete it.

Member agencies were preselected based on ethnic and geographic representation of clients, hours and days of operation, as well as the number of clients they typically serve. A geographic representation of food pantries that participated in the survey is listed in Appendix D. Of the 902 returned surveys, 68.6% were filled out in English and 31.4% in Spanish.

In addition, survey participants had the opportunity to provide their contact information on a separate form in the survey (included in Appendix C at the end of the survey) if they wanted to participate and/or volunteer with MPFS programs. This form was detached from survey responses to protect participant confidentiality. This information will be used to create a grassroots base of volunteers and provide information on MPFS resources to those who are interested.

One-On-One Interviews with Food Pantry Customers

In addition to surveys, one-on-one interviews (Appendix E) were conducted with food pantry customers. These interviews were used as a qualitative supplement to the community survey. Furthermore, the one-on-one interviews involved open-ended questions that allowed for more discussion on individualized experiences with and solutions to hunger and poverty without limiting responses.

The interviews illuminated experiences with hunger and poverty in relation to existing community resources. They also included perspectives on how these issues can be resolved. More specifically, the one-on-one interview questions gathered information on:

- Experiences with hunger
- Utilization of community resources
- Community involvement
- Proposed solutions to hunger and poverty personally and for the future generation

Incentives of \$5 gift cards to a grocery store were given to participants as an appreciation of their time and thorough responses. A total of 391 interviews were conducted with food pantry customers. Of those, 75.2% were completed in English and 24.8% in Spanish.

One-On-One Interviews with Community Stakeholders

Although food pantry customers discussed issues of access to food and resources, affordability of food, and community resources through surveys and one-on-one interviews, their perspectives may not reflect the actual availability of resources in the community. Just because resources are available does not necessarily mean that

they are accessible, known, or used by people that need them.

In addition, perspectives on how to solve and prevent hunger need the incorporation of different perspectives in order to create a coordinated response effort to address hunger.

As a result, interviews were also conducted with community stakeholders, including business leaders, representatives from local and state government agencies, and nonprofit leaders (Appendix F). The stakeholder interview questions mirrored the food pantry customer interviews, but also included questions regarding the status of the community and potential partnerships that can be developed. Such questions included:

- Availability of community resources
- Views on community assets and barriers
- Proposed solutions to hunger and poverty
- Interest and capacity to form community partnerships

Forty-nine interviews were conducted with community stakeholders, who represented government, private and nonprofit sectors in Marion and Polk counties.

Board of Directors and Staff Feedback

The MPFS Board of Directors is the leadership of MPFS and represents the current and future direction of the organization. As such, it is important to understand ideas put forth by the Board of Directors regarding MPFS current and potential programs and how to address hunger and poverty with long-term solutions. As a result, time was taken during a Board of Directors meeting to discuss these ideas.

In addition, MPFS staff are directly involved with providing services and working to end hunger. Therefore, it also was important to gather staff perspectives on these issues. MPFS staff filled out a form to discuss their ideas. The Board of Directors and MPFS staff responded to the same questions, which are provided in Appendix G. These questions include:

- Creation and/or expansion of MPFS programs
- Prevention of hunger and poverty
- Partnership opportunities

The majority of MPFS staff and Board of Directors responded to the assessment questions, with 16 staff members (66.7%) and 12 Board of Directors (75.0%) participating.

Community Advocate Focus Group

An informal focus group was conducted with the community advocates to document their experiences in the field and trends they observed while interviewing pantry customers and stakeholders. They also discussed observations and comparisons between different groups while conducting interviews and surveys.

Summary

To conclude, a variety of methods were used to not only to gather baseline data on hunger, poverty, and community resource gaps, but also to identify

community and individual capacity to address these issues. The mixed methods approach included community surveys, one-on-one interviews, stakeholder interviews, Board of Directors and staff feedback, and a focus group with community advocates. Results of the assessment will be shared in this report to advance community awareness and action in reducing hunger and poverty in our community.

ⁱ Kretzmann, J.P. & J.L. McKnight (1993). Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets. Evanston, IL: Institute for Policy Research.

ⁱⁱ United States Department of Agriculture (2009). *Access to affordable & nutritious food: Measuring and understanding food deserts and their consequences*. Retrieved from: www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/AP/AP036/.

PROFILE OF MARION AND POLK COUNTIES

Marion and Polk counties comprise approximately 2.0% of Oregon's land area (Figure 1).ⁱ Even though these two counties combined only make up 2.0% of Oregon's land mass, this region is home to 10.1% of Oregon's population.ⁱⁱ

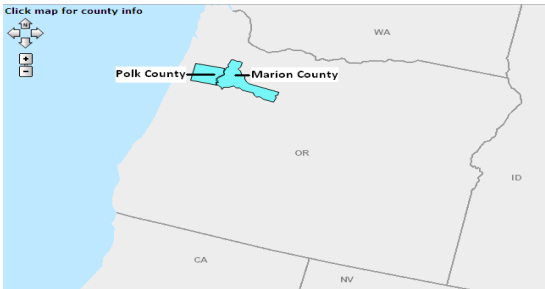


Figure 1. Map of Marion and Polk counties, Oregon.ⁱⁱⁱ

In 2009, Marion County was the 5th most populated county in Oregon, while Polk County was the 14th most populated county out of Oregon's 36 counties. Both counties have seen an average increase of 11.0% in population since 2000. The city of Salem, which is located in both Marion and Polk counties, is the 3rd most populated city in the state.^{iv}

Marion County is home to the state capital, Salem, and state institutions such as the state hospital and state prisons. As a result, Marion and Polk counties are home to some vulnerable populations that are faced with a variety of barriers to getting ahead.

Demographics

Race/Ethnicity. The majority of Marion and Polk counties is of White descent (88.2%), followed by Hispanic/Latino (16.6%). All other races/ethnicities make up less than 5% of Marion and Polk county averages. Marion County has a higher rate of Hispanic/Latino residents than the state of Oregon.^v

Language. In addition to having a higher prevalence of Hispanic/Latino residents, Marion County has a higher rate of residents speaking a language other than English at home than the state of Oregon and the U.S. as a whole. About 23.5% of Marion County residents speak a language other than English at home. More specifically, 18.9% of Marion County residents speak Spanish compared to 8.5% of Oregon's population.

Education. Marion County has lower educational attainment rates than state and U.S. averages. More Marion County residents do not have a high school diploma or its equivalent (18.6%) than Oregon as a whole (11.9%). In addition, Marion County residents have lower rates of attaining higher education than Oregon and the U.S.^{vi}

Income. The 2009 poverty threshold was \$21,756 for a family of four, including 2 adults and 2 children. Marion County has a higher rate of individuals living below the poverty level than Oregon and the U.S. About 15.5% of Marion County residents live below the poverty level, compared to 13.4% and 13.2% of Oregon and the U.S., respectively. In Marion and Polk counties, the average annual median household income is \$47,582.50.^{vii}

Employment. Since 2006, Marion County consistently has a higher unemployment rate than the state of Oregon and the U.S. as a whole. All geographic areas experienced a spike in unemployment rates during 2009, which correlates with the economic recession. However, Marion County and the state of Oregon have experienced similar unemployment rates, which were both higher than the U.S. average. Polk County also experienced higher rates of unemployment than the U.S. As of May 2010, Oregon had the 11th highest unemployment rate in the nation. Figure 2 displays a comparison of unemployment rate yearlong averages for Marion and Polk counties, Oregon and the U.S. since 2006. Unemployment rates for 2010 only include the months of January – June 2010.^{viii}

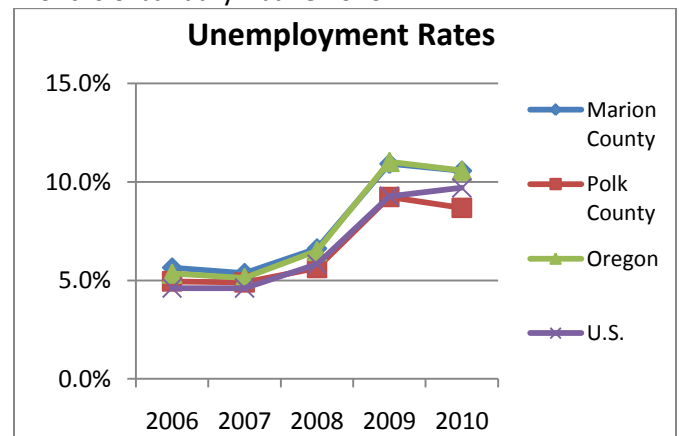


Figure 2. Comparison of unemployment rates in Marion and Polk counties, Oregon and the U.S. (seasonally adjusted)^{ix}

Free/Reduced Lunch Eligibility. While Polk County rates of free/reduced lunch eligibility is fairly consistent with Oregon rates, Marion County consistently has higher rates of free/reduced lunch eligibility than the state of Oregon. The most recent data (2009-2010 school year) shows that nearly 3 out of 5 (59.4%) students attending schools in Marion County are eligible for free or reduced lunch. Figure 3 displays the comparison of free/reduced lunch eligibility between Marion and Polk counties and the state of Oregon.^x

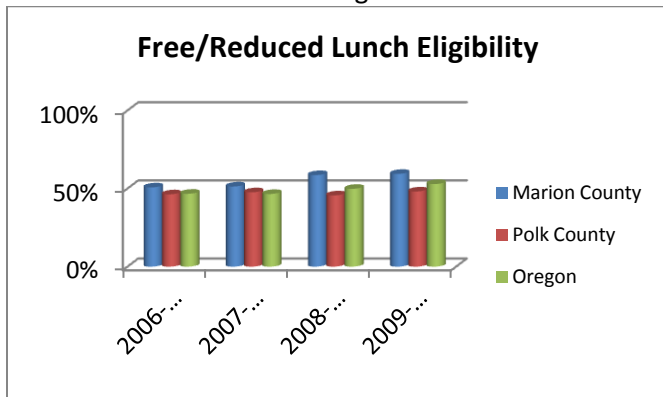


Figure 3. Free/reduced lunch eligibility in Marion and Polk counties and Oregon.

Homelessness. The number of homeless residents in Marion and Polk counties increased 75.2% since 2007. The most recent homeless count discovered that there are 3,366 homeless people residing in Marion and Polk counties (2010).^{xi} Figure 4 shows the homeless count in Marion and Polk counties since 2007. Based on the 2008 homeless count, Oregon had the highest proportion of homeless individuals in the nation.^{xii}

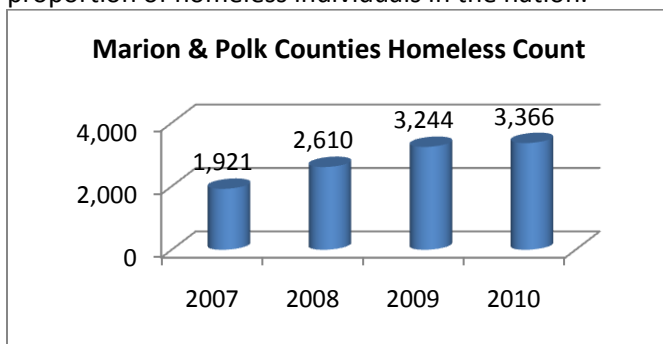


Figure 4. Marion and Polk county homeless count.

ⁱ United States Census Bureau (2008). *American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates*. Retrieved from: factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html?_lang=en.

ⁱⁱ Portland State University Population Research Center (2010). 2009 Oregon population report. Portland, OR: Proehl, R., Crain, J. Retrieved from:

www.pdx.edu/sites/www.pdx.edu.prc/files/media_assets/Po pRpt09b.pdf.

ⁱⁱⁱ United States Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service (2010). *Your food environment atlas*. Retrieved from: www.ers.usda.gov/FoodAtlas/.

^{iv} Portland State University Population Research Center (2010). 2009 Oregon population report. Portland, OR: Proehl, R., Crain, J. Retrieved from: www.pdx.edu/sites/www.pdx.edu.prc/files/media_assets/Po pRpt09b.pdf.

^v United States Census Bureau (2010). *American fact finder*. Retrieved from: factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html?_lang=en.

^{vi} United States Census Bureau (2010). *American fact finder*. Retrieved from: factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html?_lang=en.

^{vii} United States Census Bureau (2010). *American fact finder*. Retrieved from: factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html?_lang=en.

^{viii} Oregon Labor Market Information System. *Local area employment statistics*. Retrieved from: www.qualityinfo.org/olmisj/labforce?x=1&y=1

^{ix} Oregon Labor Market Information System. *Local area employment statistics*. Retrieved from: www.qualityinfo.org/olmisj/labforce?x=1&y=1

^x Oregon Department of Education. *Students eligible for free or reduced lunch*. Retrieved from: www.ode.state.or.us/sfda/reports/r0061Select.asp.

^{xi} Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency (2008). *Plan to end homelessness, Marion and Polk Counties: Results of January 30, 2008 homeless survey*. Retrieved from: www.mwvcaa.org/crp/Homeless_Count_Report_2008.pdf.

Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency (2010). *Plan to end homelessness, Marion and Polk Counties: Results of January 27, 2010 homeless survey*. Retrieved from: www.mwvcaa.org/crp/crp.html.

Mid Valley Housing and Services Collaborative (2009). *Plan to end homelessness, Marion and Polk Counties: Results of January 28, 2009 homeless survey*. Retrieved from: www.mwvcaa.org/crp/2009%20Homeless%20Report.pdf.

^{xii} United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Community Planning and Development (2009). *The 2008 annual homeless assessment report to Congress: A summary of findings*. Washington, D.C.: Khadduri, J., & D. Culhane. Retrieved from: www.housepdx.com/pdfs/housing/2008AHARSummaryanfullreport.pdf.

CHARACTERISTICS OF SURVEY AND INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

Food Pantry Representation

Surveys were distributed to most MPFS partner agencies where food boxes are provided for people needing emergency food assistance. Interviews were conducted on-site at preselected food pantries.

Appendix D shows a map of the geographic spread of the food pantry locations where customers filled out the survey and the proportion of surveys and interviews conducted and each food pantry location.

Pantry locations for interviews and survey dissemination were based on urban and rural representation, racial/ethnic distribution, and geographic dispersion.

Urban/Rural Residence

MPFS serves customers that represent both urban and rural areas nearly equally. This is based on the food box report from the current fiscal year (July 2009 – March 2010). This was also the case with survey participation. However, customer interviews more heavily represented urban regions. Table 1 shows the comparison between urban and rural representation of food box reports, survey participants, and customers that participated in one-on-one interviews.

Urban/Rural Representation	Urban	Rural
Survey Participants	45.1%	54.9%
One-on-One Interviews	61.2%	38.8%
Food Pantry Customers Served (July 2009-March 2010)	50.3%	49.7%

Table 1. Urban and rural representation of food pantry customers.

Gender

The majority of survey respondents were female (74.1%). Males comprised 25.5% of survey participants, and .4% of survey respondents reported being both male and female.

Household Composition

The average (median) household composition among survey participants included a household of 4 people according to the following breakdown:

- 2 children (under 18 years old)
- 2 adults (ages 18-64)

Survey participants, on average, had one more person per household than Marion and Polk county household averages.ⁱ

The proportion of survey participants who were part of households with children was nearly double that of county averages, with 67.1% of survey respondents belonging to households with children.ⁱⁱ

The most common types of households among survey participants were two parents/adults with children (39.2%) and single parent households (24.4%). The rate of single parent households among survey participants was higher than Marion and Polk county averages.ⁱⁱⁱ

In sum, survey participants had larger households, were more likely to have children, and had higher rates of single parenthood households than county averages.

Age

The age of survey respondents ranged from 13 -92 years, with a mean age of 41.72. With the assumption that all household members were eating from the food box, nearly half of food box recipients (45.5%) were children under 18 years old (Figure 5).

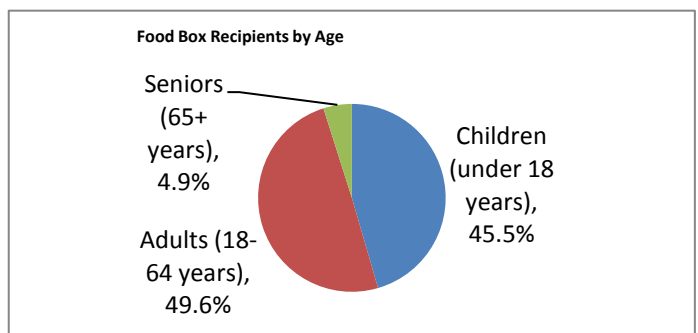


Figure 5. Food box recipients by age.

According to MPFS food box reports for the city of Salem, the proportion of food pantry customers that were children remained constant over the last 3 years, an average of 42.0%. This translates to 60,692 children eating out of a food box during the prior fiscal year (2008-2009) in the city of Salem. The most recent figures suggest an increase of 37.2% of the number of children eating out of a food box since the prior fiscal year.^{iv}

Race/Ethnicity

Food pantry customers that participated in the survey represented a variety of racial/ethnic groups, but 95.1% of respondents were White (Non-Hispanic) and/or Hispanic/Latino (Figure 6).

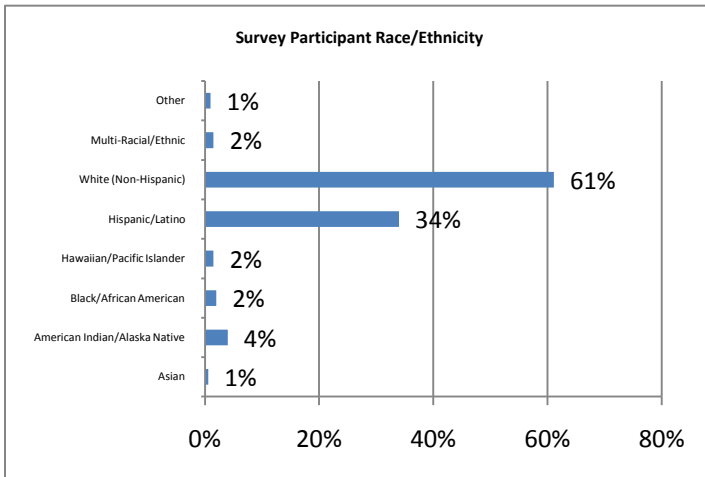


Figure 6. Race/ethnicity of survey participants.

Similar to the survey respondents, the majority of Oregon’s population, including Marion and Polk counties, was of White descent. The second most prominent race/ethnicity in the two counties was Hispanic/Latino of any race.^v

However, among survey participants, there was a larger representation of Hispanic/Latino participants than county averages.

Language

Of the completed surveys, 69.0% were completed in English and 31.0% were completed in Spanish. With regard to the customer interviews, 75.2% were completed in English and 24.8% were conducted in Spanish.

Similarly, when pantry customers were asked what language(s) they spoke at home, most customers reported speaking English (74.4%), and over one-third of survey respondents reported speaking Spanish at home (36.9%). About 4.8% of survey participants spoke another language at home other than English or Spanish.

Although there were slight variations, the proportion of English and Spanish speakers represented by each method within the assessment was fairly consistent.

Education

Survey respondents had lower educational attainment than Marion and Polk county residents as a whole. However, people whose highest educational attainment was graduate/professional school was fairly similar across survey respondents and Marion and Polk county averages.

Among survey responses, participants indicated the following (Figure 7):

- 37.5% did not have at least a high school diploma/G.E.D.
- 62.6% had at least a high school diploma/G.E.D.
- 13.2% had graduated from higher education, which includes college, graduate or technical/professional school

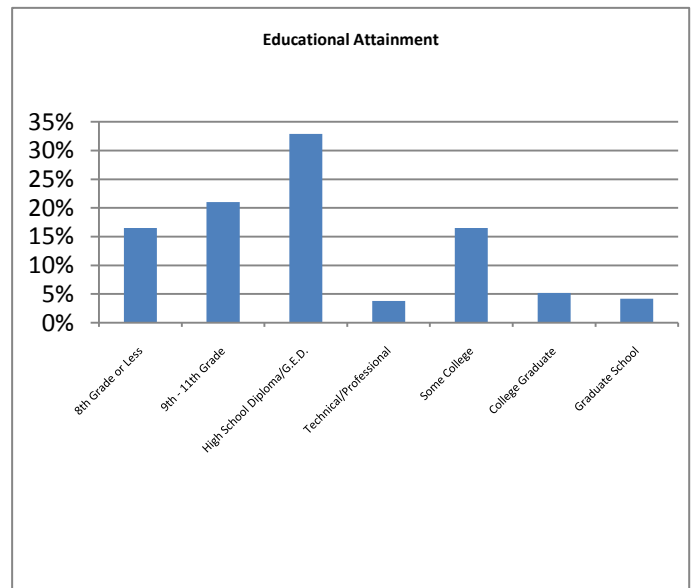


Figure 7. Educational attainment of survey respondents.

Employment

Among survey participants, 62.9% were employed at least part-time. Only 22.6% of survey respondents were employed full-time and another 39.1% were unemployed and looking for work. Still, others were potentially unable to work due to a disability (19.6%) or because they were staying at home with a child or disabled person (10.0%). Only 5.7% of all respondents were unemployed and not looking for work. Figure 8 demonstrates the employment situation for survey respondents.

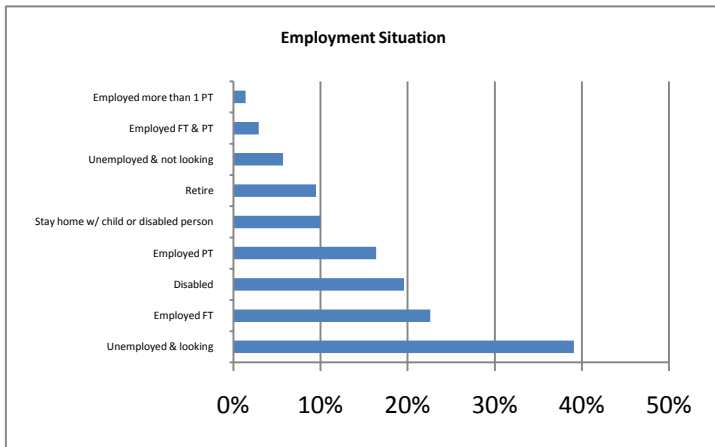


Figure 8. Employment situation of survey participants.

Income

Among survey participants, 71.8% made a household monthly income below \$1,250, and 89.9% of households made a monthly income below \$2,083 (Figure 9). With the average household composition of 4 people per household, this roughly translates to 71.8% of households having a *maximum* monthly income of \$312.50 per household member.

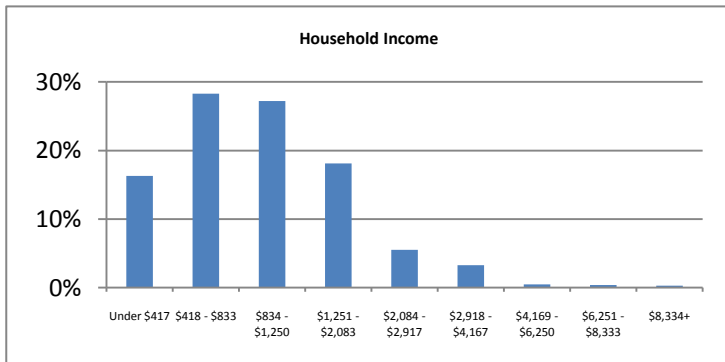


Figure 9. Household income of survey participants.

For a family of four with 2 adults and 2 children, which is the average household composition of survey participants, the poverty threshold (2009) is set at a monthly income of \$1,813.^{vi} The average median income of Marion and Polk county households is \$3,965.21 a month.^{vii} However, only 4.5% of pantry customers lived in households that brought in the Marion and Polk county median income or higher.

Nearly half (49.9%) of food pantry recipients received their current main source of income from a job (Figure 10). However, this means that 51.1% of survey participants received their main source of income from another source. Many of these sources are government programs, such as social security and unemployment.

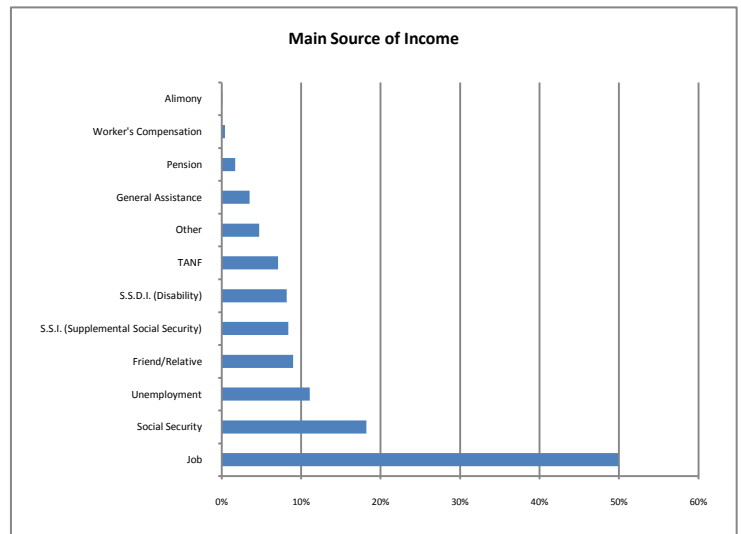


Figure 10. Main source of income of survey participants.

Summary

The demographics of survey respondents did not necessarily reflect the demographics of the community as a whole. For instance, survey participants had larger families, were more likely to have children, lower educational attainment, more Hispanic/Latino representation, and more Spanish speakers than Marion and Polk counties as a whole.

More pantry customers were unemployed and looking for work than employed full-time; however, about half of food pantry customers received their main source of income from a job.

ⁱ United States Census Bureau (2010). *American fact finder*.

Retrieved from:

factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html?_lang=en.

ⁱⁱ United States Census Bureau (2010). *American fact finder*.

Retrieved from:

factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html?_lang=en.

ⁱⁱⁱ United States Census Bureau (2010). *American fact finder*.

Retrieved from:

factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html?_lang=en.

^{iv} Marion-Polk Food Share internal data.

^v United States Census Bureau (2010). *American fact finder*.

Retrieved from:

factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html?_lang=en.

^{vi} United States Census Bureau (2010). *Poverty thresholds*

2009. Retrieved from:

www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/data/threshld/thresh09.html.

^{vii} United States Census Bureau (2010). *American fact finder*.

Retrieved from:

factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html?_lang=en.

WHY ARE PEOPLE HUNGRY?

PERSPECTIVES ON WHY PEOPLE EXPERIENCE HUNGER AND POVERTY

Community stakeholders, food pantry customers and MPFS staff were each asked: *Why do you think people are experiencing hunger and poverty in our community?*

The purpose behind the question was to gain an understanding of different perspectives on why individuals and families experience food insecurity.

Food Pantry Customer Perspective

Responses from food pantry customers reflected both personal experiences and ideas on the reasons behind the existence of hunger and poverty. When answering this question, pantry customers leaned toward external reasons while discussing why they felt people experience hunger and poverty.

The common themes in responses included:

- No jobs/unemployment (66.4%)
- Economy (24.6%)
- High cost of living, inflation (13.6%)
- No money or income (8.2%)
- Barriers to employment (5.4%)

No Jobs/Unemployment (66.4%). The most common response reported by pantry customers as to why people experience hunger and poverty was the lack of jobs in the community. Of the food pantry customers that discussed unemployment, 11.2% described job loss specifically as the reason. Customers attributed job loss to industry changes, business closures and layoffs.

Pantry customers that completed their interview in Spanish discussed the lack of jobs more often than English speakers, with 80.4% of Spanish speakers discussing this topic compared to 61.3% of English speakers.*

Economy (24.6%). The economy also was another common response among food pantry customers as to the reason why people experience hunger and poverty. *There are various reasons, but I think the economy is bad and unemployment is high. Many area businesses*

have closed. I'm shocked with the economy so bad that prices keep going up.

English speakers reported the economy as a reason why people experience hunger more often than Spanish speakers. About 28.5% of English speakers spoke about the economy compared to 13.4% of Spanish speakers.*

High Cost of Living, Inflation (13.6%). Even though the economy is currently in recession, food pantry customers felt that the price of goods and the cost of living remains high, which is a reason why people experience hunger and poverty. Customers focused especially on the high cost of food and how difficult it is to purchase basic needs at high prices.

Responses on this theme differed by the language that the interview was conducted in, with 17.2% of English speakers and 3.1% of Spanish speakers discussing the high cost of living and inflation as a reason why people experience hunger and poverty.*

No Money or Income (8.2%). The overall lack of money and income was a persistent response among food

Oh...we don't get enough money. Social security is not enough. I've worked for forty years and I don't make enough money to live on. I get sixteen dollars a month in food stamps. I turn in cans, cancel services (garbage, cell phone) just to survive.

pantry customers. This also includes the lack of money available in family budgets after paying bills, leaving people without enough funds to purchase food.

Barriers to Employment (5.4%). Some customers reported that obstacles to employment was a reason why people experience hunger and poverty, making it even more difficult to acquire a job during the economic recession. Customers discussed barriers such as being disabled, having a criminal record, and having an undocumented worker status.

Community Stakeholder Perspective

Community stakeholder responses were more varied than pantry customer responses as to why they felt people experience hunger and poverty. In addition,

stakeholders included more internal factors in their discussion. Although all food pantry customer response themes were also discussed by community stakeholders, community stakeholders tended to weigh individual choices more heavily when considering the reason why people are experiencing hunger and poverty.

Common themes discussed by community stakeholders included:

- No jobs, unemployment (46.9%)
- Economy (25.1%)
- Lack of education (22.4%)
- No money, income (16.3%)
- Spending unwisely, not budgeting (16.3%)
- Attitude toward work, unmotivated, bad choices (14.3%)
- Low wages (12.2%)
- High cost of living/inflation (12.2%)
- Lack of job skills/experience (12.2%)
- Lack of community support (12.2%)
- Family situation (10.2%)
- Issues surrounding being Hispanic/Latino and/or undocumented (10.2%)
- Barriers to employment, getting ahead (8.2%)
- Lack of transportation (8.2%)
- Health/medical concerns (8.2%)
- Housing issues (8.2%)
- Lack of knowledge of resources (6.1%)

No Jobs, Unemployment (46.9%). Similar to food pantry customers, the lack of jobs and high unemployment rate was the number one reason why stakeholders felt that people experience hunger and poverty. *It is ironic that we are experiencing so much in the heart of agriculture country and the Willamette Valley. A lack of jobs and the cost of living all contribute.*

The economic times are pretty tough. People aren't making enough money to support their family let alone donate to others in need.

Economy (25.1%). Also similar to pantry customers, the economy was the 2nd most commonly cited reason by stakeholders as to why they felt people experience hunger and poverty.

I think there are some institutional biases that are within our systems where a lot of kids and families are stereotypes. The demographics become their destiny. They never get their education, because once they were labeled the "bad" kids, and that took away their opportunity for education. It's hard for those kids to get by...

Lack of Education (22.4%). Lack of education was ranked 3rd among common responses from stakeholders. Stakeholders explained that people are unable to get ahead because they lack the educational background to do so.

No Money, Income (16.3%). Even if families have a steady income, stakeholders expressed concern that it may not be enough to cover living expenses and bills, thus leading people to experience hunger and poverty.

Spending Unwisely, Not Budgeting (16.3%). Many stakeholders felt that people experience hunger because they make bad choices about spending money, or do not budget their money wisely. *People don't have savings; we are not a savings economy. People make bad choices, for example, buying a new cell phone instead of paying bills. Bad economy caught everyone off guard.*

Attitude toward Work, Unmotivated, Bad Choices (14.3%). Another internalized reason stakeholders used to describe why they felt people experience hunger is personal choices/motivation. This includes bad work ethic, lack of motivation to get ahead in life, and negative life decisions that lead to hunger and poverty. Responses discussing this theme ranged from an understanding that while some people may be unmotivated, the economic climate makes it increasingly difficult to get ahead, while other stakeholders felt that personal choices and decisions, aside from outside influences, lead to experiences with hunger and poverty.

Low Wages (12.2%). *The common wage is also not a living wage, it's a minimum wage. Most families need to make serious sacrifices. The current wage is not enough to support a family, and jobs don't give the extra benefits of healthcare, and dental which puts an even greater stress on families. We also have a large population of the 'working poor.' They just can't get*

ahead. According to stakeholders, low wages contribute to hunger and poverty. Minimum wage does not cover all living expenses for families, thus making it difficult for families to get ahead.

High Cost of Living, Inflation (12.2%). Even if families have a steady income, stakeholders felt that the cost of living is high and inflation causes current prices of goods to go up. This poses an issue for people that cannot pay for all of their bills and necessities because the cost of these items and services are so high.

Lack of Job Skills, Experience (12.2%). Another reason stakeholders discussed as to why people experience hunger and poverty is lack of job skills and job experience. Stakeholders felt that the lack of job skills and experience acts as a barrier to gaining employment and, as a result, also contributes to the experiences of hunger and poverty.

Can we get together? What the heck are we gonna do? The model city is where there's no hunger, poverty, homelessness, crime. When people say that's ideal, they don't have the will to work for the ideal.

Lack of Community Support (12.2%). Community stakeholders discussed the importance of community support from our neighbors to connect with one another for personal outreach and to communicate resources to those who need them. According to many stakeholders, the lack of community support is what leads people to experience hunger and poverty. *People are going hungry because they are alone, they don't have connections to help them.*

Family Situation (10.2%). Another common theme discussed by stakeholders as to why people experience hunger and poverty was family situation and background. While stakeholders discussed different aspects of family situations, the common denominator in stakeholder discussions regarding family was that the family structure and background impacts experiences with hunger and poverty. This includes experiences with foster care, having incarcerated parents, lack of family planning, and living in single parent households.

Issues Surrounding Being Hispanic/Latino and/or Undocumented (10.2%). Another common theme that

stakeholders discussed as to why people experience hunger and poverty was issues relating to being Hispanic/Latino and/or an undocumented worker, which some stakeholders associated and/or even equated with one another. However, stakeholders discussed this theme in different ways. Responses varied from basing logic on stereotypes of the Hispanic/Latino population (e.g. - *80% of clients are Hispanic, not citizens and have large families. Large families are difficult to support.*), to explaining why undocumented workers and/or Hispanic/Latino customers are afraid of asking for help. A stakeholder went on to express s/he works directly with the Hispanic/Latino population, and *people in the Hispanic community people <are> afraid of going and asking for help. If they're hungry sometimes they would rather go hungry than ask for help* because they fear the new immigration regulations and the possibility of losing their driver's licenses if they ask for help.

Barriers to Employment, Getting Ahead (8.2%). Community stakeholders identified a few barriers they felt stood in the way of people getting ahead and that they felt contributed to people experiencing hunger and poverty. These barriers included mental illness and language barriers, among others. *Mental illness is a community issue that's out of control and there is still a stigma with talking about mental illness it's almost taboo. Mental health problems limits the ability to hold down a job leads to homelessness and crime.* Stakeholders felt that barriers make it difficult to obtain employment, thus leading to hunger and poverty.

Lack of Transportation (8.2%). Transportation also was an issue described by stakeholders explaining why they felt people experience hunger and poverty. Without access to transportation, people are unable to find and get jobs, and have decreased access to fresh food. In addition, stakeholders felt that gas prices were expensive, making transportation difficult to maintain even if people have access to it.

Health/Medical Concerns (8.2%). *Some health costs destroy families, and kids tend to suffer the most in this case. There also is a lack of services addressing these issues...* Stakeholders discussed health and medical concerns as an explanation for the existence of hunger and poverty. Stakeholders felt that many people have

difficulty accessing healthcare or the cost of healthcare is so high that it forces families into situational poverty.

Housing Issues (8.2%). Many stakeholders also felt that lack of affordable housing and homelessness makes it difficult for families to provide for their basic needs. Stakeholders identified that there is a shortage of affordable and available housing in the community, which they felt leads to experiences with hunger and poverty.

Unfamiliar with Resources (6.1%). *The lack of education about the programs available is a contributor <to hunger and poverty>*. Many stakeholders attributed lack of knowledge on where to go and who to ask regarding resources was a reason people experience hunger and poverty.

MPFS Staff Perspective

In addition to collecting input from pantry customers and stakeholders on why people experience hunger and poverty, the question also was asked of MPFS staff. This not only identifies staff perspectives on hunger and poverty, but also allows for a comparison of attitudes with pantry customers and stakeholders to determine if all groups view hunger and poverty consistently.

MPFS staff responses were fairly similar to stakeholder responses in that they both discussed internal and external reasons as to why people experience hunger and poverty.

However, there was less variation in responses among MPFS staff on why people experience hunger and poverty than among pantry customers and stakeholders. This may be because even though the majority of staff members responded to the assessment questions (66.7%), the total number of responses was less than the number of food pantry customers and stakeholders that were interviewed, thus possibly accounting for less variation in responses.

The common themes among MPFS staff responses include:

- Unemployment/lack of jobs/job loss (93.8%)
- Lack of education (43.8%)
- Low wages (37.5%)
- Cost of living/high cost of goods (37.5%)

- Generational poverty (25.0%)
- Economic recession (25.0%)

Unemployment/Lack of Jobs/Job Loss (93.8%). Nearly every staff member agreed that unemployment, job loss, and/or the lack of jobs were reasons behind why people experience hunger and poverty.

Lack of Education (43.8%). A large proportion of MPFS staff responses also discussed that lack of education makes it difficult to get ahead and obtain good jobs, which MPFS staff felt leads to hunger and poverty.

Low Wages (37.5%). A shared sentiment among MPFS staff on why people experience hunger and poverty was the *lack of income from both lack of jobs as well as underpaid wages*. MPFS staff felt that even if people had jobs, the lack of living family wages makes it difficult for families to get ahead.

Cost of Living/High Cost of Goods (37.5%). The cost of living and the high prices of goods, especially of basic needs such as food and healthcare, was a common theme discussed by MPFS staff as to why people experience hunger and poverty. Staff felt that the high cost of living propels hunger and poverty because many people are unable to keep up with the high cost of necessities.

Generational Poverty (25.0%). MPFS staff spoke about the role generational poverty plays in perpetuating experiences of hunger and poverty, whereas pantry customers and stakeholders did not share this theme when asked about why people experience hunger and poverty. There was a general feeling among MPFS staff that when families experience decades of poverty, it is difficult for future family members to

Unfortunately, I think there is also an aspect <of> "generational poverty" and that some folks don't have the skills, motivation, personal responsibility etc. to escape the situation they find themselves in.

escape it especially because they felt that generational poverty perpetuates the lack the economic capital, knowledge and motivation to get ahead.

Economic Recession (25.0%). Similar to food pantry customers and community stakeholders, MPFS staff also felt that the economy was a factor behind why

people experience hunger and poverty. Staff felt that the current economic recession reduced economic opportunities to get ahead and caused many families to experience hunger and poverty for the first time.

Summary

All common themes discussed by customers were shared by community stakeholders, indicating that stakeholders and customers shared many of the same views when it comes to identifying situations that lead people to experience hunger and poverty. However, community stakeholders discussed many additional factors that were not expressed by customers, many of which involved internal factors explaining why they felt people experience hunger and poverty. MPFS staff shared a few common responses with customers and stakeholders, but also had responses that were not discussed by either group.

Food pantry customers viewed hunger and poverty as a result of external factors beyond their control, such as the economy, inflation, lack of jobs, etc. However, there were differences between English and Spanish speaking customers on why they felt people experience hunger and poverty. Spanish speakers spoke more about lack of jobs and English speakers discussed the economy and high cost of goods/inflation more often.

Common themes from stakeholders and MPFS staff not shared by pantry customers included internal reasons in addition to external, such as lack of job skills, poor attitude toward work, spending issues, issues surrounding being Hispanic and/or undocumented, etc.

Food pantry customers did not speak on internalized reasons often. In contrast, stakeholders and MPFS staff discussed internal reasons in conjunction with external reasons explaining why they felt people experience hunger and poverty. This demonstrates that there is a disconnect regarding perspectives on hunger and poverty between the groups, which may have implications for the scope of community understanding and resources being able to help those in need.

WHAT WAS THE SITUATION THAT LED FOOD PANTRY CUSTOMERS TO SEEK EMERGENCY FOOD ASSISTANCE?

In addition to asking food pantry customers why people experience hunger and poverty, they were also asked about their own personal situation that led them to seek emergency food assistance. This helps to not only understand the causes behind needing emergency food assistance, but also helps to compare perspectives on why pantry customers think other people experience hunger and poverty compared to the reality of why they personally needed emergency food assistance.

The question regarding situations that led pantry customers to seek emergency food assistance fostered different responses than answers to the general question of: *Why do you think people are experiencing hunger and poverty in our community?*

Common themes shared by pantry customers regarding the situation that led up to getting an emergency food box included:

- No job/job loss (38.1%)
- No income/low wages/not enough income (32.0%)
- SNAP benefits do not last (19.7%)
- No food (13.0%)
- Need to feed their children (9.5%)
- No money for bills (8.7%)
- Disabled (8.4%)
- Health/medical concerns (8.4%)
- Cost of living/inflation/high cost of goods (8.2%)
- Not enough hours at work (8.2%)
- Living on a fixed income (7.9%)

Just as with the stakeholder responses to the question on why people experience hunger and poverty, pantry customers discussed both internal and external reasons as to why they needed emergency food assistance. More specifically, internal reasons focused on food access and personal reasons as to why they were unable to work. External reasons included high cost of living, unavailability of jobs, etc.

No Job/Job Loss (38.1%). Being unemployed, losing a job, and the lack of jobs were common responses from

pantry customers as to why they were personally experiencing hunger. Many customers felt that the economic recession caused them to lose their jobs through layoffs and business closures. Hace 3 meses de no tener trabajo, hay muy poco trabajo./Been out of work for three months, there is so little work.

Spanish speakers spoke about job unavailability more than twice as often as English speakers as the reason why they sought emergency food assistance, with 66.0% of Spanish speakers and 29.9% of English speakers discussing unemployment.*

No Income/Low Wages/Not Enough Income (32%). Even

We have 7 in the family to feed. The \$336 in food stamps we receive only goes so far.

if pantry customers were employed, many felt that their wages were not high enough to support their families, leading them to visit a food pantry for emergency food assistance. In addition, the

general lack of income was discussed as a reason for needing emergency food assistance.

SNAP Benefits Do Not Last (19.7%). Many food pantry customers needed to use emergency food assistance because their SNAP benefits did not last through the end of the month. SNAP benefits are intended to supplement food purchases on a monthly basis, but many food pantry customers found that their supplemental benefits were not enough to fully support their families with food on the table.

English speakers discussed SNAP benefits running out nearly 4 times as often as Spanish speakers, at rates of 24.1% and 6.2%, respectively.*

In addition, customers using food pantries in urban areas discussed SNAP benefits not lasting throughout the month more often than their rural counterparts. About 23.6% of urban customers and 13.6% of rural customers reported SNAP benefits not lasting as a reason why they needed emergency food assistance.*

No Food (13%). Many food pantry customers reported needing emergency food assistance because they did not have food at home and were unable to access additional food for their families without the use of a food box. *I need to make ends meet, I don't have*

There is simply not enough food in my household. I have ten people in the family, and receive only three hundred dollars in food stamps. I have grown children, they eat a lot (sometimes I think they'll eat me). I calculated, and I estimated that I need at least one thousand three hundred dollars a month to feed the family.

enough food. Last time I went to the store I only bought half of what was on my shopping list.

Among food pantry customers, English speakers

were more likely to report this theme than Spanish speakers.* About 16.0% of English speakers and 4.1% of Spanish speakers spoke about the lack of food as a reason for using a food box.

Need to Feed Their Children (9.5%). Food pantry customers expressed that they needed emergency food assistance because they had a duty to feed their children. *I'm trying to make sure that my daughter doesn't go hungry. Food prices are going way up this year.* Customers either had a lot of children to feed, their children ate a lot, or food pantry customers felt that it was important to ensure that their children had food on the table. Therefore, they used emergency food assistance to fulfill this need.

English speakers (11.2%) discussed this topic more often than Spanish-speaking customers (4.1%).*

High rent, being laid-off, electricity bills have contributed to my need for food assistance. There's literally nothing left for food! My husband has a new job, but we're behind on payments. The food pantry is a nice option to have, but we don't want to abuse it. We would like to give back someday.

No Money for Bills (8.7%). Many customers experienced hunger because food is usually their last budget item after paying bills; and by then, there is no money left to purchase food. *I have no food. Without work in the slowed building industry, I have no money for food. My*

wife was laid off and now works in a nursing home 12 hours per week with no insurance. The cost of rent and utilities (electricity and heat) has left us with nothing for food. \$100 difference is like a million to us.

About 14.3% of rural customers and 5.1% of urban customers discussed needing emergency food assistance because they did not have any enough leftover money after paying bills, demonstrating that rural customers discussed this topic more often than urban.*

Disabled (8.4%). Pantry customers also discussed how issues surrounding a disability made it difficult to maintain food security. This included barriers to employment due to a disability and living on a limited income, thus making monetary resources to purchase food an issue.

A small proportion of Spanish speakers (2.1%) discussed issues surrounding a disability, and English speakers reported a disability as a reason why they needed food assistance more than 5 times as often as Spanish speakers. About 10.5% of English speakers discussed this topic.*

Health/Medical Concerns (8.4%). The high cost of

Mi esposo sufrió un accidente en el trabajo hace un año y desde entonces no puede trabajar y con lo que yo gano no alcanza./My husband had an accident at work a year ago and since then he can't work and with what I earn it's not enough.

healthcare and health concerns made it difficult for many food pantry customers to keep a consistent flow of food in their homes. Either medical bills were too high, meaning less money to purchase food, or health concerns was a barrier to gaining employment and

receiving an income to purchase food. *I'm disabled, can't work, and doctors won't let me work. I'm diabetic and that gets expensive. My Social Security fixed income doesn't go far.*

I just moved here. My food is stretched, there is no grocery store, and no gas to get to Mac. There is a Grand Ronde store that is high priced, but it does not sell meat. The <grocery store> in Willamina is expensive! There is no money buy high priced food.

Cost of Living/Inflation/High Cost of Goods (8.2%). Many pantry customers used emergency food assistance because of the high cost of goods and living, which continue to rise. Housing, food, gas, and other necessities are

not affordable for many families, which customers discussed as causing them to experience hunger and seek emergency food assistance.

Not Enough Hours at Work (8.2%). Related to the common theme of not having enough income, many pantry customers discussed how they were not receiving enough hours at work to provide food for their families.

A higher proportion of Spanish speakers (16.5%) than English speakers (5.4%) reported the lack of work hours as a reason why they were using emergency food assistance.*

Living on a Fixed Income (7.9%). Also related to not having enough income, a proportion of individuals and families using emergency food assistance needed the resource because they were living on a fixed income. Many times this included receiving disability and unemployment benefits, as well as living off of retirement funds. Pantry customers explained that living off of this type of income, especially coupled with the inflation of goods and the lack of a raise in benefits coinciding with cost of living raises, made it necessary for individuals and families to receive emergency food support.

English speakers discussed that living on a fixed income was a reason behind needing emergency food assistance more than 10 times as often as Spanish speakers. About 10.2% of English speakers discussed issues surrounding living on a fixed income, while 1.0% of Spanish speakers reported this reason.*

Summary

In addition to talking with food pantry customers about why people, in general, experience hunger and poverty, customers also had the opportunity to discuss the situation that led them to seek emergency food assistance. The most prominent reasons why customers needed emergency food assistance was because they were unemployed or experienced job loss, their income stream and low wages were not enough to support their families, and also because their food stamps did not last throughout the month.

English speakers and urban customers were more likely to discuss SNAP benefits not lasting as a common theme than their counterparts. Discussed in further detail later in the report, rural customers and Spanish and Russian speakers reported using SNAP benefits less often than their counterparts at a statistically significant level. This finding demonstrates that while English speakers were more likely to discuss needing emergency food assistance because their SNAP benefits did not last through the end of the month, Spanish and Russian speakers, as well as rural customers, access SNAP benefits at a lower rate.

Spanish speakers reported needing to use emergency food assistance due to reasons impacting sustainable employment opportunities more often than English

speakers. This included the lack of jobs/job loss, and not enough hours at work.

However, in addition to the most discussed themes, other common responses had implications for the perpetual need for emergency food boxes. Such themes included having a disability, health/medical concerns, high cost of goods, and living on a fixed income. While most of the common responses can be addressed through increased employment opportunities for sustainable, living wage jobs, these responses cannot necessarily be solved through employment resources.

**Results are statistically significant ($p < .05$)*

FOOD ACCESS

FOOD SECURITY

Most of the respondents in the survey reported their households as being food insecure (57.0%), meaning that either sometimes or often there was not enough food to eat. So even with emergency food assistance available, most families did not eat enough food.

Food insecurity increased with age, and also was higher among households with children (Figure 11).*

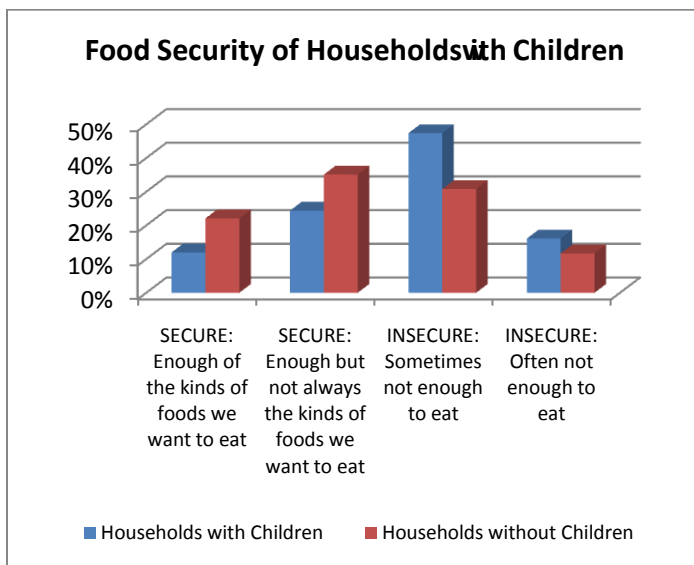


Figure 11. Food security rates among households with children.

FOOD PROCUREMENT

When it comes to getting food, most families reported using the following sources most often:

- Grocery store (71.4%)
- SNAP (59.2%)
- Dollar store (46.8%)
- Grocery outlet (37.4%)

Appendix H displays the complete set of responses.

It is important to note that all survey respondents used a food pantry as a source of food within the last year, but 31.9% of customers reported receiving food from this source. This has potential implications for how people perceive sources of food, and/or food pantry customers may have filled out this survey question inaccurately.

Not all groups and demographics utilized the same food sources in similar ways. Food procurement differed by the following:*

- Urban/rural residence
- Race/ethnicity
- Language spoken in home
- Educational attainment

Urban/Rural. Rural areas used SNAP benefits less often than food pantry customers in urban areas.

Race/Ethnicity. Hispanic/Latino survey participants, in general, used less sources of food than food pantry customers of other races and ethnicities. When compared to all other races/ethnicities, Hispanic/Latino respondents used the following food sources less often:

- Grocery store
- Grocery outlet
- SNAP

Language Spoken in Home. Survey respondents that spoke English at home were more likely to use a variety of food sources when compared to other language speakers. English speakers tended to use the following food sources more often:

- Grocery store
- Grocery outlet
- Dollar store
- SNAP

Spanish speakers tended to use food sources less often than other language speakers, including:

- Grocery store
- Grocery outlet
- SNAP

In addition, Russian speakers used SNAP less often than other language speakers.

English speakers accessed more sources of food over a period of one year than other language speakers. In contrast, Spanish speakers used less sources of food.

Education. The more educated food pantry customers were, the more they accessed a variety of sources for

food. The following food sources were used more often by customers that had higher educational attainment:

- Grocery store
- Grocery outlet
- SNAP

Summary

In sum, certain demographics utilized various food sources at different rates. Hispanic/Latinos, Spanish speakers and customers with lower educational attainment accessed less food sources than their counterparts. In addition SNAP benefits were used less often by rural customers, Hispanic/Latino customers and Spanish speakers.

FOOD PANTRY AND MEAL SITE VISITS

The average number of food pantry and meal site visits from survey findings was 6.14 over the course of the past year. The maximum amount of times an individual and family can use emergency food boxes per year is 12 (once per month), while individuals and families can access meal sites whenever they need it and according to their availability.

GOVERNMENT FOOD PROGRAMS

SNAP Participation among Survey Participants

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as food stamps, is a program implemented by the federal government to help low-income households supplement their monthly nutritional intake. SNAP is not meant to provide families with their full nutritional needs; instead, SNAP is used as a supplement. With SNAP benefits, individuals and families are able to use a card to purchase uncooked food at grocery stores.

Of the 40.8% of survey respondents that did not receive SNAP benefits, 35.0% applied but were ineligible to receive them. Another 27.8% of respondents did not think they would qualify to receive SNAP. SNAP participation varied by race/ethnicity and urban or rural residence.*

Race/Ethnicity. Hispanic/Latino respondents were less familiar with the process of applying for SNAP as they were more likely to report being unsure how to apply and not knowing where to apply as reasons for not receiving SNAP. In addition, Hispanics/Latinos were more worried about their immigration status than other races and ethnicities. White (Non-Hispanic) respondents reported being embarrassed to apply more often than other races and ethnicities as a reason for not receiving SNAP benefits.

Urban/Rural Residence. Respondents in urban areas reported applying for SNAP benefits but not qualifying more often than participants living in rural areas. Rural respondents reported *unsure how to apply* as a reason more often than urban areas.

WIC Participation among Survey Participants

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) is a federal nutrition program that provides women and their infants and children under 5 years old with nutrition education and vouchers to purchase supplemental nutritious foods, among other health and nutrition-related services. WIC recipients must meet a number of guidelines, some of which include being at-risk for not meeting nutritional needs, and household income less than 185% of the poverty level.ⁱ

Among survey participants, 19.1% used WIC as a food source. Spanish speakers and people with lower educational attainment were more likely to use WIC.* White (Non-Hispanic) pantry customers used WIC less often.*

BARRIERS TO FOOD

When it comes to getting food, food pantry customers discussed barriers that made it difficult to get the food they wanted. These barriers included:

- Cost (80.2%)
- Transportation (28.5%)
- Time (7.6%)
- Other (7.1%)

A majority of survey respondents listed cost as a problem to getting the food they wanted (80.2%);

however, transportation was also an issue among 28.5% of customers. Barriers to getting food varied with different demographics, including race/ethnicity, language spoken at home, and whether a household had children.*

Hispanic/Latino survey participants reported cost less often than other races and ethnicities as a barrier to getting they food they wanted. In addition, English speakers reported cost as a barrier to getting food more often than their counterparts. Households with children were more likely to say that transportation was an issue to getting food.

As a pervasive theme in the study's findings, the high cost of food is not only a reason behind why people access emergency food assistance (see page 16), but it was also the most prominent barrier standing in the way of pantry customers getting the food they want.

GETTING TO THE GROCERY STORE

When it comes to getting to the grocery store, respondents used the following modes of transportation:

- Car (your own) (66.9%)
- Walk (24.9%)
- Other (16.7%) 43.7% of "other" responses were specified as "getting a ride"
- Bus (11.4%)
- Carpool (9.7%)
- Bike (4.3%)
- Taxi (2.3%)

For pantry customers, the most common mode of transportation to get to the grocery store was their own car (66.9%). However, many survey participants walked to get to the grocery store (24.9%), the proportion of which was much higher than the number of respondents that used the bus (11.4%).

Participants that reported using their own car to get the store had higher incomes than people who did not use their own car to get to the grocery store.* In addition, households with children were also more likely to get to the store by using their own car.*

Respondents reported taking an average (mean) of 20.9 minutes to get to the grocery store one way, making the

average roundtrip to the grocery store approximately 41.8 minutes.

NUTRITION

Nutrition Knowledge

Participants were asked to rate their knowledge of nutrition, for which they rated:

- I know a lot about nutrition (31.6%)
- I know a little about nutrition (56.3%)
- I don't know very much about nutrition (12.0%)

Nutrition knowledge varied on a statistically significant level between certain demographics including race/ethnicity, language spoken at home, gender and educational attainment.*

Race/Ethnicity. Hispanics/Latinos were more likely to report that they knew a little about nutrition. In contrast, Whites (Non-Hispanics) were more likely to report that they knew a lot about nutrition than other races/ethnicities.

Language Spoken at Home. English speakers most heavily represented people who stated that they knew a lot about nutrition, making up 96.5% of all participants that said they knew a lot about nutrition. On the other hand, Spanish speakers were more likely to say that they did not know very much about nutrition.

Gender. Females were more likely than males to say that they knew a lot about nutrition.

Education. The higher educational attainment a participant had, the higher they rated their knowledge of nutrition.

How Nutritious is Your Diet?

Keeping in mind that only 31.6% of pantry customers reported knowing a lot about nutrition, customers were also asked how nutritious their diet was. The results are as follows:

- Very nutritious (11.1%)
- Somewhat nutritious (66.5%)

- Not nutritious (10.6%)
- Don't know (11.0%)

The most common response was *somewhat nutritious*, for which 66.5% of all survey respondents chose this response. However, customer responses differed among the following demographics: race/ethnicity, language spoken at home, and gender.*

Race/Ethnicity. Hispanic/Latino respondents were more likely to report that they did not know how nutritious their diet was. White (Non-Hispanic) respondents were more likely to report that their diet was somewhat nutritious.

Language. English speakers more likely to report that their diet was somewhat nutritious. Contrary to English speakers, Spanish speakers were more likely to report that they did not know how nutritious their diet was.

Gender. Males were more likely to report that they did not know how nutritious their diet was.

Are You Getting Enough Fresh Foods?

Of customer responses, 61.0% reported not getting enough fresh foods in their diet. The lower educational attainment customers had, the more likely they were to say that they were not getting enough fresh foods.* In addition, English speakers and households with children reported not getting enough fresh foods more often than other populations.*

Of the respondents that were not getting enough fresh foods, the most common reason was because it was too expensive (84.3%). Participants living in rural areas were

more likely they were to say that fresh foods were too expensive.*

Households without children and male respondents were more likely to report not having a refrigerator as a reason for not getting enough fresh food.*

Even though only 3.0% of survey respondents stated that they don't know how to cook fresh food as a reason for not getting enough fresh food, 19.0% of all respondents gave their contact information for more information and participation in cooking classes.

Summary

These findings highlight the need for nutrition education and outreach among Hispanic/Latinos, Spanish speakers, and males. These demographics were more likely to report that they did not know how nutritious their diets were in addition to knowing little or not very much about nutrition.

The majority of customers felt that they were not getting enough fresh food in their diet, mostly due to the high cost of fresh foods. English speakers and households with children reported more often that they were not getting enough fresh food.

**Results are statistically significant ($p < .05$)*

ⁱ Oregon Department of Human Services. *Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)*. Retrieved from: www.oregon.gov/DHS/ph/wic/about_us.shtml#desc.

BARRIERS TO GETTING AHEAD

Food pantry customers were asked to identify barriers that stand in the way of them getting ahead. Of these barriers, food pantry customers listed the following most often:

- Not employed (51.5%)
- No credit/bad credit history (39.6%)
- Health concerns (36.5%)
- Wages are too low (24.6%)
- Lack of affordable healthcare (21.2%)
- Need more hours at work (18.1%)
- Lack of transportation (16.8%)
- Criminal record (15.9%)
- No college degree (15.7%)

Appendix I displays the full list of responses.

The obstacles that pantry customers listed varied on a by the following demographics:*

- Urban/rural residence
- Age
- Race/ethnicity
- Language spoken at home
- Households with children
- Educational attainment

Urban/Rural Residence. Urban residents differed from rural residents in their responses to obstacles in getting ahead. More specifically, urban residents were more likely to report the following obstacles as barriers to getting ahead:

- No credit/bad credit history
- Criminal record
- Transportation

Age. The older customers were, the *less* likely they were to report not being employed as a personal obstacle to getting ahead.

Race/Ethnicity. Responses to this question varied on a statistically significant level by race/ethnicity on nearly every response option. More specifically, the statistically significant difference was most prominent with Whites (Non-Hispanics) and Hispanics/Latinos.

White (Non-Hispanic) participants listed the following obstacles more often:

- No credit/bad credit history
- Health concerns
- Wages too low
- Criminal record
- No college degree

Hispanic/Latino survey respondents listed unemployed and needing more hours at work more often than other races and ethnicities.

Language. Similar to the responses by race/ethnicity, there were many statistically significant differences in obstacles that stand in the way of customers getting ahead.

English speakers were more likely to list the following as obstacles standing in the way of getting ahead:

- No credit/bad credit history
- Wages are too low
- Criminal record
- No college degree

Russian and Spanish speakers listed *not employed* as an obstacle more often than other language speakers.

Households with Children. Households with children defined many obstacles to getting ahead, and were more likely to report the following obstacles than households without children:

- Not employed
- Not enough hours
- Wages too low
- No college
- No credit/bad credit

However, households without children were *less* likely to report health concerns as an obstacle to getting ahead.

Education. Differences in educational attainment among pantry customers also was correlated with reporting different obstacles to getting ahead. The higher educational attainment survey participants had, the more likely they were to report the following obstacles:

- No credit/bad credit history
- Health concerns
- Wages are too low
- Criminal record
- No college degree

The lower educational attainment respondents had, the more likely they were to say that not employed and lack of job skills were obstacles to getting ahead.

OVERCOMING BARRIERS

In contrast to asking pantry customers in about barriers preventing them from getting ahead in the survey, they were also asked during one-on-one interviews: *What things would you like to see happen to help you get ahead?*

Customers responded to this interview question with a few common themes:

- Jobs (49.6%)
- Education (11.4%)
- Transportation (8.3%)
- Better health and/or healthcare (6.2%)

Jobs (49.6%). Nearly half of pantry customers discussed needing employment in order to get ahead. More specifically with employment, many customers reported wanting jobs that were stable, with full-time family wages offering benefits. *I'd like to see more jobs and better jobs. I want the economy to turn around. It seems that I can't really get ahead.*

When responses are separated by whether the interview was conducted in English or Spanish, more than 4 out of 5 (81.3%) Spanish speakers discussed employment as a way for them to get ahead. This was a much higher proportion than English speakers that discussed jobs, which was 39.2%.*

Education (11.4%). Education was discussed as a common theme for what customers felt they needed in order to get ahead. Responses regarding education involved attaining a G.E.D. and/or access to higher education.

Transportation (8.3%). Another common response from customers explaining what they wanted to see happen to help them get ahead was better access to transportation, including both private and public transportation. *Public transportation around here would be huge. As it is, my husband must take time off from work to get us to appointments. This is cash out of our pocket.*

Better Health and/or Healthcare (6.2%). Food pantry customers also felt that their health conditions and lack of affordable health care stood in the way of getting ahead.

Summary

In summary, the most common barriers customers discussed included: not employed, no credit/bad credit history, and health concerns. Barriers were experienced across demographics, but certain demographics experienced obstacles at different rates. These demographics included: urban/rural residence, age, race/ethnicity, language spoken at home, households with children and educational attainment.

More positively, some of the demographics worked as protective factors from experiencing certain obstacles. For instance, even though higher educational attainment increased the likelihood of particular obstacles, higher educational attainment was also linked to a decreased likelihood in many other obstacles, including not employed and lack of job skills. This demonstrates that certain population characteristics can protect people from experiencing barriers to getting ahead, having important implications for prevention of hunger and poverty.

**Results are statistically significant ($p < .05$)*

RESOURCES

MPFS RESOURCES AND PROGRAMS

Involvement in MPFS Resources and Programs

In addition to providing emergency food to individuals and families, MPFS also has community programs to achieve the organization’s goal to end hunger (see Appendix A for an overview of MPFS programs).

In the survey, 41.4% of all respondents gave their contact information to get involved with and/or receive more information on MPFS programs. Of the customers that gave their contact information to get involved with MPFS programs, interest was expressed in the following resources:

- Recipes (55.5%)
- Cooking classes (54.9%)
- Community gardens (37.3%)
- Community kitchen (25.3%)
- Other (11.7%)

A higher proportion of English speakers wanted additional information or wanted to get involved with MPFS resources than other language speakers.* More specifically regarding types of resources, a higher proportion of English speakers expressed interest in getting involved with community gardens.*

Interest in Additional Support from MPFS

In addition to asking about interest in participating in MPFS programs, another survey question asked if MPFS can provide additional support to food pantry customers (Figure 12). Food pantry customers did not need to provide their contact information for this question, as the purpose of the question was to gather input on how MPFS can better serve the community.

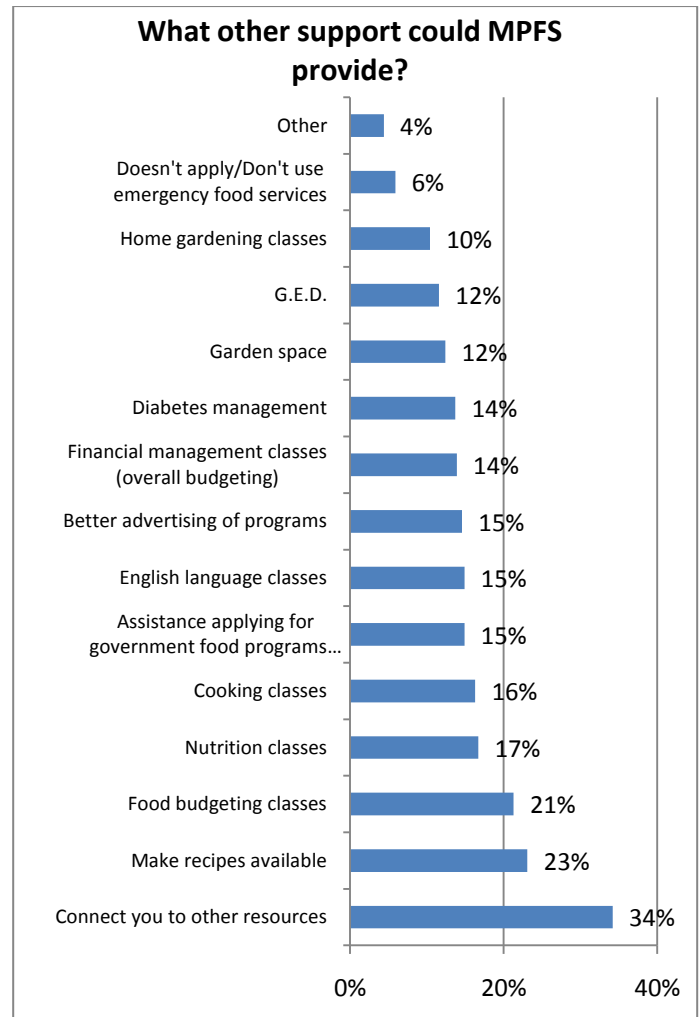


Figure 12. What other support can MPFS support provide for pantry customers?

Although many of these supports are currently available through MPFS, there was a high demand for additional support as MPFS-related resources are not available at all food pantries at all times.

Some of the MPFS support categories had statistically significant results among the following demographics:*

- Urban/rural residence
- Language spoken at home
- Households with children
- Race/ethnicity
- Education

Urban/Rural Residence. Rural residents were more likely to report wanting MPFS to connect them to other

resources in addition to wanting additional MPFS support in financial management classes and home gardening classes.

Language. Like rural respondents, English speakers were more likely to want MPFS to connect them to other resources. Furthermore, English speakers wanted additional support with recipes. When compared to other speakers, English speakers were *less* likely to want MPFS support in nutrition and English classes. Spanish speakers expressed interest in nutrition classes, cooking classes, English classes, and G.E.D.

Households with children. Households with children were more likely to respond with wanting MPFS support with: recipes, food budgeting classes, cooking classes, English classes, G.E.D., and home gardening classes.

Race/Ethnicity. Hispanic/Latino respondents wanted additional MPFS support with nutrition classes, cooking classes, assistance applying for government food programs (e.g. - SNAP), English classes and G.E.D. attainment.

White (Non-Hispanic) respondents were *less* likely to choose the following additional supports: nutrition classes, cooking classes, English classes, and G.E.D. attainment.

Education. The higher education respondents have, the less likely they wanted support with English classes from MPFS.

Summary

Over 2 out of 5 pantry customers gave their contact information to receive more information about MPFS resources and/or get involved with MPFS resources and programs.

In addition, pantry customers expressed interest in additional MPFS support in a variety of areas, namely wanting MPFS to connect them to other resources, make recipes available, and offer food budgeting classes. The types of resources that pantry customers were interested in varied by demographic characteristics.

AVAILABLE RESOURCES

In addition to asking about food resources, the survey also addressed overall community resources and the accessibility to these resources. The purpose behind this question is to understand overall resource utilization and access in our community. Many of these resources are connected to hunger; therefore, it is important to understand the availability of community resources that may have a corollary impact on hunger.

Of food pantry customers, 51.3% used a social service program over the past year. The following services were used the most often:

- Food/hunger (42.4%)
- Utility assistance (33.8%)
- Housing (24.3%)

As previously discussed, every pantry customer has used emergency food assistance. However, 42.4% of pantry customers reported using food/hunger resources in the past year. This has potential implications for how people perceive community resources, as over half of survey respondents did not define emergency food assistance as a resource they had used. It could also have implications for the reliability of the survey question in self-reporting community resource use.

Among these top 3 responses, certain demographic groups reported using these resources at different rates.* These demographic characteristics include:

- Race/ethnicity
- Households with children
- Gender
- Educational attainment

Race/Ethnicity. Among racial and ethnic groups, Hispanic/Latino respondents reported using food/hunger and housing *less* often than other races and ethnicities. However, Hispanic/Latino participants used utility assistance more often than other races and ethnicities. White (Non-Hispanic) respondents used housing resources more often than other races and ethnicities.

Households with Children. Households with children were more likely to use food/hunger, utility and housing assistance than households without children.

Gender. Female respondents used utility assistance more often.

Educational Attainment. The more education food pantry customers had, the more likely they were to use housing resources.

UNAVAILABLE RESOURCES

Even if resources are provided in the community, they may not be available due to limited resources, funding, eligibility, among other reasons. Of the survey respondents, 41.3% stated that they had a problem in the last 12 months for which they were unable to find help or services.

Participants living in rural areas reported this issue less often than urban respondents.*

The issues most commonly reported for which respondents were unable to find resources were:

- Healthcare (31.0%)
- Job placement (28.2%)
- Housing (26.9%)
- Utility assistance (22.6%)

For respondents that reported housing as a resource they were unable to find, White (Non-Hispanics) were more likely to report housing.* In contrast, Hispanic/Latino respondents reported housing less often when compared to all racial/ethnic groups.*

With regard to utility assistance, households with children were more likely to report utility assistance than households without children.*

COMPARISON BETWEEN AVAILABLE AND UNAVAILABLE RESOURCES

In order to fully understand what resources are available to the community and what is being used by people that need the support, a comparison was made between resources that customers were able to use, and resources that customers needed but were unable to use (Figure 13).

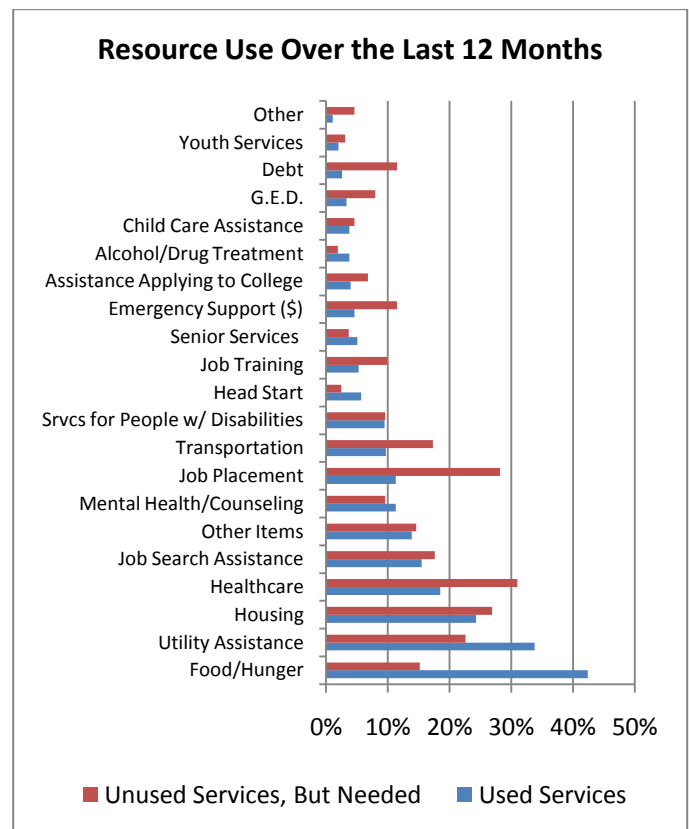


Figure 13. Comparison between needed resources and if they were used or unavailable to use.

As demonstrated in Figure 13, there were far more resources that customers reported needing but were unable to find than resources that pantry customers needed and were able to use.

Even though less people reported having a problem or issue that they were unable to find resources (41.3%) than survey respondents that were able to find and use resources (51.3%), the comparison between the list of available and unavailable resources shows that approximately twice as many resources were unavailable more often than they were available. This can be due to a number of reasons, such as eligibility, funding for programs, demand for resources, etc.

While housing and utility assistance were listed as two of the most common resources used in the past year, they were also listed by customers as the top two resources that they needed but were unable to access or find.

Summary

About 51.3% of pantry customers reported that they had used a social service in the past year, and 41.3% described that they had a problem for which they were unable to find resources. Among the services that people were able to find and use, the most common were food/hunger, utility assistance and housing.

The common resources that customers were unable to find resources for were: healthcare, job placement, housing, and utility assistance. Ironically, among these common resources that were used, housing and utility assistance were also common resources that customers needed but were unable to find.

Different demographics reported using and not using resources at different rates. Even though customers reported being unable to find resources at a lower rate than finding and using resources, more resources were unavailable than available to customers.

REASONS WHY RESOURCES ARE UNUSED

Food pantry customers and community stakeholders were asked through one-on-one interviews why people may not be using certain community resources or services. This question provides a narrative to explain what makes certain resources and services nonexistent and/or ineffective, even if they do exist.

Pantry Customer Perspective

Food pantry customers discussed the following themes most often as to why they were not using resources:

- Ineligibility (27.0%)
- Unfamiliar with resources (18.2%)
- Lack of transportation (12.5%)
- Undocumented worker (8.6%)
- Do not use resources unless needed/save resources for others who are in need (6.2%)
- Long waiting list/complicated application process (5.7%)

Ineligibility (27.0%). The most commonly discussed reason why food pantry customers were not using available resources was because they were ineligible to receive those services. Eligibility concerns were often used in the context of applying for government

programs, such as SNAP. Customers described being ineligible because they worked full-time, because of citizenship status (8.6% of customers that discussed ineligibility discussed being an undocumented worker), and because they did not have all the required documentation (such as pay stubs) available to apply for resources, among other reasons. *Between my wife and me, we have an income of \$1,200/month. We are ineligible for housing because we “make” too much money.*

Unfamiliar with Resources (18.2%). Many food pantry customers explained that they were not using resources because they were unfamiliar with what resources were available in the community. *Not knowing what’s available is a big problem.*

Inaccessibility is an issue I have with using other community resources. Transportation is the big problem. I had to drive 20 miles or so to get <to the food pantry> today.

Lack of Transportation (12.5%). Even if resources were available, many food pantry customers explained that it is difficult to access transportation to use these resources. This could be because the public transportation system does not operate in convenient

locations or during convenient days and hours, lack of gas money to get to resource locations, etc.

Undocumented (8.6%). Although reasons pertaining to being an undocumented worker were listed under eligibility reasons, there was a substantial amount of pantry customers who spoke specifically about how being an undocumented worker made it difficult to access resources. Therefore, this reason is being discussed as a separate theme. *No quiero llamar atencion que no somos ciudadanos./I don’t want to draw attention to the fact that we are not citizens.*

A higher proportion of interviews conducted in Spanish discussed reasons pertaining to being an undocumented worker. About 28.1% of interviews conducted in Spanish discussed undocumented worker status, while 2.1% of English interviews discussed this topic.*

Customers that used urban pantries discussed undocumented status more often than customers accessing rural pantries, at rates of 11.1% and 4.7%, respectively.*

Do Not Use Resources Unless Needed/Save Resources for Others Who Are in Need (6.2%). *We try to save services for people in greater need. Also, it is an embarrassing pride issue.* Many customers did not want to use valuable and limited resources unless they absolutely needed them. In other cases, customers did not use resources because they did not want to take opportunities away from others who may need them more.

Long Waiting List/Complicated Application Process

Some of these services are really hard to get. You go through the very long application process, you turn everything in on time, and wait for a response. Unfortunately many times the response doesn't come either because they "misplaced" your application or you don't qualify.

(5.7%). For some customers, they explained that they do not use certain resources or services because they felt that the application process was too complicated, or the waiting list to receive services was too long.

Stakeholder Perspective

Stakeholders shared many common responses with food pantry customers regarding why they felt resources were not being used. However, they discussed reasons involving the act of applying for resources less often than pantry customers.

More specifically, pantry customers spoke about ineligibility and long waiting list/complicated application process to a higher degree than stakeholders. These themes presume that pantry customers have applied for resources but did not receive them for the reasons they listed.

Stakeholders, on the other hand, focused more on why pantry customers might not solicit resources in the first place, as opposed to discussing why customers may not qualify or receive resources *after* they have already asked for assistance.

The most common themes discussed by stakeholders included:

- Do not know about available services (61.2%)
- Pride, embarrassment (49.0%)

- Cultural/language barrier (24.5%)
- Lack of transportation (20.4%)
- Eligibility (10.2%)
- Do not identify as needing resources/others need it more (6.1%)

Do Not Know about Available Services (61.2%). A common stakeholder theme also shared by pantry customers was the unfamiliarity with available resources as a reason why people may not be using services. *People may not know they're available. A lot of people are in a position they haven't been in before.*

Pride, Embarrassment (49.0%).

There might be some stigma asking for these types of community resources. And the stigma could be both coming from the outside and inside. Unless you make it a friendly and helpful environment, not a lot of people will come to get help. Because it's humiliating enough as it is.

Although a small percentage of food pantry customers reported that pride and embarrassment were behind why people were not using resources (4.1%), nearly half of stakeholders interviewed felt that this was an important factor in

the utilization of resources.

Cultural/Language Barrier (24.5%). Nearly a quarter of interviewed stakeholders discussed cultural and language barriers as obstacles to applying and/or receiving resources. These barriers included services available only in English, lack of cultural understanding by service providers, and the fear from undocumented workers from using services.

Lack of Transportation (20.4%). Lack of transportation was an identified theme by stakeholders that stakeholders felt restricted the ability of people to use resources. Even if resources are available, if people cannot get to them, then they cannot be used.

Ineligibility (10.2%). Ineligibility was the most common theme that pantry customers identified explaining why people may not be using resources. However, 10.2% of stakeholders discussed eligibility issues in response to explaining why resources may be unused. Although it was still a common response, it was not as frequently discussed as it was among pantry customers.

Do Not Identify as Needing Resources/Others Need it More (6.1%). Stakeholders also discussed a variation of a common theme shared by pantry customers, that resources are saved and unused so that they can be preserved for others that need it more. The variation is that stakeholders discussed that people might identify as not needing resources, which is why they do not use them. Pantry customers, on the other hand, did not discuss that they identified themselves as not needing the resources, but that they were not using the resources until they absolutely needed them and had no other alternative. In this case, customers felt that they might need the resource, but delayed accessing them until they felt it was necessary.

Summary

Overall, customers did not use resources because they were unable to access them (e.g. – ineligible, unfamiliar with where to get resources, and lack of transportation to get to resource location), they chose to save limited resources for others who may need the resources more critically, and also because they felt that the application process was too arduous and complicated and/or the waiting lists were too long.

Food pantry customers discussed themes involving why they did not approach resources in the first place and why they did not receive resources after applying. Although stakeholders and customers shared many of the same themes as to why people may not be using resources, stakeholders concentrated their discussion on why customers may not ask for resources. Unlike pantry customers, stakeholders focused less on reasons why customers might not be receiving resources if they had applied for them.

Stakeholders felt that customers were not using certain resources because they did not know about them, were too proud or embarrassed to ask for resources, were faced with cultural/language barriers, they lacked transportation to get to potential resources, were ineligible to receive services (10.2% of stakeholders discussed this compared to 27.0% of pantry customers), and/or did not identify as needing resources.

BEST FEATURES OF PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

During one-on-one interviews with community advocates, food pantry customers discussed the best features of the programs and services they use. The

purpose of this question was to define what makes services effective for people that need and utilize them.

Most of the interviews reflected upon the services of local food pantries. However, whether or not the services discussed were offered by food pantries or by other organizations in the community, there was a common trend among what people valued in the services provided.

The best features of the programs and services that food pantry customers discussed included:

- Providing help for a need (39.8%)
- Friendly, non-judgmental staff and volunteers (23.7%)
- Quality of service (22.4%)
- The existence and availability of services (14.4%)
- Location (7.4%)

Providing Help for a Need (e.g. – food) (39.8%). The most cited feature that food pantry participants appreciated in the services they used was that it provided help for a need. This often referred to food from food pantries, but also included assistance with bills such as utilities, housing, and other basic needs. *The availability of food for those in need is an important feature. Every community [seems] to have a food bank that helps to meet basic needs. It helped me to meet emergency need while I was pregnant to avoid nights without eating.*

Spanish speakers discussed this as one of the best features of the programs they used more often than English speakers.*

Friendly, Non-Judgmental Staff and Volunteers (23.7%). Nearly a quarter of customers described their experiences with staff and volunteers as one of the best

They support you. I think it's important for everyone to support each other.

features of programs. *The wonderful and very helpful people who volunteer are the best feature. No one here has made me feel less than. It*

was important to food pantry customers that staff and volunteers treat them with respect and without judgment so they felt comfortable asking for assistance.

English speakers and rural residents spoke about the friendly, non-judgmental staff and volunteers as one of the best attributes of the services they use more often than their counterparts.*

Quality of Service (22.4%). Many customers defined the quality of services and products they received as some of the best features of services. For instance, with regard to emergency food, customers appreciated the quality, freshness, and amount they received from various food pantries. *This food bank here is a life source. You actually get a variety of stuff that you could actually get vitamins out of. I used to live on bread.*

The Existence and Availability of Services (14.4%). *They exist. Without them, would have nothing.* Another common theme was that customers appreciated that the services they used existed and were available in the community.

English speakers discussed how the existence of services was one of the best features of the programs they used more often than Spanish speakers.*

Location (7.2%). Customers liked that the location of services were convenient for them to access them when needed. *In this area <Dallas> they are all close together. Down in Salem, services are scattered around town and this makes it a pain.*

Summary

In summary, customers appreciated that resources were available to meet their needs, and that services were of good quality and easily accessible by location. Furthermore, many customers appreciated it when resources were provided by staff and volunteers who were friendly and non-judgmental when customers needed to ask for community assistance.

SERVICE AND PROGRAM SUGGESTIONS FOR MPFS

MPFS Board of Directors (BOD) brainstormed MPFS program creation and expansion ideas during a monthly BOD meeting. Each BOD member came up with program ideas individually before group discussion. In addition, MPFS staff provided input on the same

questions as the BOD regarding service and program expansion ideas for the agency, but through a written survey.

As the MPFS leadership providing direction for the future of MPFS, it is important to note the ideas of the BOD to identify how MPFS can further address hunger and poverty. In addition, MPFS staff have inside knowledge of providing services to the community, and staff input was also gathered to identify community need and how MPFS can address it effectively. Figure 14 displays the MPFS program creation and expansion ideas described by staff and the BOD.

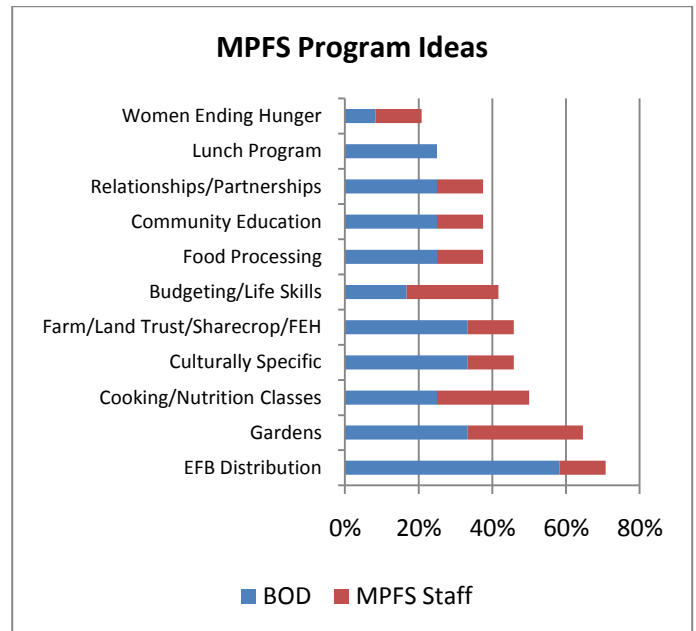


Figure 14. MPFS program ideas discussed by MPFS staff and Board of Directors.

Expand Emergency Food Box Distribution (58.3% BOD; 12.5% Staff). The most common idea discussed by MPFS staff and the BOD combined was expanding emergency food box distribution. Ideas for expansion included increasing access to rural communities and homebound customers.

Even though expanding emergency food box distribution was the most popular MPFS program idea, most of the responses came from the BOD and not from MPFS staff. The BOD discussed this expansion idea nearly 4 times as often as MPFS staff.

While the BOD and staff agreed that food distribution needed to be expanded, their ideas on how and why to do it differed. The BOD focused especially on creating mobile food pantries to reach populations with less access to food boxes, with 71.4% of the BOD that discussed this theme referring specifically to mobile food pantries.

When staff spoke about expanding emergency food boxes, they did not discuss mobile food pantries. Instead, they spoke about it in terms of reaching homebound customers and seniors and also spoke about how expansion of food box distribution would reduce hunger, but not solve the issue.

Certainly, continual expansion of food distribution through MPFS member charities would reduce hunger, but I don't think that this would be a sustainable plan for us.

Gardens (33.3% BOD; 31.33% Staff). Not only did the BOD and staff have the same ideas with regard to community gardens, but a similar proportion of the BOD and staff discussed the expansion of community gardens. Ideas surrounding community gardens from both groups involved the expansion of community gardens to all communities and to rural areas.

Cooking and Nutrition Education (25.0% BOD; 25.0% Staff). The BOD and MPFS staff spoke equally about creating and expanding cooking and nutrition education, with 25% of the BOD and staff discussing this idea.

Culturally-Specific Program Development (33.3% BOD; 12.5% Staff). Although not a program, the BOD and staff mentioned specific demographics in providing resources for and recruiting customers and volunteers. Demographics discussed included the Hispanic/Latino population, elders and children, and females. The BOD tended to speak about demographic-specific program ideas more often than MPFS staff.

Farming (33.3% BOD; 12.5% Staff). Programs involving farming and food donations, such as an MPFS farm, land trust, sharecropping, and the Farmers Ending Hunger program were discussed by the BOD and staff as a program expansion idea that MPFS should implement. Fifty percent of BOD responses in this category involved

developing a land trust. The BOD discussed farming nearly 3 times as often as the staff.

Budgeting/Life Skills Education (16.7% BOD; 25.0% Staff). Another common theme regarding MPFS program ideas was providing budgeting/life skills education. Nearly all responses in this category focused on budgeting education, while 2 responses focused on overall life skill development. Staff discussed creating budgeting/life skills education more often than the BOD.

Food processing (25.0% BOD; 12.5% Staff). A popular program creation idea discussed by the BOD and staff included food processing. Food processing involves processing, canning, packing and freezing raw food for the purpose of distributing it to food pantries as an additional food source. The BOD discussed food processing more often than the staff.

Community Education (25.0% BOD; 12.5% Staff). The BOD and staff felt that it was important to expand community education on hunger-related issues for the purpose of increasing community engagement, support, partnerships and action. The BOD discussed community education as a creation and expansion idea for MPFS twice as often as staff.

Hold public forums, seminars to meet, engage and partner with governments, corporations, small business and other organizations to brainstorm as a community.

Develop Relationships/Partnerships (25.0% BOD; 12.5% Staff). As previously mentioned, one of the purposes behind expanding communication was to further develop relationships and partnerships in the community. In particular, the BOD and staff spoke about fostering relationships with local food sources, nonprofits, community groups, Oregon State University Extension program, governments, corporations, and small businesses. Partnership and relationship development was a popular MPFS expansion idea that came from both the BOD and staff; however, the BOD spoke more about relationship and partnership development than staff.

No Hungry Child Free Lunch Program Expansion (25.0% BOD; 0% Staff). A popular response made by the BOD was to expand the No Hungry Child free lunch program

to include additional communities in Marion and Polk counties, especially in rural regions. No staff members discussed expanding the No Hungry Child lunch program.

Women Ending Hunger (8.3% BOD; 12.5% Staff). Lastly, the BOD and staff discussed expanding Women Ending Hunger. Most discussion points about Women Ending Hunger were to expand and continue with Women Ending Hunger efforts. However, one BOD response spoke about expanding Women Ending Hunger members to be more inclusive of Hispanic women. Staff spoke about Women Ending Hunger expansion slightly more often than the BOD.

Summary

MPFS staff and the BOD discussed many of the same program creation and expansion ideas to enhance MPFS’ ability to address hunger in the community. However, the extent to which the BOD and MPFS staff discussed these ideas differed between the two groups. Furthermore, the BOD and MPFS staff had different ideas on how to create and implement programs. Most of the program ideas involved expanding existing programs.

Pantry customers indicated interest in many of the program ideas set forth by MPFS staff and the BOD, such as gardens, cooking/nutrition classes and budgeting/life skills. They described this interest when asked about how MPFS can provide further support and also when they were asked if they were interested in participating and/or volunteering in various MPFS programs.

SERVICE AND PROGRAM SUGGESTIONS FOR THE COMMUNITY

Because many community stakeholders were involved with community programs and familiar with existing resources and potential gaps in services, they were asked: *What kinds of services or programs would you like to see offered in the community that are not already available? Why?*

Common themes in services that stakeholders felt were missing but should be available in the community included:

- Life skills (20.4%)
- Cooking/nutrition classes (16.3%)
- Community support (14.3%)
- Career training (14.3%)
- Resources in a central location (12.2%)
- Outreach/education on services (12.2%)
- Community gardens (10.2%)
- Housing (8.2%)
- Resources for Spanish speakers (8.2%)
- Counseling (8.2%)
- Partnerships/collaborations (6.1%)
- Do not know (6.1%)
- Education (6.1%)
- Existing programs more efficient (6.1%)
- Increase resource access (6.1%)
- Expand resource locations (6.1%)

These responses centered around how to make existing resources work more effectively for the community. In addition, nearly all stakeholder responses regarding programs discussed expanding existing programs rather than the creation of new programs.

Table 2 summarizes stakeholder suggestions to improve programs and also program expansion ideas of existing resources.

Program Improvement Suggestions	Program Expansion Suggestions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community support • Resources located in “one-stop-shop” location • Outreach, education on services • Resources for Spanish speakers • Partnerships, collaborations • Make existing programs more efficient • Increase resource access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life skills • Cooking/nutrition classes • Career training • Community gardens • Housing • Counseling • Education

Table 2. Community stakeholder suggestions to improve or expand upon existing resources.

Of the existing program expansion suggestions, MPFS currently administers cooking/nutrition classes and community gardens, which were also discussed by

MPFS staff and the BOD as program expansion ideas. The implication for this connection is that there is general consensus and desire for expansion of these programs, and MPFS is the agency that provides these programs to the community. Thus, it is important to note that MPFS staff, the BOD, and community stakeholders would like to see these programs expanded.

Summary

Stakeholders also discussed program ideas for the community at large, especially focusing on resources currently unavailable. Although stakeholders were asked to discuss resources currently unavailable in the community, nearly half of the common themes involved expanding existing resources. This may indicate that existing programs may not be reaching everyone in the community. Program expansion ideas shared by stakeholders, MPFS staff, the BOD and pantry customers included: life skills (specifically, food budgeting), cooking/nutrition classes, gardens.

COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

MPFS staff and community stakeholders were each asked: *How can we foster or improve collaborations between local organizations, government and businesses to reduce hunger and poverty?* This particular question was important because no single organization or entity can address hunger and poverty alone, especially since these issues are often related to other issues. The responses to this question provide tangible ways in which the community can partner together for a common mission, sharing our resources toward a common goal: reduce hunger and poverty.

MPFS Staff Perspective

Responses by staff members focused specifically on strengthening partnerships to extend MPFS' mission in the community. MPFS staff interpreted the question as pertaining specifically to improving collaborations with MPFS, and not the community at large.

To this end, MPFS staff discussed opportunities to improve partnerships with MPFS through a variety of means, involving staff, the private sector, and community education. The most common themes

shared by MPFS staff on how to foster collaborations to reduce hunger included:

- Staff and volunteers need to get involved with other agencies (21.4%)
- Partner with the private sector (21.4%)
- Foster communication, relationships (21.4%)
- Community presentations (14.3%)
- Continue with what MPFS is already doing (14.3%)
- Volunteering (14.3%)

Staff and Volunteers Need to Get Involved with Other Agencies (21.4%). MPFS staff felt that fellow staff members and MPFS volunteers should become more involved with other community organizations. Involvement included attending meetings for other organizations, serving on another organization's Board of Directors, and volunteering with other community services. By getting involved beyond the walls of MPFS, staff and volunteers can work on other aspects of hunger and poverty in conjunction with other community agencies, and extend relationships with other organizations.

Partner with the Private Sector (21.4%). The same proportion of staff also felt that MPFS should develop more relationships with the private sector, namely with local businesses. Partnership suggestions with the private sector included paid volunteer time, developing economic development strategies to build livable communities, and encouraging businesses to hold local food drives.

Foster Communication and Relationships (21.4%). Although fostering communication and relationships was tied in first place as one of the most common themes discussed by MPFS staff, staff responses were very vague and broad in their description of this theme. *Talk more. Share more. Cooperate/team up more.* One response discussed the need for increased inter-agency communication, especially among MPFS leadership and staff. However, other staff discussed the need for

communication, but did not discuss with who and how.

Volunteering gets them in the door and a better understanding of what we do then they could better help our needs.

Volunteering (21.4%). It was also important to MPFS staff that the community, and

namely employees in the private sector, get involved by volunteering with MPFS. A few staff members suggested expanding employee volunteer programs, while volunteering in general was discussed as a tool to enhance community collaborations.

Community Presentations (14.3%). Staff members also felt that it was important for staff and volunteers to give community presentations in order to increase collaborations in the community. Community presentations involved speaking to the community about how to become a volunteer and monthly sustainer (monthly giving program to provide MPFS with a sustainable funding source). It also involved giving presentations about MPFS and the people we serve. *Contact them and invite them in for a tour of our facility and show them a presentation about how many people they are affected by hunger and how many of those we are able to help.*

Continue with What MPFS is Already doing (14.3%). *I feel we are doing well, but need to continue building.* Another common theme discussed by staff members was that MPFS is already doing a good job with collaborations and that MPFS should continue with the efforts it has already made.

Stakeholder Perspective

Stakeholders were also asked the question: *How can we foster or improve collaborations between local organizations, government and businesses to reduce hunger and poverty?*

In contrast to the MPFS staff interpretation of the question, stakeholders responded by interpreting the interview question reference to *we* as the community at large, and not MPFS.

Stakeholders discussed the following themes as ways to improve collaborations to reduce hunger and poverty:

- Already doing a lot/already doing a good job (25.5%)
- Outreach/community education about issues (25.5%)
- Communication (21.3%)
- Government/political involvement or reform (21.3%)

- Central community service response/coordination/pool resources (21.3%)
- Community solutions and discussion (21.3%)
- Community involvement and volunteerism (14.9%)
- Develop relationships, networking (14.9%)
- Reduce duplication of services (10.6%)
- Ask for assistance, partnerships (8.5%)

Already a Lot/Already Doing a Good Job (25.5%). Over a quarter of stakeholders felt that the community was already doing a good job with fostering collaborations to reduce hunger and poverty. About 14.3% of MPFS staff felt this way.

Outreach/Community Education about Issues (25.5%).

Tied in first place as the most common theme,

Sharing information and publicity about the problem is key. People need to know what the issue is before they can address it.

stakeholders discussed that there was a need for outreach and community education, especially to educate community members and leaders on what different organizations are doing

with regard to hunger. In addition, outreach and education were needed to increase community understanding of hunger issues. *I think we need to organize so that we can be made aware of what each organization is providing. It is a continuing challenge to inform our community of our services.*

Communication (21.3%). Stakeholders also felt very strongly that communication needed to be improved, especially communication across different organizations. Furthermore, stakeholders discussed how communication is important among community education efforts, to help the general community understand issues surrounding hunger and poverty.

Government/Political Involvement or Reform (21.3%).

Although government/political involvement or reform was one of the most common themes discussed by stakeholders, the types of suggestions by stakeholders were extremely varied. Responses ranged from reducing regulation barriers *to allow people to work together*, to suggesting that government adopt policies to support community gardens. Other suggestions included *actively support<ing> legislation that will*

streamline and increase the capacity of existing programs, keeping government out of collaborations, reforming government priorities to focus on hunger and poverty, and increasing government involvement. However, the commonality between all of these responses was that government collaboration and involvement in hunger and poverty needs to be reformed in one way or another.

Central Community Service

Response/Coordination/Pool Resources (21.3%). *Social services needs to be treated as and coordinated as a*

Let's learn how we can work together in being part of a community. Instead of having all these islands take place, why don't we all move onto the same island and provide help?

community project. In order to streamline resources to make the community more effective in responding hunger and poverty issues, stakeholders discussed the need to centralize community services by location, increase resource coordination, and pool existing resources together. I say we should be willing to

share what we have and bring it all together, so we're not reinventing the wheel trying to reinvent programs that already exist

Community Solutions and Discussion (21.3%). In order to increase collaborative community efforts to reduce hunger and poverty, stakeholders spoke on the need to *bring everybody to the table* by holding community discussions, forums and summits to brainstorm how to collaborate and address hunger-related issues, including *how we can be complimentary to eachother. This is our issue. How do we get together to solve it and link together to something else?*

Community Involvement and Volunteerism (14.9%).

Stakeholders also felt that getting involved with community initiatives, volunteering, and motivating other community members and businesses to donate resources, volunteer, and get involved in community efforts, were important aspects of increasing collaboration to reduce hunger and poverty. In addition, stakeholders noted that it was important to increase

Without involvement, you can't reach people or organizations that want to help.

community involvement levels in all populations, including organizations, youth, and recipients of community services.

Develop Relationships, Networking (14.9%). Developing *human relations* with all people in the community and networking among organizations were important aspects of stakeholder ideas on how to enhance collaborations. Stakeholders felt that relationships needed to be developed in order to mobilize and educate others. *The solution is to develop the team.*

Reduce Duplication of Services (10.6%). In order to increase efficiency of resources and reduce competition between organizations to provide the same services, stakeholders discussed the need to not only streamline resources, but to eliminate duplication of services. *If organizations must compete for the same pool of resources, they may not want to collaborate. Duplication is abhorrent. We need to keep what makes sense and get rid of the rest.*

Ask for Assistance, Partnerships (8.5%). In order to improve collaborations in the community, stakeholders discussed how organizations need to just simply ask for assistance and ask others to partner in their efforts to reduce hunger and poverty. For instance, organizations can *ask <community members> for money, food, and cooperation with things like community gardens.*

Summary

In general, staff members felt that collaborations could be enhanced by increasing partnerships with the private sector. In addition, staff members discussed how other staff and volunteers at MPFS should get involved with other organizations and give community presentations in order to educate the community on hunger and to recruit volunteers and monthly sustainers. Lastly, staff felt that MPFS should communicate with staff members and the community to further develop relationships, and to continue with the collaboration efforts that MPFS has already been involved in.

Stakeholder ideas to enhance collaboration on hunger-related efforts involved streamlining and reforming existing collaborative structures and organizations, educating the community, enhancing communication and relationships within the community, and mobilizing

the community to increase the capacity to address hunger issues. However, over a quarter of stakeholders believed that the community was already effective in collaborating to address hunger and poverty.

STAKEHOLDER ORGANIZATIONS: ASSETS FOR COLLABORATION

In addition to asking stakeholders about how to improve collaborations, an inventory of partnership capacities was created using the organizations that the stakeholders represent as a base. In order to supplement asking stakeholders how collaborations could be cultivated to reduce hunger and poverty, they were also asked: *What do you see as the assets specific to your organization/business that would help us accomplish such a partnership?*

There was a wide range of responses regarding assets that stakeholders offered to form and strengthen community collaborations.

The most common assets discussed by stakeholders included:

- Networking (36.2%)
- People (21.3%)
- Provide community services (12.8%)
- Communicate resources and information to those needing them (8.5%)
- Public relations, marketing, and awareness (8.5%)

Networking (36.2%). Stakeholders felt that they had strong connections in the community that could be used to network for stronger partnerships to reduce hunger and poverty.

People (21.3%). Stakeholders were also proud of the people involved with their organizations, including staff and volunteers. Another stakeholder stated that *as an organization I would say our biggest asset is we have really good people, non-judgmental and very friendly. People seem comfortable with us*. Although

My staff—I have incredible staff that will find ways to make miracles happen.

stakeholders did not detail how people would get involved, they felt that their staff and volunteers were a

tremendous asset to their organization and the community.

Provide Community Services (12.8%). Other stakeholders discussed ways in which they could continue to provide services for the community, including parenting classes conducted in multiple languages, farming education, youth development, and housing resources.

Communicate Resources and Information to Those

<We> already established the credibility and <program participants> already know us, so they come to us because they trust us and that's one way we can help you and that's one way we can help with a partnership.

Needing Them (8.5%)

Some of the organizations that stakeholders represent work directly with low-income residents, who trust the organizations and have established relationships with them. With this asset, several stakeholders shared that

they could communicate information and resources to the people they serve.

Public Relations, Marketing & Awareness (8.5%)

Stakeholders discussed how some of their organizations were directly involved in public relation efforts and how MPFS can partner with them to make connections with the community. This included a variety of methods, such as promoting awareness of hunger-related issues among donors supporting other agencies, encouraging MPFS to publish newspaper commentaries and personal stories related to hunger and poverty, and promoting community efforts among the business community.

Summary

In total, 49 stakeholders provided 31 different ways in which their represented organizations can partner to enhance community collaborations. Although many of these collaborations are already being implemented, there are many assets in the community that have not yet been cultivated to reduce hunger and poverty. However, by simply asking community leaders on how to go about increasing partnership potential, new collaboration methods were generated and can be implemented.

**Results are statistically significant (p<.05)*

CULTURAL INFLUENCE

Culture, with regard to race/ethnicity and language, seems to be a pervasive theme in the assessment results especially because most of the responses to assessment questions varied by race/ethnicity and language. This has implications for the influence of culture on food access, community involvement, use of resources, ideas about solving and preventing hunger, and the method by which to address food security through an action plan.

Cultural/Language Barriers

Community advocates shared that during their experiences interviewing at food pantries, they found that bilingual volunteers were lacking, creating a communication barrier for Spanish or other language speakers seeking assistance.

In addition, nearly a quarter (24.5%) of stakeholders discussed how people may not be using certain community resources because of a cultural or language barrier. A few stakeholders discussed how language barriers prevented the elimination of hunger and poverty. Still, other stakeholders discussed how cultural mores may prevent the Hispanic/Latino population from receiving assistance.

To address these cultural and language barriers, a few stakeholders discussed the need to enhance English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, English literacy, and cooking classes to expose the Latino/Hispanic community to American food and teach the community how to cook with American ingredients, especially when culturally appropriate food and resources may not be available at food pantries.

Among pantry customers, 4.1% discussed how learning English would help them get ahead.

Differential Attitude

An underlying theme among interviews and observations in the field by community advocates was a level of unawareness on how to communicate cross-culturally, and differential attitude toward cultural/ethnic groups, namely the Hispanic/Latino

population. Community stakeholders, pantry customers, and food pantry volunteers and staff were observed by community advocates demonstrating these thoughts and perceptions. A community advocate explained that the *<food pantry> staff weren't the only ones doing it, other pantry clients felt the same way. Those Spanish speaking people are the reasons for issues... Heard it a lot.*

Furthermore, a community stakeholder *wished <s/he> didn't have anything to do with the Spanish.* This

<There is> so much ignorance about the Latino population that can be changed. For instance, "they have such huge families," <and> questions about dishonesty.

differential attitude toward the Hispanic/Latino population has, according to a community advocate, *created an underclass.* Community stakeholders, food pantry leaders and other food pantry

customers discussed the Hispanic/Latino population in ways that characterized an *us versus them* mentality.

Some stakeholders attributed the cause behind hunger and poverty to Hispanic/Latinos, such as illegal immigration (specifically of the Hispanic/Latino population), fear from the Spanish speaking community of asking for help, and what one stakeholder coined as *Hispanic poverty.*

During one-on-one interviews, some Spanish-speaking customers described experiences with differential treatment. One customer in particular explained why *s/he* avoids using public transportation: *I don't use (public) transport because Mexicans are discriminated against. Some don't treat us well. To avoid problems, it's better not to.* Differential attitude and/or treatments places some groups at a disadvantage when trying to get ahead or accessing resources.

To a few pantry customers, they felt that reverse discrimination was an issue because they felt they could not get jobs because they were not Spanish-speaking. *Because I'm not Hispanic they won't help me. I can't get low income housing because I'm not Hispanic. I can't get because I don't have kids. I'm not a minority and I don't have kids and they discriminate.*

Aside from culture, community advocates observed and experienced differential attitudes and behaviors toward food pantry customers in general while conducting interviews. Food pantry customers were sometimes treated with less respect than staff and volunteers.

One community advocate discussed an experience s/he had when s/he arrived early at a food pantry to set up and prepare to interview food pantry customers. The community advocate felt that the staff/volunteers used a disrespectful and harsh tone when telling the advocate that they were not open for another 15 minutes.

When the community advocate explained that s/he was representing MPFS to interview food pantry customers, their demeanor changed. The community advocate went on to explain that s/he was treated more positively and the staff/volunteers invited him/her in to the pantry and accommodated the community advocate.

The community advocate expressed that that situation made him/her feel uncomfortable and raised some questions as to how food pantry customers are treated and how they perceive their interactions with food pantry staff and volunteers. The community advocate was treated differently based on how the food pantry staff and volunteers perceived his/her role at the food pantry: as a customer, and as a representative from MPFS.

Undocumented Workers

When discussing barriers to preventing hunger and poverty, many stakeholders attributed obstacles to undocumented worker status. One stakeholder, in particular, believed that a large proportion of the community was undocumented workers, which s/he attributes to the inability to prevent hunger and poverty. *Our population is largely undocumented workers. A percentage are not, but to solve the unemployment problem is above my pay grade – wish I knew how.*

Other stakeholders, however, discussed how being undocumented was a barrier to overcoming hunger and poverty and not necessarily a cause.

Some pantry customers also had a negative attitude toward Hispanic/Latinos and/or undocumented workers, attributing the cause behind hunger and poverty to illegal immigration. A few pantry customers discussed how they can personally get ahead if illegal immigration was not an issue, so more jobs and resources will be available to citizens.

Pantry customers who were undocumented workers discussed how they were not using community resources because they *don't want to draw attention to*

Some of it's fear, especially if people are not legal citizens, or other cultures. This is a real issue and problem, people are afraid to write their name down anywhere with the fear that government agencies will track them down and send them back to their country.

the fact that we are not citizens. For undocumented workers, they felt that hunger and poverty could be prevented and solved through immigration reform by helping undocumented workers become

legal. They felt that in order to get ahead, gaining legal status was needed to gain access to more employment opportunities.

This demonstrates that there is a disconnect between perceptions of undocumented workers and what undocumented workers present as their hardships in finding work and resources.

Summary

Most of the assessment responses had statistically significant results when separated by racial/ethnic groups and/or language speakers. More specifically, the following categories in the assessment varied at a statistically significant level by race/ethnicity and/or language: food access, community involvement, use of resources, and ideas about solving and preventing hunger.

Even though culture was not specifically discussed in assessment questions, it was a pervasive theme in many of the assessment questions and responses.

Culture also was an underlying theme discussed by assessment participants during surveys and interviews in three distinct ways:

- Cultural/language barriers make it difficult to get ahead
- Differential attitude toward cultures as a barrier to getting ahead; a subset of community stakeholders and pantry customers that participated in the assessment were observed demonstrating differential attitudes toward different cultural groups
- Undocumented worker status as a barrier to getting ahead and as an identified prejudice by a subset of community stakeholders and pantry customers that participated in the assessment

With regard to cultural/language barriers, community advocates found that food pantries lacked bilingual volunteers and that many pantry volunteers and staff were unable to communicate with customers speaking another language effectively.

For some pantry customers, they felt by overcoming language barriers, they could get ahead.

Stakeholders also discussed how cultural barriers prevent the elimination of hunger and poverty and make it difficult for some groups to access resources.

A subset of stakeholders, pantry customers, and food pantry volunteers openly discussed the differential attitudes they had of certain cultural groups and how they felt that these groups were responsible for the existence of hunger and poverty. Community advocates observed some people treating certain cultural groups differently, and expressing negative attitudes about certain cultural groups.

For some pantry customers, they felt that reverse discrimination was an issue and a barrier to receiving employment and resources.

Some stakeholders and pantry customers also discussed how undocumented workers cause and/or maintain hunger and poverty. Some stereotyped all Spanish-speaking residents as undocumented workers.

However, other stakeholders and pantry customers discussed how undocumented worker status makes it difficult to get ahead.

For assessment participants that identified themselves as being an undocumented worker, they avoided the use of resources to prevent potential repercussions for their undocumented worker status, and wanted to gain legal status in order to have more employment opportunities.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND ASSETS

Asset-Based Approach

Traditional approaches to community development and community assessments follow a needs-driven path. They begin by identifying community deficiencies and, as a result, resources are created to maintain community survival and used to address needs. This approach begins with a negative outlook and does not take into consideration the actual capacity of the community to address the issues, thus parceling out community solutions to these problems without focusing on available assets to overcome them.

As an alternative approach to this traditional path, capacity-focused development looks at the capacities and assets of community members to improve their community. With this approach in mind, the survey and interviews collected information about participants' involvement in the community and personal assets in order to create an inventory of individual and community capacities.

Community Involvement

The majority of customers were involved with the community, with 68.3% of survey respondents involved specifically with church groups.

Furthermore, 27.8% of survey respondents have held a leadership position. The more educated respondents were, the more likely they were to have held a leadership position.

Nearly half (44.6%) of respondents had volunteered in the community. As with experience in leadership positions, the more educated respondents were, the more likely they were to volunteer.

About half of survey participants (50.2%) were registered to vote. A higher proportion of customers living in urban areas were registered to vote than in rural.*

Survey respondents were also asked to provide a list of 3 skills they have. The purpose of this question is to collect an inventory of skills and assets to document ways to improve grassroots organizing and capacity building among food pantry customers. A range of skills

were listed, including cooking, sewing, taking care of children, office work, knowledge of auto mechanics, people skills, and more.

Volunteering with MPFS

Of the 902 survey participants, 292 (32.4%) gave their contact information to volunteer with MPFS. Of the pantry customers that indicated interest in volunteering, they wanted to volunteer in the following capacities:

- Sort food donations (47.8%)
- Office work (38.6%)
- Help distribute food at food pantries (37.2%)
- Serve brown bag lunches for No Hungry Child program (28.7%)
- Volunteer at special events (26.3%)
- Community garden volunteer (25.9%)
- Volunteer driver (19.8%)
- Sort book donations (23.9%)
- Participate in Women Ending Hunger (19.1%)
- Teach nutrition and cooking classes (14.7%)
- Other (12.3%)

English speakers filled out the volunteer interest form at higher rates than Spanish speakers.* About 37.8% of English speakers and 20.7% of Spanish speakers demonstrated interest in volunteer opportunities at MPFS.

There were also differences between Spanish and English speakers in the types of volunteer opportunities for which they expressed interest. More specifically, Spanish speakers indicated less interest in volunteering in the following capacities: sorting food, office work, and volunteering at special events.*

In addition, a higher proportion of urban survey participants indicated interest in volunteering with MPFS than rural participants. Approximately 34.6% of urban participants and 27.5% of rural participants demonstrated interest in volunteering.*

Summary

By going beyond understanding the needs and gaps in the community to also incorporate assets, we are able to have a greater impact on issues. The majority of customers were involved with community groups, namely church group, and over a quarter of customers have held a leadership position. Almost half of customers have volunteered in the community. In addition, MPFS has a comprehensive list of skills and assets that food pantry customers have that can be utilized to cultivate the capacity of food pantry customers.

In addition, nearly one-third of customers gave their contact information so that they could volunteer with MPFS on a variety of projects, including: sorting food donations, office work, helping distribute food at food pantries, serving brown bag lunches for the No Hungry Child program, volunteering at special events, community garden volunteer, volunteer driver, sorting book donations, participating in Women Ending Hunger, teaching nutrition and cooking classes, and other volunteer opportunities.

**Results are statistically significant ($p < .05$)*

SOLUTIONS TO HUNGER

Hunger and poverty are persistent issues in Marion and Polk counties. Oftentimes people experiencing hunger and poverty are rarely asked about their ideas to solve and prevent what they are experiencing. As a result, part of this assessment includes one-on-one interviews with food pantry customers and community stakeholders asking about ideas on solutions to ending hunger and poverty in the community.

Customer Perspective

When food pantry customers were asked about their ideas on how to end hunger, they responded with solutions involving community support and systematic efforts to solve hunger and poverty. None of the common themes expressed by food pantry customers involved individual solutions, but a concerted effort by the community to address the issue of hunger and poverty.

The following is the list of common themes described by pantry customers to solve hunger and poverty:

- Jobs (26.5%)
- Increase resources, reduce eligibility requirements (12.6%)
- Do not know (10.2%)
- Community (7.8%)
- Less waste, share excess (7.5%)
- Support food banks (7.2%)
- Gardens (6.4%)
- Help others, share (5.9%)
- Government help and/or reform (5.6%)

Jobs (26.5%). With the current economic recession and lack of jobs, the most common theme expressed by customers to reduce hunger and poverty was to increase employment opportunities and the availability of jobs. Customers felt that by procuring more jobs, community members can increase their economic capital and limit their experiences with hunger and poverty.

Spanish speakers discussed jobs to a higher degree than English speakers as a solution to hunger and poverty.*

Increase Resources/Reduce Eligibility Requirements (12.6%). Customers felt that there was a need to increase access to community resources in order to solve hunger and poverty, either through increasing existing resource capacity, creating resources for gaps in services, and reducing eligibility requirements for services, such as SNAP benefits.

English speakers discussed increasing resources and/or reducing resource eligibility requirements as a solution idea more often than Spanish speakers.*

Do Not Know (10.2%). Many food pantry customers did not have any solutions to hunger and poverty, responding simply that they *don't know what to do*.

Community (7.8%). Community support through neighbors and sharing was a common solution to hunger and poverty raised by food pantry customers. *I think the more aware of our neighbors and their needs and we just try to do a little bit for each other that would be a big step to ending hunger and homelessness. If you can do a little and someone else can do a little pretty soon there's not such a big need.*

Less Waste, Share Excess (7.5%). Pantry customers felt that it was important to reduce the waste of resources,

We, ourselves are the problem sometimes. If we don't need, we should give to those who do. United we can do it. Sometimes we can, sometimes we can't. I've found cans of food in the laundry rooms. If we don't eat it, don't take it just to throw it away.

especially food, in order to solve hunger and poverty. *When I volunteered at a preschool, my heart would rip to see all the food that was being thrown away. People need to learn that food is not garbage.* In addition, if an individual, business or agency has excess of

anything, customers felt that they should be donated to help those in need.

Support Food Banks (7.2%). Another theme regarding solutions to hunger and poverty included the appreciation of the availability of food banks, the need to expand food bank services, including location, availability and services, such as delivering to home-bound individuals and increasing the number of times

families are able to access emergency food services, and the call to support local food banks in their efforts to help those in need. Pantry customers discussed supporting food banks through donating food and holding more food drives.

Gardens (6.4%). Customers discussed how home and community gardens were important in solving hunger and poverty. They felt that people should garden more, and that community gardens should be expanded. *I think community gardens are good, it helps people learn and improves self esteem; they learn to do something and see results in their work.*

Gardens were discussed as a solution to hunger much more often by English speakers than Spanish speakers.*

Help Others, Share (5.9%). Similar to building a sense of community, customers also felt that solving hunger and

Help others if you have extra. Give what you can. Support neighbors and family.

poverty would need to come from helping others and sharing resources with neighbors and family, especially because *everyone has something to contribute*

no matter how small. Customers felt that community members should *help each other as much as we can.*

English speakers discussed this solution idea to a higher degree than Spanish speakers.*

Government Reform/Help (5.6%). Lastly, customers discussed the common theme of needing additional help from government or government reform as a way to solve hunger and poverty. Although this was a common theme, the types of responses within this theme fell upon a spectrum. Some customers felt that government needed to be reorganized, taxes decreased, and that government involvement should be reduced. However, other customers felt that government involvement should be increased, food programs should be created and expanded, and the government should create more jobs.

Community Stakeholder Perspective

Unlike pantry customers who discussed ideas mostly consisting of systemic solutions, stakeholders shared both systematic and individual-level solutions to hunger and poverty. In addition, stakeholder responses focused heavily on the food system, whereas the responses by

food pantry customers focused on overall resources. The most common themes discussed by stakeholders to solving hunger and poverty included:

- Education (20.4%)
- Jobs (20.4%)
- Community (16.3%)
- Donations (16.3%)
- Outreach/community education (14.3%)
- Food production and harvesting (12.2%)
- Attitude, motivation (10.2%)
- Higher wages (8.2%)
- Community engagement, involvement (8.2%)
- Less waste, share excess (8.2%)
- Government and tax reform (8.2%)
- Job search assistance/job skills (6.1%)
- Nutrition/cooking classes (6.1%)

Education (20.4%). Education, tied with jobs, was the most common theme discussed by stakeholders regarding solutions to hunger and poverty. Stakeholders felt that *education is the key* to addressing hunger-related issues. *Education goes a long way to earning more financial resources to buy food.*

Jobs (20.4%). Tied with education as the most common theme expressed by stakeholders, jobs were also important to stakeholders in determining solutions to hunger and poverty. This included, foremost, the creation of jobs; however, stakeholders also discussed the limited availability of jobs, the importance of living wage jobs, connecting people to jobs, and sustainable jobs that allow for the opportunity for employees to gain promotions.

Community (16.3%). Similar to pantry customers, stakeholders also felt that community support and sense of community were important to decreasing

We're just not good neighbors anymore. We need to step out to get to know each other. We need to drop fear and trust each other more. Then we can become a good neighbor and take care of each other.

hunger and poverty levels in our community. Stakeholders felt that neighbors should step up and care for one another and provide support to those in need. *We as*

an entire community—we have to have options for everyone in our community. Not everyone can pull themselves up by their bootstraps. Society makes this

darn near impossible. We need to care for each other. We should know the kid or elderly person next door and take notice of their well-being. As a country, we've been focused on a global responsibility. We need to know our local responsibility.

Donations (16.3%). Stakeholders expressed the importance of food and monetary donations to support food bank efforts in addressing hunger. Specific ideas within the theme of donations ranged from growing food to donate, food drives, and fundraising.

Outreach/Community Education (14.3%). For stakeholders, they felt that in order to solve hunger and poverty, it is important to *<educate> people about this issue, people living in it, or those that don't know about it.* Furthermore, stakeholders also discussed that it is necessary to conduct community outreach among those experiencing hunger and poverty to teach nutrition education.

Food Production and Harvesting (12.2%). On an individual level and also for MPFS, stakeholders discussed the role of food production and harvesting in solving hunger-related issues. For individuals and families, food production and harvesting were important for families to maintain nutritious diets and to receive nutrition education. For MPFS, stakeholders felt that food production and harvesting were important to increase donations to MPFS and provide nutritious food to families in need.

Attitude, Motivation (10.2%). Another common theme from stakeholder interviews included acknowledging that the attitude and motivation of people experiencing hunger and poverty affects their situation, and that this attitude needs to change in order to improve one's situation. *It's one thing to help but you can't do that forever. We need change of perspective opposed to the entitlement mentality.*

Higher Wages (8.2%). Increasing the availability of living wage jobs also was a common theme expressed by stakeholders in order to solve hunger and poverty.

You have to have the engagement of the community...Have people and communities come together sort of like a grassroots society.

Community Engagement and Involvement (8.2%). Stakeholders also felt that hunger and poverty

could be addressed by encouraging and increasing levels of community engagement and involvement. Although many stakeholders spoke about engagement and involvement, they spoke about this theme in very vague terms.

Less Waste, Share Excess (8.2%). Similar to pantry customers, stakeholders also felt that reducing waste and sharing excess were important variables in solving hunger and poverty. However, stakeholders spoke about this theme more in terms of food processing, while customers discussed this theme more in terms of food waste with food distributors, such as restaurants and grocery stores. One farmer shared that his farm *threw a lot of cauliflower away last year. There's a lot of waste going on. We had beans get bypassed last summer for getting too big. They <food processors> say consumers don't want to see that in the can, but you can eat that.*

Government and Tax Reform (8.2%). Stakeholders also discussed government and tax reform as a common response when giving ideas to solving hunger and poverty. However, most responses focused on tax reform with no central agreement on how taxes should be reformed to help those in need. A stakeholder noted that *we need to reform the Oregon tax system so that it is more fair*, while other stakeholders called for higher taxes on *some* people, and others called for a decrease in taxes. Responses involving government were also unique according to each stakeholder, with suggestions that government should allow *hunger help* to happen, to incorporating community health initiatives in city planning codes and policy. Regardless, stakeholders agreed that some form of government or tax reform needs to happen in order to solve hunger and poverty.

Job Search Assistance/Job Skills (6.1%). Job search assistance and job skills training were common responses regarding solutions to hunger and poverty. Stakeholders spoke about this theme in general terms, stating the need to help people find jobs, and also to develop job skills to help people gain employment.

Nutrition/Cooking Classes (6.1%). Lastly, *food production/prep/nutrition are critical to sustaining one's self & family. Learn how to do a lot with a little.* Stakeholders discussed the importance of nutrition and cooking education in solving hunger and poverty, and

how nutrition education can help individuals and families out of hunger.

Summary

Pantry customers tended to discuss solutions to hunger with a whole systems approach, focusing on macro-level support and intervention in order to address the issue of hunger. Stakeholders, on the other hand, spoke about both macro-level solutions in addition to individual-level solutions when it comes to the issue of hunger.

A few of the solutions offered by pantry customers and stakeholders were shared between the two groups. The most prominent solution to hunger and poverty shared by both stakeholders and customers was jobs. This included creating more jobs, having more access to jobs, etc. Also important was having a strong sense of community, where neighbors can help one another and *unite*. Other shared responses include wasting less and sharing excess resources, such as food, and reforming government and increasing government assistance.

However, the proportion of stakeholders that spoke about sense of community, reducing waste and sharing excess, and government reform/assistance was higher than customers who spoke about these ideas as solutions to hunger. In contrast, pantry customers spoke more often about jobs as a solution to hunger.

The significance behind this comparison is that these solutions are shared between both people experiencing hunger and community leaders. This intersection of solutions represents how people across a variety of sectors and with different backgrounds can agree upon important aspects of what needs to happen to reduce hunger rates. Even though each group offered up separate solutions in addition to the ones they had in common, it is important to note that there are several key points that are agreed upon between different groups of people when it comes to solving hunger.

**Results are statistically significant (p<.05)*

HUNGER PREVENTION

In addition to asking key groups about their ideas on how to solve hunger that already exists, they were also asked about how to prevent it from happening in the future. Pantry customers, community stakeholders, and MPFS staff were each asked about their ideas on how to prevent hunger and poverty for future generations.

Pantry Customer Perspective

Food pantry customer response themes touched on both external and internal factors, and most of the responses involved teaching beyond the formal educational system. Participants responded personally to the question and offered up prevention ideas based on how they would teach their own children. These ideas included teaching life skills, values, and motivating and counseling their children.

In addition, pantry customers expressed interest in maintaining and/or increasing resources, including government and community resources, to help people in poverty. Common response themes included:

- Education (40.4%)
- Jobs (15.5%)
- Life skills (14.7%)
- Community, help one another (7.0%)
- Do not know (6.7%)
- Government reform (5.1%)
- Teach values (5.1%)
- Maintain current resources (5.1%)
- Motivate, counsel, give advice (5.1%)

We need to prepare kids with the knowledge and encouragement they need to better understand the importance of education to set them up better later in life.

Education (40.4%). The most common hunger prevention idea shared among pantry customers was to encourage education to their children, and also to improve the educational system.

Spanish speakers discussed education much more often than English speakers as a hunger prevention factor.*

Jobs (15.5%). Another important prevention tool, according to food pantry customers, was jobs. *Create more jobs. Some people go to school for 4-5 years and still don't have a job, so job creation is crucial.* When food pantry customers spoke about jobs, they included many aspects of employment including: the future generation getting a good job, having more jobs available for the next generation, children getting better jobs than their parents, and the ability to find work. *More jobs are needed. I want jobs and education for my grandchildren to have a better life.* More specifically, many food pantry customers spoke about the importance of education to enable the future generation to find better jobs.

A much higher proportion of Spanish speakers discussed jobs to prevent hunger.*

Life Skills (14.7%). Food pantry customers also felt it was important for the future generation to be knowledgeable of life skills, such as budgeting, how to shop wisely, and work ethic, among other life skills. They felt that life skills could aid in preventing the future generation from experiencing hunger and poverty. *What are needed are life skills. People need to know how to keep a checking account and whether or not it is better to buy only what we need or spend money on bulk sales. People need to be informed about services to meet their basic needs before they can even begin to look into paying for something like college.*

Hunger and poverty are usually the result of a community breakdown. We need to build a sense of community. The person down the street is just as important as the neighbor you've known all your life. We need this sense of community because there is no guarantee that services and programs will still be funded in ten years. We need to build a sense of community responsibility then bond social interaction between communities.

Community/Help One Another (7.0%). In order to prevent hunger and poverty, pantry customers also shared another theme shared as the need to build a sense of community and teach their children to help others and *unite ourselves/unirnos todos.*

Do Not Know (6.7%). *Not sure.* Many food pantry customers did not have any ideas on how to prevent the future generation from experiencing hunger.

Government Reform (5.1%). Another common theme expressed by pantry customers was the need for government reform in order to prevent hunger. Pantry customers held many different political views, especially on this topic. As a result, responses varied tremendously within this category. Examples of responses under the theme included increased government involvement, revising the government budget and managing it more closely, reforming government to focus more on constituents, and increasing funding for government programs, such as social security.

Teach Values (5.1%). Customers felt it was important to teach their children and the future generation some values to *try to live an upright life. Teach children to live legitimately, and a lawful life. Hunger and poverty happens because one is always trying to get ahead of another. Be prepared for the unexpected.* Part of teaching children values was to prepare them for the future, and also to teach them to help others.

A higher proportion of English speakers discussed teaching values to the next generation as a hunger prevention idea than Spanish speakers.*

Maintain Current Resources (5.1%). In order to prevent hunger in the future, customers talked about maintaining existing resources, such as food banks.

Motivate, Counsel, Give Advice (5.1%). Customers also felt that motivating and counseling their children and the future generation would have an impact on preventing hunger in their futures. In addition to helping the youth prepare for their futures, customers

We need to prepare kids with the knowledge and encouragement they need to better understand the importance of education to set them up better later in life.

highlighted the importance of staying involved in their children's lives by supporting them.

Spanish speakers discussed the need to motivate, counsel and give advice to the next generation to a higher degree than English speakers.*

Stakeholder Perspective

Common responses from stakeholders included an emphasis on personal liability and life choices, which pantry customers discussed as well, but to a lesser extent. Examples of these responses include self-sufficiency, work ethic, literacy, volunteerism and mentoring. The full list of common response themes included:

- Education (65.3%)
- Nutrition and cooking education (16.3%)
- Life skills (12.2%)
- Self-sufficiency (12.2%)
- Job skills (10.2%)
- Work ethic (10.2%)
- Community (10.2%)
- Community education/outreach (10.2%)
- Motivate (10.2%)
- Literacy (6.1%)
- Support services (6.1%)
- Volunteerism (6.1%)
- Mentoring (6.1%)
- Gardening (6.1%)

Education (65.3%). Similar to pantry customers, stakeholders also responded with education as the most common theme they felt was important in order to prevent hunger and poverty. Education was described as a protective factor and the *foundation to reducing hunger and poverty*. Not only does formal education help students gain access to better jobs in the future, but stakeholders felt that education also helps break the cycle of poverty and enhances life skills.

Nutrition and Cooking Education (16.3%). Stakeholders felt it was important to teach nutrition and cooking education so that individuals and families experiencing hunger know how to provide nutritious meals for their families, even if they are on a tight budget.

Life Skills (12.2%). Improving life skills, such as budgeting, also was a common theme described by stakeholders to prevent hunger and poverty. Stakeholders felt that life skills give people the

knowledge of how to make manage life and get the most out of situations and assets when resources are lacking.

Self-Sufficiency (12.2%). By becoming self-sufficient and reducing dependence on outside resources, stakeholders felt that hunger could be prevented. In order to help people become self-sufficient, stakeholders felt that education and assistance need to be provided.

Job Skills (10.2%). In addition to developing other skills, stakeholders also found that enhancing job skills was important to prevent hunger and poverty. Improved job skills open up more doors for more employment opportunities and increased economic capital, thus reducing the chance of experiencing hunger.

Work Ethic (10.2%). Many stakeholders held the notion that people experience hunger because they do not have a good work ethic. As a result, one of the hunger prevention themes discussed by stakeholders was to increase work ethic so that people are motivated to work and find jobs.

Community (10.2%). Many stakeholders felt that hunger

Communities that do best have a sense of ownership and relationship building with neighbors.

prevention cannot happen without mobilizing the entire community to support the efforts through the promotion of relationship development among neighbors and building a sense of community.

Community Education/Outreach (10.2%). Teaching the community about hunger and poverty and reframing social thought on these issues through community outreach was another common theme discussed by stakeholders regarding the prevention of hunger and poverty.

Motivate (10.2%). It was also notable from stakeholder interviews that they felt that in order to prevent hunger, people need the *incentive to rise above the situation that they find themselves in* and motivation through empowering the future generation.

Literacy (6.1%). Literacy was another common theme described by stakeholders regarding how to prevent hunger and poverty. *Literacy and early childhood education with parent involvement are critical. Literacy*

and education are the foundation to reducing hunger and poverty. This helps to bring the child up while also transferring literacy to the parents as well.

Support Services (6.1%). Stakeholders also outlined the need to *build stronger support systems*, refine support services to *support family effort*, and make current support services more efficient to serve the community in order to prevent hunger and poverty for the future generation.

Volunteerism (6.1%). Another hunger prevention idea discussed by stakeholders was to promote volunteerism among the younger generation, and award community involvement.

Mentoring (6.1%). Although stakeholders did not extend any details on this theme, mentoring was a common method stakeholders felt could prevent hunger and poverty.

Gardening (6.1%). Lastly, stakeholders felt that expanding involvement with gardens was integral to preventing hunger. This included further involvement with community gardens, teaching gardening, and growing food.

MPFS Staff Perspective

In addition to food pantry customers and stakeholders, the perspective of MPFS staff also was documented on how to end hunger. Gathering input on this perspective was important because MPFS staff currently work on anti-hunger initiatives and are directly involved with reducing and preventing hunger in our community. Because MPFS staff work directly on hunger-related issues, they have knowledge about hunger that may not be captured by other community groups, such as stakeholders and food pantry customers.

As previously discussed, it is important to note for comparison purposes that while the majority of MPFS staff members responded to the assessment questions, the total number of responses was less than stakeholder and pantry customer responses because there is a limited number of MPFS staff members when compared to the number of stakeholders and pantry customers.

With this in mind, there were far less prevention topics discussed by MPFS staff than by stakeholders, and most

of the common responses by MPFS staff were also shared by stakeholders and customers. Figure 15 displays the list of common responses by MPFS staff. MPFS staff focused on both individual-level and community-wide prevention ideas to hunger and poverty.

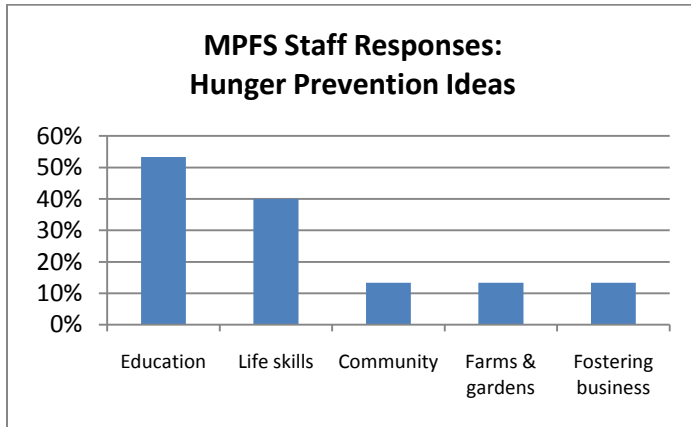


Figure 15. MPFS staff ideas on preventing hunger and poverty.

Education (53.3%). The most common hunger prevention theme discussed by MPFS staff was education. *Fund and support basic education; encourage students to remain in and finish school; instill within these students a realization of the importance of their education to their success in life.* Over half of MPFS staff that responded to this question believed that education was an important aspect to prevent hunger and poverty.

Life Skills (40.0%). Almost half of MPFS staff also believed that focusing on life skills was an important strategy to preventing hunger, including budgeting and life skills training to *increase self-sufficiency trainings.*

A committed community is a must if it is to happen. We need to enlist the help of our young people in the work of feeding people and fighting hunger. The "elder" population cannot do it alone. It will take a whole village!

Community Support (13.3%). Preventing hunger, according to MPFS staff, requires the effort of the entire community.

Farms and Gardens (13.3%). Growing food was a prevention strategy that a number of MPFS staff felt could aid in preventing hunger and poverty for the

future. *I also think people need to get more involved in creating their own food sources. I am looking into aquaponics, tilapia farming, and things like that.*

Community gardens in every possible area would be fun to see.

Fostering Business (13.3%). Lastly, different methods to improve business success were encouraged by MPFS staff as methods to prevent hunger, including tax credits for domestic businesses and jobs, and *improved capitalization for microenterprise activities for low income persons.*

Summary

The most common responses by pantry customers regarding hunger prevention included education, jobs and life skills. Among these common themes, Spanish speakers were more likely to discuss education and jobs.

For community stakeholders, the most common prevention themes included education, nutrition and cooking education, life skills, and self-sufficiency. Stakeholders had more variation in responses than pantry customers and MPFS staff. As a result, stakeholders discussed more response categories. Stakeholder themes tended to emphasize personal liability and life choices, which pantry customers described to a lesser extent.

Education and life skills were the most common responses to hunger prevention described by MPFS staff. Common themes presented by MPFS staff included both individual and community-wide prevention ideas, similar to stakeholders and pantry customers.

Food pantry customers, community stakeholders and MPFS staff agreed upon many aspects of hunger prevention, of which the most common theme discussed by every group was education.

Customers, stakeholders and MPFS staff also shared expressed common prevention ideas of life skills and community. Even though those categories were not the most frequently discussed by each group, they were discussed often by customers, stakeholders and MPFS staff.

The implication behind these shared responses demonstrates the felt importance of education, life skills and community in the prevention of hunger,

especially as these different groups intersected on the same ideas.

Another theme that was shared by pantry customers and stakeholders, but not by MPFS staff, was the need

to motivate the next generation. Although stakeholders discussed this prevention theme to a higher degree than customers, motivation was important to both groups.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based upon the results of this community-wide assessment, MPFS believes that over the next year a collaborative strategic plan can be developed to reduce food insecurity. This plan will not only address identified community needs related to hunger and food insecurity, but also draw upon community capacity to address these issues through individual and community assets.

Recommendations were made, based on the assessment results, to implement action strategies within the following categories:

- MPFS resources
- Community resources
- Collaborations and partnerships
- Access to food
- Economic development
- Education
- Health
- Transportation
- Sense of community
- Advocacy
- Cultural resources

MPFS will determine which recommendations will be the most effective to incorporate into the organization’s Strategic Plan, and also in Women Ending Hunger’s action plan.

Women Ending Hunger is a grassroots coalition of more than 700 women and men who work *to end hunger by exploring and eliminating its root causes because <they> passionately honor the worth and dignity of every member of our community.* The group identifies and implements projects to make an impact on hunger.

While many of the strategies will be implemented by MPFS, its member agencies, and Women Ending Hunger, the implementation plan will incorporate a collaborative community approach to solving hunger. Therefore, it is critical to prioritize the recommendations and determine the most effective methods through which the community may address a comprehensive approach to hunger and poverty.

Below are the set of recommendations that MPFS will use as a starting point to establish a community-wide implementation plan to impact food security.

<i>MPFS Resources</i>	
Recommendation	Rationale
<i>Prepare, educate and give out more recipe instructions and live demonstrations of how to prepare and cook food.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 23% of customers expressed interest in receiving MPFS support with recipes; 19.0% of customers gave their contact information to receive more information and/or get involved with receiving recipes.
<i>Connect pantry customers to other resources by providing information and referrals. This can be done through resource advocate volunteers at pantry locations, resource lists to disseminate with food boxes, etc.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customers expressed interest in receiving MPFS support in connecting them to other resources (34%). • Community advocates found that, while interviewing customers, rural areas had less information regarding available resources in the community, and less referral and information sharing regarding these resources; however, these customers wanted to receive information about these resources. • Community advocates also observed that information about community resources were readily available at food pantries, but resource books were extremely difficult to find at pantries, and volunteers/staff at a couple of pantries were unwilling to help pantry customers locate resource books or help them with finding resources.

MPFS Resources (cont.)

Recommendation	Rationale
<i>Offer food budgeting classes so individuals and families can learn how to stretch food resources.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 21% of customers expressed interest in receiving MPFS support in food budgeting classes. • MPFS is serving more people than ever before, and helping people stretch their food resources may prevent the need for emergency food boxes in addition to making food box resources last longer. • 19.7% of pantry customers attributed seeking emergency food assistance to being unable to make their SNAP benefits last through the month. • The majority of customers felt that they were not getting enough fresh food in their diet, mostly because they felt fresh foods were too expensive (84.3%).
<i>Expand the community garden program.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12.7% of food pantry customers gave their contact information to receive more information/get involved with community gardens. • Both the Board of Directors and MPFS staff discussed expanding community gardens, especially to additional communities and rural areas, as an MPFS program expansion idea. • 10.2% of community stakeholders described community gardens as a service or program they would like to see offered in the community that was not already available.
<i>Expand emergency food distribution by MPFS to member agencies, with a focus on rural areas.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As an idea for MPFS program expansion, both the Board of Directors and MPFS staff (but a higher proportion of Board of Directors) discussed expanding emergency food distribution, especially in rural areas.
<i>Expand and create MPFS opportunities for food processing to supplement and enhance MPFS' ability to distribute nutritious food to member agencies.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A popular program creation idea discussed by the Board of Directors and MPFS staff included food processing. Food processing involves processing, canning, packing and freezing raw food for the purpose of distributing it to food pantries as an additional food source.
<i>Expand land resources to procure additional food for emergency food distribution.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board of Directors (33.3%) and MPFS staff (12.5%) discussed expanding land resources as a MPFS program development idea. Land resources described by the Board of Directors and MPFS staff included farming and food donations, such as an MPFS farm, land trust, sharecropping, and the Farmers Ending Hunger program.

MPFS Resources (cont.)

Recommendation	Rationale
<p><i>Ensure that all MPFS programs are inclusive of the diverse population that MPFS serves.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12.5% of MPFS staff and 33.3% of the Board of Directors discussed cultural-specific program development when discussing program expansion ideas for MPFS. This includes specific recruitment and program provision catered to the Hispanic/Latino population, seniors and children, and females. • Interest in MPFS programs varied by urban or rural residence and language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ English speakers and households with children were more likely to respond with wanting additional support with recipes. ○ Rural residents and English speakers were more likely to report wanting MPFS to connect them to other resources. ○ Community advocates found that, while interviewing customers, rural areas had less information regarding available resources in the community, and less referral and information sharing regarding these resources; these customers wanted to receive information about these resources. ○ A higher proportion of English than Spanish speakers expressed interest in and gave their contact information to get involved with community gardens.

Community Resources

Recommendation	Rationale
<p><i>Expand the No Hungry Child program, especially to rural areas.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25% of the Board of Directors wanted MPFS to expand the No Hungry Child free lunch program to include additional communities in Marion and Polk counties, especially in rural regions.
<p><i>Expand Women Ending Hunger efforts and membership.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MPFS staff (12.5%) and the Board of Directors (8.3%) discussed expanding Women Ending Hunger. Most discussion points about Women Ending Hunger were to expand and continue with Women Ending Hunger efforts.
<p><i>Reduce eligibility requirements for resources and/or increase resource capacity to serve additional people in need. This may include a coordinated response and community partnerships to ensure a safety net of services.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For pantry customers, the most common reason why they felt people were not using resources was because of ineligibility (26.6%). • Customers (12.0%) felt that reducing eligibility requirements and increasing resources was a solution to hunger and poverty. This was the 2nd most discussed solution idea. • One of the barriers customers felt stood in the way of them getting ahead was not eligible for community services (6.8%).

Community Resources (cont.)

Recommendation	Rationale
<p><i>Streamline resources by offering resources in a centralized location and pooling existing resources together.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholders felt that resources need to be offered in a centralized location (12.2%), and that this was a service not offered in the community that should be available. Stakeholders also felt that existing programs should be more efficient (6.1%) and that resource access should be increased (6.1%). • In order to streamline resources to make the community more effective in responding hunger and poverty issues, stakeholders discussed the need to centralize community services by location, increase resource coordination, and pool existing resources together (21.3%). • Customers discussed services being too far away as a barrier to getting ahead (5.5%).

Collaborations and Partnerships

Recommendation	Rationale
<p><i>Increase involvement and relationship development with other community agencies, including the private sector. This includes volunteering with other organizations, encouraging community involvement with other agencies, and working together to create strategies to improve the community.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MFPS specific: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ MPFS staff (12.5%) and Board of Directors (25.0%) felt that developing relationships and partnerships with different sectors of the community was an important aspect of programs that MPFS should expand. ○ When MPFS staff were asked how to improve collaborations and partnerships, the most common response was for MPFS staff and volunteers to get involved with other community organizations (21.4%), such as serving on another organization’s Board of Directors, and volunteering with other organizations. ○ MPFS staff (21.4%) also felt that partnering with the private sector to develop relationships with local businesses was important to improve collaborations. Partnership suggestions with the private sector included paid volunteer time, developing economic development strategies to build livable communities, and encouraging businesses to hold local food drives. ○ MPFS staff (21.4%) described how they felt it was important for that the community, and namely employees in the private sector, get involved by volunteering with MPFS. • Overall community: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ About 21.4% of MPFS staff also felt that fostering communication and relationships with community organizations was a method of increasing collaborations with organizations, government and businesses. ○ When the Board of Directors was asked about how to improve collaborations, 21.3% felt that communication was key. ○ Stakeholders also felt strongly that communication needed to be improved, especially communication across different organizations. Furthermore, stakeholders discussed how communication is important to help the general community understand issues surrounding hunger and poverty.

Collaborations and Partnerships (cont.)

Recommendation	Rationale
<i>Evaluate community interest in and effectiveness of a regional or community food policy council with representatives from a variety of sectors, including individuals who are currently and/or have experienced hunger.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food pantry customers have many demonstrated needs that they are unable to find resources for, and are preventing them from getting ahead, which has implications for needing a variety of sectors (e.g. – housing, employment department, farmers, social service agencies, etc.) to come to the table to discuss comprehensive solutions to address hunger and food insecurity. • A policy-level approach to addressing food insecurity, with the input of a variety of community members, would be effective in funneling additional resources to address food insecurity and its related community issues.
<i>Give community presentations to enhance public understanding of MPFS and its role in the community.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About 14.3% of staff felt that staff and volunteers should give community presentations in order to increase collaborations in the community. Community presentations involved speaking to the community about how to become a volunteer and monthly sustainer (monthly giving program to provide MPFS with a sustainable funding source), and also educate the community on MPFS and the people we serve.
<i>Improve inter-agency communication among MPFS staff.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some MPFS staff expressed the desire to increase inter-agency communication between MPFS staff and leadership.

Access to Food

Recommendation	Rationale
<i>Enhance SNAP education, outreach & application assistance, and ensure that efforts are inclusive of our community's diverse population. This will not only reduce the stigma of receiving SNAP, but also increase SNAP participation among individuals who are eligible but are not receiving SNAP.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most of the respondents in the survey reported their households as being food insecure, meaning that either sometimes or often there was not enough food to eat (57%). • About 40.8% of survey respondents did not receive SNAP benefits. Of those that did not receive SNAP benefits, 27.8% did not apply because they did not think they would qualify. • Rural customers, Spanish speakers, and Russian speakers reported using SNAP benefits less often than their counterparts. • Hispanic/Latino respondents were more likely to report being unsure how to apply and not knowing where to apply as a reason for not receiving SNAP. • Rural respondents reported “unsure how to apply” as a reason more often than urban areas for not receiving SNAP. • White (Non-Hispanic) respondents reported being embarrassed to apply more often than other races and ethnicities as a reason for not receiving SNAP benefits.

Access to Food (cont.)

Recommendation	Rationale
<p><i>Access to fresh and nutritious food can be enhanced through increasing locations of food vendors of all types, including grocery stores, healthy options offered at corner stores, farm stands, and mobile food vendors and pantries. This may also include partnering with existing organizations to deliver groceries to community members, such as partnering with the library and grocery store to deliver food to residents in a central location (e.g. - Virtual Supermarket Project in Baltimore).</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transportation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The most common modes of transportation pantry customers used to get to the grocery store were their own car (66.9%) and walking (24.9%). Customers walked more often to the grocery store than used public transportation (11.0%). ○ The average amount of time to get to the grocery store one way was 20.9 minutes. ○ 28.5% of pantry customers described transportation as a barrier to getting the food they want. • Nutrition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The majority of customers felt that they were not getting enough fresh food in their diet, mostly due to the high cost of fresh foods. ○ 66.5% of customers felt that their diets were “somewhat nutritious,” while 10.6% and 11.0% described their diets as “not nutritious” or “don’t know,” respectively.
<p><i>Programs that keep the cost of fresh food down and/or affordable should be implemented, such as subsidized CSA’s, SNAP, seed and garden programs, etc., especially in rural areas.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of customers felt that they were not getting enough fresh food in their diet, mostly because they felt fresh foods were too expensive (84.3%). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rural customers were more likely to say that fresh foods were too expensive. • The largest barrier to food for pantry customers was cost (80.2%). • Most of the respondents in the survey reported their households as being food insecure, meaning that either sometimes or often there was not enough food to eat (57%).
<p><i>MPFS and local food pantries should recruit nutritious food donations and expand upon MPFS’ core food program. The core food program ensures that pantries receive foods necessary to maintain a healthy diet.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of customers (61.0%) felt that they were not getting enough fresh food in their diet, mostly due to the high cost of fresh foods. • 66.5% of customers felt their diets were “somewhat nutritious,” while 10.6% and 11.0% described their diets as “not nutritious” or “don’t know,” respectively. • Food pantry customers access food pantries and/or meal sites on an average of every other month. • The number of food box customers and food boxes has increased.

Access to Food (cont.)

Recommendation	Rationale
<i>Conduct a food basket survey in each community.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To better understand the unique needs of each community and better understand food access since food prices vary by area, conduct a food basket survey to determine each community’s needs with access to food and availability of nutritious food at affordable prices. • This is important because the majority of customers felt that they were not getting enough fresh food in their diet, mostly due to the high cost of fresh foods.

Economic Development

Recommendation	Rationale
<i>Enhance employment opportunities and availability of jobs. This can be done by partnering with economic development agencies, the employment department, the private sector, and creating/supporting micro-enterprise opportunities for pantry customers.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A large percentage of pantry customers reported being unemployed and looking for work. More pantry customers were unemployed and looking for work than employed full-time. • The most common barrier that impeded pantry customers to getting ahead was not employed (52.0%). • About half of customers reported that jobs would help them get ahead. • The #1 solution to hunger and poverty, as cited by pantry customers AND stakeholders, was jobs (25.3% customers, 20.4% stakeholders). • The 2nd most common prevention idea by pantry customers (15.5%) was jobs.
<i>Ensure that employment resources are inclusive of the diverse population that resides in Marion and Polk counties.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Among responses from pantry customers regarding jobs, a higher proportion of Spanish speakers discussed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Jobs as a reason why people experience hunger and poverty. ○ The unavailability of jobs as a reason behind why they sought emergency food assistance. ○ Employment as an asset that would help them get ahead. ○ Jobs were discussed as both a solution and prevention tool to hunger and poverty. • Similar to Spanish speakers, a higher proportion of Russian speakers discussed how unemployment was a barrier to getting ahead.
<i>Job skill development and career training.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12.2% of stakeholders felt that lack of job skills and work experience was a reason why people experience hunger and poverty. • Stakeholders (14.3%) wanted to see career training offered in the community and felt that this resource was not available. • Job search assistance/job skills was an idea put forth by 6.1% of stakeholders as a solution to hunger and poverty; job skill development also was described by 10.2% of stakeholders as a strategy to prevent hunger and poverty.

Economic Development (cont.)

Recommendation	Rationale
<p><i>Develop programs and resources that extend the economic capital of individuals unable to gain employment or have difficulty accessing employment opportunities. This includes micro-enterprises, etc.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some common responses as to why people were seeking emergency food assistance had implications for the perpetual need for emergency food boxes. Such themes included having a disability, health/medical concerns, high cost of goods, and living on a fixed income. While most of the other common responses can be addressed through increased employment opportunities for sustainable, living wage jobs, these responses cannot be solved through employment resources. • Some of the reasons why people sought emergency food assistance included reasons that might make traditional employment challenging to do or maintain: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Disabled (8.4%). ○ Living on a fixed income (7.9%).
<p><i>Subsidies should be available for all basic needs. If goods necessary for survival were more affordable, such as housing and food, then customers would not need to utilize emergency food services.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For customers and MPFS staff, the 3rd common reason behind why people experience hunger and poverty was the high cost of living, goods, and/or inflation. Stakeholders (12.2%) also felt that the high cost of goods and inflation was a reason behind why people experience hunger and poverty. • For 8.2% of customers, the high cost of living, inflation and/or high cost of goods was a reason behind why they were seeking emergency food assistance. • The largest barrier to food for pantry customers was cost (80.2%).
<p><i>Address barriers to getting ahead to expand economic opportunities. This may include increasing access to and availability of classes to: learn how to improve credit scores, address rental history to gain better access to rent housing, and increase opportunities to rent housing with evictions on record, etc.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No credit/bad credit history was a barrier that 40.0% of pantry customers described as a barrier to getting ahead. • Barriers to employment were a reason that 5.4% of pantry customers felt people experience hunger and poverty. For stakeholders, barriers to employment and barriers to getting ahead were discussed by 8.2% of stakeholders as a reason why people may be experiencing hunger and poverty. • Stakeholders also felt that people experience hunger and poverty for the following reasons: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Criminal record (15.9%). ○ Poor rental history, evictions (8.2%).
<p><i>Expand opportunities and availability of fair family wage jobs, either through advocacy, partnerships with the private sector to connect pantry customers to good paying jobs, etc.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12.2% of stakeholders felt that people experience hunger and poverty due to low wages. • For 32.0% of pantry customers, no income/low wages/not enough income was a reason behind why they sought emergency food assistance. • Pantry customers also described wages being too low (24.6%) as a barrier to getting ahead.

Education

Recommendation	Rationale
<p><i>Educational resources need to be more accessible and available to food pantry customers to improve educational attainment rates, which impact economic conditions. This includes GED classes, literacy programs, English as a second language, access to higher education, financial assistance, etc.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When compared to overall county rates, food pantry customers demonstrated lower educational attainment than Marion and Polk county residents as a whole. • Community stakeholders & MPFS staff believed that lack of education is one of the main reasons why people experience hunger and poverty. • Even though higher educational attainment increased the likelihood of particular obstacles, higher educational attainment was also linked to a decreased likelihood in many other obstacles, including unemployment and lack of job skills. • When customers were asked what would help them get ahead, educational opportunities were the 2nd most common response (11.4%). • Tied with jobs as the most discussed strategy to solve hunger and poverty, 20.4% of stakeholders discussed education as a solution to hunger and poverty. • Education was the most common prevention strategy for hunger and poverty discussed by MPFS staff (53.3%), pantry customers (40.4%), and stakeholders (65.3%). • For pantry customers, barriers to getting ahead included not having a college degree (15.7%) and/or not having a high school diploma or GED (10.9%).
<p><i>Ensure that education resources are inclusive of the diverse population that resides in Marion and Polk counties.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As discussed in prior rationale, education was discussed by pantry customers as a hunger prevention strategy. Customers also expressed interest in MPFS support with attaining a GED. Among both of these findings, a higher proportion of Spanish speakers discussed education than other language speakers, and Hispanic/Latino participants expressed interest in MPFS support in GED attainment.
<p><i>Increase community education and outreach on hunger and poverty.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25.5% of stakeholders discussed how community education and outreach will foster and improve collaborations. • Stakeholders identified community education and outreach as a solution (14.3%) and prevention (10.2%) strategy.
<p><i>Enhance access to life skills education, including financial literacy.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The most common response from stakeholders on services and programs they would like to see offered in the community that were not already available was life skills (20.4%). • One of the reasons why stakeholders felt people were experiencing hunger was because they felt people were not spending wisely and not budgeting (16.3%). • For pantry customers, one of the barriers standing in the way of getting ahead was the inability to manage money (10%). • For 14.7% of pantry customers and 12.2% of stakeholders, life skills were described as a way to prevent hunger and poverty; in addition, 12.2% of stakeholders felt that self-sufficiency was a prevention idea. • The Board of Directors and MPFS staff discussed budgeting/life skills education as a suggestion for MPFS program development.

Health

Recommendation	Rationale
<p><i>Increase access to comprehensive, affordable healthcare through advocacy. This can be done through developing partnerships with other organizations that conduct advocacy for affordable healthcare, forming grassroots advocacy to address health-related issues, MPFS volunteer-led advocacy campaigns to local and federal political representatives, increasing awareness of issues through editorials, etc.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 3rd most common barrier that pantry customers described as standing in their way to getting ahead was health concerns (37.0%). • White (Non-Hispanic) respondents reported health concerns as a barrier to getting ahead more often than other races and ethnicities. • Better health and/or better healthcare was one of the most common responses by customers as to what they would like to see happen to help them get ahead (6.2%). • Healthcare was a resource that 31.0% of customers described as being unable to find or use. • One of the reasons that led up to why customers sought food box assistance was because of health/medical concerns (8.4%). • 8.2% of stakeholders felt that health/medical concerns were a reason behind why people experience hunger and poverty.
<p><i>Expand access to mental health resources.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health concerns were a barrier to getting ahead for 10.2% of pantry customers.

Transportation

Recommendation	Rationale
<p><i>Conduct a needs assessment and efficiency evaluation of the public transportation system in each community. As an alternative or a supplement to public transportation (especially in rural communities where public transportation may be inefficient), develop a carpool/rideshare system.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The most common modes of transportation pantry customers used to get to the grocery store were their own car (66.9%) and walking (24.9%). Customers walked more often to the grocery store than used public transportation (11.0%). • The average amount of time to get to the grocery store one way was 20.9 minutes. • 28.5% of pantry customers described transportation as a barrier to getting the food that they want. • Transportation was one of the most common responses by customers as to what they would like to see happen to help them get ahead. • For 12.3% of pantry customers, lack of transportation was a reason why they were not using certain resources. About 20.4% of stakeholders felt that lack of transportation was behind why people were not using certain resources. • Lack of transportation was a reason why 8.2% of stakeholders believe people experience hunger and poverty. • For 16.8% of pantry customers, lack of transportation was a barrier to getting ahead. Urban customers reported lack of transportation more often as a barrier. • Transportation was something that 8.3% of pantry customers said they would like to see happen to help them get ahead. • The convenient location of resources was described by 7.4% of customers as one of the best features of programs and services.

Sense of Community

Recommendation	Rationale
<p><i>Develop a sense of community, where neighbors can count on one another for support and community connections. This can be done through community events, hosting community gatherings, developing alternative currency programs, community potlucks to share food resources, etc.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholders (12.2%) felt that people experience hunger and poverty because of the lack of community, stressing the importance of community support from our neighbors to connect for personal outreach and community resources to those who need them. • About 14.3% of stakeholders also felt that community support was a community service that they would like to see offered that was not already available. • Community as a solution to hunger and poverty. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Pantry customers described community (7.8%) and helping others and sharing (5.9%) as solutions to hunger and poverty. ○ Similarly, community stakeholders discussed community (16.3%), community engagement and involvement (8.2%) and sharing excess resources and reducing waste, such as food (8.2%) as solutions to hunger and poverty. • Community as prevention to hunger and poverty. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Customers also felt that community and helping one another was a prevention tool for hunger and poverty (7.0%) ○ Community support was described by 13.3% of MPFS staff as a way to prevent hunger and poverty.
<p><i>Increase opportunities to mentor pantry customers and their families. Women Ending Hunger may be a good platform to begin looking at models of mentorship and interest from pantry customers in participating.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentoring and/or different aspects of mentoring were described by pantry customers and stakeholders as a tool to prevent hunger and poverty. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Pantry customers felt that teaching values to the next generation (5.1%) and motivating/counseling/giving advice to the next generation (5.1%) were ways to prevent hunger and poverty. ○ For 10.2% of stakeholders, they felt that work ethic, community and motivation were hunger prevention tools ○ Mentoring was described by 6.1% of stakeholders as a way to prevent hunger and poverty.
<p><i>Continue to develop a network of volunteers, with a specialized focus on developing a grassroots volunteer base.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Of the 902 food pantry customers that participated in the survey, 32.4% gave their contact information to volunteer with MPFS programs. • Each customer described their skills in the survey; these skills and assets need to be evaluated to determine how to enhance volunteer programs among pantry customers, and how to mobilize people according to their assets. • 14.9% of stakeholders felt that community involvement and volunteerism was a strategy to improve community collaborations and partnerships. • Stakeholders also felt that volunteerism (6.1%) was a tool to prevent hunger and poverty.

Advocacy

Recommendation	Rationale
<p><i>Develop a grassroots advocacy network of pantry customers to address a variety of concerns at the policy and legislative level. Women Ending Hunger members have demonstrated some interest to work on advocacy.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pantry customers and stakeholders discussed the desire for government/political reform in a variety of contexts. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Government and political reform was discussed by 21.3% of stakeholders as a way to improve collaboration and partnership opportunities. ○ Government and political reform as a solution to hunger and poverty: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pantry customers described government help and/or reform as a way to solve hunger and poverty (5.6%). ▪ Stakeholders discussed government and tax reform as a strategy to solve hunger and poverty (8.2%). ○ Government and political reform as a way to prevent hunger and poverty. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pantry customers discussed government reform (5.1%) as a way to prevent hunger and poverty. ● Many customers expressed the need for additional resources in order to meet their needs, which are impacted by policy and legislative decisions. By developing a grassroots action network, food pantry customers can voice their concerns and participate to advocate for increased resources.
<p><i>Increase voter registration in rural areas.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rural pantry customers were less likely to be registered to vote (44.6%) than urban customers (58.8%).
<p><i>Evaluate interest in a grassroots coalition led by and consisting of members that are currently experiencing hunger and/or food insecurity. These members should volunteer and represent communities experiencing hunger by serving on Advisory Committees, Board of Directors, etc., for nonprofit organizations working with populations experiencing food insecurity.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In order to understand and address how to effectively address hunger and food insecurity concerns, people experiencing hunger need to be represented on movements addressing this issue. ● Many community providers do not have a current food pantry customer or others populations that they serve volunteering on their Board of Directors, although a few of the Board of Directors, themselves, have experienced hunger personally. Having leadership representation of the population a nonprofit organization serves can help guide the organization in ways that may make services more effective, and can assist other Board of Directors in understanding the situation that they are helping.

Cultural Resources

Recommendation	Rationale
<p><i>Cross-cultural communication training for MPFS, MPFS partner agencies, and the community at large.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community advocates observed that some community stakeholders and food pantry volunteers/staff were unaware on how to communicate cross-culturally, and community advocates felt that some community stakeholders and pantry leaders held differential attitudes toward cultural/ethnic groups. For some, this translated to an <i>us versus them</i> mentality, with negative attitudes toward different cultural/ethnic groups and the potential of differential treatment. • Pantry staff/volunteers and pantry customers were observed communicating with Spanish speakers and/or Hispanic/Latino pantry customers in a negative manner, and made negative comments in front of customers and behind their backs. Some stakeholders and customers discussed how Spanish speakers and Hispanics/Latinos were the cause behind hunger and poverty.
<p><i>MPFS should expand volunteer and staff capacity to more effectively connect with and reach out to the diverse population that MPFS serves.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hispanic/Latino and Spanish speaking pantry customers differed in many of their responses during interviews and on the survey from other language speakers and races/ethnicities. This has implications for the need for a culturally specific approach in working with diverse populations in order to reduce hunger and poverty. • In general, MPFS staff, Board of Directors, and volunteers represent the majority population; increasing the capacity of MPFS to communicate with the diverse population that MPFS serves or could potentially serve would help MPFS impact the community more effectively. This is especially important as various groups of people have different needs and interests.

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APPENDIX A

What is Marion-Polk Food Share?

“Leading the fight to END hunger in Marion and Polk counties...because no one should be hungry.”

Marion-Polk Food Share (MPFS) is a local food bank that distributes emergency food to member agencies, which includes meal sites and food pantries. As of April 2010, there were 86 member agencies throughout Marion and Polk counties that belonged to the MPFS network. Member agencies provide direct support to individuals and families in need by providing hot meals and distributing emergency food boxes directly to individuals and families. The amount of food in each emergency food box depends on the number of family members, and each box provides emergency food assistance for 3-5 days. Individuals and families are able to use emergency food assistance once per month. In addition to receiving and distributing food, MPFS hosts community programs to improve household food security.

Programs & Projects:

Core Foods. In addition to providing emergency food to those in need, MPFS has made the commitment to ensure that the food available to pantry customers is nutrient-dense, or what MPFS calls *Core Foods*. Under the guidance of a licensed nutritionist, MPFS ensures that the food distributed to food pantries include the Core Foods, which categorizes foods by: grains, vegetables (shelf stable), fruit (shelf stable), milk/calcium (shelf stable), meat/beans/protein, eggs, and fresh/frozen meat.

Homebound Emergency Food Delivery. For food pantry customers who are homebound, such as seniors and people with disabilities, community volunteers deliver emergency food directly to them.

Senior Nutrition Supplemental Program. As a supplemental source of food for seniors living at or below the poverty level, MPFS distributes food on site to residents living in a senior housing complex. With this structure, homebound seniors are able to access supplemental food.

No Hungry Child Meal Program. A large percentage of students in Marion and Polk counties receive free or reduced lunch at school because their families qualify as being low income. Oftentimes, breakfast and lunch at school are the most reliable meals of the day for students whose families are living in poverty. In order to ensure that students are receiving meals during school breaks, such as summer and winter, MPFS and community partners implement the No Hungry Child meal program. The program provides nutritious meals to students during school breaks so they have access to free, nutritious meals while school is out of session.

Sustainable Community Garden Program. The garden program at MPFS includes a variety of activities, such as education, community garden space, and programs to grow and donate food to MPFS. Education within the garden program includes learning about organic gardening and community food production, train-the-trainer programs teaching low-income households organic gardening, garden meal planning, harvesting, food preparation and healthy eating. In addition, the garden program holds work parties and encourages neighbors to *grow a row* in their home garden and donate the harvest for hunger relief efforts.

Nutrition Education (Pantry Partners). Through a partnership with Oregon State University Extension Service, MPFS provides nutrition and cooking demonstrations at food pantries while customers are waiting to pick up an emergency food box. The Pantry Partners program is run by volunteers under the train-the-trainer model. With these demonstrations, pantry customers learn how to cook simple recipes at home, including the food they receive in emergency food boxes, and how to stretch food resources further. They also learn about nutrition, food preparation and food safety.

Women Ending Hunger. *We are women working together to end hunger by engaging, educating, and empowering our community.* Women Ending Hunger is a grassroots coalition of more than 700 women and men who work to end hunger by exploring and eliminating its root causes because <they> passionately honor the worth and dignity of every member of <their> community. The group identifies and implements projects to make an impact on hunger. Past and current projects include: cooking and nutrition classes through Pantry Partners, harvester teams to glean fruit to share with MPFS customers, Women Ending Hunger community garden, children's book group to promote literacy, sorting food, connecting neighbors to resources, and speaking to the community about food insecurity via MPFS' Speakers Bureau. Current Women Ending Hunger priorities include: (1) development of a team of Resource Advocates to connect people to the SNAP program, community gardens, and share skills and resources with neighbors; (2) creating a Salem Women's Collective to develop opportunities for learning and practicing skills which may lead to entrepreneurial cottage industries showcasing women's skills; and (3) branding Women Ending Hunger as a community movement to get more people and organizations involved.

Reading for All Partnership. Because of the direct link between poverty, hunger and illiteracy, MPFS partnered with Marion County Children and Families Commission on their Reading for All Initiative to improve literacy rates throughout Marion County. This model distributes books to families that use emergency food services and children utilizing the Spring Break Free Lunch Program. Books are donated by the community and are sorted by age appropriateness at MPFS. More than 20,000 books were given to children and families during the first year of partnership.

APPENDIX B

SUMMARY OF REGIONAL ASSESSMENTS

Regional assessments have been conducted in Marion and Polk counties that range from analysis of hunger factors and food box recipients to community needs assessments. Although each assessment provides relevant data for the current assessment, there are many limitations to these community assessments. These limitations include, but are not limited to: limited relation to the population and/or topic of interest, not representative of the community, outdated, and/or they do not identify community capacity. In order to learn from past assessments and build upon current knowledge, reviews of these assessments are discussed below.

Marion-Polk Food Share Client Survey (2005)

A survey of MPFS clients was conducted in 2005. The purpose of the survey was to learn about MPFS client demographics, participation in food assistance programs, interest in classes and MPFS programs, and to inform program direction based on survey results. Although the survey provided a wealth of information regarding clients that receive food boxes, the information is outdated for the purposes of the current research. Additionally, the survey results were collected but were not analyzed beyond a frequency analysis.

The research also does not address household and community food security (with the exception of questions regarding transportation access) and does not identify household assets and ways to improve situations to make emergency food less necessary. These items are necessary to inform an action plan to reduce community hunger and poverty.

However, the client survey had a large response rate, and will be used for comparative analysis with the current study to determine changes in client demographics, use of federal programs, and interest in Marion-Polk Food Share programs and classes.

Oregon Food Bank Hunger Factors Assessment

The Oregon Food Bank (OFB), which is the statewide coordinating agency for hunger relief organizations, conducts a survey approximately every two years analyzing factors that lead people to need emergency food services. Client surveys are distributed to a representative sample of emergency food box providers and their clients across Oregon.

Although OFB could only evaluate a preselected representative sample of agencies for the 2008 assessment, MPFS distributed the survey to *all* of its food pantries so that it could conduct its own analysis on the state of hunger in the region, although not every local food pantry participated in the study. OFB, however, only analyzed surveys from preselected pantries from Marion and Polk counties for the purposes of their research.

The response rate for MPFS agencies was a lot lower than MPFS' client survey conducted in 2005. Nonetheless, as with the MPFS 2005 survey, the data provides an appropriate baseline on hunger and poverty to compare with the efforts of the current research. Furthermore, the assessment was conducted recently, but before the impact of the economic recession. Aside from demographics and baseline data on hunger and poverty, the survey is limited in identifying individual and community resources and assets that are being utilized or could be utilized to address hunger and poverty in an action plan.

Marion County Department of Children and Families

Under statewide policy, Oregon county governments are required to collaborate and strategically plan with social service agencies to provide more effective and comprehensive support to children and families. To identify appropriate baseline data and determine goals for strategic planning, Marion County Commission on Children and Families (CFC) conducted research in 2002 and 2008 to continually update its strategic plan based on county needs.

For the 2002 strategic plan, Marion County CFC disseminated surveys and conducted focus groups with agency providers and different community groups, including Asian and Hispanic/Latino clients. This research was conducted to determine the county's strengths, gaps, and barriers. It was also conducted to identify benchmarks for county goals in supporting children and families.

The most recent strategic plan also includes a county needs assessment on issues surrounding children, youth and families. It was last revised in 2008. This particular plan analyzed benchmarks identified by the Oregon Progress Board to be high-level outcome goals, and the strategic plan includes action items that will help the community reach the benchmark goals.

Marion County CFC has been criticized by some community members for its use of Oregon Progress Board's high-level outcomes and benchmark data as a basis of CFC's strategic plan, as they may not be the most appropriate or accurate tools in identifying benchmark data on children and families. Furthermore, the benchmark data are used to compare counties across Oregon, which CFC finds ineffective. However, through this research various community issues and gaps are brought to the forefront, and CFC used these gaps and issues to build upon its strategic plan to work on the following areas: runaway and homeless youth; healthy development of young children; student success; health care access and availability; family preservation.

Although these areas impact and are impacted by hunger and poverty, they do not maintain a comprehensive perspective of issues beyond that of families and children. Therefore, the research conducted by CFC provides a great sounding board for issues related to hunger and poverty, but they do not provide a complete picture of issues surrounding hunger and poverty and they do not identify community capacity to address these issues.

Polk County Commission for Children and Families

Under the same statewide legislative policy as Marion County CFC, Polk County's Commission for Children and Families (CFC) is also charged with planning and collaborating with community partners to support children and families.

As a result, Polk County CFC also conducted a needs assessment in 2009. This needs assessment was conducted differently than Marion County's CFC by utilizing a survey that was mailed to Polk County residents. The assessment utilized a broad approach to understanding the needs and support systems in the community, which the CFC director found to be very limited in helping CFC address community issues. However, for the purposes of the current survey, Polk County CFC's research helps identify community issues and services unique to the county and how adequate residents find the services to be. This serves as a preliminary investigation into community needs, which can be used to inform the current research.

United Way of Columbia-Willamette

United Way of Columbia-Willamette (UW), in an effort to identify community issues and adequacy of existing resources, conducted a community assessment in Marion, Polk and Yamhill counties in early 2009. The purpose of the assessment was to identify community issues and adequacy of resources addressing them. With the information, UW put together baseline data that helped identify key issues of concern in the community so that they can address these issues using a community impact model. This model identifies the community's most pressing issues, for which UW will concentrate its funding to make a larger impact rather than spreading their funding across a variety of programs and issues, thereby making less of an impact but touching more issues.

Although the assessment was conducted recently, it is limited in its scope and does not have adequate representation of the tri-county area. Through discussions with the Community Impact Director, we learned that the survey had very low participation rates from all counties and approximately half of the respondents were donors of UW or worked for UW funded agencies. Therefore, the assessment reflected a small population of agency perspectives on community needs and adequacy of resources, but not necessarily those of the low-income community. In addition, the Community Impact

Director felt that the survey was too broad and that the right questions were not asked. However, the results can be used as a preliminary guide to understanding resident perspectives on community issues and resources.

Marion County Health Department Assessment

The Marion County Health Department (MCHD) conducted a community assessment analyzing the status of community health in the county. Surveys were mailed to Marion County residents regarding health indicators. With this research, MCHD was able to identify community strengths and challenges related to community health and next steps in improving community health. Some of the findings overlap with the current assessment's goals in improving the region's quality of life, but much of the assessment focuses on health indicators that are beyond the scope of the current assessment or not pertinent to the goals of the research. Therefore, some of the MCHD findings can be used to inform the current research, but a more thorough investigation needs to be conducted in order to better understand how to improve the region's quality of life beyond medical health indicators.

Marion and Polk Counties Plan to End Homelessness

The Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency (MWVCAA) conducts a yearly homeless count and surveys a limited number of homeless individuals regarding their situation and experience with homelessness. They also compiled demographic data and indicators regarding homeless individuals in Marion and Polk counties. The purpose of this research is to inform *Marion and Polk Counties Plan to End Homelessness*. This research helps identify barriers to overcoming homelessness, societal costs of homelessness, and community resources that exist to address the issue. *Marion and Polk Counties Plan to End Homelessness* is an implementation plan to reduce homelessness in Marion and Polk counties. The research that precedes the plan is used to measure outcomes and evaluation of the plan's progress.

The implementation plan includes action items that directly impact homelessness, such as housing first, affordable housing, supportive housing, and system improvements. While the plan directly addresses issues that impact the low-income community, it does not directly address hunger. Although hunger can be indirectly impacted by *Marion and Polk Counties Plan to End Homelessness*, it is important to have a plan addressing reduced hunger and improved nutrition-related outcomes in order to positively impact food security within Marion and Polk counties.

APPENDIX C



2009 Confidential Marion-Polk Food Share Survey (English Version)

Marion-Polk Food Share is a non-profit agency that collects and gives food to emergency food pantries so that people in our community won't go hungry. We are asking people to fill out this survey to gain a better understanding of our community. With this information, we want to understand our community's strengths and how our community can improve its resources to better support residents. **All of the survey information is confidential, so please do NOT put your name on it. You do not have to do the survey to receive food assistance.** Please fill out every item to the best of your knowledge. We appreciate your participation and we thank you for your time!

Where are you taking this survey? _____ Date _____

If you have already taken this survey, please do NOT fill it out again. Thank you!!

1. Which of the following statements best describes the food eaten in your household?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Enough of the kinds of food we want to eat | <input type="checkbox"/> Enough but not always the kinds of food we want to eat |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes not enough to eat | <input type="checkbox"/> Often not enough to eat |

2. In the past 12 months, how did you and your family get food? (Check all that apply)

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grocery Store | <input type="checkbox"/> Grocery Outlet | <input type="checkbox"/> Convenience Store (Circle K) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dollar Store | <input type="checkbox"/> Farmer's Market | <input type="checkbox"/> Restaurant with a server |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fast food restaurant | <input type="checkbox"/> Senior meal site | <input type="checkbox"/> Food pantry |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gleaners | <input type="checkbox"/> Soup kitchen/Shelter | <input type="checkbox"/> WIC (Women, Infant, Children) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Food Stamps | <input type="checkbox"/> Head Start | <input type="checkbox"/> Summer Lunch |
| <input type="checkbox"/> School Breakfast/Lunch | <input type="checkbox"/> Daycare | <input type="checkbox"/> Jail/prison |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Meals on Wheels | <input type="checkbox"/> Home garden | <input type="checkbox"/> Community garden |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friend/neighbor/family | <input type="checkbox"/> Church | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

3. If you do not currently receive food stamps, what is keeping you from applying, or receiving, food stamps? (Check all that apply)

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Applied, but did not qualify | <input type="checkbox"/> Do not think I will qualify | <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure how to apply |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Long lines/multiple visits | <input type="checkbox"/> Concern about immigration status | <input type="checkbox"/> Do not know where to go to apply |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Application too long/confusing | <input type="checkbox"/> Feel nervous or embarrassed | <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to keep appointment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Office is far away from home/work | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | |

4. In the past 12 months, how many times have you gotten food from a Food Pantry or meal site? _____ times (including today).

5. What do you see as the main problems to getting the food that you want? (Check all that apply)

- Cost Transportation Time Other _____

6. How do you get to the grocery store? (Check all that apply)

- Car (your own) Carpool Bike Bus Taxi Walk Other _____

7. On average, how long does it take you to get to your usual grocery store (one way)? _____

8. Do you feel you are getting enough fresh foods, like fruits and vegetables, eggs, milk, whole grains?

- Yes (If yes, skip to question 9) No

8a. If no, why are you not getting enough fresh foods?

- Too expensive Don't have a refrigerator Don't know how to cook fresh food
 Prefer other types of food Nearby stores don't sell fresh foods Other _____

9. How nutritious is your diet?

- Very nutritious Somewhat nutritious Not nutritious Don't know

10. How would you rate your knowledge of good nutrition?

- I know a lot about nutrition I know a little about nutrition I don't know very much about nutrition

11. In addition to emergency food, what other support could Marion-Polk Food Share provide to you and your family? (Check all that apply)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Connect you to other resources you might need | <input type="checkbox"/> Assistance applying for government food programs (Food Stamps) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nutrition Classes | <input type="checkbox"/> Cooking Classes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Food Budgeting Classes (how to get more for your \$) | <input type="checkbox"/> Financial Management Classes (overall budgeting) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Make recipes available | <input type="checkbox"/> Garden space |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Home gardening classes | <input type="checkbox"/> Better advertising of programs (community gardens, cooking) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> GED | <input type="checkbox"/> Diabetes management |
| <input type="checkbox"/> English language classes | <input type="checkbox"/> Does not apply/Don't use emergency food services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | |

12. Have you or a member of your household used a social service program in the past 12 months? (Examples: food, housing, job placement, counseling, utility assistance, etc.).

- Yes No (If no, skip to question 13)

12a. If yes, which services did you use? (Check all that apply)

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Housing | <input type="checkbox"/> Healthcare | <input type="checkbox"/> G.E.D. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Assistance applying to college | <input type="checkbox"/> Job training | <input type="checkbox"/> Job search assistance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Job placement | <input type="checkbox"/> Food/Hunger | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Alcohol/drug treatment | <input type="checkbox"/> Mental health/counseling | <input type="checkbox"/> Senior services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Youth services | <input type="checkbox"/> Services for people with disabilities | <input type="checkbox"/> Utility assistance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Head Start | <input type="checkbox"/> Child care assistance | <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency support (\$) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Debt | <input type="checkbox"/> Other items (clothing, housewares) | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

13. People sometimes have difficulty getting help or services that they need. Have you or a member of your household had a problem in the past 12 months for which you were **unable** to find help or services?

- Yes No (If no, skip to question 14)

13a. If yes, what was the issue you were unable to find help or services for? (Check all that apply)

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Housing | <input type="checkbox"/> Healthcare | <input type="checkbox"/> G.E.D. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Assistance applying to college | <input type="checkbox"/> Job training | <input type="checkbox"/> Job search assistance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Job placement | <input type="checkbox"/> Food/Hunger | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Alcohol/drug treatment | <input type="checkbox"/> Mental health/counseling | <input type="checkbox"/> Senior services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Youth services | <input type="checkbox"/> Services for people with disabilities | <input type="checkbox"/> Utility assistance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Head Start | <input type="checkbox"/> Child care assistance | <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency support (\$) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Debt | <input type="checkbox"/> Other items (clothing, housewares) | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

14. What obstacles, if any, does your household face when you are trying to get ahead? (Check all that apply)

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not employed | <input type="checkbox"/> Need more hours at work | <input type="checkbox"/> Wages are too low |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health concerns | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of affordable healthcare | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of housing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No high school diploma/GED | <input type="checkbox"/> No college degree | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of job skills |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to manage money | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of access to counseling | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of transportation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of affordable, safe child care | <input type="checkbox"/> Criminal record | <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to control or treat alcohol/drugs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Need to improve English skills | <input type="checkbox"/> Waiting lists too long for services | <input type="checkbox"/> Not eligible for community services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not aware of existing services | <input type="checkbox"/> Services are too far away | <input type="checkbox"/> Services not open at convenient hours |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No credit/bad credit history | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor rental history/evictions | <input type="checkbox"/> Mental health concerns |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | | |

15. When you think about your skills, what 3 things do you think you do best? These skills can include things you learned at home, school, in the community, or at work.

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____

16. On the whole, how satisfied are you with the life you lead?

- Very satisfied Fairly satisfied Not very satisfied Not at all satisfied

17. Are you involved with any of the following groups or activities (check all that apply):

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Church groups | <input type="checkbox"/> Business organizations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Neighborhood associations | <input type="checkbox"/> Veteran groups (Veterans of Foreign Wars) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Senior groups | <input type="checkbox"/> Sports leagues |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Youth groups (Future Farmers, Scouts) | <input type="checkbox"/> Service clubs (Kiwanis, Rotary) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> School groups (PTA, childcare) | <input type="checkbox"/> Ethnic/cultural associations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | |

18. Have you ever held a leadership position in any groups or activities that you are involved with?

- Yes No

19. Have you ever volunteered with a group or organization in the community?

- Yes No

20. Are you registered to vote?

- Yes No Does not apply

21. How can we best support the next generation, such as your future grandchildren, so that fewer people will live with hunger and poverty in the future?

22. What ideas do you have on how to end hunger and poverty that people are experiencing in our community today?

Demographics

23. Which community do you live in?

- | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> NE Salem | <input type="checkbox"/> NW Salem | <input type="checkbox"/> South Salem | <input type="checkbox"/> Keizer | <input type="checkbox"/> Aumsville |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Silverton | <input type="checkbox"/> Stayton | <input type="checkbox"/> Mt. Angel | <input type="checkbox"/> Woodburn | <input type="checkbox"/> Dallas |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Independence | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (list) _____ | | | |

24. Gender: ___ Male ___ Female

25. What is your age? _____

26. Including yourself, how many people live in your household?

- Children under 18 _____
- Adults 18-64 _____
- Seniors (65 and older) _____

27. Which of the following describes your household (Check only one).

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Single parent/female (children under 18) | <input type="checkbox"/> Single person living alone |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Single parent/male (children under 18) | <input type="checkbox"/> Single person living with roommates |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Two parents/adults with children | <input type="checkbox"/> Partnered couple no children |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Multigenerational (grandparent, adult child, grandchild) | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

28. How would you describe your race/ethnicity? (Check all that apply)

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian | <input type="checkbox"/> American Indian/Alaska Native | <input type="checkbox"/> Black/African-American |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hawaiian/Pacific Islander | <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic or Latino | <input type="checkbox"/> White, Non-Hispanic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Multi-racial/ethnic | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | |

29. What language(s) do you speak in your home? _____

30. What is your highest level of education completed? (Check only one)

- | | | | |
|--|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 8 th grade or less | <input type="checkbox"/> 9 th -11 th grade | <input type="checkbox"/> High school diploma/GED | <input type="checkbox"/> Technical/professional |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Some college | <input type="checkbox"/> College graduate | <input type="checkbox"/> Graduate school | |

31. Please check which of the following best describes the employment situation for you and other adults in your households (Check all that apply for all adults in your household):

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Working full time (one job) | <input type="checkbox"/> Working part time (one job) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Working full time plus part time job | <input type="checkbox"/> Working more than 1 part time job |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Unemployed & looking for work | <input type="checkbox"/> Disabled |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Retired | <input type="checkbox"/> Staying home w/ child or disabled person |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Unemployed and not looking for work | |

32. What was your household's main source of income last month?

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Job | <input type="checkbox"/> Social Security | <input type="checkbox"/> S.S.D.I. (Disability) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> G.A. (General Assistance) | <input type="checkbox"/> Pension | <input type="checkbox"/> Alimony |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Unemployment Compensation | <input type="checkbox"/> Worker's Compensation | <input type="checkbox"/> Friend(s)/Relative(s) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> S.S.I. (Supplementary Social Security) | <input type="checkbox"/> TANF | <input type="checkbox"/> Other(s) _____ |

33. What was your approximate household income last month, including all household members and all sources (including wages, social security, public assistance, and all other cash income)?

- | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Under \$417 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$418 - \$833 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$834 - \$1,250 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,251 - \$2,083 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$2,084 - \$2,917 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$2,918 - \$4,167 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$4,168 - \$6,250 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$6,251 - \$8,333 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$8,334 and over | |

34. Do you have any other comments on the survey?

Thank you for your time and participation! Your input goes a long way in strengthening our community. If you want more information about the project, please contact Melinda Gross at (503) 581-3855, x308; mgross@marionpolkfoodshare.org. Thank you!!!

Marion-Polk Food Share: 1660 Salem Industrial Drive NE, Salem, OR 97301

*****DETACH THIS PAGE FROM THE SURVEY*****

This page will be separated from the survey to protect your confidentiality. Your responses to the survey will not be connected to any identifying information.

1. Are you interested in participating in a group discussion on community resources and hunger? If you are selected to participate in a group discussion, **you will receive a \$5 gift card** to a grocery store. NOTE: You cannot participate in a group discussion if you have already received a \$5 gift card by participating in a one-on-one discussion.

- Yes (If yes, provide your contact information below so we can schedule the group conversation with you)
- No

2. Marion-Polk Food Share currently offers the following programs and resources. Are you interested in participating in or receiving information about any of them? (Check all that apply):

- Cooking classes (including nutrition, food budgeting) Recipes
- Community gardens Community kitchen
- Other _____

3. Are you interested in volunteering with Marion-Polk Food Share in the following areas? (Check all that apply).

- Sorting food donations
- Volunteer driver to pick up and distribute food to pantries
- Office work (mailings, answering phones, data entry, inventory, etc.)
- Community garden volunteer (help plant, weed, grow and harvest)
- Serve brown bag lunches at the summer/senior lunch program
- Help distribute food at food pantries
- Volunteer at special events, such as fundraisers and food drives
- Sorting book donations for Reading for All! Program
- Participate in Women Ending Hunger group (work on volunteer project and public advocacy to end hunger)
- Teach nutrition & cooking classes at food pantries
- Other _____

Please give your contact information below if you would like us to contact you with more information on participating and/or volunteering in Marion-Polk Food Share programs, and/or if you are interested in participating in a group discussion. **Your contact information will NOT be attached or connected to your survey responses in order to protect your confidentiality.**

Name _____ Phone Number _____

Email _____

Address _____

*****DETACH THIS PAGE FROM THE SURVEY*****



2009 encuesta confidencial de Marion-Polk Food Share (Spanish Version)

Marion-Polk Food Share es una agencia sin fines de lucro que colecciona y da alimentos a despensas de emergencia para que la gente de nuestra comunidad no esté con hambre. Pedimos a la gente que rellenen esta encuesta para mejor entender nuestra comunidad. Con esta información, queremos entender las fuerzas de nuestra comunidad y cómo podemos mejorar los recursos de nuestra comunidad para mejor apoyar a la gente. **Toda la información en la encuesta es confidencial, así que por favor NO ponga su nombre en la encuesta. No es necesario que rellene la encuesta para recibir comida.** Por favor conteste cada pregunta lo mejor que pueda. ¡Apreciamos su participación y le damos **gracias** por su tiempo!

¿En qué despensa está usted? _____ Fecha _____

¿Usted ya relleno esta encuesta? (Si ya lo hizo, por favor no lo haga otra vez)

Sí No

1. ¿Cuáles de las siguientes declaraciones mejor describe(n) la comida que se come en su casa?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bastante de los tipos de comida que queremos comer | <input type="checkbox"/> Bastante, pero no siempre de los tipos que queremos |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A veces no hay suficiente | <input type="checkbox"/> Muchas veces no hay suficiente |

2. Durante los pasados 12 meses, ¿Dónde consiguieron comida usted y su familia? (Ponga ✓ en los que se aplican)

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tienda de abarrotes | <input type="checkbox"/> Grocery Outlet | <input type="checkbox"/> Tienda de conveniencia (Circle K) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tienda de un dólar | <input type="checkbox"/> Mercado de granjeros | <input type="checkbox"/> Restaurante con mesero |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Restaurante de comida rápida | <input type="checkbox"/> Sitio de comida para ancianos | <input type="checkbox"/> Despensa pública/banco de comida |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Espigadoras | <input type="checkbox"/> Cocina de sopa/albergue/refugio | <input type="checkbox"/> WIC (Women, Infant, Children) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Estampillas de comida | <input type="checkbox"/> Head Start | <input type="checkbox"/> Programa de almuerzo en el verano |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Desayuno/almuerzo escolar | <input type="checkbox"/> Proveedor de cuidado para niños | <input type="checkbox"/> La cárcel/prisión |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Meals on Wheels | <input type="checkbox"/> Huerto particular | <input type="checkbox"/> Huerto comunal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Amigo/vecino/familia | <input type="checkbox"/> Iglesia | <input type="checkbox"/> Otro _____ |

3. Si usted no recibe estampillas de comida actualmente, ¿qué le previene el solicitar o recibirlas? (Ponga ✓ en los que se aplican)

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Las solicité, pero no califico | <input type="checkbox"/> No creo que califique | <input type="checkbox"/> No sé cómo solicitarlas |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Colas largas/visitas múltiples | <input type="checkbox"/> Preocupaciones sobre estatus de inmigración | <input type="checkbox"/> No puedo hacer una cita |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No sé adónde ir para solicitarlas | <input type="checkbox"/> Tengo vergüenza/estoy nervioso/a | <input type="checkbox"/> Solicitud larga/confusa |
| <input type="checkbox"/> La oficina está muy lejos de mi casa/trabajo | | <input type="checkbox"/> Otro _____ |

4. ¿Durante los últimos 12 meses, cuántas veces acudió un banco de comida? _____ veces (**incluya hoy**)

5. Para usted, ¿cuáles son los problemas más serios a la hora de obtener los alimentos que usted quiere? (Ponga ✓ en los que se aplican)

Costo Transporte Tiempo Otro _____

6. ¿Por qué medio de transporte llega usted a la tienda de abarrotes? (Ponga ✓ en los que se aplican)

- Carro (propio) Carpool Bicicleta Bus Taxi A pie Otro _____

7. Normalmente, ¿Cuánto tiempo le cuesta llegar a su tienda de abarrotes normal (de ida)? _____

8. ¿Usted cree que come bastantes alimentos frescos como frutas, verduras, huevos, leche y cereales integrales?

- Sí (En este caso, salte a pregunta #9) No

8a. En el caso de que no, ¿Por qué no come suficientes alimentos frescos?

- Son demasiado caros No tengo refrigerador No sé prepararlos
 Prefiero otros tipos de alimentos Las tiendas cercanas no venden alimentos frescos
 Otro _____

9. ¿Qué tan nutritiva es su dieta?

- Muy nutritiva Algún tanto nutritiva No nutritiva No sé

10. ¿Cuánto sabe usted sobre la alimentación buena?

- Sé mucho Sé un poco No sé mucho

11. Además de comida de emergencia, ¿qué otro apoyo le podría proveer Marion-Polk Food Share a usted y su familia? (Ponga ✓ en los que se aplican)

- Conectarle a otros recursos que necesita GED
 Clases sobre alimentación Clases de cocina
 Clases sobre cómo hacer un presupuesto para comida (cómo comprar más por la misma cantidad de dinero)
 Clases sobre cómo manejar su dinero (presupuesto completo)
 Anunciar mejor/más los programas (huertos comunales, clases de cocina)
 Proveer recetas Prestar terreno para sembrar
 Clases sobre cómo sembrar Manejar la diabetes
 Ayuda con la solicitud para estampillas de comida Clases de inglés
 No se aplica a mí/No uso servicios de comida de emergencia Otro _____

12. ¿ Ha utilizado usted o un miembro de su familia un servicio social durante los pasados 12 meses? (Ejemplos: alimentos, alojamiento, empleo, terapia, ayuda con las cuentas de luz, etc.).

- Sí No (En este caso, salte a la pregunta #13)

12a. En el caso de que sí, ¿qué servicios utilizó? (Ponga V en los que se aplican)

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ayuda con la solicitud para la universidad | <input type="checkbox"/> Cuidado médico | <input type="checkbox"/> G.E.D. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Capacitación para el trabajo | <input type="checkbox"/> Ayuda con buscar trabajo | <input type="checkbox"/> Deuda |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Housing/Alojamiento | <input type="checkbox"/> Transporte | <input type="checkbox"/> Servicios para ancianos |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Salud mental/terapia | <input type="checkbox"/> Empleo | <input type="checkbox"/> Alimentos/hambre |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Servicios para jóvenes | <input type="checkbox"/> Tratamiento de alcohol/drogas | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Servicios para personas con discapacidades | <input type="checkbox"/> Ayuda con cuentas (luz, etc.) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ayuda con cuidado para niños | <input type="checkbox"/> Apoyo de emergencia (\$) | <input type="checkbox"/> Head Start |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Otras cosas (ropa, cosas para la casa) | <input type="checkbox"/> Otro _____ | |

13. A veces es difícil para la gente recibir la ayuda o los servicios que necesitan. ¿Usted o un miembro de su familia ha experimentado un problema durante los pasados 12 meses por el cual **no pudo** encontrar ayuda o servicios?

- Sí No (En este caso, salte a la pregunta #14)

13a. En el caso de que sí, ¿cuál fue el problema por el cual no pudo encontrar ayuda o servicios? (Ponga V en los que se aplican)

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ayuda con la solicitud para la universidad | <input type="checkbox"/> Cuidado médico | <input type="checkbox"/> G.E.D. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Capacitación para el trabajo | <input type="checkbox"/> Ayuda con buscar trabajo | <input type="checkbox"/> Deuda |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Housing/Alojamiento | <input type="checkbox"/> Transporte | <input type="checkbox"/> Servicios para ancianos |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Salud mental/terapia | <input type="checkbox"/> Empleo | <input type="checkbox"/> Alimentos/hambre |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Servicios para jóvenes | <input type="checkbox"/> Tratamiento de alcohol/drogas | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Servicios para personas con discapacidades | <input type="checkbox"/> Ayuda con cuentas (luz, etc.) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ayuda con cuidado para niños | <input type="checkbox"/> Apoyo de emergencia (\$) | <input type="checkbox"/> Head Start |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Otras cosas (ropa, cosas para la casa) | <input type="checkbox"/> Otro _____ | |

14. ¿Qué obstáculos, si es que hay, enfrentan su familia a la hora de intentar seguir adelante? (Ponga V en los que se aplican)

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Falta de empleo | <input type="checkbox"/> Necesitar más horas en el trabajo | <input type="checkbox"/> Pago demasiado bajo |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Problemas de salud | <input type="checkbox"/> Falta de cuidado para niños a costo bajo | <input type="checkbox"/> Falta de casa |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No tener diploma/GED | <input type="checkbox"/> No tener carrera de universidad | <input type="checkbox"/> Falta de experiencia en el trabajo |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No poder manejar el dinero | <input type="checkbox"/> Falta de acceso a terapia | <input type="checkbox"/> Falta de transporte |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Falta de cuidado para niños seguro y a costo bajo | | <input type="checkbox"/> Record criminal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No poder tratar o controlar adicciones a alcohol/drogas | | <input type="checkbox"/> Inglés |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Listas de espera para servicios demasiado largas | | <input type="checkbox"/> No calificar para servicios comunitarios |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No conocer servicios que existen | <input type="checkbox"/> Los servicios están demasiado lejos | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Los servicios no están abiertos durante horas convenientes | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Falta de crédito/historia mala de crédito | <input type="checkbox"/> Historia mala de alquiler/desalojo | <input type="checkbox"/> Problemas de salud mental |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Otro _____ | | |

15. A la hora de pensar en lo que usted sabe hacer, nombre 3 cosas que usted cree que sabe hacer muy bien. Estas habilidades pueden incluir lo que aprendió en casa, en la escuela, en la comunidad o en el trabajo.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

16. En total, ¿Qué tan satisfecho/a está usted con su vida?

- Muy satisfecho/a Un poco satisfecho/a No muy satisfecho/a No satisfecho/a para nada

17. ¿Está usted involucrado/a con los siguientes grupos o actividades? (Ponga V en los que se aplican)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grupos de la iglesia | <input type="checkbox"/> Organizaciones de negocios |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asociaciones del vecindario | <input type="checkbox"/> Grupos de veteranos (Veterans of Foreign Wars) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grupos para ancianos | <input type="checkbox"/> Ligas de deportes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grupos para jóvenes (Future Farmers, Scouts) | <input type="checkbox"/> Clubs de servicio (Kiwanis, Rotary) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grupos escolares (PTA, cuidado para niños) | <input type="checkbox"/> Asociaciones étnicas/culturales |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Otro _____ | |

18. ¿Alguna vez usted tuvo una posición de liderazgo en los grupos o actividades?

- Sí No

19. ¿Alguna vez usted hizo voluntarismo con un grupo u organización en la comunidad?

- Sí No

20. ¿Usted está registrado/a para votar?

- Sí No No se aplica a mí

21. ¿Cómo podemos mejor apoyar a la siguiente generación, tales como sus futuros nietos, para que menos gente viva con el hambre y la pobreza en el futuro?

22. ¿Qué ideas tiene usted sobre cómo terminar el hambre y la pobreza que la gente de nuestra comunidad experimenta hoy?

Demográficos

23. ¿En qué comunidad vive usted?

- | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> NE Salem | <input type="checkbox"/> NW Salem | <input type="checkbox"/> South Salem | <input type="checkbox"/> Keizer | <input type="checkbox"/> Aumsville |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Silverton | <input type="checkbox"/> Stayton | <input type="checkbox"/> Mt. Angel | <input type="checkbox"/> Woodburn | <input type="checkbox"/> Dallas |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Independence | <input type="checkbox"/> Otra (escriba) _____ | | | |

24. Sexo: ___ Hombre ___ Mujer

25. ¿Qué edad tiene? _____

26. Incluyéndole a usted, ¿cuántas personas viven en su casa?

- Niños menores de 18 _____
- Adultos 18-64 _____
- Ancianos (65 y más años) _____

27. ¿Cuál de las siguientes declaraciones describe a su familia? (Ponga \checkmark en sólo uno).

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Madre soltera/divorciada/separada (niños menores de 18) | <input type="checkbox"/> Una persona que vive sola |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Padre soltero/divorciado/separado (niños menores de 18) | <input type="checkbox"/> Soltero/a que vive con compañeros de cuarto |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Padres/2 adultos con niños | <input type="checkbox"/> Una pareja sin niños |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Multi-generacional (abuelos, niños adultos, nietos) | <input type="checkbox"/> Otro _____ |

28. ¿Cómo describe su raza/etnicidad? (Ponga \checkmark en los que se aplican)

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asiático | <input type="checkbox"/> Americano nativo/nativo de Alaska | <input type="checkbox"/> Negro/Africano-Americano |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hawaiano/de las islas pacíficas | <input type="checkbox"/> Hispánico o Latino | <input type="checkbox"/> Blanco, No-hispánico |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Multi-racial/étnico | <input type="checkbox"/> Otro _____ | |

29. ¿Qué idioma(s) se habla(n) en su casa? _____

30. ¿Cuál es el nivel más alto de educación que usted completó? (Ponga \checkmark en sólo uno)

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> grado 8 o menos | <input type="checkbox"/> grado 9-11 | <input type="checkbox"/> Diploma(secundario)/GED | <input type="checkbox"/> Técnico/profesional |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Algunos estudios universitarios | <input type="checkbox"/> Graduó de la universidad | <input type="checkbox"/> Estudios superiores | |

31. Por favor, ponga \checkmark en las declaraciones que mejor describen el trabajo de usted y CADA adulto en su casa:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Un trabajo a tiempo completo | <input type="checkbox"/> Un trabajo a tiempo parcial |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Un trabajo a tiempo completo más un trabajo a tiempo parcial | <input type="checkbox"/> Más de 1 trabajo a tiempo parcial |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sin trabajo y buscando trabajo | <input type="checkbox"/> Con discapacidad |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jubilado/a | <input type="checkbox"/> Sin trabajo y no buscando trabajo |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Quedándose en casa con niños/una persona con discapacidad | |

32. ¿Cuál fue su fuente más importante de ingresos durante el mes pasado?

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trabajo | <input type="checkbox"/> Seguro social | <input type="checkbox"/> S.S.D.I. (Discapacidad) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ayuda general | <input type="checkbox"/> Pensión | <input type="checkbox"/> Alimony |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Compensación de desempleo | <input type="checkbox"/> Worker's Compensation | <input type="checkbox"/> Amigo(s)/pariente(s) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> S.S.I. (Seguro social suplementario) | <input type="checkbox"/> TANF | <input type="checkbox"/> Otro(s) _____ |

33. ¿Aproximadamente cuál fue su ingreso total durante el mes pasado, incluyendo todos los miembros de la familia y todas las fuentes (incluyendo el pago, seguro social, ayuda pública, y todo el otro ingreso en efectivo)?

- | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Menos de \$417 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$418 - \$833 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$834 - \$1,250 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,251 - \$2,083 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$2,084 - \$2,917 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$2,918 - \$4,167 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$4,168 - \$6,250 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$6,251 - \$8,333 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$8,334 y más | |

34. ¿Usted tiene algún otro comentario para la encuesta?

¡Gracias por su tiempo y participación! Sus comentarios nos ayudan mucho a la hora de fortalecer nuestra comunidad. Si desea más información sobre este proyecto, por favor póngase en contacto con Melinda Gross al (503) 581-3855, x308; mgross@marionpolkfoodshare.org. ¡¡Gracias!!!
Marion-Polk Food Share: 1660 Salem Industrial Drive NE, Salem, OR 97301

*****SEPARE ESTA PÁGINA DE LA ENCUESTA*****

Esta página se mantendrá separada de la encuesta para proteger su confidencialidad. Sus respuestas a la encuesta no se conectarán con información que le identifica.

1. ¿Está usted interesado/a en participar en un grupo para hablar de hambre y recursos comunitarios? Si le seleccionamos para participar en el grupo, **usted recibirá una tarjeta de regalo de \$5** para una tienda de abarrotes. NOTA: No puede participar en el grupo si ya recibió una tarjeta de regalo de \$5 por participar en una entrevista uno por uno.

Sí (En este caso, escriba su información de contacto abajo para que podamos fijar el horario de la conversación en grupo con usted)

No

2. Actualmente, Marion-Polk Food Share ofrece los siguientes programas y recursos. ¿Está usted interesado/a en participar o recibir información sobre ellos? (Ponga ✓ en los que se aplican):

Clases de cocina (incluyendo alimentación, presupuestos para comida)

Recetas

Huertos comunales

Cocina comunitaria

Otro _____

3. ¿Está usted interesado/a en hacer voluntarismo con Marion-Polk Food Share en las siguientes áreas? (Ponga ✓ en los que se aplican)

Clasificar donaciones de comida

Conductor voluntario para recoger y distribuir alimentos a despensas públicas

Hacer tareas en la oficina (correo, contestar el teléfono, entrada de datos, inventario, etc.)

Voluntario en los huertos comunales (sembrar, quitar malas hierbas, cosechar)

Servir almuerzos en el programa de almuerzos en el verano/para ancianos

Ayudar a distribuir alimentos en las despensas

Hacer voluntarismo en eventos especiales, como recaudación de fondos y comida

Clasificar donaciones de libros para el programa Reading for All!

Participar en el grupo Women Ending Hunger (trabajar en proyectos voluntarios y promoción pública para terminar el hambre)

Enseñar clases sobre alimentación y cocina en las despensas

Otro _____

Por favor, escriba su información de contacto abajo si le gustaría que le contactemos con más información sobre participar y/o hacer voluntarismo en programas de Marion-Polk Food Share, y/o le interesa participar en una conversación en grupo. **Su información de contacto NO se conectará a sus respuestas en la encuesta para proteger su confidencialidad.**

Nombre _____ Número de teléfono _____

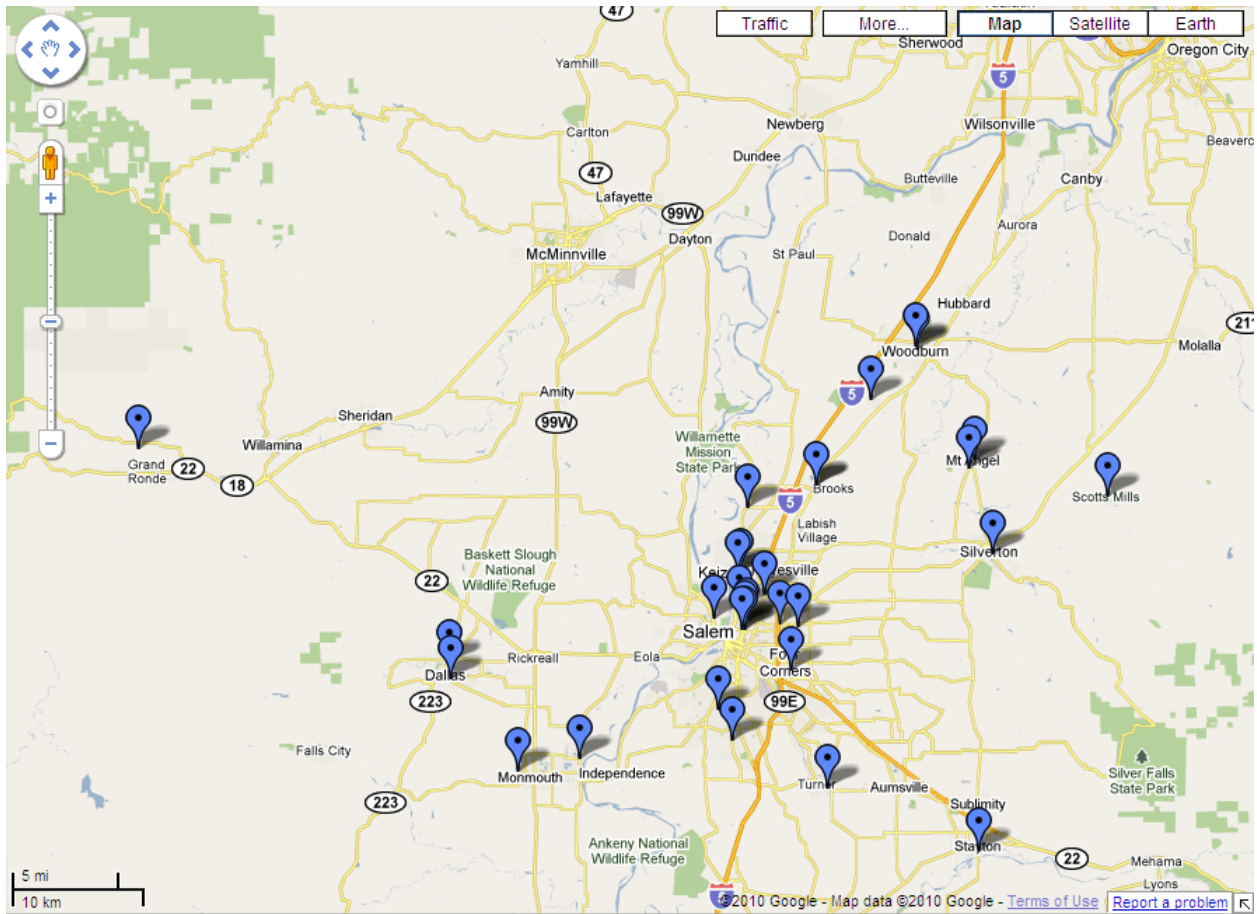
Correo electrónico _____

Dirección _____

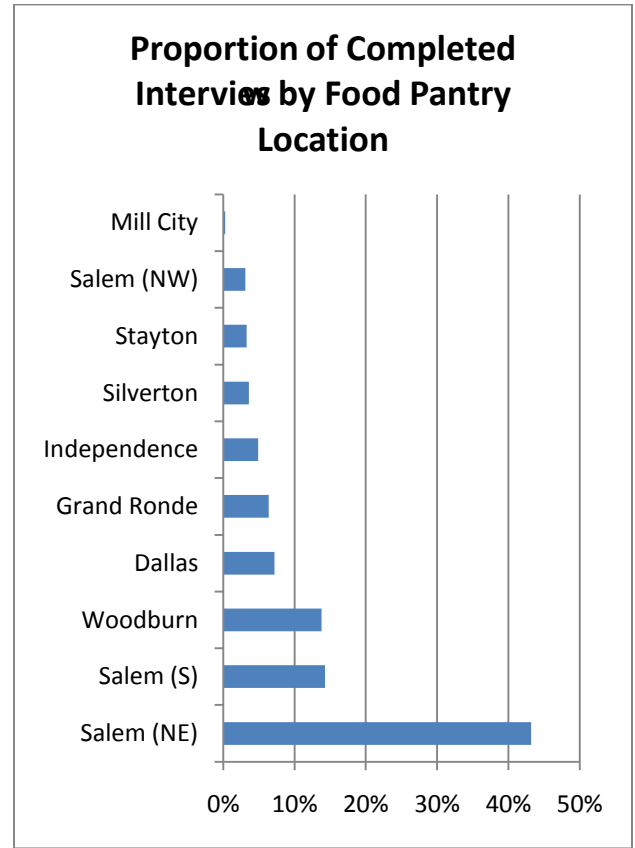
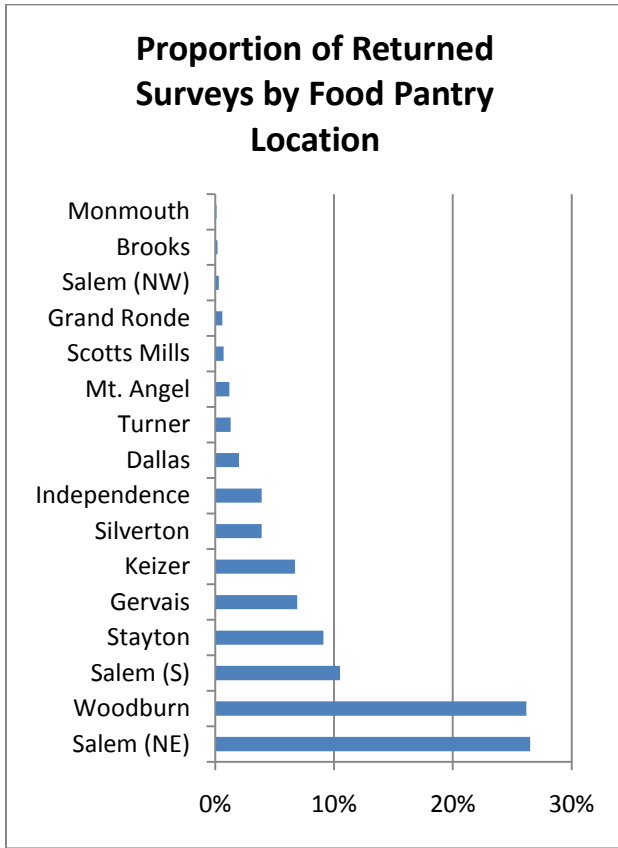
*****SEPARE ESTA PÁGINA DE LA ENCUESTA*****

APPENDIX D

Food Pantry Locations for Survey Dissemination



Survey and Interview Distribution by Food Pantry Location



APPENDIX E

Food Pantry Customer Interview Questions (English Version)

Name of Interviewer _____

Where is this interview taking place (e.g. – name of food pantry) _____

Date _____ Gift Card (e.g. – Safeway, Fred Meyer's, etc.) _____

Marion-Polk Food Share is a non-profit agency that collects and gives food to emergency food pantries so that people in our community won't go hungry. We are having conversations with people to gain a better understanding of our community. We will use the information you share with us to understand our community's strengths and how we can improve resources to better support residents. **All of the information you share with me will remain confidential, and you do not have to participate to receive food assistance. You will receive a \$5 gift card for participating.** Please answer questions to the best of your knowledge. We appreciate your participation and **thank you** for your time!

1. Why do you think people are experiencing hunger and poverty in our community?
2. What was the situation that led you to seek emergency food assistance?
3. During times when money or money concerns are a major problem, what do you do to get by?
Probe: Neighbors babysitting children, friends and family to lend you money, sharing transportation, etc.
4. What would you say are the best features of the programs and services you use?
Probe: What makes them really work for you?
5. What are some reasons why you may not be using certain community resources or services?
Probe for transportation problems, eligibility, lack of comfort using the food stamps, the application process, attitudes of food stamp office staff, didn't know about the program, etc.
6. What things would you like to see happen to help you get ahead?
Probe: affordable, safe childcare, access to full-time employment with benefits, access to higher education, transportation to find a job, etc.
7. People are involved in the community in different ways. What kinds of activities or groups, if any, are you a part of?
Probe: Bowling leagues, book clubs, church choirs, neighborhood block clubs, Kiwanis, Girls Scouts, political groups.
8. What ideas do you have on how to end hunger and poverty that people are experiencing in our community today?
9. How can we best support the next generation, such as your future grandchildren, so that fewer people will live with hunger and poverty in the future?

10. Are there any resources that you need today?

If yes, give participant community resource list and help them identify where they can access resources for what they are needing today. Briefly list the types of resources they need (e.g. – clothing, housing, food, etc.)

11. Are you interested in volunteering with or participating in any Marion-Polk Food Share programs, such as community gardening, cooking classes, etc.?

If yes, get their contact information on a separate contact sheet and assure the participant that their contact information will be separated from their responses and will only be used to give them information on participating in the programs

12. Do you have anything else you would like to add or share?

Thank you for your time! Your ideas and experiences go a long way in helping us strengthen our community. As a thank you, what kind of gift card would you like?

Food Pantry Customer Interview Questions (Spanish Version)

Preguntas para la entrevista uno-por-uno

Nombre del empleado _____

Lugar de la entrevista (nombre de la despensa) _____

Fecha _____ Tarjeta de regalo (Safeway, Fred Meyer's, etc.) _____

Marion-Polk Food Share es una agencia sin fines de lucro que colecciona y da alimentos a despensas de emergencia para que la gente de nuestra comunidad no esté con hambre. Vamos a conversar con la gente para mejor entender nuestra comunidad. Usaremos la información que usted comparte con nosotros para entender las fuerzas de nuestra comunidad y cómo podemos mejorar los recursos para mejor apoyar a la gente. **Toda la información que usted comparte conmigo es confidencial, y no tiene que participar para recibir comida. Usted recibirá una tarjeta de regalo de \$5 (cinco dólares) sólo por participar.** Por favor, conteste las preguntas lo mejor que pueda. ¡Apreciamos su participación y le damos **gracias** por su tiempo.

1. ¿Por qué cree usted que la gente de nuestra comunidad experimenta hambre y pobreza?
2. ¿Cuál fue la situación que le causó buscar ayuda de comida de emergencia?
3. Durante los tiempos de problemas con dinero o cuando preocupaciones de dinero son un problema grande, ¿qué hace usted para seguir adelante?
Sonda: Los vecinos cuidan a los niños, familia y amigos le prestan dinero, compartir el transporte, etc.
4. En su opinión, ¿Cuáles son los mejores rasgos de los programas y servicios que usted utiliza?
Sonda: ¿Qué parte de los programas le ayuda más?
5. ¿Cuáles son las razones por qué usted no utiliza ciertos recursos o servicios de la comunidad?
Sondea para problemas de transporte, cualificaciones, incomodidad con el uso de estampillas, el proceso de solicitud, tratamiento por el personal de la oficina de estampillas, no conocer el programa, etc.
6. ¿Qué debe pasar para ayudarle a seguir adelante?
Sonda: cuidado para los niños seguro y de costo bajo, acceso a empleo a tiempo completo con beneficios, acceso a educación superior, transporte para buscar trabajo, etc.
7. La gente está involucrada en la comunidad de distintas maneras. ¿Usted forma parte de qué tipos de actividades o grupos, si es que lo haga?
Sonda: Ligas de bowling, clubs de lectura, coros de la iglesia, clubs de la vecindad, Kiwanis, Girls Scouts, grupos políticos.
8. ¿Qué ideas tiene usted sobre cómo terminar el hambre y la pobreza que experimenta la gente de nuestra comunidad hoy?
9. ¿Cómo podemos mejor apoyar a la siguiente generación, tales como sus nietos futuros, para que la gente no viva con el hambre y la pobreza en el futuro?

10. ¿Hay recursos que usted necesita hoy?

En este caso, da al participante la lista de recursos de la comunidad y ayúdale a identificar dónde pueden acceder recursos para lo que necesitan hoy. Haz una lista breve de lo que necesitan (ropa, alojamiento, comida, etc.)

11. ¿Está usted interesado/a en hacer voluntarismo o participar en los programas de Marion-Polk Food Share, por ejemplo en el huerto comunal, clases de cocina, etc.?

En este caso, escribe su información de contacto en otra hoja de papel y asegúrale que su información se mantendrá separado de sus respuestas confidenciales y se usará sólo para darles información sobre participar en los programas.

12. ¿Hay algo más que le gustaría decir o añadir?

¡Gracias por su tiempo! Sus ideas y experiencias nos ayudan mucho en fortalecer a nuestra comunidad. ¿Qué tipo de tarjeta de regalo le gustaría como obsequio?

APPENDIX F

Community Stakeholder Interview Questions

1. What programs or services, if any, does your organization/business provide for low-income individuals and families?
2. Why do you think people are experiencing hunger and poverty in our community?
3. What barriers are preventing the elimination of these problems?
4. What are some reasons why people may not be using certain community resources or services?
5. What kinds of services or programs would you like to see offered in the community that are not already available? Why?
6. What are your solutions to ending hunger and poverty in our community?
7. How can we best support the next generation so that fewer people will live with hunger and poverty?
8. What can we do to foster collaboration between local organizations, government and businesses in reducing hunger and poverty?
9. What do you see as the assets specific to your organization/business that would help us accomplish such a partnership?
10. Which people, organizations or businesses would you recommend talking to regarding these questions?
Note: We are planning on interviewing a large number of people representing the nonprofit, government, and private sector. If you think there is anyone we might miss that can provide valuable input on these questions, please let us know.
11. Is there anything else you would like to add or share?

APPENDIX G

Board of Directors and MPFS Staff Community Assessment Questions

1. When it comes to addressing hunger and poverty, what about MPFS services and programs makes them really work for the population we serve? What can MPFS improve upon?
 - a. What makes MPFS programs work well for the population we serve?
 - i. _____
 - ii. _____
 - iii. _____
 - b. Improve upon?
 - i. _____
 - ii. _____
 - iii. _____
2. Why do you think people are experiencing hunger and poverty in our community?

3. How can we best support the next generation so that fewer people will live with hunger and poverty?

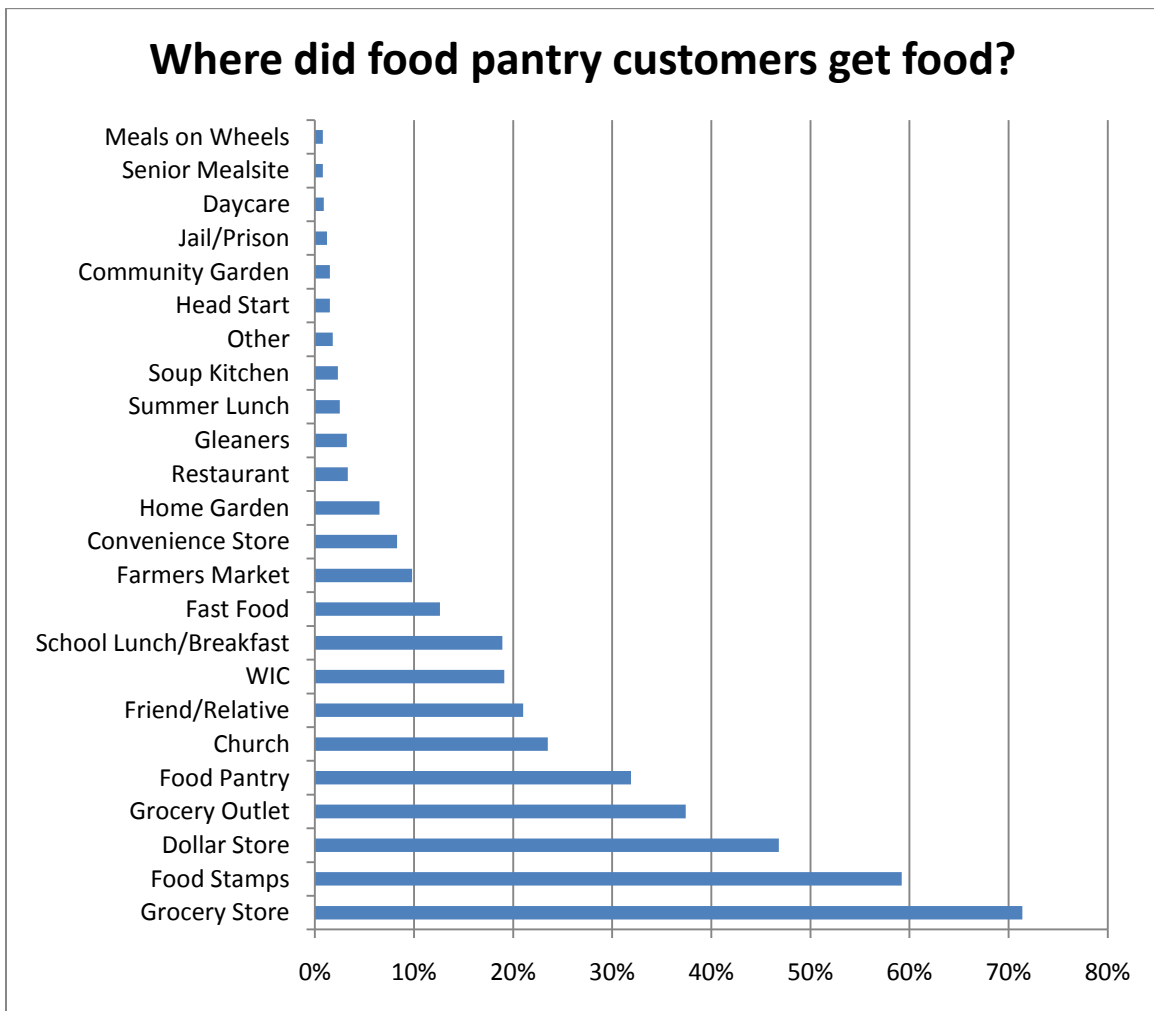
4. What specific services and programs can MPFS create or expand upon to reduce hunger in our community?

5. How can we foster or improve collaborations between local organizations, government and businesses to reduce hunger and poverty?

6. Which people, organizations or businesses (if any) would you recommend talking to regarding these questions?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
7. Is there anything else you would like to add or share?

APPENDIX H

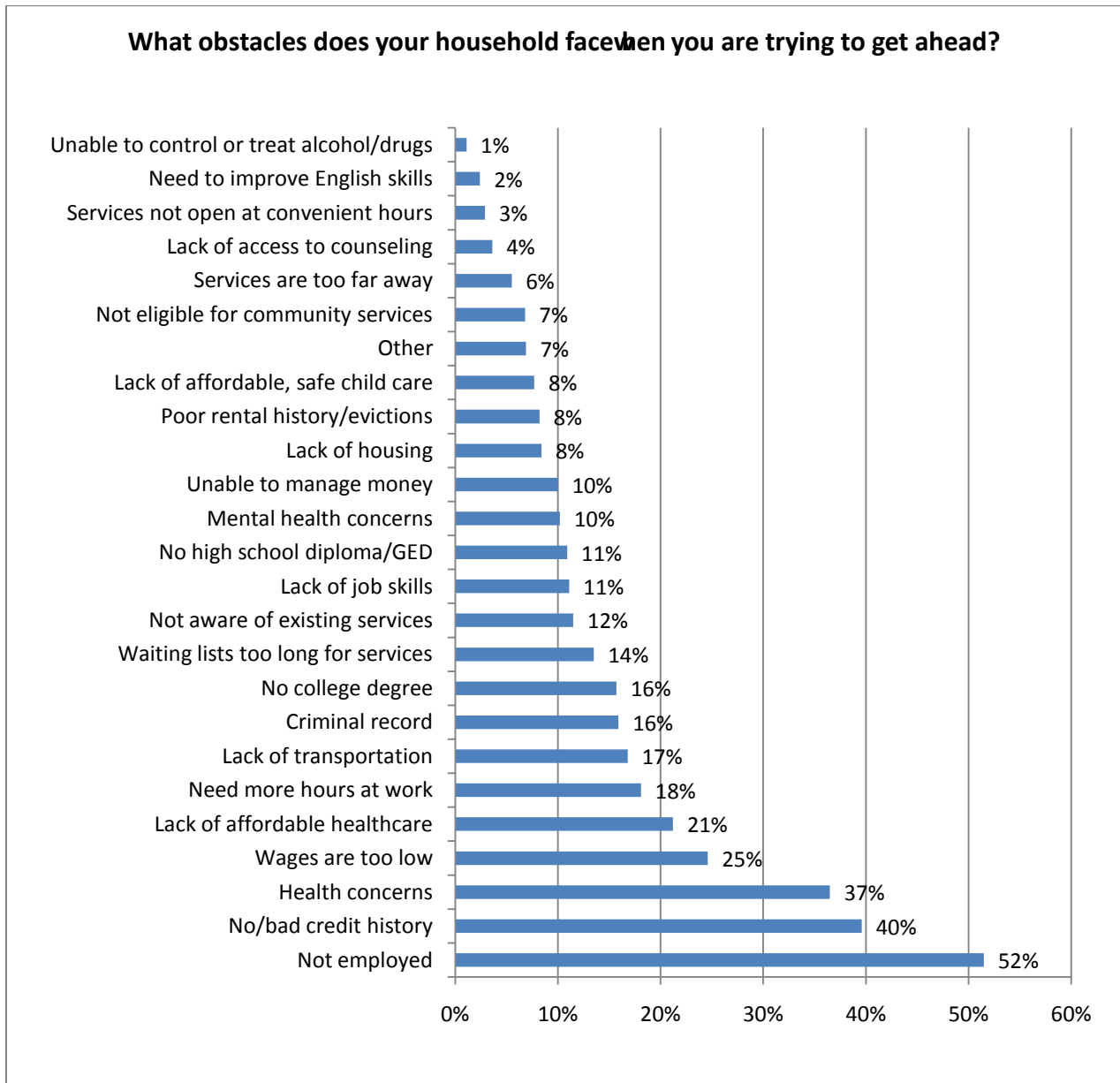
Where Did Food Pantry Customers Get Food?



It is important to note that while 31.9% of pantry customers reported using a food pantry in the past year, all survey respondents utilized food pantries. This has implications for how people perceive community resources.

APPENDIX I

Obstacles to Getting Ahead for Food Pantry Customers





*Leading the fight to END hunger in Marion and Polk counties
...because no one should be hungry.*

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