

DATA INSIGHTS THAT CENTER RURAL COMMUNITY VOICES

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THE RURAL
CHILD HUNGER
SUMMIT 2023



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SPEAKERS



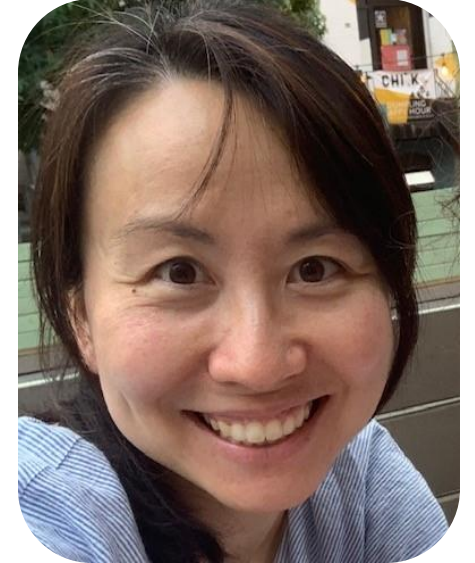
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Policy, Systems, and Environmental Strategies Generated by Participants to Support Family Food Security in Rural Communities


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Acknowledgements

The presenter would like to acknowledge:

- Share Our Strength for funding this study
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- Study participants, partners, and state leads for their engagement in the project and commitment to meaningful results



Why did we work on this project?

- Co-develop with family participants' and practitioners' recommendations for PSE strategies to support family's food security in rural communities
- Prioritize which PSE strategies will make the greatest impact in rural communities to support family's food security



What are PSE strategies?

PSE strategies are tools in communities that shape systems and structures where rural families live, work, and play. PSE strategies and tools are aimed towards the community level and not the individual.



Policy

Change is at legislative and organizational levels and include laws, ordinances, regulations, and rules.



System

Shifts are made in the way problems are solved within organizations, institutions, or communities.



Environment

Change is made in economic, social, and physical environments.

3-step process

1. Interviews to Develop List of PSE Strategies

2. Surveys to Prioritize PSE Strategies

3. Focus Groups to Gain Consensus on PSE Strategies

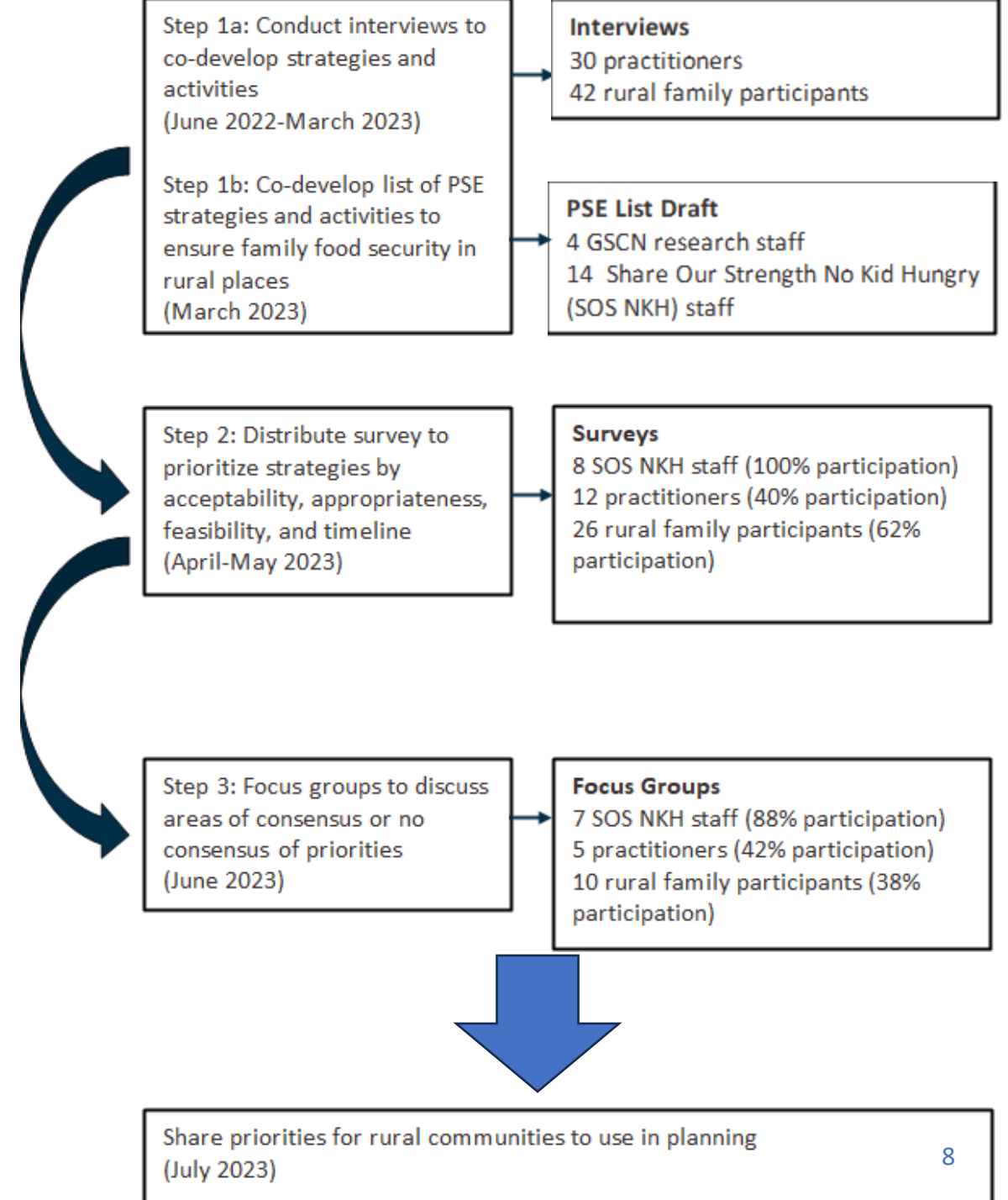
Participant Engagement

30 practitioners working with rural places

42 individuals with a family, enrolled in a social service, and living in rural places of:

- Arizona
- Georgia
- Kentucky
- Michigan
- Texas

Share Our Strength staff



Programs directed at food resources in rural communities



SNAP



WIC



School nutrition



Food banks



Food skills education



Local food at farmer's markets & community gardens

“The [name of backpack program] is a program that provides food bags for children in the highest needs category that are identified in every school district in our county, the [backpacks] meet all the food categories, also, the nutrition categories, and then also, they're, they're provided during the times that they are not in school. So it's every holiday break. They're provided enough food to sustain them during that holiday break.” [Michigan practitioner]

“We do a lot of food preservation and food safety programming. We're doing a lot of canning classes and canning programming and then we house the National Center for Home Food Preservation here at UGA. We answer a lot of questions and do a lot of programming in that work.” [Georgia practitioner]

Programs beyond food resources in rural communities



Healthcare programs



Housing assistance



Unemployment benefits



Early childhood education or afterschool



Stimulus checks



Tax credits

“I'd love to see policies that streamline the application process for all of this, I'd love to see a policy push that would streamline it, modernize the application process, and where it becomes just a one stop shop where folks don't have to go to a million different places to qualify for different things.” [Arizona practitioner]

“My child goes to a program called [name of youth program]. After school, they have [youth] for about 3 hours, from 3:30 to 6:00, they teach them to read, they teach them to do their homework. This program is important because once or twice a month they meet with the parents and the children also go and they teach them how to brush their teeth, they educate them, they teach them to read if they have reading problems. If the child has problems in school, they help them.” [Georgia family¹⁰ speaking Spanish]

1. Make it easier to sign up for programs
2. Make people more aware of services
3. Make it trouble free for people to use programs
4. Expand employment
5. Make it easier to get from place to place
6. Make housing more affordable
7. Provide chances for people to suggest changes to programs
8. Expand school nutrition programs
9. Increase access to affordable health care
10. Expand food banks
11. Make childcare options and early childhood education better fit the needs of families
12. Provide options for people to learn about buying and making healthy foods on a budget
13. Provide more places to get food locally

Prioritized Strategies for Rural Places

Highest Prioritized Strategies

#1 Make it easier to sign up for programs

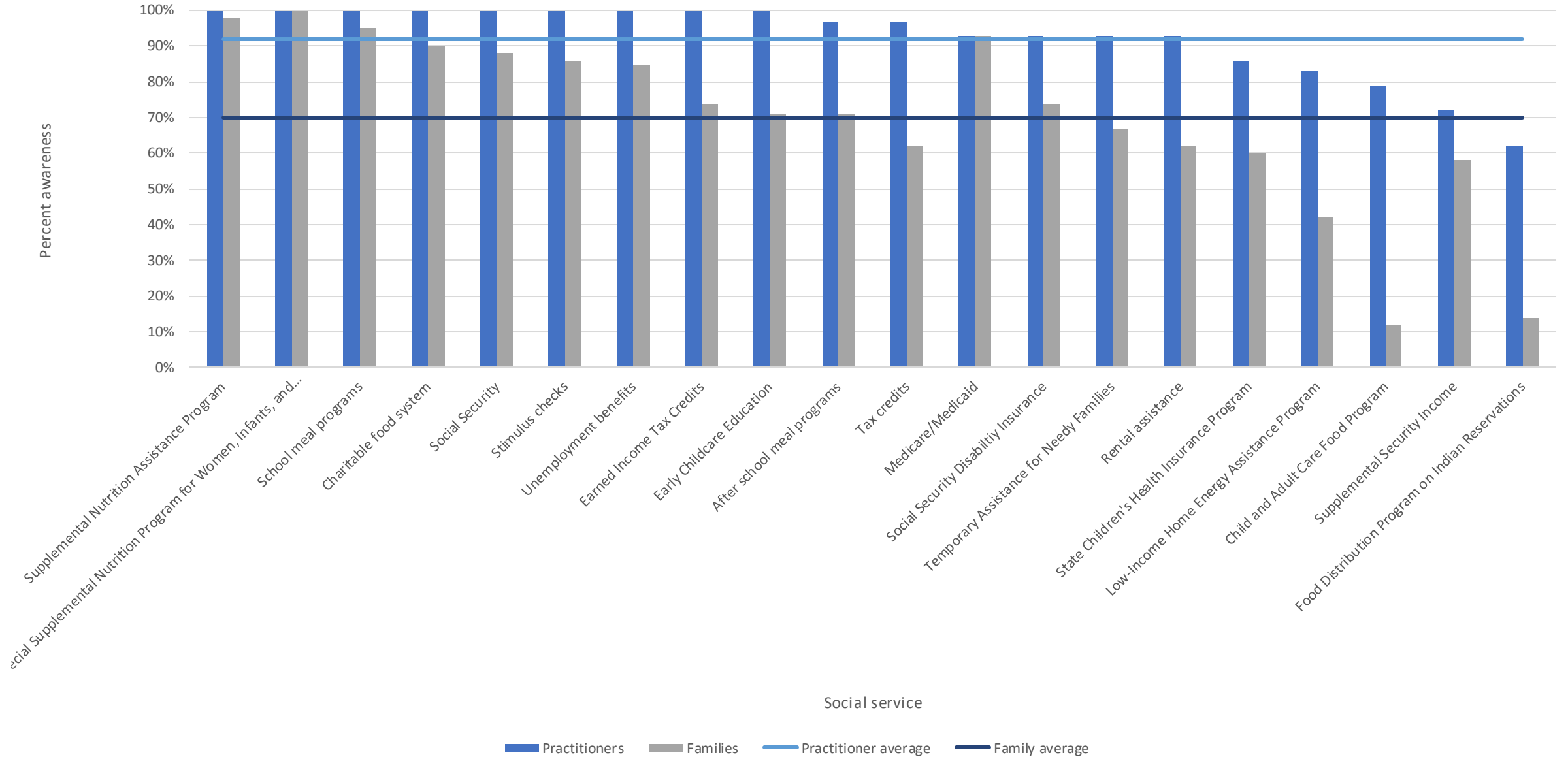
- Ensure there are local offices in rural communities where people can go to sign up for these programs
- Make program applications shorter
- Allow people to fill out one application that can be used for all programs

Highest Prioritized Strategies

#2 Make people more aware of services

- Advertise for programs in creative ways such as through social media
- Advertise for programs in many locations in the community
- Local community members share how to sign up and use these programs
- Organizations employ bi-lingual staff members to tell people about programs

Overall Practitioner and Family Participant Awareness of Social Services



Highest Prioritized Strategies

#3 Make it trouble free for people to use programs

- Make it faster to start using these programs
- Change program rules for how people can use money or services
- Allow people to receive program services on the phone, video, or computer; make it easier to check out at grocery stores when using SNAP and WIC
- Make it easier to keep using and stay on these programs
- Make it easier for immigrants to use these programs
- Follow-up with families that are receiving programs

Lowest Prioritized Strategies

#1 Provide more places to get food locally

- Start community gardens
- Let people donate meat from hunting to food banks
- Provide discounts at farmer's markets
- Make the food at farmer's markets less expensive
- Create mobile farmer's markets
- Provide prescriptions for fruits and vegetables at health care clinics
- Work with food banks to offer fresh local foods

Lowest Prioritized Strategies

#2 Provide options for people to learn about buying and making healthy foods on a budget

- Provide classes and resources in multiple languages
- Provide food skills classes online (website, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube)
- Provide cooking classes
- Provide finance classes (budgeting, saving)
- Provide food preservation classes (canning foods, freezing foods)
- Provide food safety classes

Lowest Prioritized Strategies

#3 Provide options for people to learn about buying and making healthy foods on a budget

- Provide free preschool
- Open more childcare locations
- Open childcare facilities for more hours
- Provide bookmobiles and mobile libraries

How to do PSE work in rural communities:

Focus on assets



Partnerships with existing local organizations



Agricultural landscape



Use existing community needs assessment



Close-knit communities

“There is a place called [name of organization] which is for the state to listen to the Latinos voices that need to be heard, and for the government to support us more. Sometimes you go there to talk and listen to what other people are saying. A lot of people from the community go and participate to support [name of organization] because it has been helping the community for 15 years now, and it has provided a lot of help for everything.”

[Georgia family participant speaking Spanish]

“As far as community wise, being self-sufficient. Rather than having to rely upon the federal government just being self-sufficient [is good]... everybody's pitching in, it's more of a communal, like everybody helping out everybody.” [Arizona family participant speaking English]

How to do PSE work in rural communities:

Challenges to consider



Transportation



Affordable health care



Affordable housing



Internet access



Access to affordable and healthy food



Limited Employment



Limited childcare

“Migrants, in particular, it can be a lot of expense to have a medical emergency and not have insurance. There was a time when we had tried to get medical insurance, but it didn't cover 100%, despite paying a significant amount that I consider to be expensive for medical insurance that doesn't meet people's needs.” [Texas family participant speaking Spanish]

“Around here, there's not a whole lot of jobs to have and what there is, they're making minimum wage, which is like a \$7.25 an hour. You can't, especially with a one parent household, you cannot live off of that amount of money as far as paying rent, paying your utilities, buying food, buying diapers, buying necessities, toilet paper, laundry, soap, bath, soap, all that stuff. You can't afford to do that. So you have to make cut somewhere.” [Kentucky family participant speaking English]

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Prioritized Strategies for Rural Places

Use this list to start
with one thing!

Planning and doing
PSE strategies and
activities should be
inclusive and
depend upon the
rural community's
assets and needs



Let's talk!

E-mail me at Carmen Byker Shanks

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Rural Parent Attitudes Toward Out of School Time Meals: A National Survey of Parents in Rural Areas



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Presenter: Anthony Panzera, PhD MPH
Associate Director of Research, SOS-NKH



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A National Survey of Parents in Rural Areas

- Share Our Strength-No Kid Hungry (SOS-NKH)
 - Anthony D. Panzera
 - Marisa Kirk-Epstein
 - Carolyn Vega
 - Paige Pokorney
- FM3 Research (Contractor)
 - Lucia Del Puppo
 - David Metz
 - Denny Han





Background

- Prior to Summer 2023
 - Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and other summer meals programs for children required group setting (“congregate”) meal service.
- December 29, 2022
 - Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023 signed into law
 - Non-congregate meal service for rural areas with no nearby congregate meal service was made permanent.
- Summer 2023
 - Implementation of non-congregate meal service in rural communities.
- Winter 2023
 - Interim final Rule implementing this option must be issued by Dec. 29, 2023.






Goal: to systematically understand, document, and share insights about implementation of non-congregate meals in Summer 2023.

The **objectives** of this survey were to:

- **Identify** meal site characteristics rural families consider when determining whether such sites are accessible.
- **Understand** rural parents' preferences for non-congregate and congregate meal sites.
- **Understand** preferences around non-congregate meal service to inform our recommendations around program design to USDA.
- **Explore** differences in preferences and attitudes among survey respondents.



Methodology

Dates	July 8-August 9, 2023
Survey Type	Dual-mode Voter Survey
Research Population	Low-income Parents Living in Rural Areas with Household Incomes at or below 185% of the Federal Poverty Level
Total Interviews	600
Recruitment	 Telephone Calls  Email Invitations  Text Invitations
Data Collection Modes	 Telephone Interviews  Online Interviews

Characteristics of Respondents

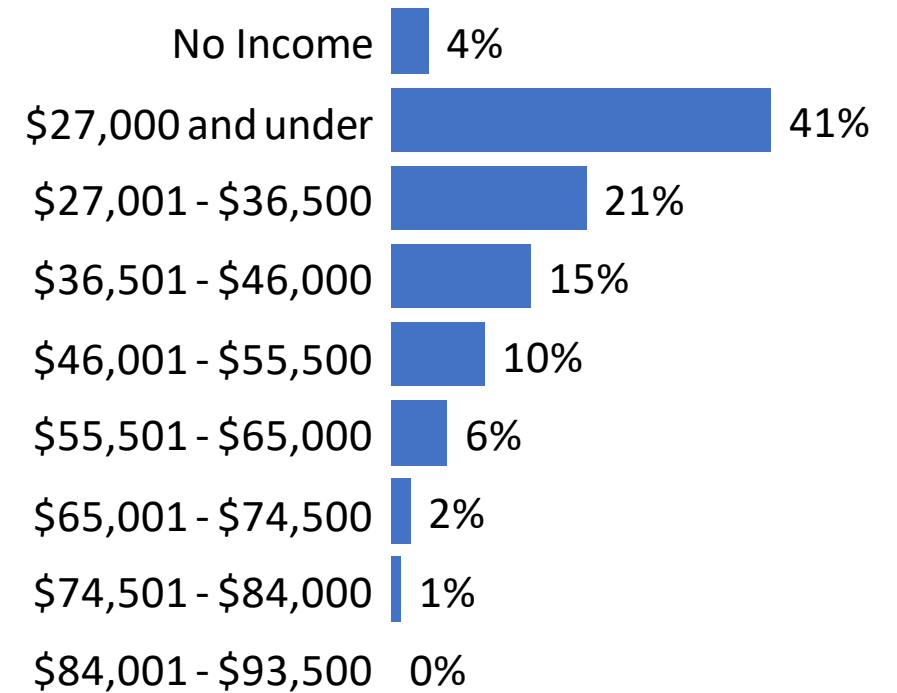


Survey Sample

n = 600 Parents

- **89%** -- living in homes with **1-3 children**
- **91%** -- living in homes with **2-6 family members**
- **50% female, 47% male, 2% non-binary, 1% DK/R**

Combined Household Income



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Experiences with Food Insecurity



In the past year...

- **Two in five** often worried about running out of food before having money to buy more.
- **Nearly one-third** have often run out of food.
- **More than two in five** said their children sometimes or often did not eat enough.

African American parents were more likely to say their children were not eating enough.

Demographic Group (Often True)	Within the past 12 months we worried whether our food would run out before we got money to buy more.	Within the past 12 months the food we bought just didn't last and we didn't have money to get more.	Within the last 12 months the children were not eating enough because we just couldn't afford enough food.
All Parents	39%	29%	16%
Race/Ethnicity			
Whites Only	38%	30%	16%
Latinos	40%	33%	14%
African Americans	45%	28%	24%
All People of Color	43%	28%	17%
Region			
Northeast	48%	33%	24%
Midwest	26%	22%	14%
South	48%	37%	17%
West	39%	22%	14%

Summer imparts hardship on rural families...

- 82% of parents reported spending more on groceries during summer.
- Families spend \$168 more per month on groceries during the summer, after holding household income and size constant.
- Groups more likely to report increased summer grocery spending:
 - Parents of children ages 5-10
 - Parents with more children

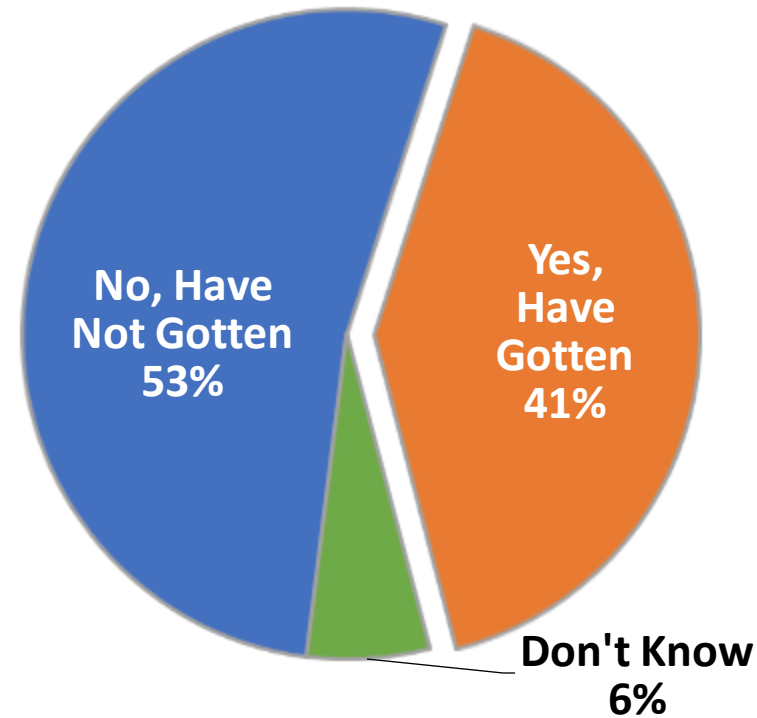


**Preferences and experiences
with School Meals and Out-of-
School Time Meals**

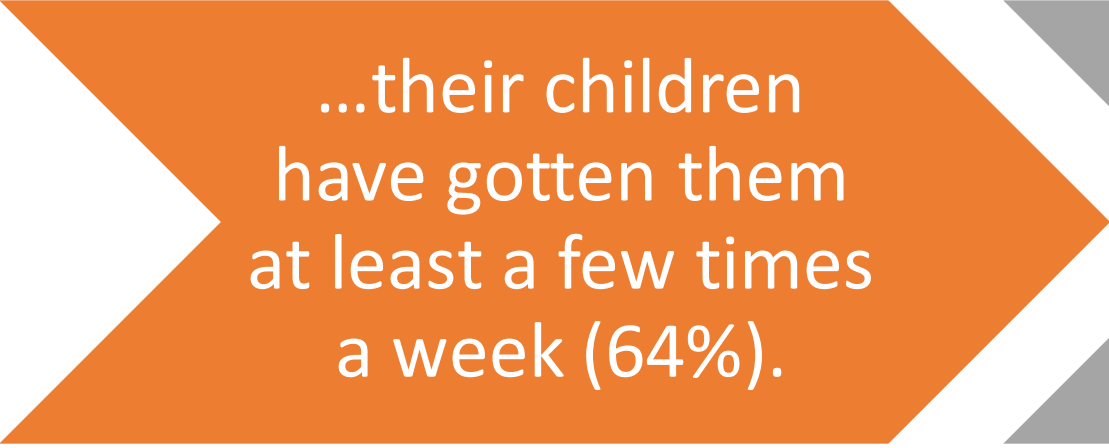


While a majority have gotten school meals, two in five said their children have gotten meals during summer breaks.


Has your child ever gotten a meal at a site run by a school or another provider, like a community organization, during summer breaks?



Those who reported prior participation in summer meals said...



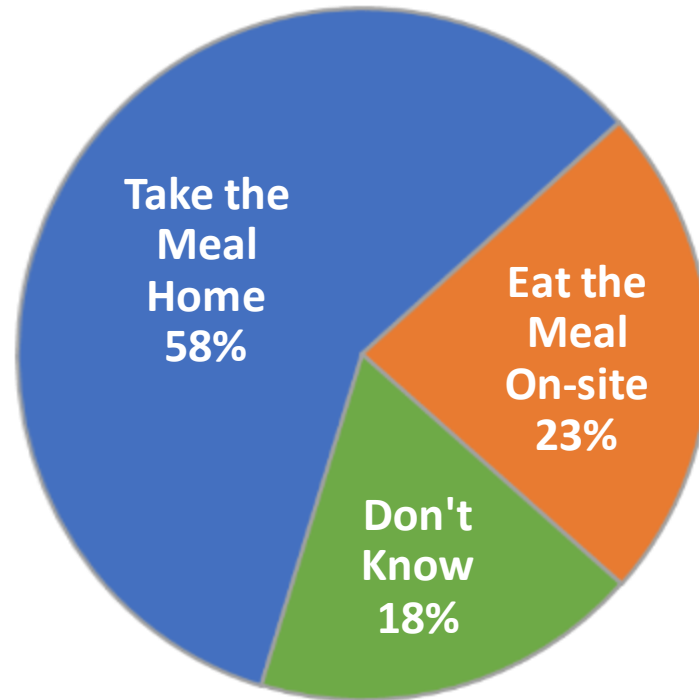
...their children
have gotten them
at least a few times
a week (64%).



...they have picked
meals up to take
home (72%).

A majority of parents preferred having their children take home meals, while one-quarter preferred having their children eat on site.

*In general, when accessing free meals during summer, do you prefer that your child be able to pick up and take a meal home **OR** eat the meal on-site?*



Preference for “taking meals home” cuts across age groups, region, and access to transportation.

Preferences



Those who preferred to take home the meal point to comfort and convenience.



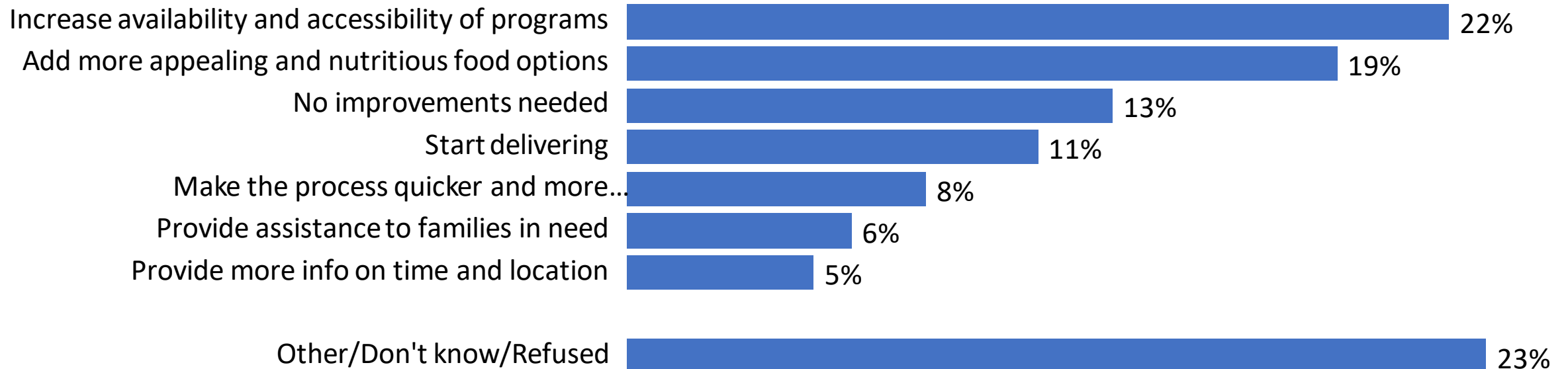
Those who favored on-site meals said the food is healthy and fresh when eaten on-site.

Accessibility, Appeal, and Choice

A majority (55%) of respondents said it is important to have both options (on-site and take-home) available.

How would you improve the experience of getting these types of meals that you take home when school is out for the summer?

(Open-ended; Asked of Parents Who Picked Up Meals During the Summer, n=179)



Views on Take Home Summer Meals (Non-congregate)



72% said they would be likely to pick up and take home meals when school is not in session.

Parents of children ages 5-10 were most likely to participate in take-home meals.

Those with access to a car and/or bike most of the time more likely to participate in take-home meals.

Choosing take-home meals → **motivators**

Likely to participate if:

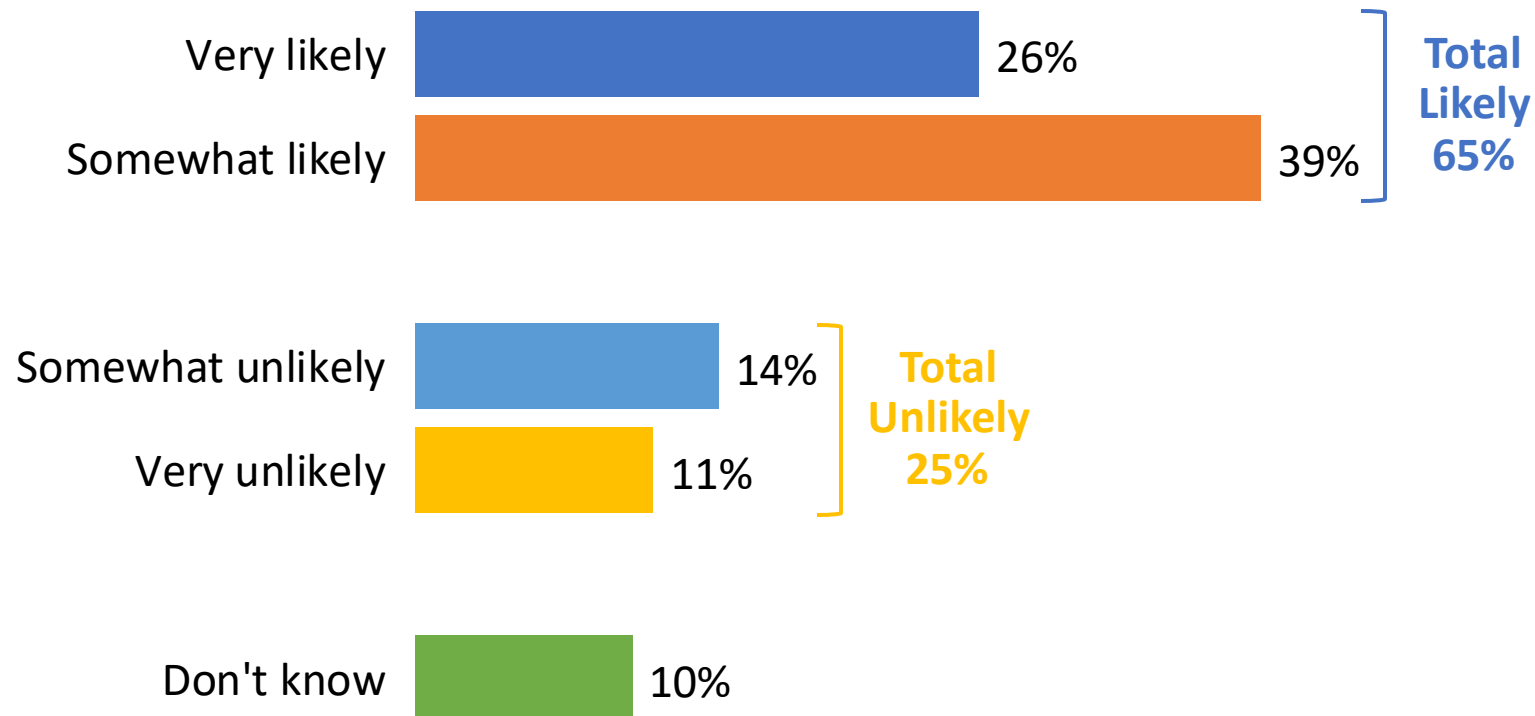
- Meals include foods children like and eat (77% of parents)
- The area is safe (76% of parents)
- Multiple meals were provided (73% of parents)
- Meals were delivered to your home (71% of parents)
- Meals meet standards to ensure healthy, nutritious meals (71% of parents)
- Available website with detailed info about program (71% of parents)
- Child can pick up for non-present siblings (70% of parents)
- Parents can pick up meals without child present (70% of parents)
- Meal pick-ups can be scheduled (70% of parents)

Views on On-Site Summer Meals (Congregate)

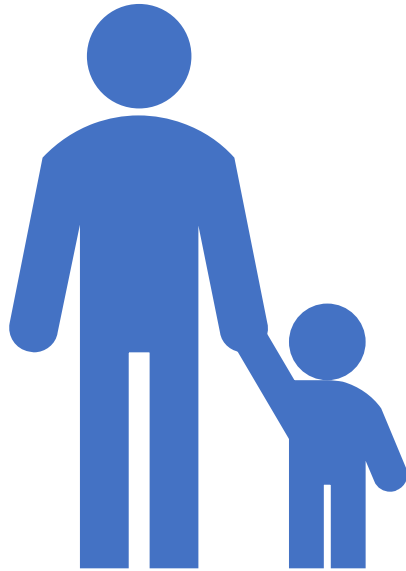


Two-thirds said they'd be likely to participate in on-site meals, but only one-quarter were very likely.

Suppose that during this summer break, free meals at a school or community organization were available for your child to eat on-site. If that were the case, how likely is it that you would have your child participate? Would you be very likely, somewhat likely, somewhat unlikely, or very unlikely?



Who is likely to participate in on-site meals?



- Families in the Northeast, Midwest, and South are more likely to participate than families in the West.
- African American and Latino families more likely to participate than White families.
- Those with reliable access to transportation (car/bike/public) were more likely to participate in on-site meals.
- Likelihood of participating does not vary by kids' age or household income.
- 26% of those likely to participate in on-site meals said that it's because it would help financially.
- 25% of those unlikely to participate in on-site meals said it wouldn't be convenient.

Next steps

- Sharing insights with USDA
 - Interim Final Rule expected by December 29, 2023
- Extended learning synthesis across SOS-NKH teams
 - Informal and formal discussions with state agencies and sponsors
 - Reviewing grant reporting data from NKH grantee sponsors
 - Surveying of state agencies and sponsors
 - Gathering insights from our State Campaigns teams
- Lingering issues
 - Identifying and clarifying “rural pockets”
- <https://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/programs/summer-meals>



Thank You!

Questions?

apanzera@strength.org

A Rural Home Delivery Pilot in Eastern Kentucky




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Jillian Papa, MPH
Advisor, Save the Children



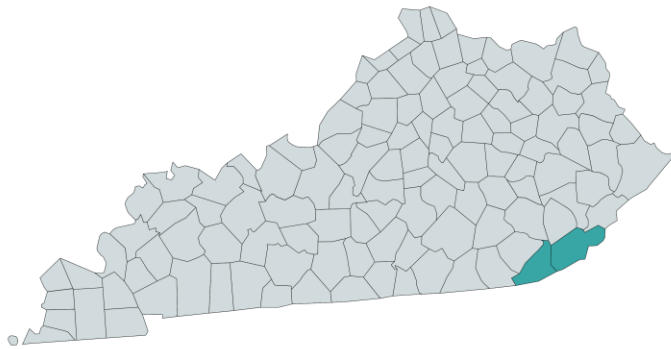
Acknowledgements

Thank you to Amazon for funding this project and thank you to all of the evaluation participants and implementers from Save the Children, Christ's Hands, Midwest Food Bank, and the following school districts: Bell County Public School District, Harlan County Public Schools, Harlan Independent Schools, and Pineville Independent Schools.



Why this project?

Harlan and Bell county Kentucky have some of the highest rates of food insecurity, along with high rates of households without a vehicle.



Occupied Housing Units with No Vehicles Available

Kentucky	Harlan	Bell
6.9%	9.6%	9.4%

The counties that are projected to have the highest food insecurity rates in 2021 are listed in Table 13.

Table 13. Counties with the highest projected overall food insecurity rates in 2021 (compared to 2020 projections and 2019 actuals)

Ranking	County	2021	2020 (ranking)	2019 (ranking)
1	Presidio County, TX	29.2%	29.4% (2)	24.2% (17)
2	Oglala Lakota County, SD	29.1%	29.3% (3)	27.7% (3)
3	Issaquena County, MS	27.9%	28.7% (5)	29.4% (1)
4	Harlan County, KY	27.5%	29.1% (4)	26.6% (5)
4	Holmes County, MS	27.5%	29.6% (1)	26.2% (6)
4	Todd County, SD	27.5%	28.6% (6)	27.5% (4)

* The impact of COVID on local food insecurity March 2021 report



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Project Goal

To reduce child food insecurity by increasing access to nutritious meals during weekends and holiday closures when school is not in session.

The project aimed to address the following challenges in rural communities:

- 1) Transportation barriers
- 2) Inadequate and/or inaccessible school meal offerings during weekends
- 3) A lack of capacity for food banks to deliver food directly to homes



Pilot Program Model

A weekly box consisting of perishable and nonperishable foods (about 16 meals) was delivered directly to children's homes prior to the start of the weekend.

1,788

Children

948

Households

327,372

meals distributed



23-weeks from March to August 2023



Community-based model leveraging local partnerships

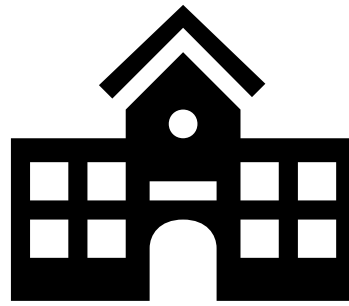


100% meals met USDA Summer Food Service Program pattern requirements



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School Districts
Enrollment & Family Liaisons



Midwest
FOOD BANK®
Food Procurement
& Box Assembly



Funder & Logistics
Consultant



**Save the
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Project Management
& Evaluation



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Hearing Community Voice

Continuous feedback was gathered using **formal** and **informal** methods throughout the course of the pilot from **participants** and **implementers**.

Feedback was used for program improvement either to:

- **Quickly adjust the program in real time**
- **Inform the next phase of the program**



Formal Participant Evaluation

3-Week Check In
Survey

N= 169

Midpoint Survey &
Interviews

N= 254

6 interviews

Final Project
Survey

N= 216



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Discussion Groups

- Delivery drivers (3)
- Midwest food bank leadership (2)
- District Leads (2)
- Save the Children staff (6)

Interviews

- Christ's Hands Director
- Christ's Hands Warehouse Manager
- Amazon Lead

Surveys

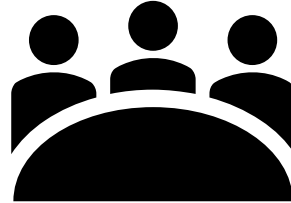
- Family Resource and Youth Services Center (FRYSC) School Staff (9)
- Food bank volunteers (4)



Informal Feedback Methods



Emails



Biweekly
Implementers
Sync Meeting



Phone Calls



In-Person/Walk-Ins



Internal Team
Meetings



Quick Pivots

What We Heard

Districts leaders and staff had a lot of questions about the enrollment process.



Tracking tools were quickly developed for districts to gather necessary information on families for deliveries.

Delivery drivers felt unsafe due to loose dogs on properties when delivering.



Families were informed that if dogs were not leashed, food boxes would not be delivered.

Participants shared that chicken juice was leaking through the packaging.



The packaging was quickly changed to properly seal the chicken to prevent leaking.



Program Improvements for Phase 2

What We Heard

School staff did not have enough time to enroll families.



The Phase 2 timeline includes more time and support to enroll and onboard families to the program.

Delivery drivers discovered just an address and phone number isn't always enough to make deliveries.



Enrollment forms asks for coordinates and landmarks as well as a second phone number.

Participants specified foods in the box they liked the most and least.



The items that were reported "least liked" were removed and the items that were "most liked" remained.



Checking our assumptions

Example Conditions for Successful Program Implementation

Food was safe.



Most participants put food into the refrigerator within 2 hours of arrival.

Families ate the food.



Most participants said they never or rarely throw away food from the box.

Delivery technology worked.



Most participants received a text message when the delivery arrived.



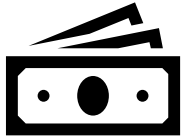
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Participant Outcomes

On average participants saved:



\$67.54 per week



79 minutes per week

Participants:

- Felt good giving their child(ren) food from the box.
- Believed the food in the box is healthy.
- Felt the food was easy to prepare.
- Believed the box fit their family's needs.
- **Were less worried whether their food would run out before there was money to buy more.**



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Participant Quotes

The **constant assurance** that there will be fresh, healthy food for the kids throughout the week takes a lot of pressure off our single-income household.

I **never have to worry** about running out of food because I can always cook a few meals from the box and we are fed.

It has **cut down on my grocery bill** and allowed us to have meat or fresh vegetables when we normally wouldn't have.

I didn't have to worry about **finding a ride** where my husband works out of town.

It has saved us money, less trips to the store, and **less stress** about needing food at the end of the month.



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Implementer Quotes

This program is the **best food insecurity assistance method** we've had yet. Organizations have put a lot of time and money into weekend food programs, but all we can send home are snacks. That's not a long-term solution. If we want to make a difference, it's what you all are doing.

Every time I bring the box, [the kids] come running out excited. To see their little faces light up, you couldn't trade it for anything in the world. **It's the most fulfilling thing I've done.**

The biggest success was the **ability to identify the neediest, most vulnerable children** for the program, working with the School Family Resource Center. They work with them day in and day out. It was a huge benefit.

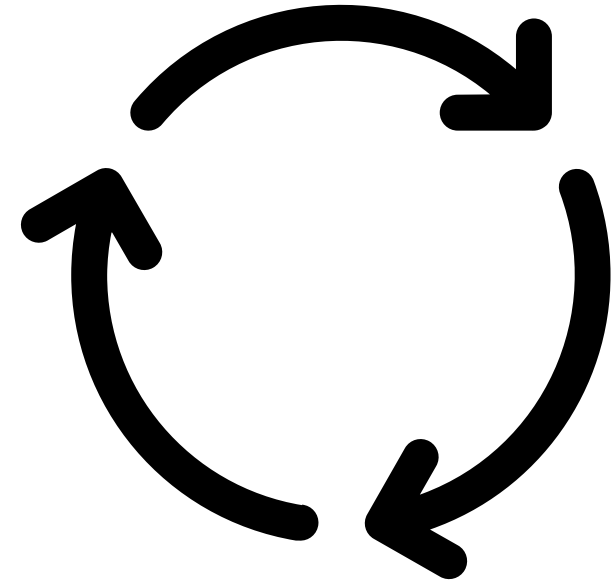
The candidness and respect that partners have for each other was the biggest success. Each plays a role and **everyone comes from a place of, yes.** Yes, we want to do it. And let's figure out the best way to do it.



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The combination of formal and informal evaluation methods allowed us to continuously improve the program!



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Questions?

Thank you!

Jillian Papa, MPH

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THANK YOU!

Karen Wong
Center for
Best Practices,
No Kid Hungry



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