



Northwest

Food Partners

Network

Building food security for stronger communities.



Pantry Assessment

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Background

Food pantries are traditionally operated by private charity organizations (pantries, churches etc.) and known for giving grocery items to people in need. Typically, clients receive a few bags of groceries for a given period and can be limited in their choice. Most food pantries are open to the public, while others only cater to a particular clientele. Funds are obtained from several sources, including individual donations, food banks¹, and government grants. Food pantries rely greatly on funding and most often all-volunteer staff to keep food flowing to people in need. Nevertheless, even with funding shortages, pantries make an effort to help people deal with food insecurity² and hunger³.

According to Biggerstaff et al. (2002) the emergency food system has provided nourishment to the poor and hungry for the past 200 years. During the early 1980s' the Reagan administration's policies drastically reduced social safety net programs, including tightening eligibility to government assisted food programs which, in turn, forced many food insecure Americans to rely more heavily on the charitable sector to provide an adequate supply of food on a consistent basis (Bhattarai et al., 2005). Coupled with the realities of high unemployment and underemployment, excessive shelter costs, inadequate public assistance, and reduced food assistance, the charitable emergency food system expanded exponentially in the 1980s' (Poppendieck, 1999). The biggest example of this trend is the formation of Feeding America⁴, which helped move the nation's network of food banks from an informal and improvised solution to a permanent response to hunger (Daponte & Bade, 2006). The idea of using food pantries became so popular that "politicians also encouraged local rather than federal responses and placed a heavier responsibility upon private resources to meet the needs of the poor" (Daponte 1996, 1).

The number of food insecure Americans remains high and the number of people receiving benefits from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as Food Stamps) is getting larger. As of December 1, 2011, more than 46 million Americans received the USDA's SNAP benefits (USDA, 2011). This is the highest enrollment since its inception and experts from diverse professional disciplines claim that this sharp increase has been partly triggered by the ongoing economic recession. Since SNAP is widely recognized as the first line of defense against hunger, millions of Americans, including Chicagoans, enroll at alarming rates. Despite research that shows government nutrition programs, like SNAP and WIC⁵, as more cost-efficient than charity operated food programs, in the current political climate these nutrition programs are often first to be cut- espousing the myth that the charitable response to food insecurity is enough (Berg, 2008).

A new study released by Feeding America, *Food Banks: Hunger's New Staple*, found that many Americans chronically depend on food pantries. In theory, emergency food programs are set-up to serve food to people dealing with short-term food shortages. However, the Feeding America study found that food from pantries is no longer being used to meet temporary needs: rather, it has become part of a household long term strategy to supplement monthly shortfalls in food.

¹ Warehouses that distribute food items to charitable organizations. These organizations, in turn, distribute the foods to people (Pierre Food Bank 2012).

² Limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or limited or uncertain ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways (Anderson 1990).

³ The uneasy or painful sensation caused by a lack of food. The recurrent and involuntary lack of access to food (Anderson 1990).

⁴ The nation's leading domestic hunger-relief charity. Its mission is to feed America's hungry through a nationwide network of member food banks and engage our country in the fight of hunger.

⁵ Women Infant and Children nutrition program.

Food Insecurity

In December 2011 the national unemployment rate held at 8.5 percent (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012). As a result of this ongoing economic downturn, millions of Americans struggle to put food on their table. According to Coleman-Jensen et al. (2011) in 2010, 85.5 percent of United States households were food secure throughout the year and 14.5 percent (49 million Americans) had difficulty providing enough food due to a lack of resources.

The preliminary findings of *Map the Meal Gap Study 2011* rank Cook County⁶ as third among counties with the largest number of food insecure individuals. According to the report, 16.1 percent of its residents are classified as food insecure (approximately 836,000 people)⁷, representing a great challenge. The principal organization attempting to meet that challenge is the Greater Chicago Food Depository (GCFD)⁸. In February of 2010, the GCFD, in conjunction with Feeding America, estimated that in Cook County, 678,000 people each year rely on emergency and supplemental food resources. This represents a 36 percent increase, from the 2006 data in the number of people seeking emergency food assistance (GCFD Hunger in America Executive Summary, 2010). The findings from these studies both capture high levels of need and demand for emergency food and suggest that there may be as many as 158,000 food insecure residents not accessing GCFD supported food programs in Cook County.

In the Northwest Food Partners Network (NFPN) service area⁹, there are clear signs of the gap between the need of increased emergency food assistance and the existing resources dedicated to meet that need. Four of the five communities in the area¹⁰ have food insecurity rates higher than the Cook County average, with Humboldt Park showing the highest concentration with an estimated 1 in 4 residents experiencing food insecurity. According to the same *Map the Meal Gap Study*, in total there are over 60,000 food insecure residents in the NFPN service area, but NFPN organizations are serving (at most) 20,000 residents combined. The study also identifies the NFPN's four largest community areas¹¹ as among "the most underserved" in terms of child nutrition programming. Even with this data, resources for food programming are shrinking and capacity for local response is being strained. Since 2010, four key pantries have closed or are scheduled to close in the NFPN service area¹², placing extra burden on other area pantries and food insecure residents that have to travel farther to access emergency food resources.

Community Profile

According to the most recent available community data sets (GCFD, 2011), the NFPN neighborhoods demographics reflect 58.7 percent Latino, 13.7 percent African American and 25.5 percent Caucasian,¹³

⁶ All of the NFPN pantry are located and served within Cook County boundaries.

⁷ 2010 US Census Bureau reports population of Cook County at 5,194,675 - 16.1 % of this number is approximately 836,000. <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/17/17031.html> .

⁸ Is a nonprofit food distribution and training center providing food for hungry people while striving to end hunger in the community. The Food Depository distributes donated and purchased food through a network of 659 pantries, soup kitchens and shelters in Cook County every year.

⁹ Communities of Humboldt Park, Hermosa, Logan Square, West Town and Belmont Cragin.

¹⁰ Food insecurity rates according to Map the Meal Gap: Humboldt Park 25.8 %, Hermosa 18.5, Logan Square 17.2% and West Town 14.7%.

¹¹ Belmont Cragin, Humboldt Park, West Town and Logan Square.

¹² Faithworld, Humboldt Park Social Services, Erie House and Maria Fontanez.

¹³ This includes a sizeable non-English speaking Eastern European population made up mostly of Ukrainian, Polish and Russian. The other 2.1 percent is a mix of Asian and "Other."

with a total population of 332,765. The average poverty rate is 22 percent, with the highest concentration in Humboldt Park with more than one in three people (33.8%) experiencing poverty.

The Northwest Side of Chicago became an increasingly Latino dominated area in the 1950s' in large part due to the arrival of Puerto Ricans recruited to work in the steel mills as part of Operation Boot Strap (Ramos-Zayas 2003). In subsequent decades, three main factors shaped the demographics of the Northwest Side: increased immigration from Mexico, the Caribbean, and Latin America, encroaching gentrification from the east and sustained enclaves of African American and Eastern European communities. Today, the Puerto Rican community maintains a strong presence in Northwest Chicago, specifically in the area around Humboldt Park with the recent development of the Paseo Boricua, a space that was created as a cultural and economic celebration for Puerto Ricans/Latinos, and in part to counteract the trend of gentrification by taking control of the neighborhood development process.

Over the last few decades much of West Town and a large portion of Logan Square have experienced rapid gentrification, increasing the Caucasian population and per average income for those communities significantly. However, Humboldt Park¹⁴, the central neighborhood of the NFPN service area, maintains a majority mix of Latino (52.5%) and African American (42.6%) residents. The 5 block radius around the park itself is the area where most of the social service organizations and many emergency food programs are located. On the other hand, Belmont Cragin and Hermosa, an area of over 107,000 residents, have very few pantries and non-profit services.

The most heavily Latino dominated communities in the NFPN service area are Belmont Cragin and Hermosa (combined 78.6 percent Hispanic population) as well as the Northern and Western portions of Humboldt Park and Logan Square. These same areas are some of the most highly hit by the recession and foreclosure epidemic with Belmont Cragin having the most foreclosures (937) in 2009 of all Chicago neighborhoods (National People's Action, 2010). In addition, Hermosa and Humboldt Park communities were also ranked in the top ten of foreclosure rates making this area of Chicago's Northwest side a major foreclosure hotspot in 2009 (National People's Action, 2010).

Most of the African American community resides in the southern and western portion of the city defined neighborhood of Humboldt Park. There are several studies that have deemed Humboldt Park and surrounding communities as "food deserts"¹⁵, which tend to have higher rates in low-income and minority neighborhoods (Gallagher 2006). The 2011 *Chicago Food Desert Progress Report* demonstrated that although progress was made to shrink Chicago's food deserts, in the Humboldt Park and surrounding neighborhoods the problem remains significant, especially in the African American sections.

Health disparities are also a major issue for Humboldt Park and the surrounding areas. The community has a childhood obesity rate of 47%, compared to the already high national average of 26%.¹⁶ In addition, according to the Sinai Health System *Improving Community Health Survey* (2004), the rates of diabetes, asthma and depression are all significantly higher than the City of Chicago average in the Greater Humboldt Park area. Using this data as a launching pad, several local initiatives have taken root in recent years to

¹⁴ Colloquially the neighborhood of Humboldt Park is known by its vicinity to the park, but the city defined map has the eastern portion from California to Western as part of West Town.

¹⁵ Areas where individuals and families do not have access to grocery stores that offers healthy foods such as fresh fruits and vegetables.

¹⁶ Greater Humboldt Park Community of Wellness - <http://www.ghpcommunityofwellness.org/Health-priorities/Active-Lifestyles/index.html> .

address the health disparities, most notably the Block by Block Campaign for diabetes prevention, Muevete, a free community physical activities program¹⁷ and the Greater Humboldt Park Community of Wellness.¹⁸

Northwest Food Partners Network

To make a measurable impact on hunger in the surrounding communities, the NFPN is leading a community-wide effort to work collaboratively with emergency food providers, urban agriculture entities, food policy groups and healthy living campaigns to build food security in Chicago's Northwest side.

The NFPN is an alliance of organizations dedicated to building food security in its service area. The NFPN works collaboratively to share resources, coordinate food providers, and provide comprehensive food programming that empowers community residents to engage in a sustainable food system that promotes healthy and active lives.

Total number of pounds (lbs) of food distributed by the NFPN organizations per month is just over 73,000. The food distribution information of those who participated in the food assessment is revealed. Northwestern Settlement House [32,000 lbs] serves approximately 1200 households per month. Onward Neighborhood House [3,500 lbs] distributes food to 150 households a month, European American Association [4,000] distributes to 200 households a month, and Saint Sylvester's Parish [7,000 lbs] distributes food to approximately 270 households a month. Saint Mark's Parish [6,000 lbs] provides food to 200 households a month, and Association House of Chicago [10,000 lbs] serves food to 350 households a month. These numbers represent unduplicated households.

In an effort to address the growing amount of need in the area, the NFPN is working with area organizations, to open up new pantry sites¹⁹ and to strengthen the existing pantries' capacity to serve. This year, the NFPN seeks to create partnerships with local grocers²⁰ to establish a food salvage initiative that will increase the quantity and quality of food items distributed, as well as develop innovative nutrition and food security projects in collaboration with member agencies.²¹ The network will also continue connecting with urban agriculture projects this summer to promote healthy eating and provide food insecure residents with increased access to fresh produce. Perhaps most importantly, NFPN members will continue to advocate for just food policies both at the local and federal government levels and to the larger institutions that influence the current emergency food system. These are just a few strategies that the NFPN is implementing to increase food security on the Northwest Side of Chicago.

Methodology

This study summarizes responses from food pantry clients within the NFPN. Data was gathered from November 2-December 15, 2011 in the Northwest side of Chicago. Convenient samples were taken from six NFPN food pantries in the neighborhoods of Humboldt Park, Logan Square and West Town.

¹⁷ Includes Zumba, Yoga, Tai Chi and other classes/sessions.

¹⁸ www.ghpcommunitiyofwellness.org

¹⁹ Onward House, St. Peters of Belmont Cragin, New Hope Bible Church and La Casa Norte.

²⁰ Cermak Produce, Tony's Finer Foods, and Carnicerias Jimenez.

²¹ One example is the Casa on the Vine project which connected area pantry participants with a container garden to grow their own produce.

Paper-based surveys offered in four languages (English, Spanish, Russian, and Ukrainian) were utilized to collect data. The actual survey had eighteen questions in one page front-and-back. The Bill Emerson National Hunger Fellow²² administered Surveys at each pantry on one randomly selected day for the full length of food distribution. All clients were asked to partake in the survey as they waited to be served. Participation in the survey was voluntary and was not a prerequisite for receiving emergency food allotments. The majority of clients who participated completed the survey while waiting to go through the intake process at the food pantry and others completed the survey after they received their food.

The Bill Emerson National Hunger Fellow scheduled visits and administered surveys at the following pantries: Northwestern Settlement House (collected 76 surveys out of 140 clients served), Onward Neighborhood House (collected 28 surveys out of 40 clients served), European American Association (collected 32 surveys out of 45 clients served), Saint Sylvester's Parish (collected 60 surveys out of 75 clients served), Saint Mark's Parish (collected 34 surveys out of 50 clients served), and Association House of Chicago (collected 9 surveys out of 30 clients served). Clients were encouraged to provide honest feedback and advised that their comments would not hinder the continuation of services and at the food pantry.

The results of the study are limited by the voluntary nature of the surveying tool. Although Convenience Sampling has a bias because the sample is not representative of the entire population, the data collected in this report should be viewed as a snapshot of the current economic conditions and affects of hunger and poverty for clients of the NFPN pantries.

Survey results will provide a better understanding of client's needs, suggestions and family makeup and measure NFPN member agencies' service impact. Furthermore, the findings will provide insights about clients' needs that may be helpful in making improvements. This study is also intended as a tool to increase awareness and participation of NFPN member organizations and to develop the network's capacity to act in common on issues of network concern.

Results

Client Profile:

The family composition of food pantry clients varied. Of the 239 participants, twenty-nine percent were single without children, thirty-seven percent were single with children, ten percent of the respondents live with spouse/partner without children, and fifteen percent of the respondents live with spouse/partner with children. Additionally, five percent of the respondents have other living arrangements and a low four percent failed to respond.

About half of all respondents acknowledged they receive food stamp benefits. Forty-six percent responded that they receive food stamps, fifty-one percent of all respondents responded do not receive food stamp benefits, and a low three percent did respond this question.

Out of the fifty-one percent (or 122) of the clients that reported not receiving food stamps, thirty-nine percent reported that they have never applied for benefits, twenty-one percent responded that they do not qualify because their income is too high, eight percent of the client reported that the requirements are not worth the benefits, and a low three percent reported that they do not know how to apply for

²² A fellow from the Congressional Hunger Center that supported a diversity of NFPN projects to help eliminate hunger, poverty, and social inequality in the community.

food stamps. Additionally, thirteen percent of the participants did not respond to this question, two percent of participants reported not receiving food stamps because of their legal status, and three percent reported not needing food stamps.

Furthermore, eight percent of participants reported not receiving food stamps for reasons unspecified, two percent circled multiple reasons, and one percent of participants reported that they stopped receiving food stamps for unstated reasons.

Out of the forty-six percent (or 110) respondents who receive food stamp benefits, twenty percent reported that food stamps last one week, thirty-one percent reported that food stamps last two weeks, thirty-one percent reported three weeks, six percent reported that the food stamps last the entire month, and twelve percent did not respond this part of the question.

Methods for learning about NFPN pantries:

Figure 1.1: “Word of Mouth” is the most popular method for finding out about NFPN’s member organizations pantries.

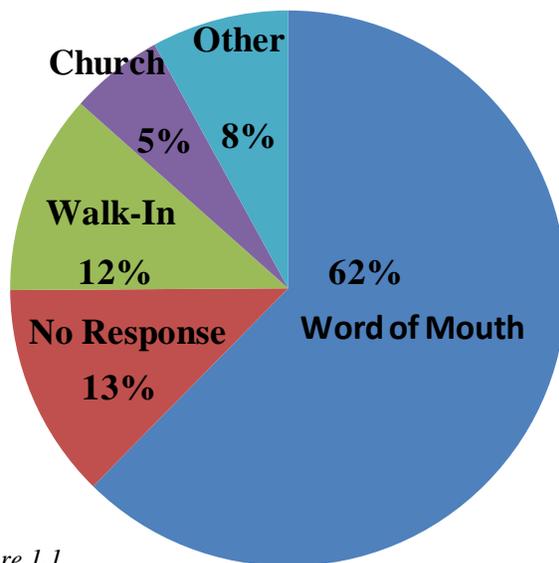


Figure 1.1

This key result reiterates the importance of local outreach, revealing that the majority of pantry users heard about the emergency food program via “word of mouth”, specifically citing referrals through area social service organizations, schools, GCFD and public aid offices.

Travel:

A large number of people reported traveling a short distance to the pantry. Thirty-seven percent of all participants reported traveling one or more miles and sixty percent of all participants reported traveling less than one mile to get to the pantry. Three percent of the respondent did not answer this question. Pantry clients use different methods to get to the food pantry. Sixty-three percent reported walking to the pantry, six percent reported driving, ten percent of the participants reported to be driven by family or friends, and three percent of the participants reported riding a bicycle to the pantry. In addition, six percent reported taking public transportation and twelve percent did not respond to this question.

Frequency of Visits:

The results of the surveys show that the sample population visits NFPN pantries at different frequency levels. Twenty-eight percent reported visiting an NFPN food pantry once a week, five percent reported twice a week, and thirty-six percent reported once a month. In addition, eleven percent of reported visiting a pantry twice per month, six percent once every few months, and ten percent reported it was their first time. One percent of the clients reported attending NFPN food pantries once in the last 12 months, another one percent reported twice in the last twelve months, and two percent did not respond.

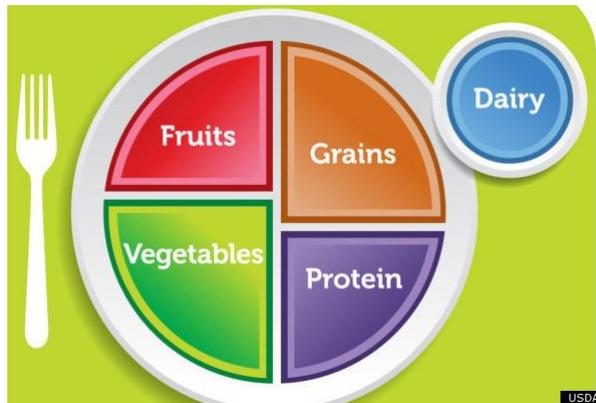
Food Allotment:

Clients were spread out in their responses to how long emergency food allotments last. Thirty-two percent reported that food lasts more than a week, twenty-seven percent reported 4-6 days and thirty percent reported 3 days or less. We did not control for family size or pantry site for this, so it is difficult to make an accurate estimate from this data as to how long food lasts for participants in general. This should be noted for possible future research.

Nutritious Foods:

Client perception of services reveals a mix of positive feedback, requests for more variety of food and a few surprising results. About three-fourths of pantry users reported that the NFPN member organizations are providing the foods they need to make nutritious meals. At the same time, clients are requesting more items in three basic categories: protein (meats, eggs, beans/rice etc), cooking items (oil, flour, butter) and produce (fruits and veggies).

Figure 1.2: Clients would like NFPN pantries to add several nutritious foods to their allotment.



Source: United States Department of Agriculture, January 2012

Figure 1.2

Based on the survey suggestions, the following is a list of food that clients need to prepare nutritious meals: Red Meat, Chicken, Turkey, Ham, Breads, Rice, Beans, Oatmeal, Butter, Eggs, Milk, Flour, Cooking oil, Sugar, Vegetables, Fruits, Fat-free items, and a variety of canned goods.

Clients' Food:

Despite the evident food hardships faced by many pantry users, most rely on other resources as their main strategy for obtaining food. Approximately one-third of pantry users gets most of their food by using a LINK card with another third reporting purchasing the majority of their food with their own

money. A smaller, but still significant portion (15%) revealed that they depend mostly on food from charitable organizations.²³

Equality of Distribution:

Nearly one-third (seventy-two percent) of all respondents believe that there is unequal distribution of food at NFPN member organizations. Nineteen percent of respondents believe that there is equal distribution, and nine percent did not respond this question. Some of the perceived reasons for unequal distribution were: households with kids get more, households that are bigger get more, some people need more, people that are first in line get more, the staff is giving more food to friends, and some people have their bags pre-made with extra fruit.

Skipping Meals:

Despite consistent food pantry visits, a substantial number of participants reported skipping meals. Fifty percent of the participants reported eating everyday in the last month (prior to the survey). Twenty-four percent reported going one or two days without eating, thirteen percent reported going three to six days without eating, and five percent reported going seven or more days without eating. Eight percent of the participants did not respond this question.

Network Pantry Usage:

A large number of respondents visit other pantries. Forty-five percent reported not needing to visit any other food pantries to get enough food for the week, twenty-one percent reported visiting one other pantries, fifteen percent reported visiting two other pantries, ten percent reported visiting three or more pantries, and nine percent did not respond this question.

Household Amenities:

The majority of food pantry clients have basic household amenities. Sixty-two percent reported they have a working stove and refrigerator. Thirty percent of reported lacking basic cooking amenities and eight percent did not respond this question.

Figure 1.3: As clients decide what pantry to visit, they take many factors into consideration.

Respondents reported that the most popular factor considered when choosing the pantry they will visit is how friendly/courteous are the pantry staff, followed by the location of the pantry, and the quality/freshness of produce. Although 239 participants completed and submitted surveys, they were asked to circle all the responses that applied. The numbers in *Figure 1.3* represent the number of times the factors were selected.

²³ Pantries and churches.

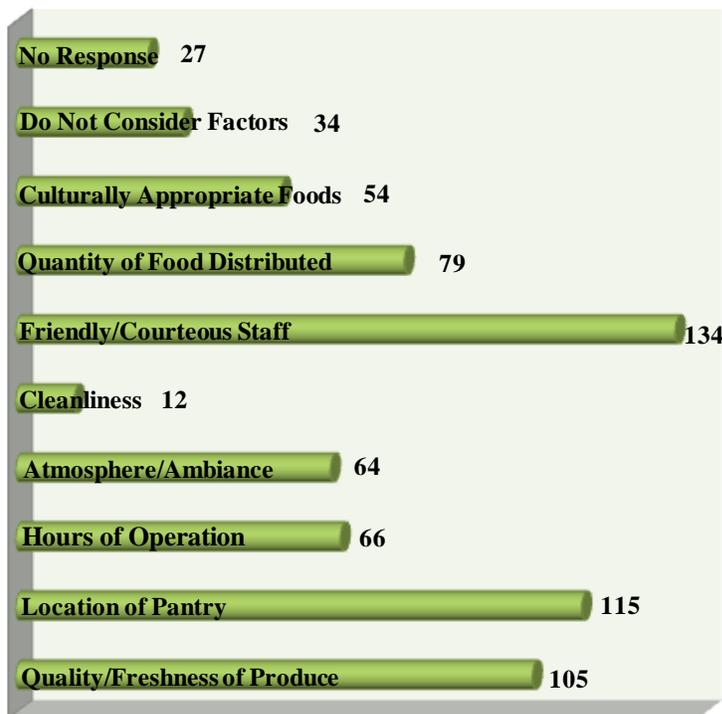


Figure 1.3

At the end of the survey participants were asked to provide suggestions for improving food distribution at food pantries (see Figure 1.4) and suggestions for preventing people from throwing away unwanted food (see Figure 1.5).

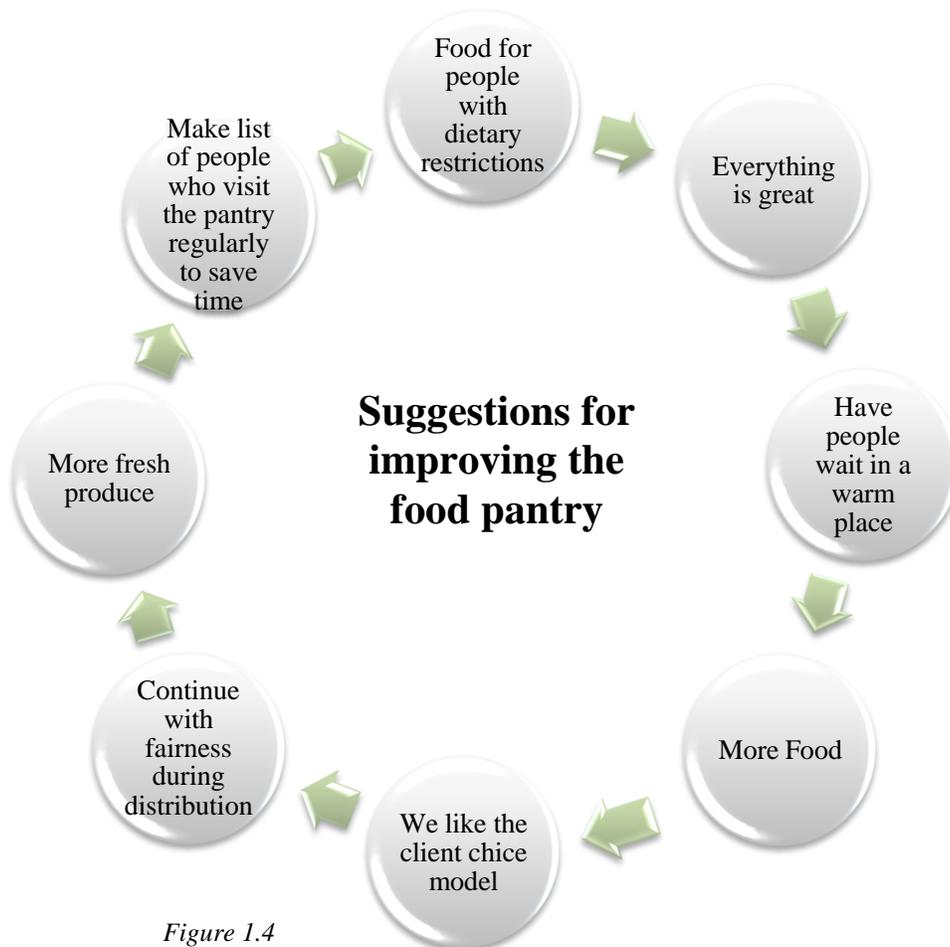


Figure 1.4

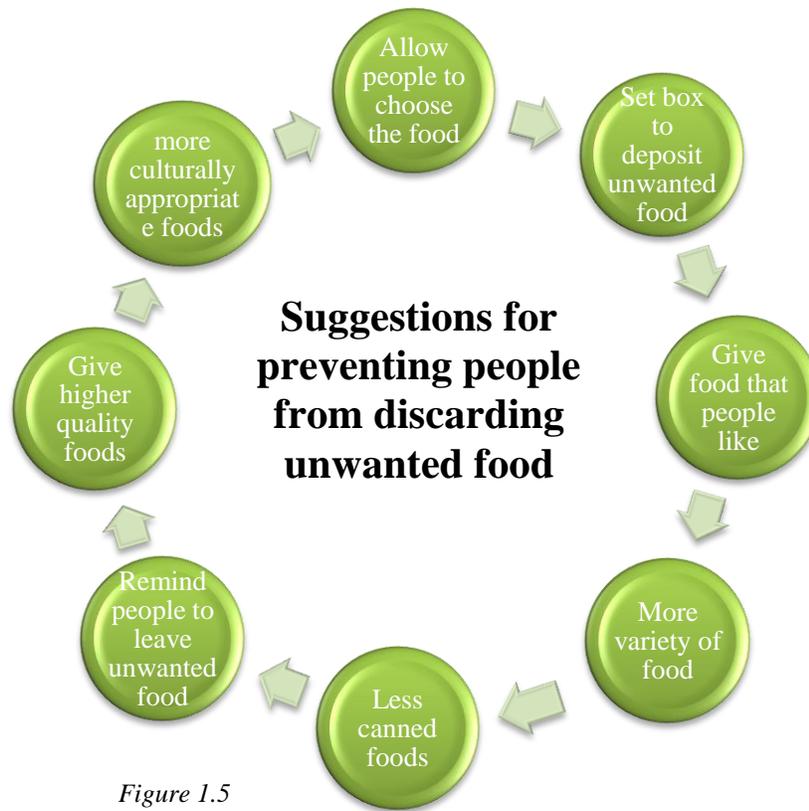


Figure 1.5

Analysis

The NFPN Pantry Assessment highlights the realities of area pantry participants’ struggles and strategies coping with food insecurity, as well as capturing a unique mix of their nutritional behavior, perceptions, and preferences of area pantries’ services.

Previous national research claims that food from pantries is no longer being used to meet temporary needs, but has instead become part of a household long term strategy to supplement monthly shortfalls in food. The assessment not only confirms this statement, but reveals a level of pantry use far exceeding that of the emergency food system’s original intent of clients receiving supplemental food once a month. Eighty percent of respondents use food pantry services on a monthly basis or more, with one third of all clients surveyed (33%) visiting pantries at the rate of once a week or more. Similarly, nearly half of all pantry participants (47%) visit multiple (2 or more) pantries per month in an attempt to obtain the nutrition they need. Even with all the extra activity of pantry clients going more frequently and visiting multiple sites the severity of food insecurity among NFPN pantry users is alarming. The survey shows that 42% of all pantry clients went one or more full days without eating in the past month, with nearly 18% of total respondents going 3 or more days without food.

Distance is often a barrier that pantry users must and do overcome to access emergency food. Although the majority of clients walk to the closest pantry (60%) within a mile of their home, a significant portion (37%) travel a mile or more. A combined 22% percent of pantry clients drive, are driven or take public transit to distribution sites, these numbers suggest that at minimum 1 in 7 (15%)²⁴ pantry clients are walking a mile or more to pantries. Another barrier for some pantry clients (30%) is lack of basic cooking

²⁴ This assumes that all 22% of car and public transit users come from further than one mile, making the probability of the estimate the lowest possible for walking a mile or more to reach a distribution site.

amenities. Although the majority (60%) responded that they have the sufficient amenities to store and cook food (like a fridge and stove).

One of the surprising finding shows that, when deciding which pantry to visit, clients seem to value friendly/courteous staff, pantry location and quality/freshness of produce over quantity of food distributed and hours of operation, although both the of the latter where noted as important factors too.

Despite the positive feedback and general grateful attitude of the clients, another surprising finding shows that many clients view distribution at NFPN pantries as unequal. Although some of this perception is admittedly due the fair practice of larger families receiving more food, there is a perception that pantry clients that arrive first receive more food than those who arrive later during distribution. This may be a matter of resources for pantries that strive to distribute an adequate amount of food to each participant, but may not have enough to meet the high volume of pantry users towards the end of their distribution time.

The final key result reiterates the importance of local outreach, revealing that the majority of pantry users heard about the emergency food program via “word of mouth”, specifically citing referrals through area social service organizations and schools. A main impetus for the creation of the NFPN is to make these connections that facilitate the “word of mouth” flow of information with area organizations so that anyone who needs emergency food knows where, when and how to access it.

Conclusion

Clearly, NFPN pantries have become a major part of many households’ long-term strategy to supplement monthly shortfalls in food. As politicians continue to attack safety-net programs like SNAP and WIC and pantries continue to close in the Northwest side of Chicago extra burden will be put on already strained emergency food providers. Despite all of the great efforts of NFPN member agencies to connect food insecure residents with nutrition, the survey results show that a significant amount of pantry participants are requesting emergency food assistance more frequently and attending more locations just to feed themselves and their families. At the same time many clients are going a full day (or days) every month without eating: an incomprehensible and unjustifiable situation for residents of a country with such an abundance of food. In addition to facing a variety of socio-economic²⁵ challenges every day, with pantries having a myriad of times, locations, different food allotment sizes, service areas and assistance programs many clients are forced to go on a real life scavenger-hunt just in order to find sufficient free food resources.

The GCFD and other food banks have mastered a system that is highly efficient for supplying a steady amount of inexpensive (sometimes free) food to agencies across the city. How have we, as community agencies, not been able to join together and come up with a better system for food distribution at the local level other than our current one. The current system seems woefully inadequate to meet our own participants’ needs, not to mention the needs of the larger community: If we are serious about ending hunger in our communities, then area agencies providing emergency food services must start collaborating on a deeper level by rethinking the way we do emergency food distribution and pooling our collective resources to start new pantry models that have the end goal of eradicating food insecurity in a given area. The first step forward is working together to create a strong, detailed proposal that promotes a new model of pantry, possibly one that would function at regular store hours with large quantities of food available,

²⁵ Poverty and unemployment for example.

similar to a WIC center²⁶. There could be one mega pantry in the area, or several smaller satellites working on the same model. Networks like the NFPN can act as catalysts that spark these types of ideas and build relationships to ensure success and buy-in for a project of this magnitude. To ensure that action is taken, however, network members must collectively approach, with proposal in hand, larger ally organizations, like GCFD and The Chicago Community Trust, that have access to funders with an interest in eradicating food insecurity.

²⁶ Or even partnering with a WIC center.

Appendix I

Pantry Assessment

1. How many people live with you? (living/staying with you)? (*Choose only ONE answer*)
 - a. Single without children
 - b. Single with child/children: Age of child/children: _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, _____.
 - c. With spouse/partner without children
 - d. With spouse/partner with child/children: Age of child/children, _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, _____.
 - e. Other: _____
2. Do you or any member of your household receive Food Stamps/SNAP (LINK)?
 - a. Yes b. No
 - 2a. If **YES**, approximately how much money do you get in SNAP (LINK)? _____
 - 2b. If **YES**, approximately how long do your food stamps cover what you need to eat?
 - a. One week b. Two weeks c. Three weeksd. All month
 - 2c. If **NO**, why not? (*circle all the apply*)
 - a. I have never applied for food stamps
 - b. I do not qualify because my income is too high
 - c. Because of my legal status
 - d. I don't know how to apply for food stamps
 - e. The requirements of the program are not worth the benefits
 - f. Other: please specify, _____
 - g. I do not need food stamps
3. How often do you come to this food pantry? (*circle only one*)
 - a. Once a week b. Twice a week c. Once per month
 - d. Twice per month e. Once every few months f. Once in the last 12 months
 - g. Twice in the last 12 months h. This is my first-time
4. How did you first learn about this food pantry? Please specify, _____
5. Approximately, how long does the food you receive here last you? (*circle only one*)
 - a. Three days or less b. Four daysc. Five Days d. Six days
 - e. One week f. Two weeks g. Three weeks h. All month
6. Is this pantry providing you with the foods you need to prepare nutritious meals?
 - a. Yes b. No
 - 6a. If **NO**, what are the kinds of foods you need? Please specify, _____
7. How far do you travel to this pantry? (*circle only one*)
 - a. One block b. Two blocks c. Three blocks
 - d. Half-mile e. One mile f. Two miles or more
 - 7a. How do you get to the pantry?
 - a. Walk b. Bike c. Drive d. Public transportation e. Family drive me f. Friend drives me
8. Where does most of your food come from? (*circle all the apply*)
 - a. I use my LINK card to buy food at the store b. I use my money to purchase food
 - c. I get free food from my family/friends e. I get free food from people on the sidewalk

- f. I get free food from church
- g. I get free food from a food pantry/kitchen
- h. I get food from garbage cans

9. In the last month, did you ever skip a meal because your household was short on food?*(circle only one)*
- a. No, Never
 - b. Yes, 1 or 2 days
 - c. Yes, on 3 to 6 days
 - d. Yes, on 7 or more days
10. How many **other** food pantries do you need to go to in order to get enough food for the week?
- a. None
 - b. One
 - c. Two
 - d. Three or more
- 10a. If you attend other food pantries, can you identify the place/places specify, _____
- 10b. If **NONE**, why don't you participate in them? *(circle all that apply)*
- a. Don't know hours or locations
 - b. Don't feel safe going to certain neighborhoods
 - c. Not open during the times I can go
 - d. Other pantries are too far
 - e. They don't provide enough food
 - f. Do not qualify because I do not live in the neighborhood
 - g. I get enough food from here
11. Are you or anyone in your household enrolled in the meals-on-wheels program?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
- 11a. Would you or anyone in your household benefit from a delivery from the food pantry?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
12. Do you lack access to the basic tools of cooking and preparing meals? (e.g. lack of access to refrigeration and a facility to warm or cook food)
- a. Yes
 - b. No
- 12a. If **YES**, would you rather get food that you do not need a place to cook or prepare?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
13. Factors you consider when choosing what pantry to pick-up free food? *(rank in order of preference with #1 highest preference, #9the least preference)*
- | | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| ___ Quality/freshness of produce | ___ Location of pantry |
| ___ Hours of Operation | ___ Atmosphere/ambiance |
| ___ Cleanliness | ___ Friendly/courteous staff |
| ___ Quantity of food distributed | ___ Culturally appropriate foods |
| ___ Do not consider factors because I just need food | |
14. Do your children receive free or reduced-price school breakfast and lunch?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. No children
15. During school breaks (e.g. winter break, holidays, summer) do you need more free food in order to feed your children?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. No children
16. Do you think everyone gets the same amount of food at this pantry?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
- 16a. If **NO**, why not? Please specify, _____
17. How would you improve the food distribution at this pantry? Please specify, _____
18. Do you have any suggestions on how we can prevent people from throwing-away food they receive here? Please specify, _____

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