

WHAT CLIENTS THINK OF MOBILE PANTRIES



In general, clients find the Mobile Pantries convenient and accessible, with few challenges. In focus groups, participants talked about being treated with kindness and respect, and expressed deep gratitude for the caring and dedicated staff and volunteers.

Virtually all survey respondents reported being treated well or very well when at a Mobile Food Pantry. Nearly all rated their overall Mobile Pantry experience as good or very good, and were very likely to recommend the Mobile Food Pantry to others. Clients appreciate and try to make the most of the food provided. They try to avoid wasting it and find multiple ways to use or share it if needed.

Clients shared a high degree of satisfaction with food offered at Mobile Pantries. For example, at least three-quarters of clients said they like and use all of the fruits and vegetables.

Clients shared a desire for a wider variety of produce and other food and were particularly eager to receive fresh fruits and vegetables. They are also eager to receive meats, other proteins and dairy.

When asked which foods most often went to waste:

50% Baked goods	18% Fruit
24% Vegetables	15% Dry goods
18% Dairy	3% Protein

This further illustrates clients' desire for healthy options, but also alludes to the fact that clients may not be able to get through a larger quantity of baked goods before they go bad.

THE FUTURE OF THE MOBILE PANTRY PROGRAM

More than anything, this study confirmed that Mobile Pantries improve access to fresh, nutritious food in a way many hunger-relief programs cannot. As a result, the study justified the program as an effective tool in the fight against hunger, one worth continuing for as long as the need remains.

Although the study results were positive overall, they also illuminated ways the program could improve. The results will influence how our team strategizes and conducts the program moving forward.

Clients would like to see a more consistent variety of food groups (produce, protein and dairy), seasonal products and a wider variety of fruits and vegetables.

About 6 in 10 clients found the amount and freshness of the produce satisfactory, showing there is room to grow in this area.

Clients who accessed educational programming and materials viewed them favorably. Many noted an interest in receiving food information that reflects products on the menu that day (e.g. providing recipes to go along with unfamiliar produce). Right now, such education is not frequently offered across our service area, but could be a future priority.



MOBILE PANTRY PROGRAM 2021 EVALUATION RESULTS

STUDY REFLECTS CLIENTS' PERSPECTIVES AND LIVED EXPERIENCES



Mobile Pantries are like farmers markets on wheels that offer a variety of fresh fruits, vegetables, dairy products, baked goods and other food to people in need at no charge. They are hosted by local organizations such as churches, schools and community centers.

Since its inception over two decades ago, the Mobile Pantry program has grown to serve 32 counties (7 urban and 25 rural).

EVALUATING THE PROGRAM

In the program's 23 years, the food bank has never conducted a comprehensive study of its strengths and weaknesses. Our team realized that, in order to inform future strategies, there was a need to learn who attends the Mobile Pantries and what their thoughts and experiences are. To answer these questions, we commissioned a study with support from the Feeding America National Organization.

ABOUT THE STUDY

The qualitative and quantitative data outlined in this report was gathered in early 2021 through an online survey of 644 clients from 31 distribution sites, and from 6 focus groups and 7 agency partner interviews. The data is representative of the entire territory the program serves.



STUDY RESULTS

WHO THE PROGRAM BENEFITS

84%
White

75%
Women

Even though the majority of respondents were women, this does not mean mostly women benefit from Mobile Pantries. Many women share the food they pick up with their male counterparts, children or grandchildren.

10%
Latino

7%
Did Not Identify

5%
African American

4%
American Indian

2%
Asian

2.1

Approximately 18% of clients reported they live alone. Among those who do not, 52% have children present. Where children were present, an average of 2.1 children live in the household.



A GLIMPSE AT OUR CLIENTS' REALITY



Roughly 7 in 10 client households live below the poverty line. However, it's common for some neighbors who live above it to still need food support.

SOURCE OF INCOME

More than 90% of client households have some source of monthly income across household members.

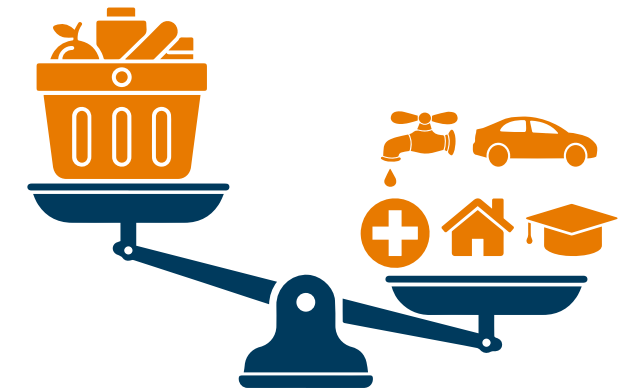
Social Security and/or a pension 36%

Full-time job 25%

Disability income 23%

Part-time job 14%

Unemployment Compensation 12%



FOOD VS. EXPENSES

More than half of clients have had one or more recent instance of choosing between paying for food or for living expenses:

- Transportation (55%)
- Utilities (51%)
- Medical (47%)
- Rent/Mortgage (40%)
- Education (24%)



2/3 have one or more preventable chronic disease associated with diet:

- 44% High blood pressure
- 35% High cholesterol
- 22% Diabetes

HOW CLIENTS COPE WITH FOOD INSECURITY



On average, households received food from a pantry or grocery program in 6.2 of the past 12 months.



90% are interested in eating more fruits and vegetables
68% would consume more if items cost less
80% credit the Mobile Food Pantry with helping them eat more fruits and vegetables.

