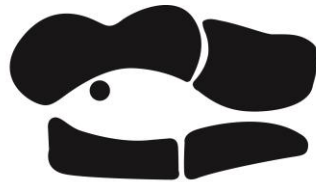


# 2017 Client Survey Findings

Prepared for



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**LOAVES & FISHES**

Groceries for Neighbors in Need

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# Executive Summary

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This report summarizes the findings from the Loaves & Fishes' Client Survey conducted from October 1 to October 30, 2017. The survey was developed with input from the Chief Development Officer for Loaves & Fishes. It was intended to collect data from a convenience sample of respondents to better understand the demographic profile, needs and realities, and thoughts about the services they receive at Loaves & Fishes food pantries in the Charlotte area. Respondents were asked to complete the survey voluntarily and received no incentives for their participation. A total of 845 individual heads of household adults responded to the survey, however it should be noted that not all questions were answered by the entire sample.

## Key Findings

- The majority of those who responded to the survey was female; between the ages of 45 and 64; Black or African-American; at least a high school graduate; and own or rent their home.
- Food access is an issue such that they have often or sometimes substituted cheaper foods or cannot afford a balanced diet (n=746, 94%), worried about food running out (n=744, 93.2%), had food run out (n=708, 88.9%), and did not eat due to lack of money to buy food (n=568, 69.7%).
- When respondents run out of food, their primary way of getting food is to ask family members (n=345, 50.2%), while about one in five indicated that they do not eat (n=143, 20.8%). or they ask friends for food (n=141, 20.5%).
- Respondents indicated that because they received groceries provided by Loaves & Fishes, they will use the money saved to pay rent (n=306, 52.7%), pay electric and/or gas bills (n=156, 26.9%), and pay for medicine (n=92, 15.8%). Other expenses they would pay for include transportation needs, expenses for them and their children (n=27, 4.6%). In addition, over two-fifths (n=364, 46.0%) currently receive food stamps, SNAP, or EBT benefits.
- An overwhelming majority of respondents (n=707, 89.4%) reported that Loaves & Fishes' pantry hours and locations are convenient (n=271, 34.3%) or very convenient (n=436, 55.1%). Respondents also indicated that getting a referral to Loaves & Fishes was easy (n=300, 38.4%) or very easy (n=357, 45.7%).

## Overview

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This report provides findings from the 2017 Loaves & Fishes Client Survey. The Client Survey was designed to gather data from a convenience sample of respondents to understand better respondents' demographics, needs and realities, and thoughts about the services they receive at Loaves & Fishes food pantries in the Charlotte area. A total of 845 client surveys were conducted across 19 pantries in October 2017. Data gathered via these surveys will provide greater insights to Loaves & Fishes staff and volunteers regarding how to better serve their communities to ensure that Loaves & Fishes is doing all that it can to meet the grocery needs of those at risk of hunger.

## Methodology

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The Client Survey was developed with input from the Chief Development Officer for Loaves & Fishes. The Client Survey relied upon a convenience sample to gather information from respondents and was conducted across the various pantries in October 2017. Respondents were asked to participate in the survey voluntarily and received no incentive for doing so. A total of 845 individual heads of household adults responded to the survey.

Given that Charlotte Loaves & Fishes expects to serve 75,000 persons (25,000 households) by the end of the year, to ensure a confidence level of 95% with a margin of error of  $\pm 3.46$ , a sample size calculator indicated that 777 unique households (or 3.1% of the population served) would need to be surveyed. This threshold was met, and thus survey findings should be close if the entire population served by the Charlotte pantries responded to the survey.

## Findings

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### Respondent Demographics

As shown in Table 1a “Heads of Household: Respondent Demographics I,” over a quarter of respondents (n=220, 27.7%) were male and almost three-fourths (n=575, 72.3%) were female. Nearly a quarter (n=192, 24.4%) are not working, but looking for work whereas over a quarter (n=204, 26.0%) are disabled. Almost two-fifths of respondents (n= 320, 39.8%) were in the 25-44 years old range, while over two-fifths (n=351, 43.6%) were between 45 and 64 years of age. Just under three-fourths of respondents (n=588, 73.0%) were Black or African-American, while 12.3% were White, and 11.8% were Hispanic. Over four-fifths of respondents (n=651, 81.2%) have a high school education or higher, while less than a fifth of respondents (n=151, 18.8%) have less than a high school education.

**Table 1a.  
Heads of Household: Respondent Demographics I**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Male	220	27.7
Female	575	72.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>795</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Employment Status</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Employed full-time	122	15.5
Employed part-time	82	10.4
Employed part-time, looking for full-time work	29	3.7
Working a temporary job	44	5.6
Not working, looking for work	192	24.4
Not working and not looking for work	43	5.5
Disabled	204	26.0
Retired	70	8.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>786</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Age Group</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
18-24	32	4.0
25-44	320	39.8
45-64	351	43.6
65 or older	102	12.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>805</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Black / African-American	588	73.0
Latino / Hispanic	95	11.8
White / Caucasian	99	12.3
Native American / Indian American	7	0.9
Asian / Pacific Islander	3	0.4
Other	13	1.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>805</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Educational Attainment</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Less than high school	151	18.8
High school graduate	286	35.7
Some college	244	30.4
College graduate or higher	121	15.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>802</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 1b “Heads of Household: Respondent Demographics II,” shows that the majority of respondents (n=565, 72.0%) currently own or rent their home or apartment. Less than half of the respondents (n=364, 46.0%) indicated that they currently receive food assistance, such as Food Stamps, SNAP, or EBT benefits.

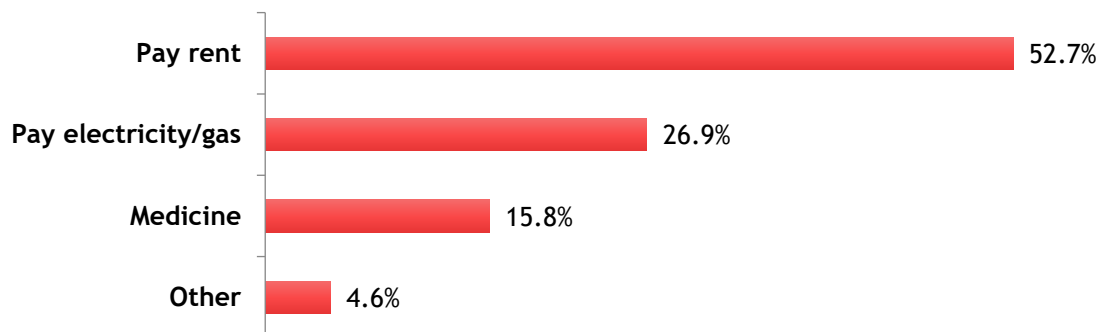
**Table 1b.**  
**Heads of Household: Respondent Demographics II**

Living Situation	n	%
Own or rent	565	72.0
Living with friends or relatives	114	14.5
Homeless	76	9.7
Friends or relatives living with respondent	30	3.8
Total	785	100.0
Currently Receiving Food Stamps, SNAP or EBT benefits	n	%
Yes	364	46.0
No	428	54.0
Total	792	100.0

### Impact of Pantries

As recipients of groceries at Loaves & Fishes, respondents were asked to describe what they would do with the money saved. The majority of respondents (n=306, 52.7%) indicated that they will use the money saved to pay rent, while over a quarter will pay electric and/or gas bills (n=156, 26.9%) and 15.8% will pay for medicine (n=92). The remaining respondents (n=27, 4.6%) will pay for other things, which include such things as transportation needs (e.g., car payment, gas, car maintenance), to support their children (e.g., shoes for school and haircuts), and for personal expenses (e.g., purchase hygiene items, laundry, etc.) to name a few.

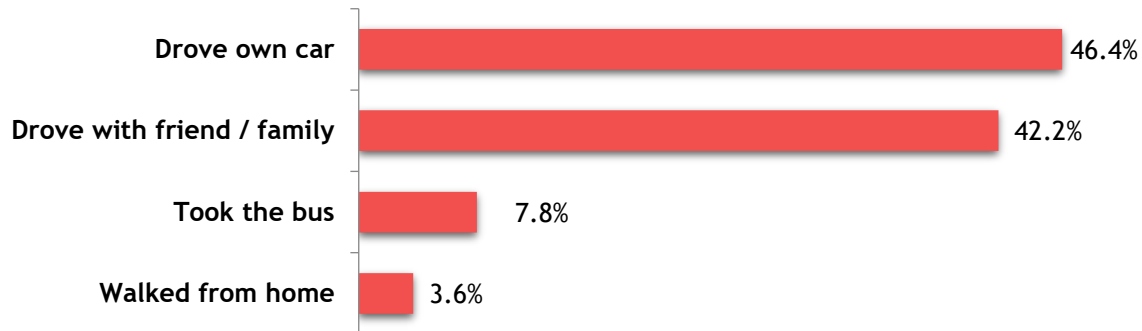
**Figure 1: Because you received groceries today at Loaves & Fishes, which of the following describes you? (I will use the money saved to...)**



## Access to Food

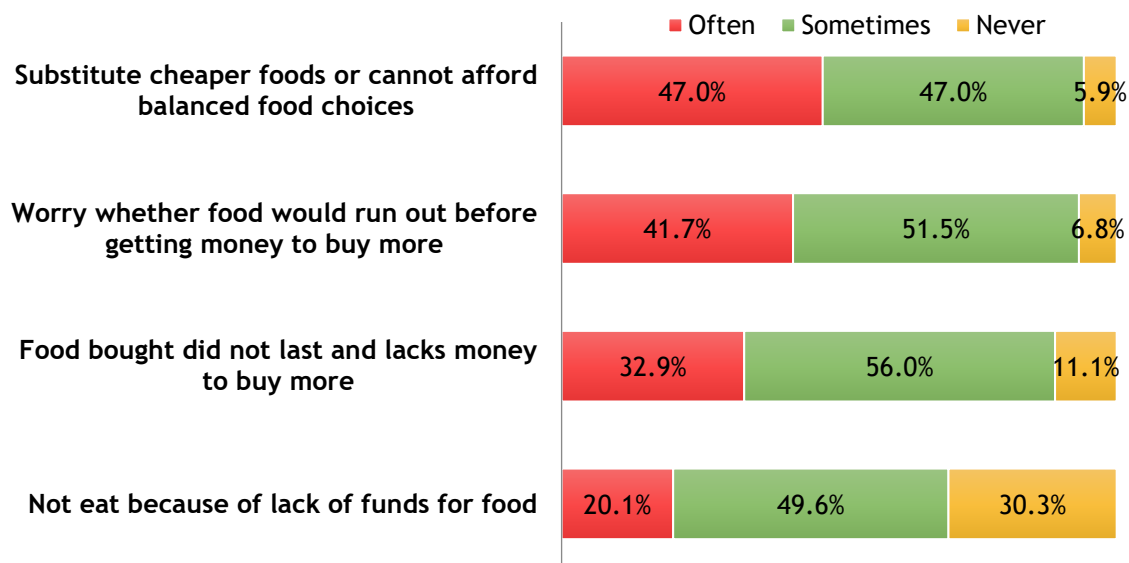
At the time of completing the survey, respondents were asked the following question, “How did you get to the pantry today?” Of those who provided a response to this question (n=799), nearly half (n=371, 46.4%) reported that they drove their own car, while over two-fifths (n=337, 42.2%) said that they drove with a friend or family member. The remaining respondents indicated that they took the bus (n=62, 7.8%) or walked from home (n=29, 3.6%).

**Figure 2: Mode of Transportation to Loaves & Fishes**



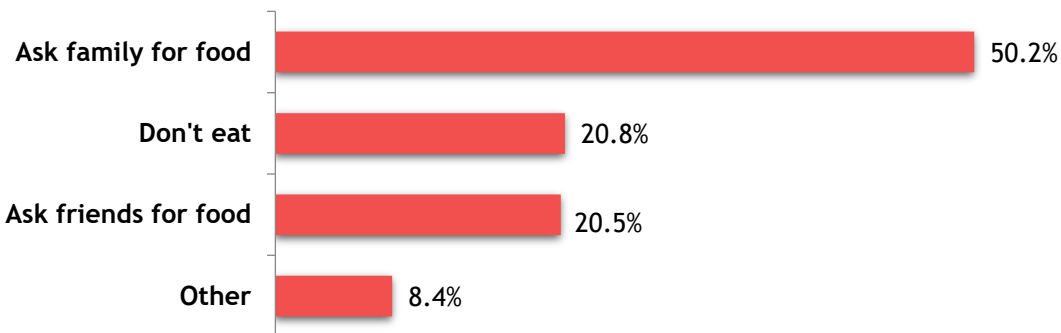
The figure below shows how frequent in the past year respondents had issues with accessing food. For a large majority of respondents, access is an issue such that they have often or sometimes substituted cheaper foods or cannot afford a balance diet (n=746, 94.0%), have worried about food running out (n=744, 93.2%), had food run out and lacked money to buy more (n=708, 88.9%), and did not eat due to lack of funds (n=568, 69.7%).

**Figure 3: Food Insecurity Issues  
(In the last 12 months, respondent...)**



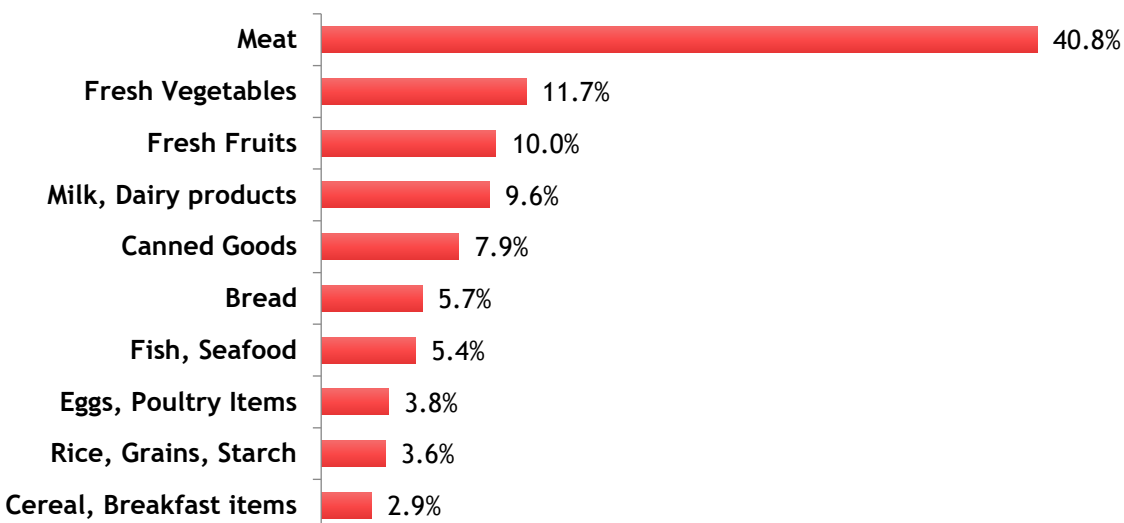
When respondents run out of food and cannot visit Loaves & Fishes, one in two (n=345, 50.2%) indicated that they ask family for food, and one in five (n=143, 20.8%) simply do not eat. About one-fifth (n=141, 20.5%) stated that they ask friends for food, while 8.4% find other means to get by, such as borrowing money, seeking assistance from their church, or selling things like jewelry. Other common responses were to get by the best they can, eat food available at work, or to make sure their kids eat.

**Figure 4: When respondents run out of food and unable to visit Loaves & Fishes, they...**



When asked what foods they would like to have available at Loaves & Fishes, 522 respondents took the opportunity to provide their preference which allowed for duplicate responses. Figure 5 below represents the top 10 items mentioned by respondents, for which two in five would like to see more meat (n=213, 40.8%), followed by fresh vegetables (n=61, 11.7%), fresh fruits (n=52, 10.0%), milk or dairy products (n=50, 9.6%), canned goods (n=41, 7.9%), bread (n=30, 5.7%), fish/seafood (n=28, 5.4%), eggs/poultry items (n=20, 3.8%), rice/grains/starch (n=19, 3.6%), and cereal or breakfast items (n=15, 2.9%).

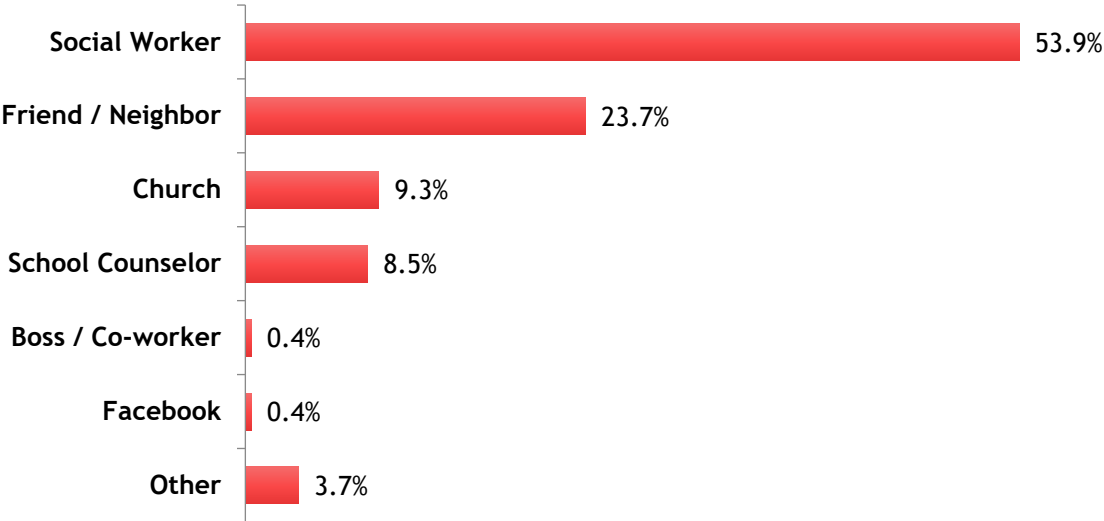
**Figure 5: Foods that respondents would like to have available at Loaves & Fishes**





Respondents were asked how they heard about Loaves & Fishes. Over half of those who responded indicated that they first heard about Loaves & Fishes from their social worker (n=376, 53.9%), followed by friend or neighbor (n=165, 23.7%), their church (n=65, 9.3%), and school counselor (n=59, 8.5%). A small minority have heard about Loaves & Fishes through word of mouth at their place of employment (n=3, 0.4%) or through Facebook (n=3, 0.4%). The remaining respondents (n=26, 3.7%) provided other sources.

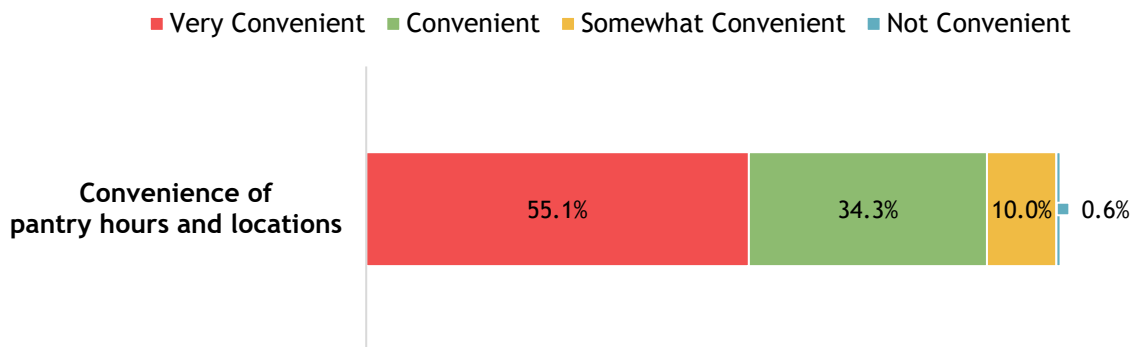
Figure 6: How did you hear about Loaves & Fishes?



## Service Quality

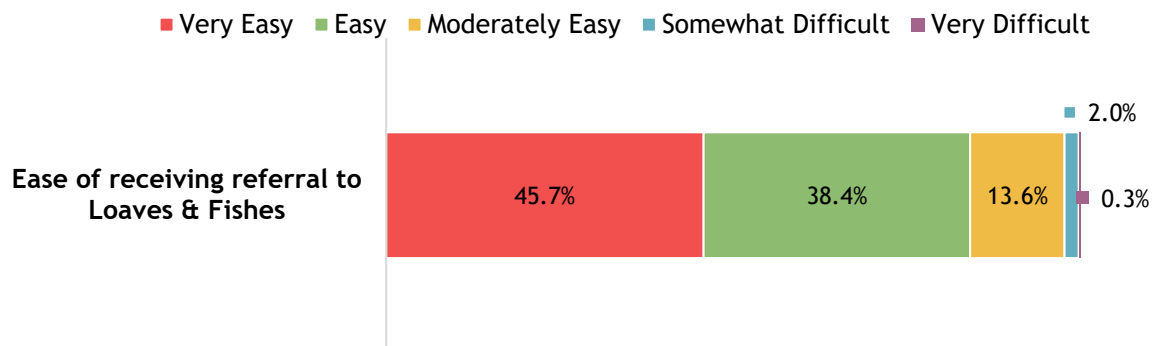
This year's survey included two new questions to determine respondents' perception on how convenient are the hours and locations of the food pantries as well as the level of ease of receiving a referral to Loaves & Fishes. As Figure 7 below indicates, the majority of respondents (n=707, 89.4%) find the pantry hours and locations to be convenient, with over half (n=436, 55.1%) stating it was very convenient. A small number of respondents found the hours and locations of the food pantries to be somewhat convenient (n=79, 10.0%) or not convenient at all (n=5, 0.6%).

**Figure 7: Do you find Loaves & Fishes' pantry hours and locations convenient?**



In regards to the ease of receiving a referral to Loaves & Fishes, about four in five of the respondents reported that the referral process to be easy (n=300, 38.4%) or very easy (n=357, 45.7%), while 13.6% (n=106) said it was moderately easy. The remaining 2.3% experienced the referral process to be somewhat (n=16, 2.0%) or very difficult (n=2, 0.3%).

**Figure 8: How was your ease of receiving a referral to Loaves & Fishes?**



Respondents were provided the opportunity to comment on what Loaves & Fishes mean to them. Many of the answers provided were identical and respondents took this opportunity to share their feelings of gratitude to Loaves & Fishes. Below are some examples of the comments provided by respondents.

**Table 4.  
What does Loaves & Fishes mean to you? (Selected Responses)**

Verbatim Responses
• Food for my kids to eat today.
• Means the difference between going to bed hungry or full.
• I will eat this week.
• A lot because I know that my kids will not go to bed with an empty stomach. Thanks.
• As a single mother being able to feed my family is like winning a million dollars. I have children that look up to me and this is important.
• A place where people can get help and understanding when needed.
• A way to feed my kids when I can't.
• Everything!
• It means LOVE! I'm greeted with smiles and never judged.
• Eating tonight and tomorrow!! The Best. When you have nothing Loaves & Fishes comes through in a Big Way.....Thank You!!

## Summary

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The majority of those who responded to the survey was female; is between the ages of 45 and 64; Black or African-American, is at least a high school graduate; and own or rent their home. In addition, over two-fifths (n=364, 46.0%) currently receive food stamps, SNAP, or EBT benefits.

Survey results suggest that respondents who receive groceries from Loaves & Fishes are faced with food access issues. The majority of respondents reported that:

- They have often or sometimes substituted cheaper foods or cannot afford balanced food choices (n=746, 94.0%), worried about food running out (n=744, 93.2%), had food run out and lacked money to buy more (n=708, 88.9%), and did not eat due to lack of money (n=568, 69.7%).
- When respondents run out of food, one in two (n=345, 50.2%) indicated that they ask family for food, while about one in five said that they do not eat (n=143, 20.8%) or ask friends for food (n=141, 20.5%).

When asked about what foods they would like to have available at the food pantries, the most cited item was meat (n=213, 40.8%), followed by fresh vegetables (n=61, 11.7%) and fresh fruits (n=52, 10.0%).

The benefits that clients receive through the services provided by Loaves & Fishes are evident in the survey findings. Respondents indicated that because they received groceries, they will use the money that they saved to pay rent (n=306, 52.7%), pay electric and/or gas bills (n=156, 26.9%), pay for medicine (n=92, 15.8%), and to pay for other expenses including transportation needs and expenses for themselves and/or for their children (n=27, 4.6%). Finally, respondents reported positive experience with Loaves & Fishes, particularly with its pantry hours and locations and the referral process. An overwhelming majority of respondents (n=707, 89.4%) reported that Loaves & Fishes' pantry hours and locations are convenient (n=271, 34.3%) or very convenient (n=436, 55.1%). In regards to getting a referral, respondents indicated that it was easy (n=300, 38.4%) or very easy (n=357, 45.7%).

# Appendix: Survey Questionnaire

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**For each question, please fill in the circle next to the answer that best fits you.**

1. What is the work status of the primary wage earner, head(s) of household or breadwinner:  
 Working full-time  Not working, but looking for work  
 Working part-time  Not working and not looking for work  
 Working part-time but looking for full-time  Disabled and cannot work  
 Working a temporary job  Retired, on a fixed income
2. What is your age group?  
 18-24  25-44  45-64  65 and above
3. What is your race/ethnicity?  
 Black/African-American  Native American or Indian American  Latino/Hispanic  
 Asian/Pacific Island  White/Caucasian  Other \_\_\_\_\_
4. Are you  Male or  Female
5. What is the highest level of education you have completed?  
 Less than high school  Some college  
 High school graduate  College graduate or higher
6. What is your living situation?  
 I own or rent a house or apartment  I live with friends or relatives (other than my children or spouse)  
 I am homeless  Friends or relatives (other than my children or spouse) live with me
7. Because you received groceries today at Loaves & Fishes, which of the following describes you? (Choose One)  
 I will use the money saved to help pay my rent.  
 I will use the money saved to help pay my electric or gas bill.  
 I will use the money saved to help pay for medicine.  
 Other (Please Specify) \_\_\_\_\_
8. How did you get to the pantry today?  
 Drove my own car  Took the bus  Drove with a friend or family member  Walked from my home
9. In the last 12 months, did you worry about whether your food would run out before you got money to buy more?  
 Often  Sometimes  Never
10. In the last 12 months, did you substitute cheaper foods or were not able to afford balanced food choices?  
 Often  Sometimes  Never
11. In the last 12 months, did the food you buy not last and you didn't have money to get more?  
 Often  Sometimes  Never
12. In the last 12 months, were you ever hungry but didn't eat because there wasn't enough money for food?  
 Often  Sometimes  Never
13. What do you do when you run out of food and cannot visit Loaves & Fishes? (Please select all that apply.)  
 I don't eat  I ask family for food  I ask friends for food  Other \_\_\_\_\_
14. Do you currently receive Food Stamps, SNAP or EBT benefits?  
 Yes  No
15. What foods would you like to have available at Loaves & Fishes? \_\_\_\_\_

16. How did you hear about Loaves & Fishes?  
O Friend/Neighbor                      O Social Worker                      O My boss or co-worker  
O School Counselor                      O Facebook                      O Other \_\_\_\_\_  
O Church
17. Do you find Loaves & Fishes' pantry hours and locations convenient?  
O Very Convenient                      O Convenient                      O Somewhat Convenient                      O Not Convenient
18. How was your ease of receiving a referral to Loaves & Fishes?  
O Very Easy                      O Easy                      O Moderately Easy                      O Somewhat Difficult                      O Very Difficult
19. What does Loaves & Fishes mean to you? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_