

# 2016 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 31, 2016. The survey was developed with input from Loaves & Fishes' Chief Development Officer, 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 respond to the survey voluntarily and received no incentives for their participation. A total of 809 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; 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.
- Food access is an issue such that they have often or sometimes worried about food running out (n=734, 93.3%), had food run out (n=724, 91.5%), ate less due to lack of food/money to buy food (n=671, 84.9%), and did not eat due to lack of food/money to buy food (n=564, 71.6%).
- When respondents run out of food, their primary way of getting food is to ask family members (n=302, 42.4%), while about one in five indicated that they do not eat (n=147, 20.6%). or they ask friends for food (n=140, 19.6%).
- Respondents indicated that because they received groceries provided by Loaves & Fishes, they will use the money saved to pay rent (n=294, 53.6%), pay electric and/or gas bills (n=155, 28.3%), and pay for medicine (n=77, 14.1%). Other expenses they would pay for include transportation needs, daycare expenses and to support their children (n=22, 4.0%). In addition, nearly one in two (n=398, 51.1%) currently receive food stamps, SNAP, or EBT benefits.
- An overwhelming majority of respondents (n=675, 86.9%) reported that they shop groceries at grocery stores, but a small number of respondents also reported that they only shop at convenience stores (n=20, 2.6%) or at a Farmer's market (n=8, 1.0%). Respondents also indicated that they would like to have the following healthy foods available at Loaves & Fishes: fresh produce (n=360, 73.8%), fresh meats (n=100,

20.5%), fresh fish (n=100, 20.5%), chicken (n=17, 3.4%), and fresh dairy or milk (n=21, 4.3%).

## Overview

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This report provides findings from the 2016 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 808 client surveys were conducted across 16 pantries in October 2016. 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 Loaves & Fishes' Chief Development Officer. The Client Survey relied upon a convenience sample to gather information from respondents and was conducted across the various pantries in October 2016. Respondents were asked to participate in the survey voluntarily and received no incentive for doing so. A total of 808 individual heads of household adults responded to the survey.

Given that Charlotte Loaves & Fishes expects to serve 70,000 persons (24,000 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 776 unique households (or 3.2% 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," nearly a quarter of respondents (n=193, 24.7%) were male and three-fourths (n=589, 75.3%) were female. Nearly a quarter (n=191, 24.5%) are not working, but looking for work whereas over a quarter (n=222, 28.5%) are disabled. Over two-fifths of respondents (n= 327, 41.3%) were in the 25-44 years old range, while another two-fifths (n=339, 42.9%) were between 45 and 64 years of age. Nearly two-thirds of respondents (n=526, 66.2%) were Black or African-American, while 17.7% were White, and 12.6% were Hispanic. Over three-fourths of respondents (n=613, 78.9%) have a high school education or higher, while less than a quarter of respondents (n=163, 21.0%) have less than a high school education.

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

| <b>Gender</b>                                  | <b>n</b>   | <b>%</b>     |
|--|------------|--------------|
| Male   | 193        | 24.7         |
| Female   | 589        | 75.3         |
| <b>Total</b>                                   | <b>782</b> | <b>100.0</b> |
| <b>Employment Status</b>                       | <b>n</b>   | <b>%</b>     |
| Employed full-time                             | 116        | 14.9         |
| Employed part-time                             | 78         | 10.0         |
| Employed part-time, looking for full-time work | 36         | 4.6          |
| Working a temporary job                        | 26         | 3.3          |
| Not working, looking for work                  | 191        | 24.5         |
| Not working and not looking for work           | 41         | 5.3          |
| Disabled                                       | 222        | 28.5         |
| Retired  | 70         | 9.0          |
| <b>Total</b>                                   | <b>780</b> | <b>100.0</b> |
| <b>Age Group</b>                               | <b>n</b>   | <b>%</b>     |
| 18-24  | 39         | 4.9          |
| 25-44  | 327        | 41.3         |
| 45-64  | 339        | 42.9         |
| 65 or older                                    | 86         | 10.9         |
| <b>Total</b>                                   | <b>791</b> | <b>100.0</b> |
| <b>Race/Ethnicity</b>                          | <b>n</b>   | <b>%</b>     |
| Black / African-American                       | 526        | 66.2         |
| Latino / Hispanic                              | 100        | 12.6         |
| White / Caucasian                              | 141        | 17.7         |
| Native American / Indian American              | 9          | 1.1          |
| Asian / Pacific Islander                       | 5          | 0.6          |
| Other  | 14         | 1.8          |
| <b>Total</b>                                   | <b>795</b> | <b>100.0</b> |
| <b>Educational Attainment</b>                  | <b>n</b>   | <b>%</b>     |
| Less than high school                          | 163        | 21.0         |
| High school graduate                           | 253        | 32.6         |
| Some college                                   | 244        | 31.4         |
| College graduate or higher                     | 116        | 14.9         |
| <b>Total</b>                                   | <b>776</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

Table 1b “Heads of Household: Respondent Demographics II,” shows that the majority of respondents (n=584, 75.3%) currently own or rent their home or apartment. Under a fifth (n=119, 15.6%) reported that they are raising their grandchildren. Over half of the respondents (n=398, 51.1%) indicated that they currently receive food assistance, such as Food Stamps, SNAP, or EBT benefits.

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

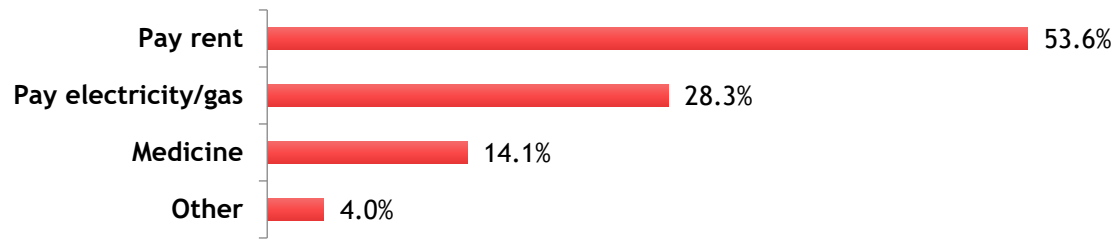
| <b>Living Situation<sup>1</sup></b>                          | <b>n</b>   | <b>%</b>     |
|--|------------|--------------|
| Own or rent  | 584        | 75.3         |
| Living with friends or relatives                             | 115        | 14.8         |
| Homeless   | 53         | 6.8          |
| Friends or relatives living with respondent                  | 24         | 3.1          |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>776</b> | <b>100.0</b> |
| <b>Raising Grandchildren</b>                                 | <b>n</b>   | <b>%</b>     |
| Yes  | 119        | 15.6         |
| No   | 645        | 84.4         |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>764</b> | <b>100.0</b> |
| <b>Currently Receiving Food Stamps, SNAP or EBT benefits</b> | <b>n</b>   | <b>%</b>     |
| Yes  | 398        | 51.1         |
| No   | 381        | 48.9         |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>779</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

### 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=294, 53.6%) indicated that they will use the money saved to pay rent, while over a quarter will pay electric and/or gas bills (n=155, 28.3%) and 14.1% will pay for medicine (n=77). The remaining respondents (n=22, 4.0%) will pay for other things, which include such things as transportation needs, daycare expenses, to support their children, and for college tuition to name a few.

<sup>1</sup> Two respondents provided more than one response and were omitted from this total.

Figure 1: What will respondent use the money saved

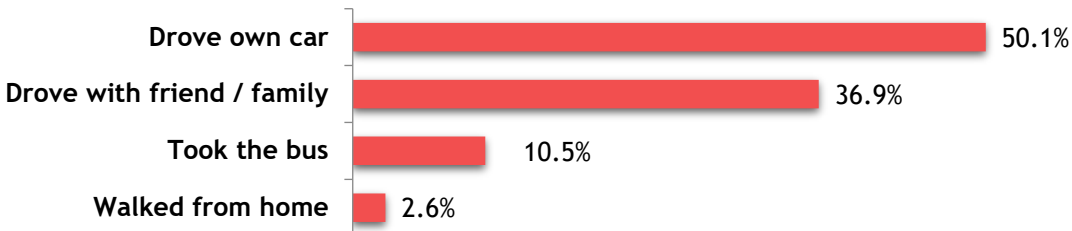




## Access to Food

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=783), about half (n=392, 50.1 %) reported that they drove their own car, while over a third (n=289, 36.9%) said that they drove with a friend or family member. The remaining respondents indicated that they took the bus (n=82, 10.5%) or walked from home (n=20, 2.6%).

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



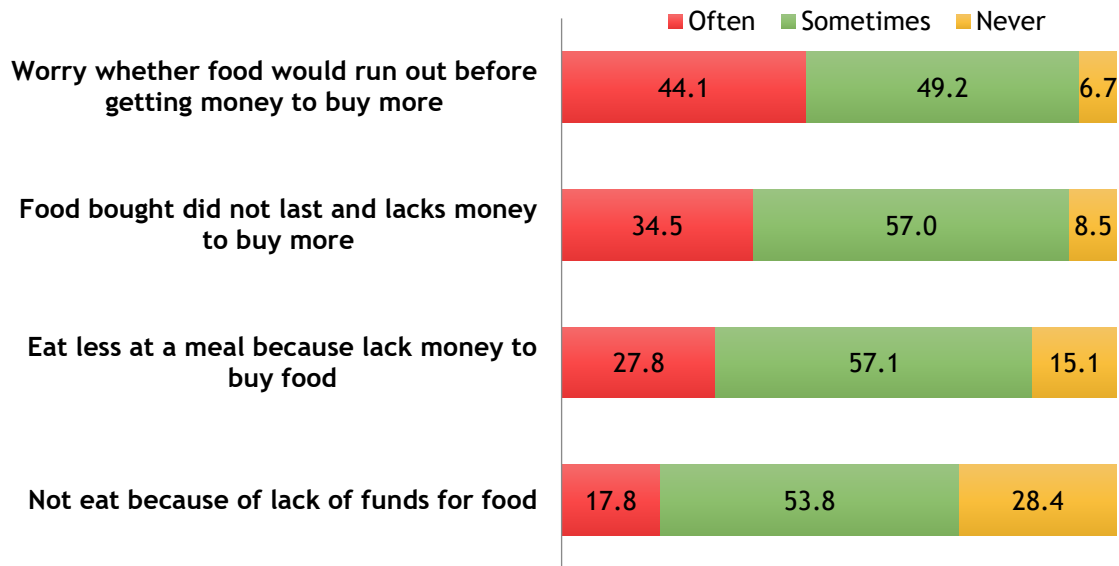
Respondents were asked where they usually shop for groceries and respondents could select more than one answer choice. A total of 777 responses were provided, and of those the grocery store was cited the most at 86.9%. Those who only shop at convenience stores were 2.6% while those who only shop at Farmer’s Market was about 1%. Those whose responses were categorized as “Other” were at 3% and includes responses such as the Dollar Tree, Sam’s Club, and other food banks. Table 2 below displays the remaining combination of responses cited.

**Table 2.  
Where Respondents Shop for Groceries**

| Places for Shopping Groceries         | n          | %           |
|---------------------------------------|------------|-------------|
| Grocery Store                         | 675        | 86.9%       |
| Convenience Store                     | 20         | 2.6%        |
| Farmer's Market                       | 8          | 1.0%        |
| Other                                 | 23         | 3.0%        |
| Both Grocery and Convenience Store    | 13         | 1.7%        |
| Grocery and Farmer's Market           | 12         | 1.5%        |
| Grocery and Other                     | 24         | 3.1%        |
| Convenience Store and Farmer's Market | 0          | 0.0%        |
| Convenience Store and Other           | 2          | 0.3%        |
| Farmer's Market and Other             | 0          | 0.0%        |
| <b>Total</b>                          | <b>777</b> | <b>100%</b> |

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 worried often or sometimes about food running out (n=734, 93.3%), had food run out (n=724, 91.5%), ate less due to lack of food/money to buy food (n=671, 84.9%), and didn't eat due to lack of food/money to buy food (n=564, 71.6%).

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



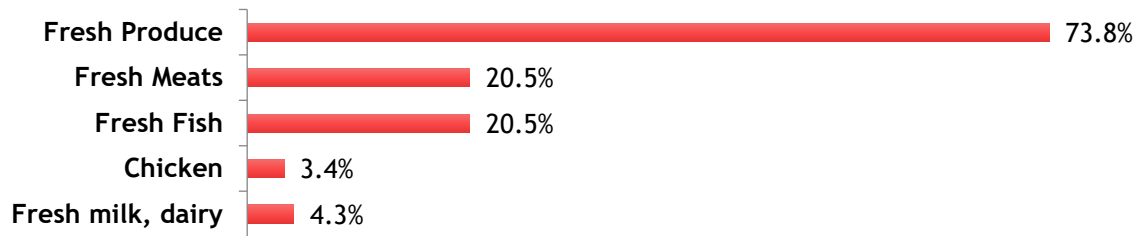
When respondents run out of food and cannot visit Loaves & Fishes, over two-fifths (n=302, 42.4%) indicated that they ask family for food, and one-fifth (n=147, 20.6%) simply do not eat. Nearly one-fifth stated that they ask friends for food, while 11.8% find other means to get by, such as finding other pantries, getting food from the soup kitchen, or seeking assistance from their church. Other common responses were to eat less, make-do, or to make sure their kids eat. Table 3 below displays the remaining combination of responses cited.

**Table 3.**  
**When respondents run out of food, they...**

| <b>Other means when unable to visit Loaves &amp; Fishes</b> | <b>n</b>   | <b>%</b>    |
|---|------------|-------------|
| Don't eat   | 147        | 20.6%       |
| Ask family for food   | 302        | 42.4%       |
| Ask friends for food  | 140        | 19.6%       |
| Other   | 84         | 11.8%       |
| Don't eat and ask family for food                           | 11         | 1.5%        |
| Don't eat and ask friends for food                          | 3          | 0.4%        |
| Don't eat and Other   | 8          | 1.1%        |
| Ask family for food and other                               | 5          | 0.7%        |
| Ask friends for food and other                              | 3          | 0.4%        |
| Don't eat and ask family and friends for food               | 10         | 1.4         |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>713</b> | <b>100%</b> |

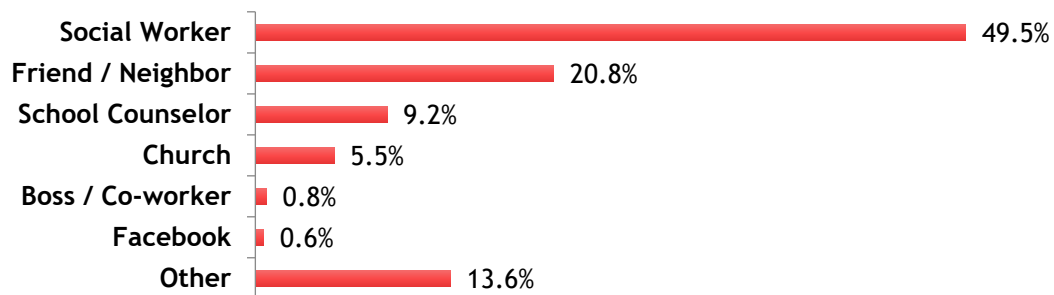
When asked what healthy foods they would like to have available at Loaves & Fishes, 488 respondents took the opportunity to provide their preference which allowed for duplicate responses. Of those who responded, just under three-fourths said fresh produce (n=360, 73.8%), followed by fresh meats (n=100, 20.5%), fresh fish (n=100, 20.5%), chicken (n=17, 3.4%), and fresh dairy, milk (n=21, 4.3%).

**Figure 4: Healthy foods that respondents would like to have available at Loaves & Fishes**



Respondents were asked how they heard about Loaves & Fishes. Nearly half of those who responded indicated that they first heard about Loaves & Fishes from their social worker (n=393, 49.5%), followed by friend or neighbor (n=165, 20.8%), and school counselor (n=73, 9.2%). About 13.6% respondents (n=108) provided other sources and common responses include Goodwill, Urban Ministry, and Latin Coalition.

**Figure 5: How did you hear about Loaves & Fishes?**



Respondents were provided the opportunity to comment on what Loaves & Fishes mean to them. A total of 699 respondents took the opportunity to do so. Overall, responses were generally positive with the most common sentiment are the feelings of gratitude that respondents have towards the services they received. Below are some of the exceptional responses provided by respondents.

**Table 4.  
Selected Responses on Respondents' Feelings Towards Loaves & Fishes**

| Verbatim Responses  |
|---|
| A lot   |
| Hope  |
| I can eat   |
| A blessing  |
| Everything  |
| I am grateful to receive the help and it shows me the humanity of the volunteers and workers. I thank you all.  |
| Another chance Another day  |
| It means people actually care and are willing to help   |
| I can feed my kids and not worry. God bless you all and thank you very much.  |
| It means that there are people that care whether I eat or not and I thank God for you people everyday   |
| Means that even when my life is scary and tough, being able to feed my grand daughter is not a fear or worry.   |
| That we can focus on take care of other bills like power-water-gas & we thank you   |
| World Class Service Organization-It has meant a tremendous amount of relief for our family than corporate downsize & transition                                 |
| I appreciate the kind volunteers that help me to bridge the food gaps & keep my pantry from being completely bare. L&F helps to keep me well fed and worry free |
| it's a lifesaver, I am so thankful!   |
| A great staff that offer not only food but fellowship as well   |
| It gives my family and I hope for a meal tomorrow. They are truly a blessing and a family that eats together provides together will always be together.         |
| Loaves & Fishes is a blessing from God to my family and a hand in difficult situations  |
| Hope- I'm most grateful for this community outreach program in times of need. The difference between having food or not- preserves ones dignity                 |
| A helping hand when needed, relief, helpful, hopeful (knowing they will help you)   |
| Less stress and I get to eat. *not just the kids and husband*   |
| A place of hope for people like me who need help  |
| It is helping me find time to get work without stressing if my kids will eat. Thank you!  |
| Peace of mind in times of need. Great selection, very friendly, & warms smiles☺ thank you   |
| It means that my family can eat without worry. I am so very grateful for loaves and fishes and the men and women that make this place so comforting.            |
| Another opportunity for me and my child to have food rather than being hungry, barely eating  |
| This is my first time here but it means a lot because it's putting food in my families house  |
| Helps me provide healthy meals for me and my granddaughter  |
| When I see my 3 boys enjoying a meal it brings pure happiness & warmth to my heart. With that said loaves & fishes means the world to me at this hard time.     |

## 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, nearly one in two (n=398, 51.1%) 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 worried about food running out (n=734, 93.3%), had food run out (n=724, 91.5%), ate less due to lack of food/money to buy food (n=671, 84.9%), and did not eat due to lack of food/money to buy food (n=564, 71.6%).
- When respondents run out of food, about two in five (n=302, 42.4%) indicated that they ask family for food, while about one in five said that they do not eat (n=147, 20.6%) or ask friends for food (n=140, 19.6%).

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=294, 53.6%), pay electric and/or gas bills (n=155, 28.3%), pay for medicine (n=77, 14.1%), and to pay for other expenses including transportation needs, daycare expenses, and to support the needs of their children (n=22, 4.0%). Finally, about three in four of respondents (n=360, 73.8%) reported that they would like fresh produce to be available at Loaves & Fishes, followed by fresh meats (n=100, 20.5%), fresh fish (n=100, 20.5%), chicken (n=17, 3.5%), and fresh dairy or milk (n=21, 4.3%).

## 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
  - Working part-time
  - Working part-time but looking for full-time
  - Working a temporary job
  - Not working, but looking for work
  - Not working and not looking for work
  - Disabled and cannot work
  - 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. Are you raising your grandchildren?
  - Yes  No
  
8. 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) \_\_\_\_\_
  
9. 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
  
10. Where do you usually shop for your groceries? (Please select all that apply.)
  - Grocery store  Convenience Store  Farmer's Market  Other \_\_\_\_\_

11. 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
12. In the last 12 months, did the food you buy not last and you didn't have money to get more?  
 Often  Sometimes  Never
13. In the last 12 months, did you ever eat less at a meal because there wasn't enough money to buy food?  
 Often  Sometimes  Never
14. In the last 12 months, were you ever hungry but didn't eat because there wasn't enough money for food?  
 Often  Sometimes  Never
15. 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 \_\_\_\_\_
16. Do you currently receive Food Stamps, SNAP or EBT benefits?  
 Yes  No
17. What healthy foods would you like to have available at Loaves & Fishes? \_\_\_\_\_
18. How did you hear about Loaves & Fishes?  
 Friend/Neighbor  Social Worker  My boss or co-worker  
 School Counselor  Facebook  Other \_\_\_\_\_  
 Church
19. What does Loaves & Fishes mean to you?