

2019 Client Impact Survey Findings

Prepared for



LOAVES & FISHES

Groceries for Neighbors in Need

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Executive Summary

This report summarizes findings from the Loaves & Fishes' 2019 Client Impact Survey conducted during the month of September. The survey was previously 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 1,159 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 25 and 44; Black or African-American; at least a high school graduate; disabled and cannot work, and renting their home or apartment.
- Food access is an issue such that they have often or sometimes worried about food running out before getting money to buy more (n=1067, 94.8%), and had food run out and lacked the funds to buy more (n=1012, 90.0%).
- When respondents run out of food, their primary way of getting food is to ask family members (n=482, 44.3%) or their friends for food (n=246, 22.6%), while about one in five (n=230, 21.2%) indicated that they do not eat. In addition, about two in five (n=448, 39.9%) currently receive food stamps, SNAP, or EBT benefits.
- Respondents indicated that because they received groceries provided by Loaves & Fishes, they will use the money saved to pay rent or mortgage (n=462, 49.0%), pay electric or gas bill (n=200, 21.2%), and pay for medicine (n=102, 10.8%). Moreover, the majority of respondents (n=1009, 89.1%) reported that their family will be able to eat more fruits and vegetables as a result of their visit to the pantry.
- An overwhelming majority of respondents reported that getting a referral to Loaves & Fishes was easy (n=781, 70.8%) or somewhat easy (n=247, 22.4%). When asked what Loaves & Fishes mean to them personally, respondents stated that getting food from Loaves & Fishes was a big help (n=296, 40.1%), and that they feel thankful (n=155, 21.0%), and blessed (n=76, 10.3%).

Overview

This report provides findings from the Loaves & Fishes' 2019 Client Impact Survey. The Client Impact Survey was designed to gather data from a convenience sample of respondents to better understand respondents' demographics, needs and realities, and thoughts about the services they receive at Loaves & Fishes food pantries in the Charlotte area. A total of 1,159 client surveys were conducted across 18 pantries in September 2019. 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

The Client Impact Survey was previously developed with input from the Chief Development Officer for Loaves & Fishes. The Client Impact Survey relied upon a convenience sample to gather information from respondents and was conducted across the various pantries in September 2019. Respondents were asked to participate in the survey voluntarily and received no incentive for doing so. A total of 1,159 individual heads of household adults responded to the survey.

Given that Loaves & Fishes expects to serve **78,000 persons (26,000 households)** by the end of the year, to ensure a confidence level of 95% with a margin of error of ± 3.46 , a sample size calculator indicated that 778 unique households (or 3% of the population served) would need to be surveyed. This threshold was met, and thus survey findings should be close, as if the entire population served by the Charlotte pantries responded to the survey.

Findings

Respondent Demographics

As shown in Table 1a “Heads of Household: Respondent Demographics I,” over three-fourths of respondents (n=788, 75.5%) were female and just under a quarter (n=251, 24.0%) were male. A small number of respondents (n=5, 0.5%) specified neither. About a quarter (n=279, 25.7%) are disabled, while another quarter (n=267, 24.6%) are not working, but looking for work. Over two-fifths of respondents (n= 480, 42.7%) were between 25 and 44 years of age and a similar percentage of respondents (n= 465, 41.3%) were in the 45-64 years old range. Just under three-fourths of respondents (n=809, 72.8%) were Black or African-American, while 14.7% were White, and 8.7% were Hispanic. Over four-fifths of respondents (n=921, 82.5%) have a high school education or higher, while less than a fifth of respondents (n=196, 17.5%) have less than a high school education.

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

Gender	n	%
Male	251	24.0
Female	788	75.5
Other	5	0.5
Total	1,044	100.0
Employment Status	n	%
Employed full-time	178	16.4
Employed part-time	143	13.2
Stay at home parent	48	4.4
Working a temporary job	33	3.0
Not working, looking for work	267	24.6
Not working and not looking for work	40	3.7
Disabled and cannot work	279	25.7
Retired, on a fixed income	99	9.1
Total	1,087	100.0
Age Group	n	%
19-24	49	4.4
25-44	480	42.7
45-64	465	41.3
65 or older	131	11.6
Total	1,125	100.0
Race/Ethnicity	n	%
Black / African-American	809	72.8
Latino / Hispanic	97	8.7
White / Caucasian	163	14.7
Native American / Indian American	15	1.3
Asian / Pacific Islander	7	0.6
Mixed Race / Multi-Ethnic	13	1.2
Other	8	0.7
Total	1,112	100.0
Educational Attainment	n	%
Less than high school	196	17.5
High school graduate	429	38.4
Some college	338	30.3
College graduate or higher	154	13.8
Total	1,117	100.0

Table 1b “Heads of Household: Respondent Demographics II,” shows that over two-thirds of respondents (n=759, 67.8%) currently rent their home or apartment, while one in ten (n=120, 10.7%) live with friends or relatives and a similar proportion (n=115, 10.3%) are homeowners. Other living situation includes those who are homeless (n=69, 6.2%), living in a motel or hotel (n=44, 3.9%), providing temporary space for friends or relatives (n=9, 0.8%), and living in a car (n=4, 0.4%). Lastly, about two-fifths of respondents (n=448, 39.9%) indicated that they currently receive food assistance, such as Food Stamps, SNAP, or EBT benefits, while a tenth of respondents have applied and are waiting for approval to receive the same food assistance (n=116, 10.3%).

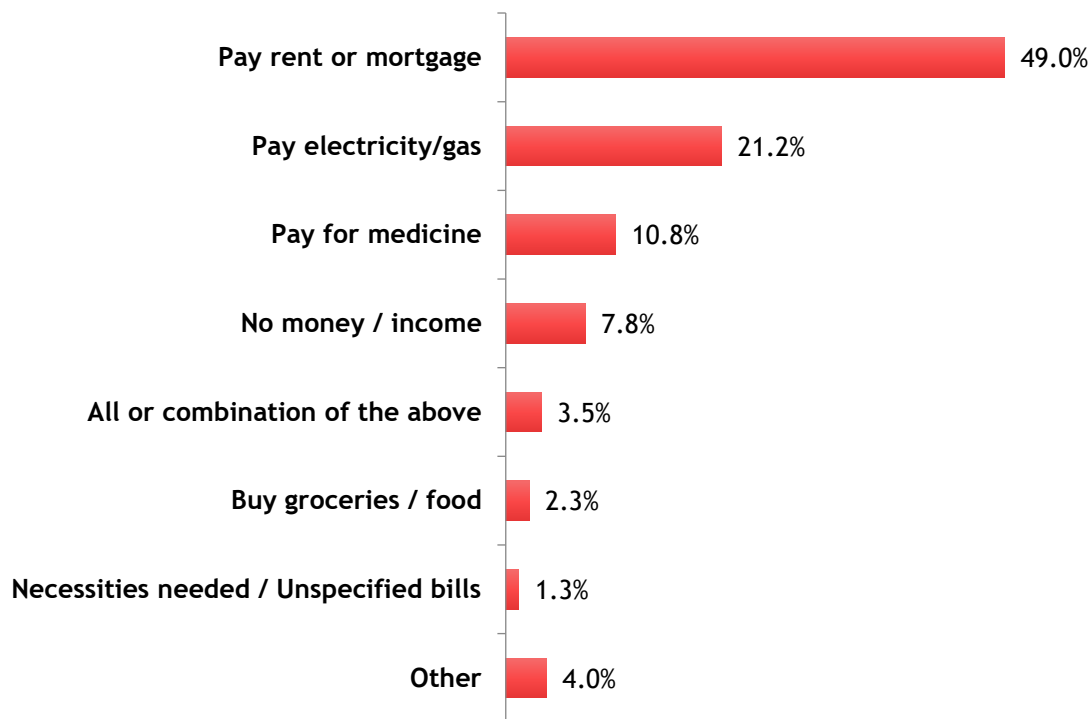
Table 1b.
Heads of Household: Respondent Demographics II

Living Situation	n	%
Renting	759	67.8
Homeowner	115	10.3
Living in a motel/hotel	44	3.9
Living with friends or relatives	120	10.7
Homeless	69	6.2
I provide temporary space for friends or relatives	9	0.8
Living in my car	4	0.4
Total	1,120	100.0
Currently Receiving Food Stamps, SNAP or EBT benefits	n	%
Yes	448	39.9
No	559	49.8
Applied, waiting for approval	116	10.3
Total	1,123	100.0

Impact of Pantries

When asked to describe themselves as recipients of groceries from Loaves & Fishes, nearly half of respondents (n=462, 49.0%) indicated that they will use the money saved to help pay rent or mortgage, while about one in five (n=200, 21.2%) will use the money saved to help pay electric or gas bill and one in ten (n=102, 10.8%) will pay for medicine. A considerable number of respondents simply described themselves as being broke (n=74, 7.8%), while some reported that they will use the money saved to pay for a combination of rent or mortgage, electricity or gas bill, and medicine. Other responses mentioned included transportation needs (e.g. gas, car insurance) and to support their children (e.g., clothing, diapers, childcare).

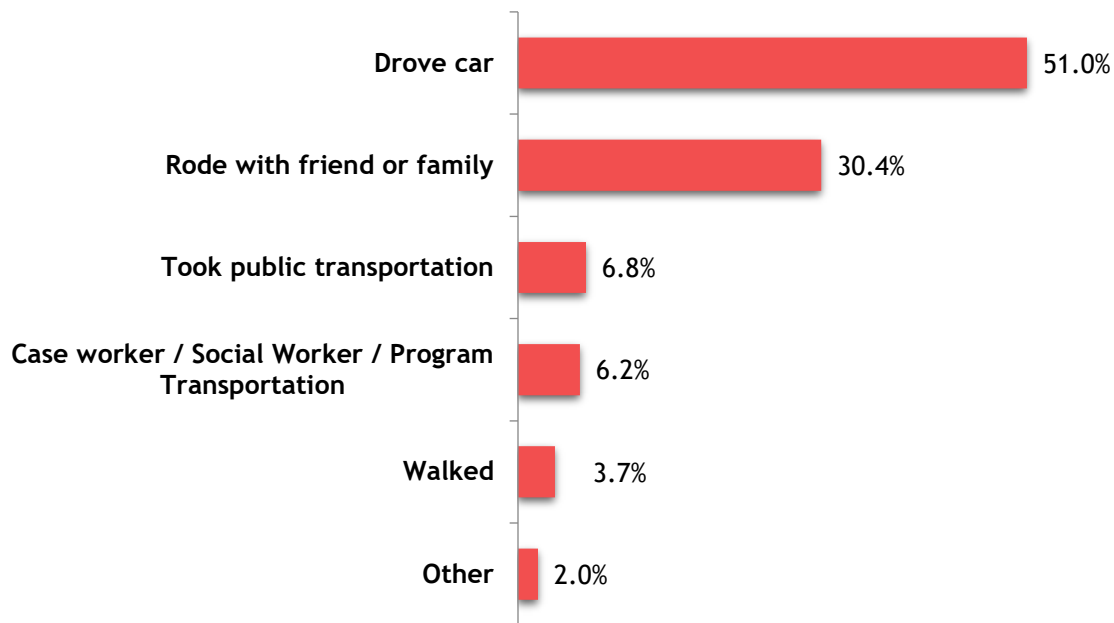
Figure 1: Because you received groceries today at Loaves & Fishes, which of the following describes you?



Access to Food

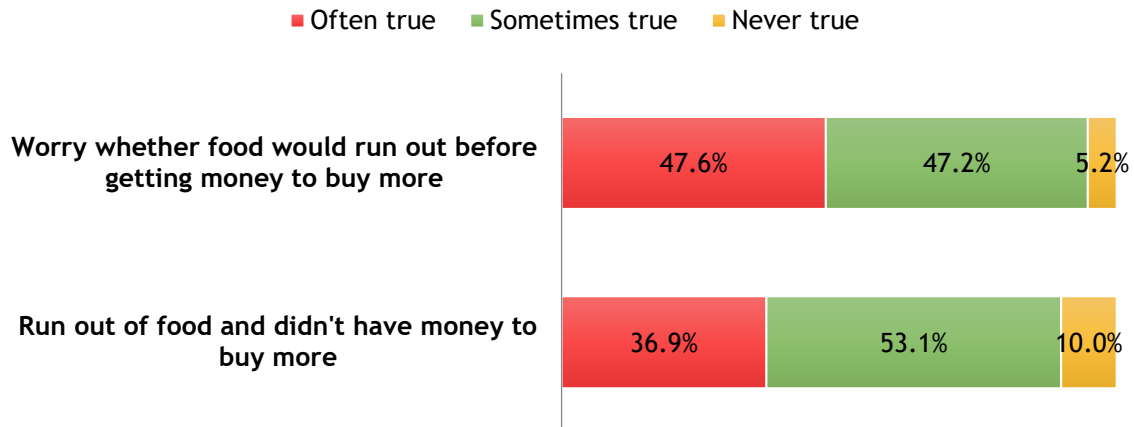
At the time of completing the survey, respondents were asked the following question, “How did you get to the pantry today?” Over half of respondents (n=580, 51.0%) reported that they drove (either their own or a borrowed car), while over a quarter (n=346, 30.4%) said that they rode with a friend or family member. The remaining respondents indicated that they took public transportation (n=77, 6.8%), was transported by their case worker or social worker (n=70, 6.2%), or walked (n=42, 3.7%). Other responses mentioned included using a ride-sharing service (e.g., Lyft, Uber) and being picked up by their church or school.

Figure 2: Mode of Transportation to Loaves & Fishes



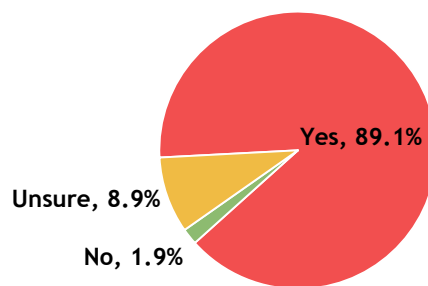
The figure below shows how frequent in the past year respondents had issues with accessing food. For a large majority of respondents, access is an issue such that they have often or sometimes worried about food running out before getting money to buy more (n=1067, 94.8%), and had food run out and lacked money to buy more (n=1012, 90.0%).

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



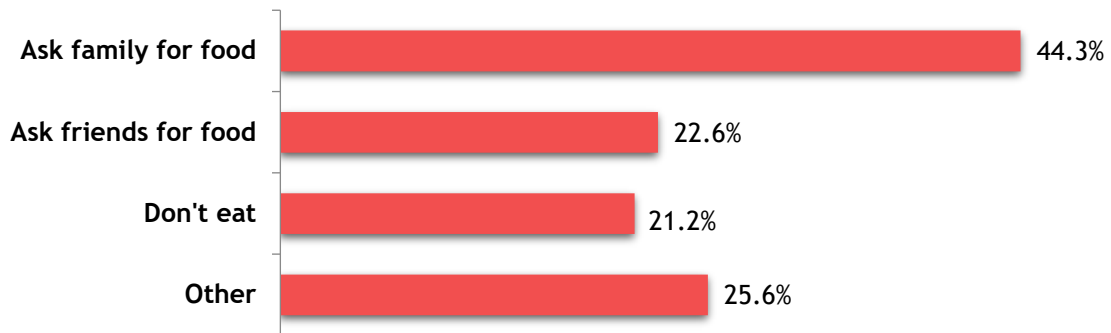
For this year's survey, survey respondents were asked if their household will be able to or plan to consume more fruits and vegetables as a result of their visit to Loaves & Fishes. The majority of respondents (n=1009, 89.1%) responded affirmatively while a small percentage said no (n=22, 1.9%). The remaining respondents were unsure (n=101, 8.9%).

Figure 4: As a result of today's pantry visit, will you and your family be able to/plan to consume (eat) more fruits and vegetables?



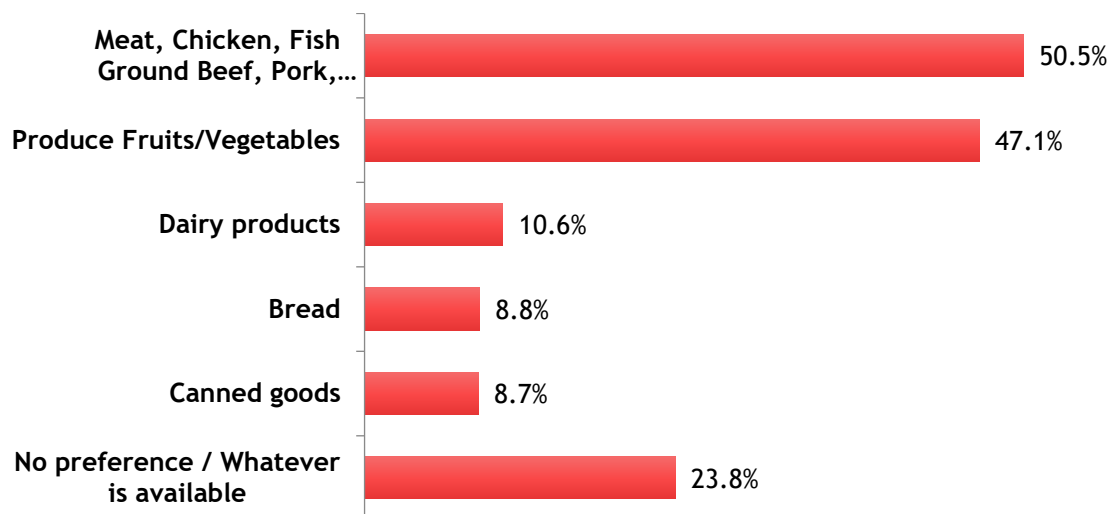
When asked what they would do when they run out of food and cannot visit Loaves & Fishes, less than half of respondents (n=482, 44.3%) reported that they ask family members for food, while over a fifth (n=246, 22.6%) ask friends. About one in five (n=230, 21.2%) conveyed that they simply do not eat.

Figure 5: When respondents run out of food and unable to visit Loaves & Fishes, they...



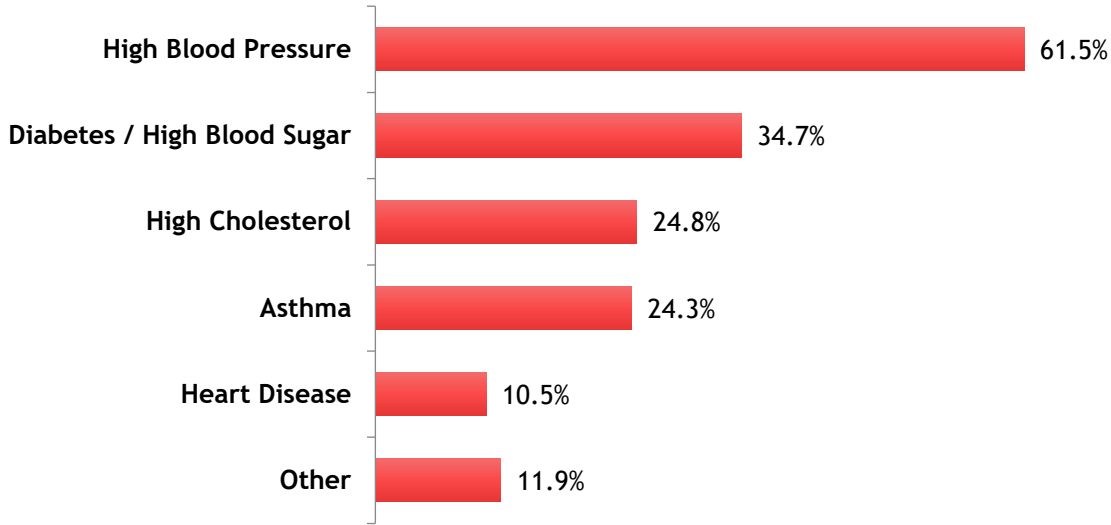
Respondents were given the opportunity to comment on what foods they would like to have available at Loaves & Fishes. Of those who provided a response (n=843), more than half (n=426, 50.5%) would like to see more meat products, such as chicken, fish, ground beef, pork, and turkey. The next most common response was fresh fruits and vegetables (n=397, 47.1%), followed by dairy products (n=89, 10.6%), bread (n=74, 8.8%), and canned goods (n=73, 8.7%). Less than a quarter (n=201, 23.8%) stated that they have no preference or that they would accept whatever food is available.

Figure 6: Foods that respondents would like to have available at Loaves & Fishes



Respondents were asked if they have ever been diagnosed with a chronic disease condition. Of those who reported that they have at least one condition (n=703), about three in five (n=432, 61.5%) have high blood pressure, one in three (n=244, 34.7%) have diabetes or high blood sugar, about one in four (n=174, 24.8%) have high cholesterol, similarly about one in four (n=171, 24.3%) have asthma, and one in ten (n=74, 10.5%) have heart disease. A substantial percentage of respondents (n=84, 11.9%) provided written responses of their condition, which included cancer, arthritis, kidney failure, glaucoma, anxiety, HIV, and depression.

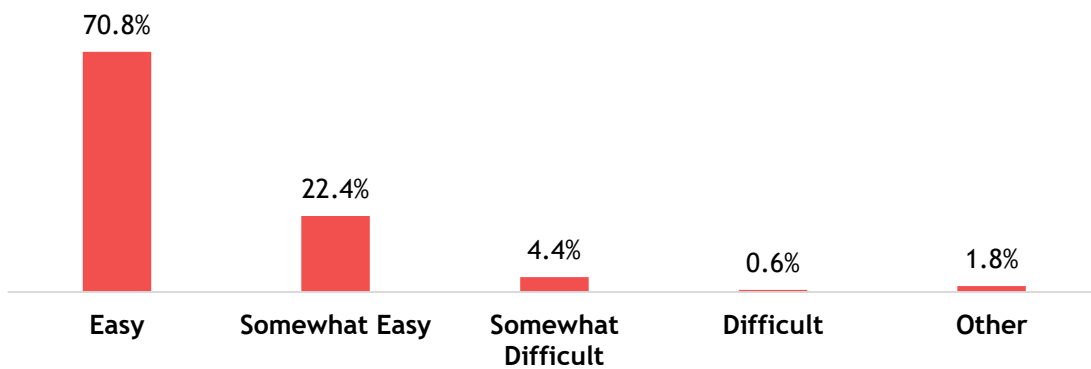
Figure 7: Have you ever been told by your health care provider that you have one of any of these chronic disease conditions? (% Yes)



Service Quality

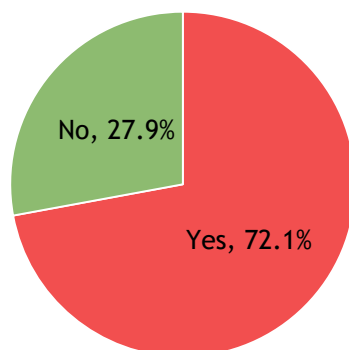
When asked about their experience in getting a referral to Loaves & Fishes, the majority of respondents reported that the referral process was easy (n=781, 70.8%) or somewhat easy (n=247, 22.4%). A small percentage of respondents felt that the referral process was difficult (n=7, 0.6%) or somewhat difficult (n=48, 4.4%). The remaining responses (n=20, 1.8%) included comments such as “I asked Social Service,” “Great,” and “It was part of moving out of the shelter.”

Figure 8: How was your experience getting a referral to Loaves & Fishes?



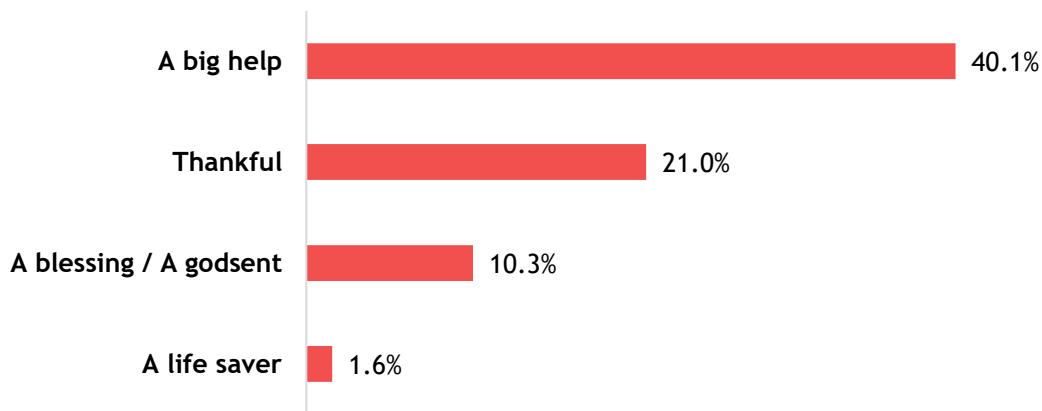
Another new survey question for this year asked respondents if they would be willing to receive notices on their cell phone via text messages. These notices will include alerts on schedule changes and special availability of food items, such as fresh produce. Nearly three in four (n=782, 72.1%) responded affirmatively while over a quarter (n=302, 27.9%) responded negatively to receiving text messages.

Figure 9: Would you like to receive notices on your cell phone?



Lastly, respondents were provided the opportunity to comment on what Loaves & Fishes mean to them personally. Of those who provided a response (n=739), many of the answers centered on respondents' appreciation of Loaves & Fishes. The most common theme was that getting food from the pantry was a big help to them and their family (n=296, 40.1%), followed by statements of gratitude (n=155, 21.0%), a blessing or godsent (n=76, 10.3%), and a life saver (n=12, 1.6%).

Figure 10: What does Loaves & Fishes mean to you personally? (Common Themes)



Below are some examples of the verbatim comments provided by respondents.

**Table 2.
What does Loaves & Fishes mean to you personally? (Selected Responses)**

Verbatim Responses
• Helps me take care of my children in a time of need. Thank You!
• I am personally grateful for everything that is given. This program helps a lot!
• I can relax knowing that I will have access to foods.
• It is my best source of food. I could not live without.
• It's God's gift to the less fortunate. I'm quite thankful that places like this exist!!
• Loaves and Fishes is very helpful to me when I run out of food. I really do appreciate Loaves and Fishes.
• Too much to put in words. It has helped my family tremendously.

Summary

The majority of those who responded to the survey was female; between the ages of 25 and 44; Black or African-American; at least a high school graduate; disabled and cannot work; and renting their home or apartment. In addition, about two-fifths (n=448, 39.9%) currently receive food stamps, SNAP, or EBT benefits.

This year's survey results continue to 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 before getting money to buy more (n=1067, 94.8%), and had food run out and lacked the funds to buy more (n=1012, 90.0%).
- When respondents run out of food, they either ask family for food (n=482, 44.3%), ask their friends (n=246, 22.6%) or they do not eat (n=230, 21.2%).

In addition to food access issues, respondents also indicated that they also have health issues. Specifically, about three in five (n=432, 61.5%) have been diagnosed with high blood pressure, one in three (n=244, 34.7%) have diabetes or high blood sugar, about a quarter (n=174, 24.8%) have high cholesterol, another quarter (n=171, 24.3%) have asthma, and one in ten (n=74, 10.5%) have heart disease.

When asked about what foods they would like to have available at the food pantries, the most cited items were meat products, such as chicken, fish, ground beef, pork, and turkey (n=426, 50.5%), followed by fresh fruits and vegetables (n=397, 47.1%), dairy products (n=89, 10.6%), bread (n=74, 8.8%), and canned goods (n=73, 8.7%).

The benefits that clients receive through the services provided by Loaves & Fishes are clearly evident in the survey findings. Respondents indicated that because they received groceries, they will use the money that they saved to pay rent or mortgage (n=462, 49.0%), pay electric or gas bills (n=200, 21.2%), and pay for medicine (n=102, 10.8%). Finally, respondents reported positive experience in regards to getting a referral to Loaves & Fishes. Specifically, an overwhelming majority of respondents indicated that the referral process was easy (n=781, 70.8%) or somewhat easy (n=247, 22.4%). Moreover, survey respondents have indicated that their visit to Loaves & Fishes has enabled their family to eat healthier foods such as fruits and vegetables.

Appendix: Survey Questionnaire

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 not looking for work
 Stay at home parent Disabled and cannot work
 Working a temporary job Retired, on a fixed income
2. What is your age group?
 19-24 25-44 45-64 65 and above
3. Are you Male Female Other
4. What is your race/ethnicity?
 Black/African-American Native American or Indian American Latino/Hispanic
 Asian/Pacific Island White/Caucasian Other (Please specify) _____
5. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
 Less than high school Some college
 High school graduate or equivalent College graduate or higher
6. Where do you live?
 I rent a house or apartment I stay with friends or relatives who are not my children or spouse
 I own a house (or have a mortgage) I provide temporary space for friends or relatives who are not my children or spouse
 I live in a motel/hotel I live in my car
 I am homeless
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 public transportation, bus, Lynx train Rode with a friend or family member
 Walked Other (Please specify) _____
9. In the last 12 months, did you worry about whether your food would run out before you got money to buy more?
 Often true Sometimes true Never true
10. In the last 12 months, did you run out of food and you didn't have money to buy more?
 Often true Sometimes true Never true
11. As a result of today's pantry visit, will you and your family be able to/plan to consume (eat) more fruits and vegetables?
 Yes No Unsure
12. 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 _____

13. Do you currently receive Food Stamps, SNAP or EBT benefits?
 Yes No Applied, waiting for approval
14. What foods would you like to have available at Loaves & Fishes? _____
15. Have you ever been told by your health care provider that you have one of any of these chronic disease conditions (check all that apply)?
 Diabetes/high blood sugar High blood pressure High cholesterol
 Asthma Heart Disease Other (Please specify)_____
16. How was your experience getting a referral to Loaves & Fishes?
 Easy Somewhat Easy Somewhat Difficult Difficult
 Other (Please specify)_____
17. Loaves & Fishes is exploring sending text messages to send alerts about schedule changes, special produce available. Would you like to receive these notices on your cell phone?
 Yes No
18. What does Loaves & Fishes mean to you personally? _____
