



Pop-Up Market Pilot Program Report

A pilot program implemented by the Food Bank of Eastern Oklahoma

Overview:

In the Fall of 2019, the Food Bank of Eastern Oklahoma (FBEO) received approximately \$30,000.00 from a local foundation to launch the pop-up market pilot program. The aim of the pilot program was to bring shelf-stable food and fresh produce to two elementary schools in areas of elevated food insecurity. All in all, the pop-up markets served approximately 2,038 aggregate households, 9,280 aggregate individuals, and distributed 51,493 pounds of food product, which is the equivalent of 42,911 meals. The pop-up markets took place at Dolores Huerta Elementary and Walt-Whitman Elementary in Tulsa across 22 markets from late 2019 to mid-2023. We are thankful for the foundation's donation in providing hunger resources to members of the community. The following report highlights insights into the implementation of the pop-up market pilot program.

Pop-Up Market Background:

The idea of a pop-up market is nothing new in Food Bank circles as food-distribution events are commonplace among Food Banks to directly service members of the community facing food insecurity. Such events may take place at the physical address of the hosting Food Bank or onsite at a partnering organization.

The unique twist of our pop-up market pilot program was that such pop-up markets took place in a fun, vibrant environment at pre-selected elementary schools. This way, at the end of the school day when parents were picking up their children from school, the parents could also “shop” for culturally tailored fresh produce and shelf-stable food products. Not only that, but our pop-up markets had snack demonstrations that offered students nutritious snacks to promote healthier eating habits while their parents shopped.

Another key distinction of our pop-up markets was that we incorporated the client-choice model where we emphasized parents choosing, or “shopping”, for themselves from multiple food options rather than receiving a set bag of groceries. With this in mind, we hoped to empower individual choice and to ensure dignity for those we served.

We had two elementary schools participate in our pop-up market pilot program: Dolores Huerta Elementary and Walt Whitman Elementary.

Dolores Huerta Elementary is located in East Tulsa where most students are of Hispanic heritage. The Oklahoma State Department of Education 2022 Low Income Report indicates that 72% of Dolores Huerta students come from households that meet low-income household criteria.

Our other school was Walt Whitman Elementary, and 95% of students who attend Walt-Whitman Elementary are considered to meet the low-income household threshold according to the same

report. Walt Whitman is located in North Tulsa, and most of the students come from African American backgrounds.

Most often, students who meet low-income household qualifications ultimately participate in the free and reduced lunch programs, which is a metric that FBEO utilizes to identify students who face food insecurity.

Due to their strategic location in underserved communities and their high rates of food insecurity among students, Dolores Huerta and Walt Whitman were ideal school-site candidates for the pop-up market pilot program. The grant's goal was for FBEO to host at least 10 distributions at each site and to utilize the client-choice model at some capacity in each distribution.

Pop-Up Market Implementation

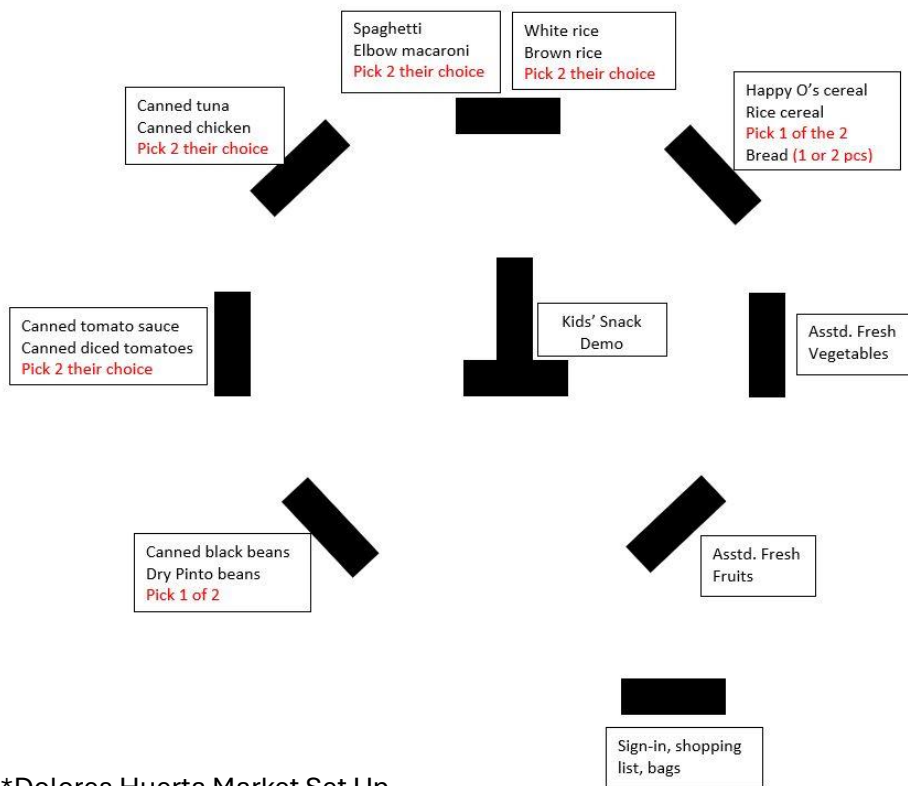
From November 2019 to May 2023, we conducted 12 markets at Dolores Huerta and 10 markets at Walt-Whitman. 1 market took place at each site on a monthly rotation, and most markets were scheduled towards the late half of the scholastic semesters: October – December and March – May.

At each market, we provided shelf-stable food products and fresh produce options. Common examples of shelf-stable items included the choice between baked beans or pinto beans, brown rice or white rice, chicken or tuna, spaghetti noodles or elbow noodles, tomato sauce or diced tomatoes, and among other categories of product. These shelf-stable items covered the bases of most Hispanic and African American cultural diets. We also offered perishable goods, such as tortillas packages to Dolores Huerta clients and bread loaves to Walt-Whitman clients.

For fresh produce, we offered cultural preferences relevant to each site. At Dolores Huerta, we provided limes, tomatoes, cilantro, bell peppers, jalapenos, tomatillos, and among other options to best serve the majority Hispanic attendees. At Walt Whitman, we provided cucumbers, blueberries, collard greens, watermelon, spinach, okra, and among other options to best serve the majority African American attendees.

We alternated the fresh produce options from market to market at each site when we returned monthly. This way, our guests always looked forward to receiving new items.

All of Dolores Huerta's pop-up markets were conducted in the school's auditorium, which provided convenient access to parents picking up their children as they simply walked from the front of the school to the auditorium. Dolores Huerta's layout of setting up tables in a semi-circle fashion with the snack demonstration in the middle facilitated a smooth market experience. Our parents only had to check in at the front of the semi-circle configuration and move to the first table on their left to partake in the market. From there, each parent visited the remaining tables clockwise until arriving at the same entrance/exit doors.



*Dolores Huerta Market Set Up

At Walt-Whitman, most of the distributions occurred outside to accommodate the school's car-pickup system via drive-through style. We implemented the client-choice model by having parents fill out "order tickets" with the market's items of the day listed. We would then fulfill orders based on the order tickets from a centralized packing station near the car line and deliver the requested bagged items directly to backseat or trunk of cars. Parents did not step out of their cars or lose their place in the car pickup line. On top of that, we set up the snack demonstration station where students would "grab and go" as they left the school and hopped into their parents' vehicle. Since we had less time with Walt-Whitman students, we taped simple recipe instructions of each snack to the container so students could try the recipes at home.

My Grocery List

Please circle the items for us to pack from the options below:

Shelf-Stable

- tuna, chicken, white rice, brown rice, tomato sauce, diced tomatoes, cereal, Elbow Mac, and spaghetti.

Fruits and Veggies

- onions, tomatoes, cucumbers, grapes, blackberries, leafy greens

- Include everything!



*Walt-Whitman Grocery List / Order Ticket

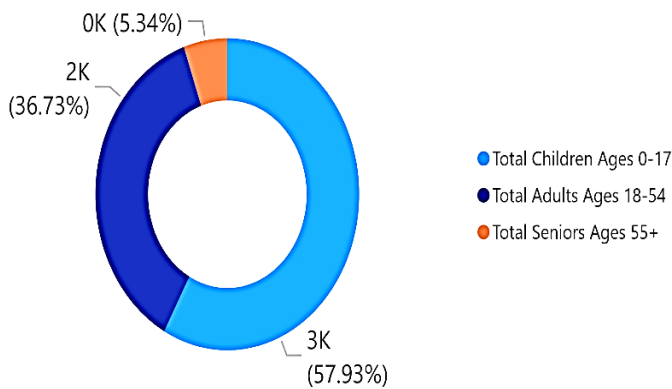
Pop-Up Market Impact and Insights

At each conducted pop-up market, any parent or legal guardian who opted to receive food products would be prompted to answer a few questions regarding household composition. We also serviced and surveyed any participating students who shopped on behalf of their family, such as walkers or bus riders. We collected data to better understand the individuals we served, to predict food product demand for upcoming pop-up markets, and to understand the overall impact of our distributions. No personal information was collected from participating clients. We asked questions regarding how many children, adults, and seniors lived in the household.

From the data collected, the following is the compilation of the 12 pop-up markets conducted at Dolores Huerta, 10 pop-up markets conducted at Walt-Whitman, and a combination of 22 markets conducted at both Dolores Huerta and Walt-Whitman.

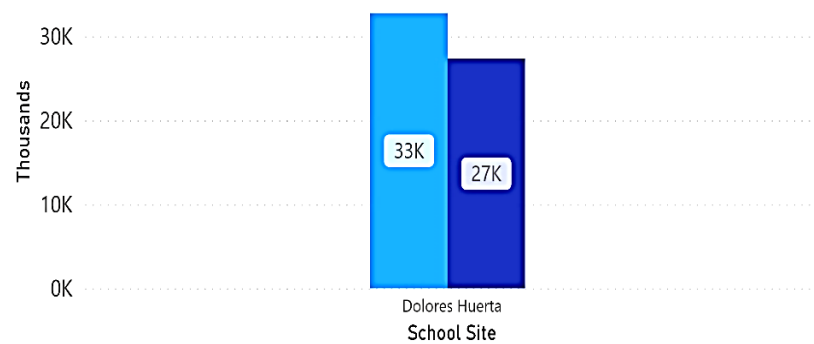
Dolores Huerta Data:

Age Breakdown of Total Individuals Served at Dolores Huerta



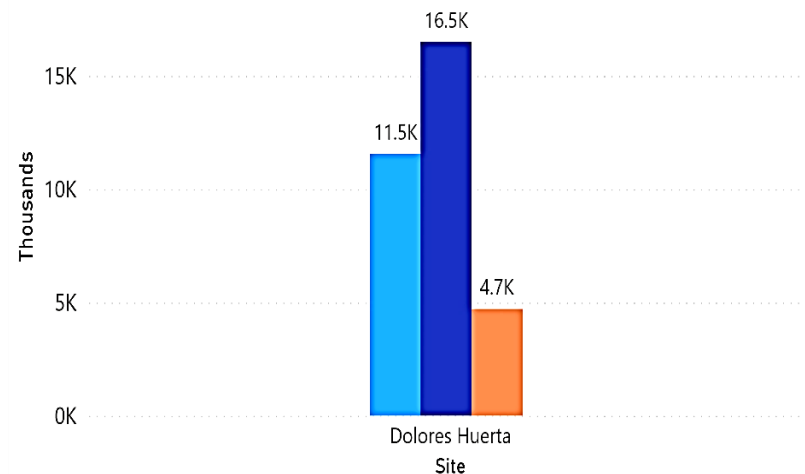
Total Pounds of Food and Equivalent Meals at Dolores Huerta

● Total Pounds of Food Product Distributed ● Total Equivalent Meals Distributed



Breakdown of Total Product Distributed At Dolores Huerta

● Total Shelf Stable ● Total Fresh Produce ● Total Bakery



3396

Total Children Served at Dolores Huerta

2153

Total Adults Served at Dolores Huerta

313

Total Seniors Served at Dolores Huerta

5862

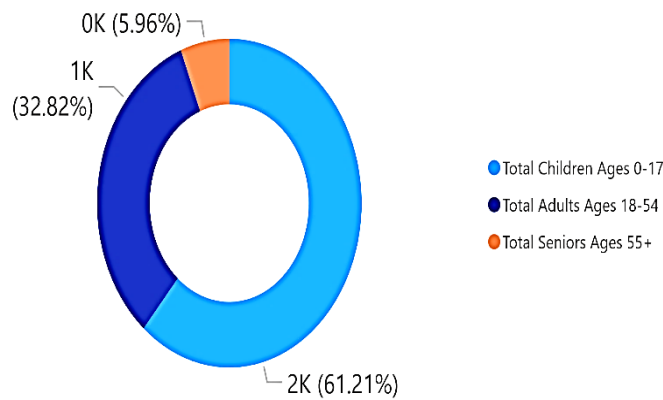
Total Individuals Served at Dolores Huerta

1325

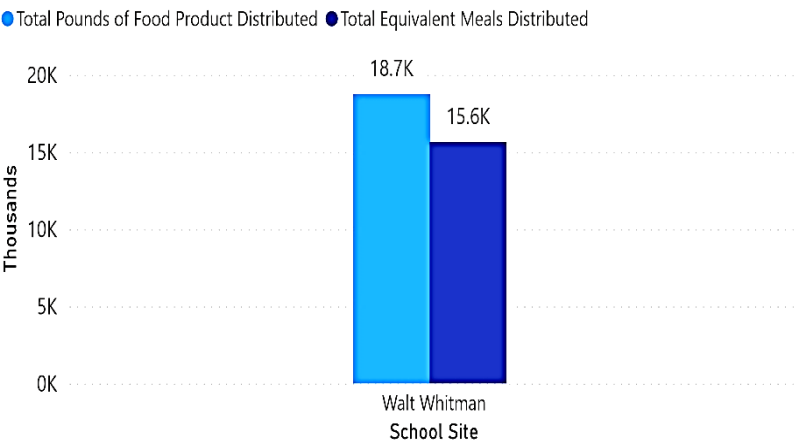
Total Households Served At Dolores Huerta

Walt-Whitman Data:

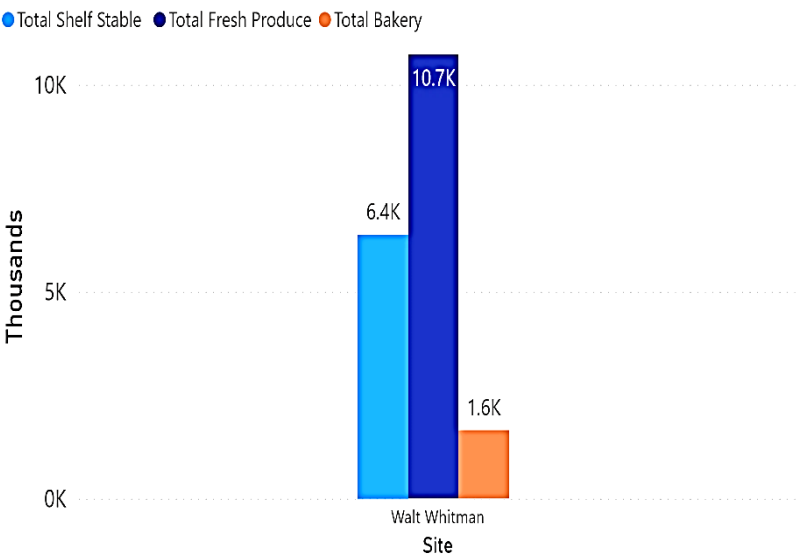
Age Breakdown of Total Individuals Served at Walt Whitman



Total Pounds of Food and Equivalent Meals at Walt Whitman



Breakdown of Total Product Distributed At Walt Whitman



1878

Total Children Served at Walt Whitman

1007

Total Adults Served at Walt Whitman

183

Total Seniors Served at Walt Whitman

3068

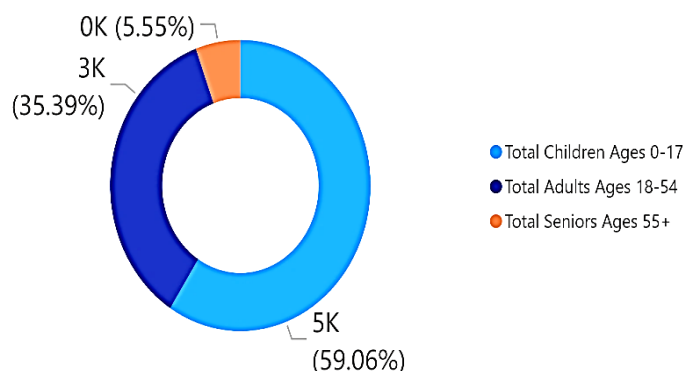
Total Individuals Served at Walt Whitman

713

Total Households Served At Walt Whitman

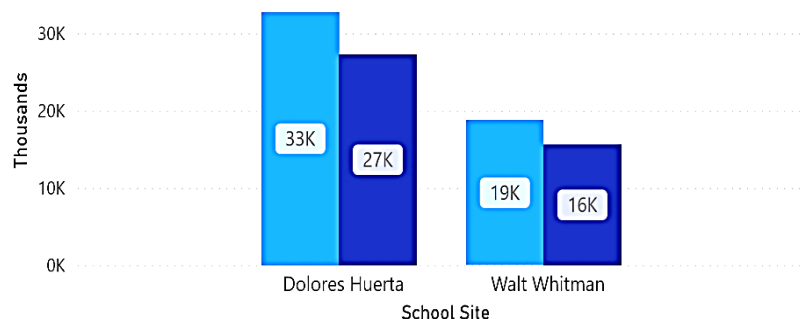
Combined Data from Both Sites over 22 Conducted Pop-Up Markets:

Age Breakdown of Individuals Served at Both Sites



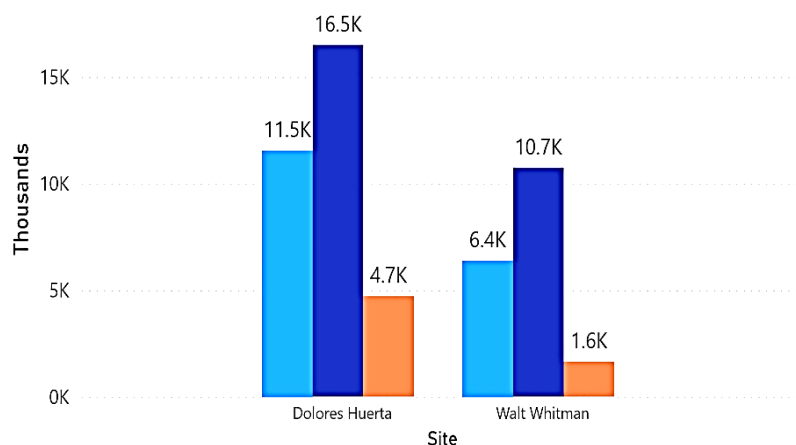
Total Pounds of Food and Equivalent Meals of Both Sites

● Total Pounds of Food Product Distributed ● Total Equivalent Meals Distributed



Breakdown of Total Product Distributed of Both Sites

● Total Shelf Stable ● Total Fresh Produce ● Total Bakery



51K

Overall Total Pounds of Food Distributed

42.91K

Overall Total Equivalent Meals

8930

Overall Total Individuals Served

2038

Overall Total Households Served

22

Number of Pop-Up Markets Throughout Grant Implementation

To provide context, each participating attendee would go home with 2-3 full bags of shelf-stable, fresh produce, and bakery items after visiting a pop-up market. We assume that the individual would share the items received with members of their household as the type of grocery items we provided were offered with this in mind. As a result, we deduced that the total number of individuals served would be identical to the total number of household individuals served.

Another measure to elaborate on is our meal conversion equation. According to the United States Department of Agriculture, 1 pound of food product is equivalent to 1.2 meals. Since we distributed approximately 51,493 pounds of food, we divided 51,493 by 1.2 to calculate the equivalent number of meals distributed: 42,911.

Lastly, these data figures reflect a portion of duplicated sign-ins. Since we did not collect unique individual data for privacy reasons across the 22 pop-up markets, the data figures are aggregate and most likely represent some repeat individuals and households throughout pop-up market implementation. However, each market welcomed new participating individuals, and over the course of 4 years, we had a relatively new participating cohort with the start of each Fall semester.

From the data sets, we noticed that most of the households served had more children in the household than adults. Food distributed at pop-up markets most likely reached 5,274 children, or roughly 59 % of total individuals served. We are proud of these figures as one of our organizational goals is to reduce the childhood food insecurity rate in Oklahoma from approximately 20% to 10% within the next 5 years. Not only that but we are also relieved that our services eased the pinch that many multi-children households are feeling as the prices of grocery goods have skyrocketed since 2020.

In the combined data section, the table “Breakdown of Total Product of Both Sites” highlights what type of product we distributed to our pop-up market clients. Of the roughly 51,500 pounds of food distributed, approximately 53% of the food distributed was fresh produce, 35% was shelf-stable food, and 12% was bakery goods. We are also proud of these figures because they emphasize our value in providing fresh produce to underserved communities who may have limited amounts of fruit and vegetable consumption and access.

It is worth noting that our data on Dolores Huerta and Walt Whitman should not be compared with one another in terms of total individuals served or by the total amount of food distributed. For starters, the intention of the pilot program was to measure overall impact at both sites, not between sites. Furthermore, Dolores Huerta has a greater student population than Walt-Whitman, so naturally, Dolores Huerta would serve more individuals and distribute more food products. For example, although not presented in the above graphics, Dolores Huerta’s pop-up markets, on average, served approximately 110 households whereas Walt-Whitman’s pop-up markets served approximately 71 households. On top of that, Dolores Huerta requested 2 additional markets due to the huge success of the pop-up markets.

Moving away from the data, a more qualitative perspective regarding the impact of the pop-up markets revealed that our families were extremely grateful and that our pilot program directly met the needs of our clients in a convenient manner. As principal of Dolores Huerta Janice Thoumire put it: “[the pop-up markets gave] our children and our families another source of food and because it’s at a school, it meets them in a place where they already are. It gives us a chance to be a resource for our families, to get them involved and to help them feel at home in our school.”

You may see an article written by Tulsa Public Schools regarding the pop-up markets by following the link below:

<https://www.tulsaschools.org/about/news/news-item/~board/dolores-huerta-news/post/dolores-huerta-elementary-school-hosts-pop-up-food-market-for-students-and-families>

Pop-Up Market Financials

In the Fall of 2019, the foundation generously sponsored the pop-up market pilot program with \$30,000. The table below shows the total cost of the pop-up markets followed by a written rationale afterwards.

The overall cost of the pop-up markets was greater than the \$30,000 foundation donation. This was expected, and FBEO supplemented the remaining \$23,502.84.

The biggest cost of the pop-up markets was the initial purchase of shelf-stable food products that occurred in 2019. In early 2020, the pop-up market pilot program was placed on pause due to the pandemic. As a result, several of the shelf-stable products neared expiration date in 2022 after a relaunch in late 2021. To replenish stock, we reordered any items near expiration in 2022 and 2023 for the remainder of the pop-up markets.

Month / Year	Category of Purchase	Cost Amount	Notes
November/ December 2019	Shelf-Stable Food	\$25,156.67	Rice, beans, tuna, pasta, cereal, etc.
November – December 2019 through January – March 2020	Donated Fresh Produce, Snack Demonstration, and Supplies	\$4,500.00	Donated fresh produce at \$.25 per pound overhead cost.
November 2021 – May 2022	Purchased Fresh Produce, Snack Demonstration, and Supplies	\$8,398.73	Purchased produce was 2-4 times the cost of donated product. Donated produce became scarce during pandemic due to supply chain issues.
April-October 2022	Shelf-Stable Food	\$2,749.96	Replenish Expired Items: rice, pasta, cereal, etc.
October 2022 – May 2023	Purchased Fresh Produce, Snack Demonstration, and Supplies	\$9947.52	Purchased produce was 2-4 times the cost of donated product. Donated produce became scarce during pandemic due to supply chain issues.
March 2023	Shelf-Stable Food	\$2,749.96	Replenish Expired Items: rice, pasta, cereal, etc.
November 2019 to May 2023	Total Cost of Amount	\$53,502.84	

Throughout the implementation of the program, due to its perishable nature, fresh produce was continuously sourced for each pop-up market. In the beginning of the pilot program, our donated in-house fresh produce was enough to cover the needs of each market. However, when fresh produce donations became tight after relaunching the program again in 2021, we relied more on purchasing fresh produce from local wholesale vendors. The donation of fresh produce became tighter after 2020 due to supply chain issues facing our big-brand fresh produce donors, such as Sam's Club, Walmart, etc. This, in turn, caused us to utilize 2-3 times more funds to purchase fresh produce.

Smaller purchases included pop-up market supplies, such as markers, plastic table clothes, utensils, t-shirt bags for carrying food, and among other items. These were relatively small purchases and often served multiple markets, thus these types of purchases were included in one category alongside fresh produce purchases.

For the most part, the cost to conduct one market was anywhere between \$2,200 and \$2,600 in terms of food products and supplies. The pop-up markets at Dolores Huerta cost more because we provided more food in general to accommodate the larger capacity. On average, the total cost of food product, \$53,502.84, divided by 22 pop-up markets is \$2,431.95. This provides an average of the cost of each pop-up market, although even the cost of each market differed from one market to the next at the same site as we rotated fresh produce monthly.

Lastly, we did not include operational costs in the budget because FBEO naturally absorbs those costs in its day-to-day operations. However, the average operational cost per pop-up market was calculated, and the average cost to transport food and pay involved employees was roughly \$1,443.12 for each market. This amount should cover the price of gasoline mileage and for the wages of the truck driver, warehouse associates, program coordinator, inventory director, and volunteer director involved in the implementation of one pop-up market. With 22 pop-up markets conducted, the total cost of operating 22 pop-up markets is \$31,748.64.

Pop-Up Market Challenges

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the mitigating efforts that led to virtual learning, the pilot program underwent a hiatus from April 2020 to November 2021 and another brief hiatus due to the Omicron variant from November 2021 to mid-February 2022. This resulted in the pilot program taking longer than its original goal of 1 calendar year to complete. Once relaunched, we typically conducted pop-up markets from October to December and from March to May to avoid the back-to-school semester rush and to circumvent most of the winter season. As a result, the completion of this program took longer than expected even after the relaunch in 2021.

Another challenge for conducting pop-up markets was the language barriers between volunteers and clients at Dolores Huerta Elementary. With most of the parents speaking Spanish only at Dolores Huerta, our volunteer groups had difficulty responding to any inquiries. We attempted to bridge the language gap as much as possible by creating signs in Spanish that explained interactions at each table. We also began soliciting volunteer groups that had Spanish speakers. The program coordinator who took over the pilot program in 2021 is fluent in Spanish so that helped tremendously in the flow of the markets at Dolores Huerta.

As mentioned in previous sections, the stress on supply chains from pent up demand during the pandemic caused major issues for our donated fresh produce sourcing, driving up our food product costs dramatically as we pivoted to purchase almost all produce. As supply-chain tensions eased so did our reliance on local wholesale produce vendors as fresh produce donations returned to normal.

Lastly, the hiatuses in operation caused several products from our initial purchase of shelf-stable foods to expire during the implementation of our pilot program. As a result, we had to replenish our inventory several times. This was unfortunate, and we tried to prevent as much food waste as possible by offering soon-to-expire food products to other programs within FBEO.

Gratitude and Future Opportunities

Hopefully, this report served its purpose in detailing how the funding for this pilot program led to providing culturally tailored food products to 2038 aggregate households of low-income families. The impact was great, and we deem the pilot program a huge success since we distributed approximately 42,911 equivalent meals to roughly 8930 aggregate individuals across 22 pop-up markets. Our families were always eager to see us, and we are grateful for the support of the foundation in making the pop-up market program possible.

Looking into the future, FBEO is hoping to launch similar initiatives inspired by the pop-up markets and by our current Free Family Farmers Market program.

The overall concept would be to partner with organizations willing to conduct once-per-month distributions on our behalf at their campuses as we would provide all the knowledge, supplies, and food products to successfully implement a “pop-up market”. This way, FBEO could develop a network of partnering organizations that may cover more ground than our FBEO personnel; we would simply drop off the necessary supplies on the day of.

Dolores Huerta Elementary and Walt Whitman Elementary have demonstrated interest in this program, and we are hoping to launch this program once more funding is secured. If the foundation would like to further financially support this or other similar Food Bank initiatives, please feel free to contact our Director of Development.

Thank you once again for providing funding to reduce food insecurity among our children in Oklahoma.