

Winslow Community Cupboard Survey Report
Colby College Statistical Survey Research Group
12/13/2023

Introduction

The Winslow Community Cupboard Client Survey, conducted in collaboration with Colby College's SC323 "Statistical Surveys, Censuses, and Society" course, led by Professor Jerzy Wieczorek, is aimed at gaining valuable insights into the topic of food insecurity within the Winslow area and its surrounding communities. Initiated in partnership with the Winslow Community Cupboard (WCC) and supported by grants from the Office of Civic Engagement and the Department of Statistics at Colby, this survey seeks to understand the factors influencing the utilization patterns of WCC services.

Our focus is on vulnerable populations, including current clients, both at the WCC's main location and its Mobile Pantry/trailer sites, as well as those receiving food deliveries.

Furthermore, we look into "inactive" clients who have not used WCC services in the past 6 months. Our survey design aims to uncover the reasons behind clients' engagement with the food pantry, shed light on the challenges faced by individuals experiencing food insecurity, and understand why people stopped using it.

The purpose of this research is to help the WCC with potential insights. By exploring the motivations and barriers associated with seeking food assistance, we can assist the WCC in improving its services and prioritizing changes or expansions. Additionally, the findings will help in informing key stakeholders, such as Good Shepherd, about the specific needs of the community and facilitating grant applications to address these identified needs.

First, this report details the methods used, ranging from the survey design to the data collection procedures. With a strong commitment to ethical research practices, our approach prioritizes participant well-being, ensuring their privacy and confidentiality throughout the study.

Next, the report summarizes responses to each survey question. Throughout the report, we discuss lessons learned and successes as well as challenges related to the survey. In the discussion section, we pull together conclusions from each of the data analysis subsections.

Finally, in an appendix, we go into the specifics of the survey procedures, participant information, and the steps taken to guarantee the anonymity and confidentiality of responses.

Through this analysis, we have aimed to contribute to the WCC's mission of relieving food insecurity and fostering a healthier, more resilient community.

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Methods Summary

Our target population for this survey was current and former clients of the Winslow Community Cupboard (WCC) food pantry and mobile pantry sites. We had four specific client groups that we wished to examine: current clients of the WCC, inactive clients (who no longer use WCC services), delivery clients, and mobile pantry clients. Delivery clients are clients that directly use the WCC facility on Lithgow Street, but are, for some reason, unable to come to the drive-through service by their own means. The volunteers at the WCC have chosen to supply the needs of this population by delivering food directly to their doorstep, hence why they are named “delivery clients”. For each of these client groups, we designed specific surveys to explore our questions of interest.

With regards to survey design, our own Statistical Survey Research Group created initial questions for each client population that addressed the specific topics we judged to be important. We presented our initial questions to WCC Operations Manager Bruce Bottiglieri, who then provided feedback on specific areas of interest to WCC leadership. Our survey questions were adjusted accordingly to suit his recommendations and suggestions. Survey questions were limited to multiple choice and short answers to ease the burden on respondents and to aid in the clarity of responses. Additionally, survey questions were tested out on unaffiliated friends of our Statistical Survey Research Group to ensure that the questions were understandable and that there were no unclear areas.

Differing survey methodologies were required for each of the specific client groups. For the inactive clients, the WCC provided a list of names and addresses for those former clients who fit our criteria: Winslow households that had used the WCC before but not in the last 6 months. The surveys were mailed to these clients with pre-addressed and stamped envelopes so that completed surveys could be mailed to the WCC. We then collected the completed and mailed-in surveys from the WCC. For trailer clients, it was not feasible for members of our Statistical Survey Research Group to attend all of the mobile pantry sites in the given timeframe, so we selected to attend the mobile pantries in Vassalboro, Oakland, and Fairfield on select dates in October and November 2023. These locations and dates were chosen to maximize our availability. At each site, we set up a table and had clients fill out a survey and drop it off as they passed through (if they so desired). We invited all active clients to take the survey if they so desired on November 9th, 2023, as we attended the WCC site. For the delivery clients, surveys were provided along with their food deliveries on October 25th, 2023. These clients were also given pre-addressed, stamped envelopes to mail the surveys back to the WCC if they desired to complete the survey. When surveys were collected, our group entered the paper responses into secure Google Sheets for analysis.

When respondents completed the survey, we provided optional entrance into a \$20 Visa gift card raffle. This was an attempt to gain more responses from our target populations. In total, we received 242 raffle cards along with 291 surveys, so about 83% of respondents entered the

raffle. 25 gift cards were awarded in the raffle, so each raffle entry had about a 10% chance of a prize. The raffle winners were mailed their prizes on Dec. 9th, 2023. Additionally, we created a script for survey recruiters, emphasizing that this survey was on behalf of the WCC in order to build trust with respondents and further reduce nonresponse. Throughout the survey process, we emphasized that response was completely optional and would not affect a client's service.

We concluded our survey with 113 responses from the active clients, 145 from the mobile pantry clients, 17 from the delivery clients, and 16 from the inactive clients for a total of 291 responses. With so few responses from the delivery and inactive clients, we advise caution against generalizing these results to the broader population, as a few responses can swing the results dramatically. No survey weighting or other adjustments were done.

Further details of the survey design and populations are available within the appendix.

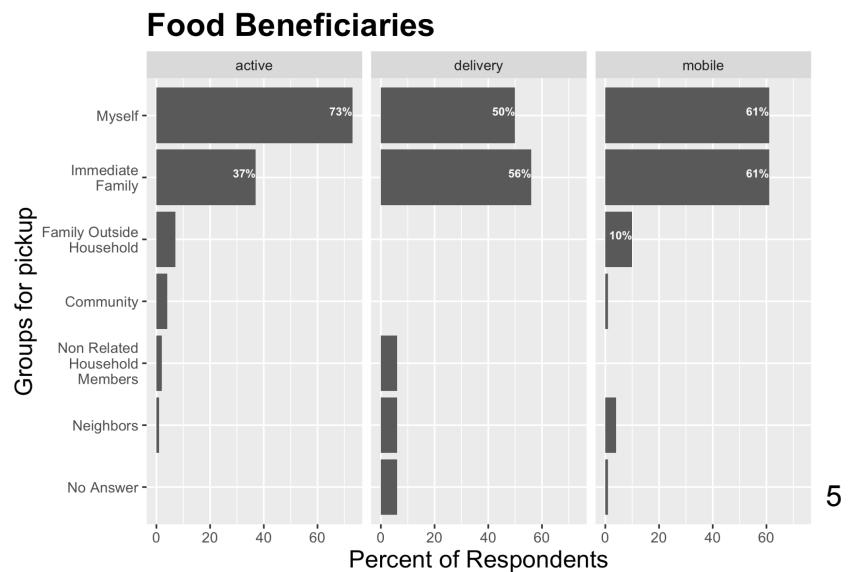
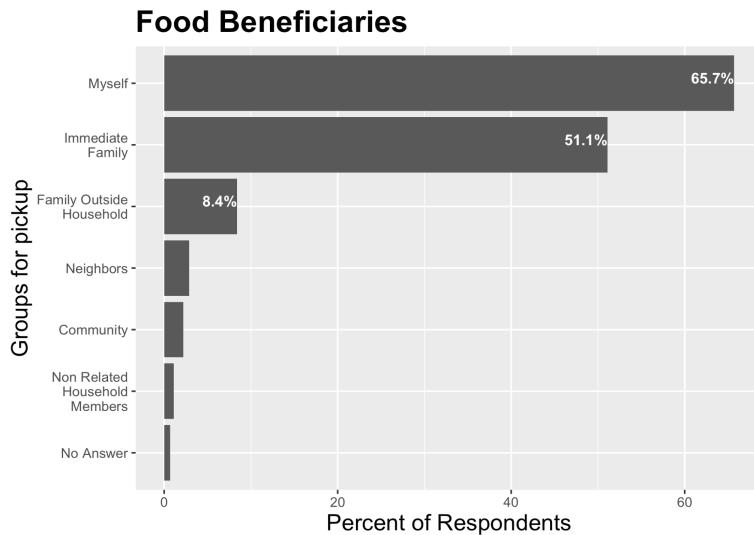
Results

General Questions

This section includes data from active, delivery, and mobile client surveys. Graphs are supplied both for all of the groups together as well as broken down by group in order to show relevant and interesting information for each group. Some totals may add up to over 100% if respondents chose more than one option.

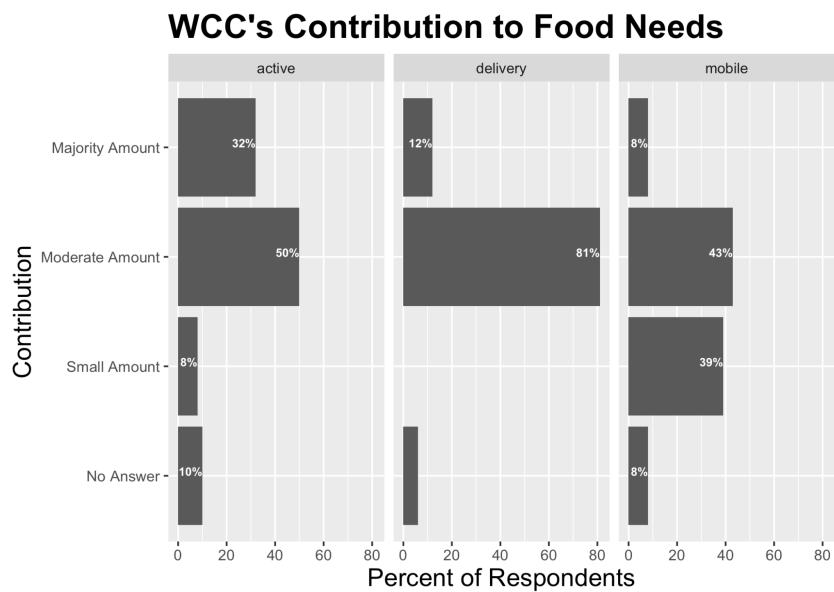
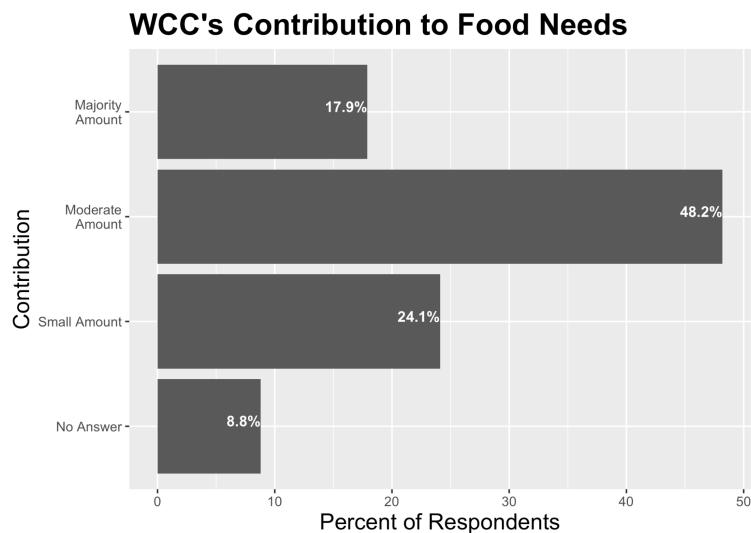
Question 1: Who are you picking up food for?

The WCC clients most often pick up food for themselves and those within their immediate household. Active clients are more likely to be picking up just for themselves whereas delivery and mobile are equally likely to be picking up for themselves or their immediate family. Mobile Pantry clients are also more likely to be picking up for family that resides outside of their household rather than active or delivery. This seems to illustrate that the mobile pantry tends to serve the needs of the wider community rather than only the highest-need individuals.



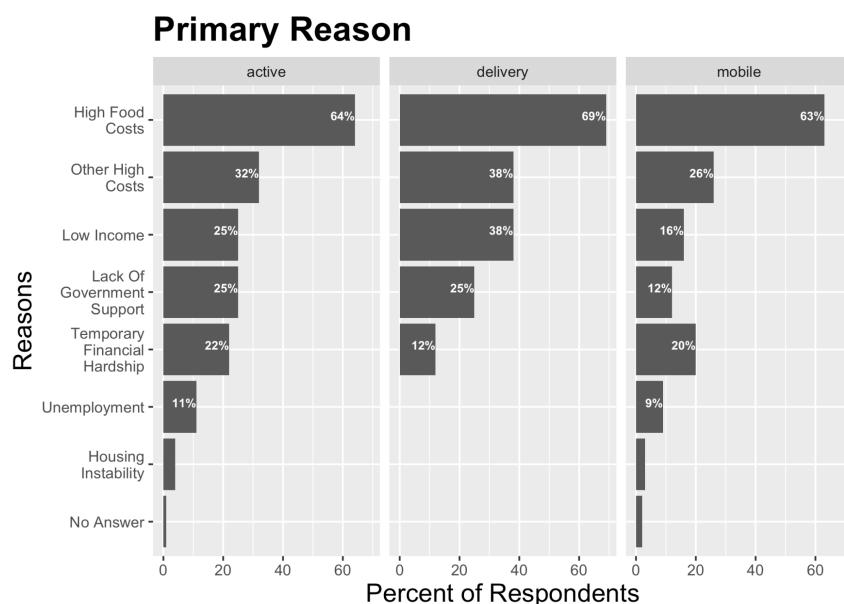
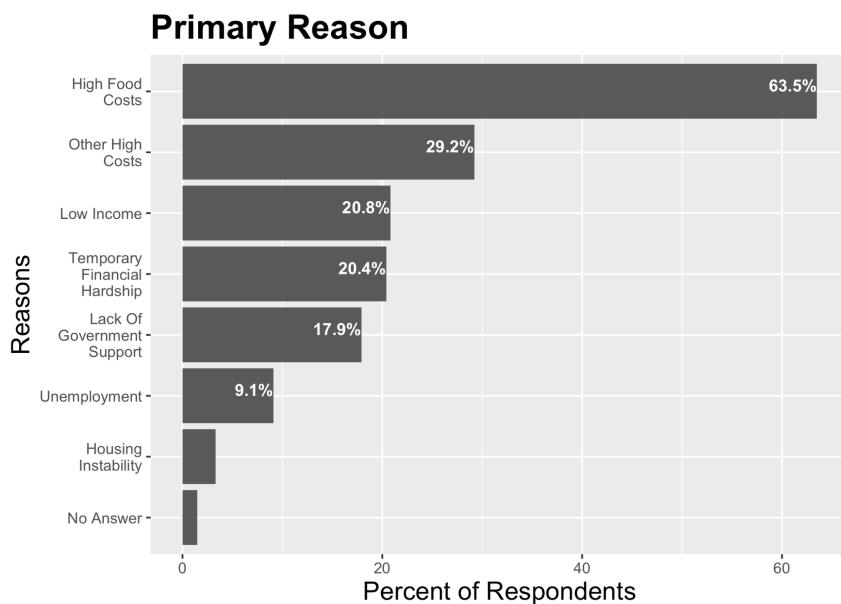
Question 2: Compared to other sources (groceries, takeout, other food pantries, ...), how much does WCC contribute to your food needs?

Overall, the WCC's services most often contribute a moderate amount towards clients' food needs. Overall the second most often response was that WCC contributed only a small amount towards food needs and third was a majority amount. When broken up by target population, the WCC provided a larger share of food needs for active and delivery which leaned more towards reporting moderate and majority, whereas the trailer clients reported getting a moderate or small amount of their food needs met by the WCC in roughly equal quantities. This may reflect the nature of the mobile trailers, which offer fewer food options and smaller quantities. Verbally during the survey data collection process clients let us know that the food contributions from the pantry change depending on the week and therefore are more variable than what is shown. Sometimes respondents selected more than one option, which could be an attempt to reflect this nuance.



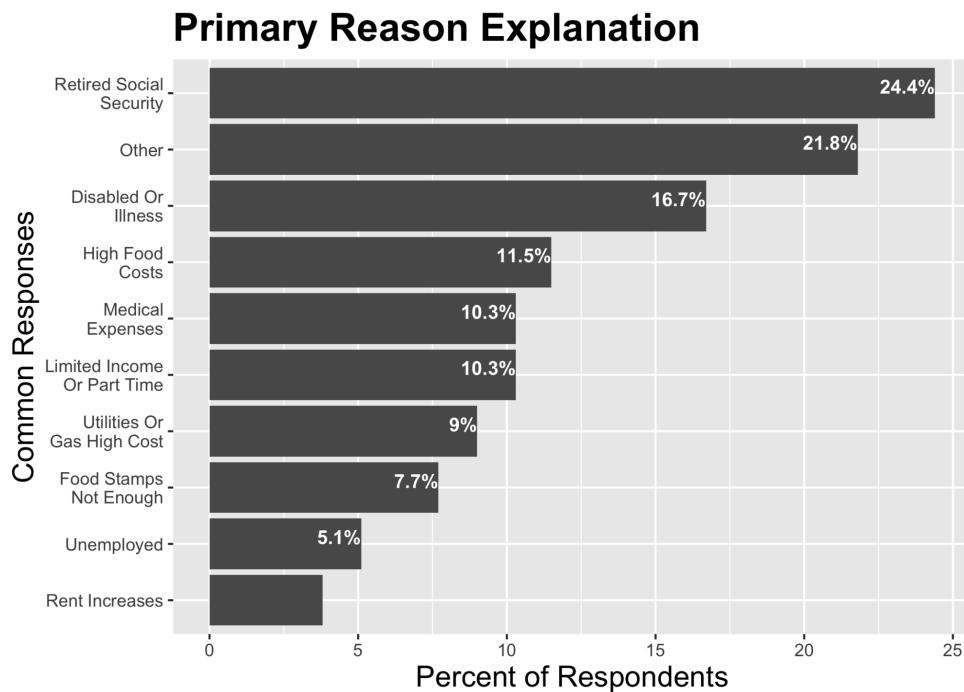
Question 3: What is your primary reason for using the WCC food pantry services?

Respondents most often report high food costs as the reason they use the pantry, with other high costs and low income coming in second and third respectively. These patterns are also seen across target populations. However, mobile pantry clients are more likely to report temporary financial hardship rather than low income. In general mobile pantry clients are less likely to report low income or lack of government support as their primary reasons for using the pantry. This may indicate, along with other findings on food contributions and government assistance, that the mobile pantries serve a larger demographic of those in need that may not be served by other assistance programs with stricter requirements. Though this question was worded as the “primary reason”, respondents often checked off multiple options.



Question 3: Please Explain Further (Primary Reason)

78 people responded with further explanations about their primary reasons for coming to the pantry. This represents a little less than a third of the total survey respondents for active, delivery and mobile. The totals in the graph below are over 100% because respondents often included more than one reason for why they came to the pantry. The most common was being retired and relying on social security income, which was often reported to be insufficient to meet people's needs. Since almost 40% of survey respondents were over the age of 65 across the entire survey, the high retirement totals are expected. Around 17% were disabled or were struggling with illness such as cancer. Some reported being on disability but again, the funds they received from the government were insufficient. In echoing the multiple choice above, around 12% reported high food costs. 10% reported struggling due to large medical expenses. Around 10% reported being on a fixed income or only working part time. 9% of respondents specifically mentioned the high costs of heat and other utilities as well as gas (it was not clear if this is referring to gas for their cars or for heating their homes). Around 8% mentioned support through food stamps being inadequate to fully meet their food needs. Lastly, several explicitly mentioned unemployment and rent increases as reasons for needing additional support. Though not included, a few mentioned inflation and the overall rising costs of living that made it difficult to make ends meet.



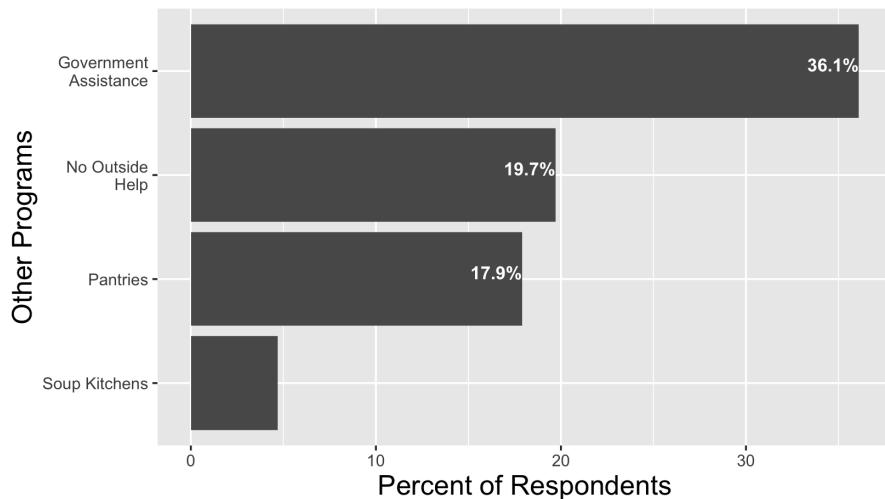
“I'm a widow on SS and this food bank has been a huge blessing!”

“usually don't have enough money for food and bills so I have to choose which one I go without so its usually food or always food”

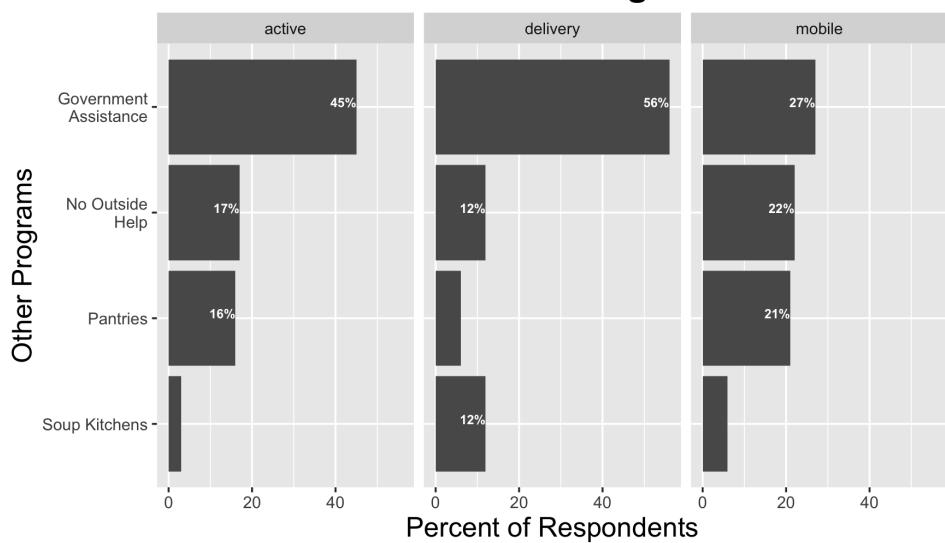
Question 4: Do you use other food assistance programs besides WCC sites (including the food pantry in Winslow and the Mobile Pantry / food trailer sites)?

Almost 40% of all respondents used government assistance and only around 20% did not use outside help. The way the question was worded, skipping it would indicate that you did not use outside help as there was no checkbox labeled “no outside help”. Therefore, the statistics on those who don’t use outside help may be off as we have no way to differentiate between those who truly do not use outside help and those who skipped the question. When splitting by target population we see that mobile pantry clients use government assistance at a much lower rate than active or delivery clients. Mobile pantry users are more likely to not use outside help or use other unaffiliated food pantries. This may indicate that the mobile pantries serve those in need who may not necessarily qualify for government assistance.

Other Food Assistance Programs



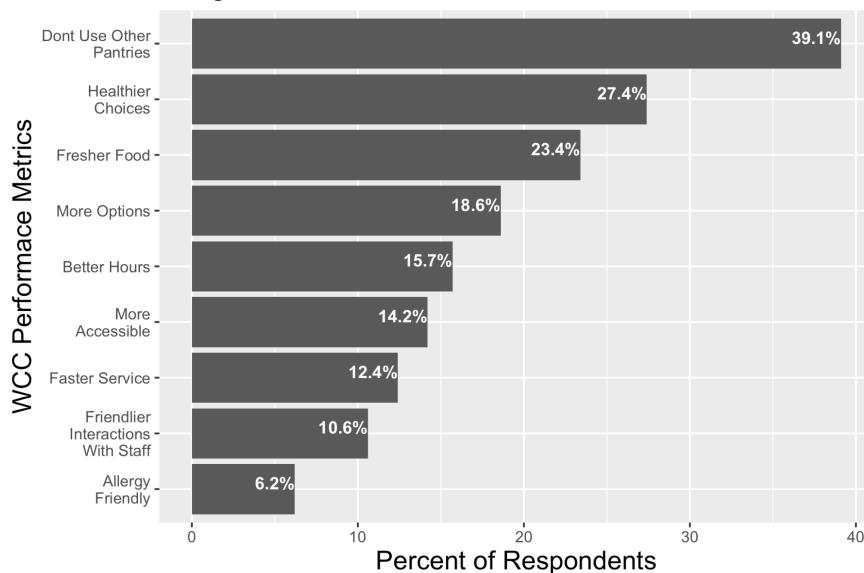
Other Food Assistance Programs



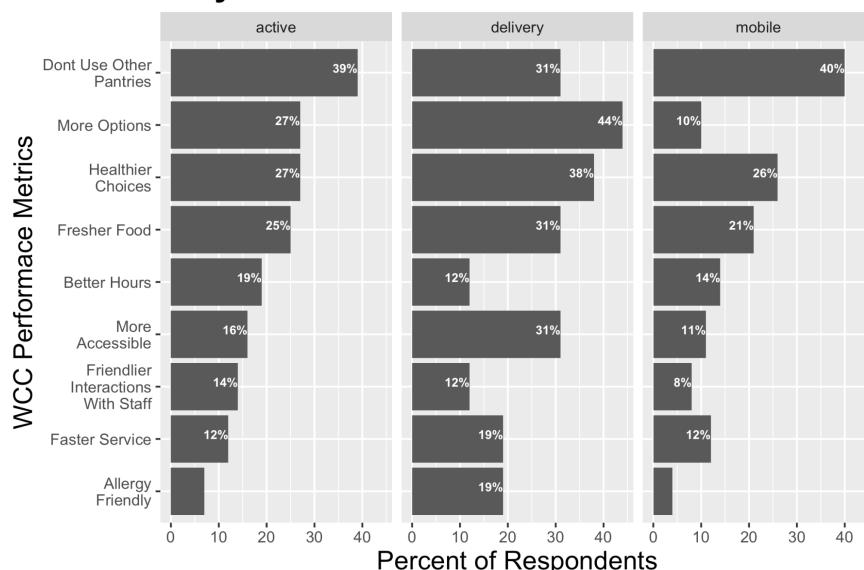
Question 5: If you have used other non-WCC food pantries, how do they compare to WCC services? Please consider all of the WCC services and pantries you have attended in the past 6 months when answering.

The way the question was worded, we interpreted no response to mean that the respondent had never used other non-WCC food pantries. A stronger survey design would include a negative “I don’t use other pantries” in order to differentiate between those who simply did not respond and those who truly do not use other pantries. For those who did respond, active and delivery participants chose the WCC because of the increased options and healthier choices it provides. Delivery clients were much more likely to select that the WCC is more accessible which makes sense given it provides an option for delivery that other pantries may not. Mobile pantry clients were less likely to select “more options” which again makes sense given the smaller number of offerings at the trailer sites.

Why the WCC over Other Pantries



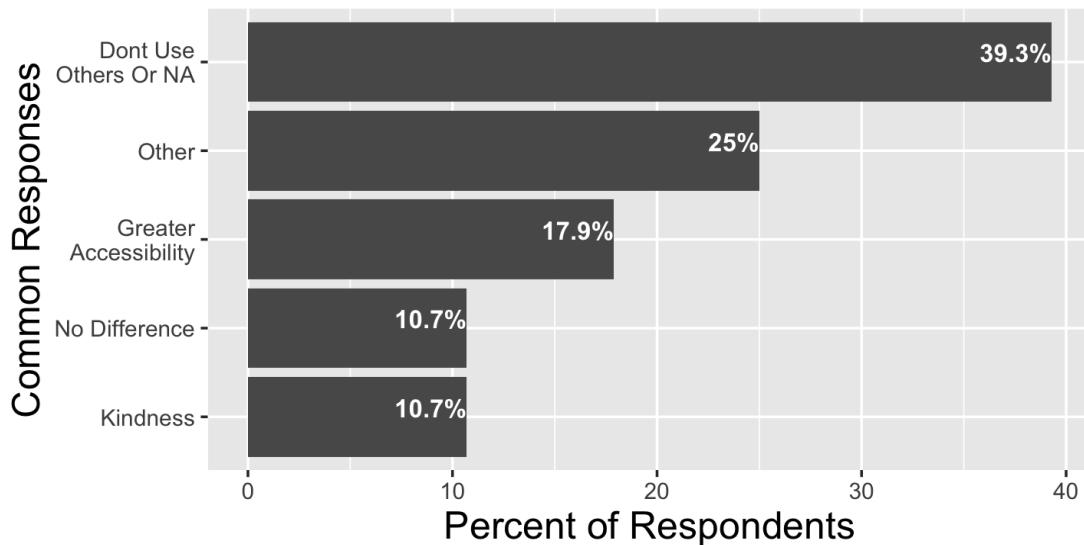
Why the WCC over Other Pantries



Question 5: Please Explain Further (Comparing Pantries)

Out of the 28 people who chose to further explain their reasons for choosing the WCC, around 40% shared that they don't use other pantries. Around 18% emphasized the accessibility of the WCC pantry, sharing that the “*Drive through is easy*” or that the delivery option makes getting food more accessible. Some shared that the layout of the pantry and the ability to pick their own items made the WCC more accessible: “*food all out + easy, able to get + pick your own item*”. There was one respondent who shared not knowing what the WCC is. This was a sentiment that students who surveyed in person at the mobile sites also observed. Some clients may not understand that the mobile site is affiliated with the WCC and therefore, in future surveys the wording should be more clear and centered around the current site that the client is at. People in the other category include those who shared that the WCC is “*just better for me*” or that the selections are healthier than what they could afford themselves. One respondent mentioned coming to the WCC in order to see people in the community.

Further Explanations in Comparing Pantries

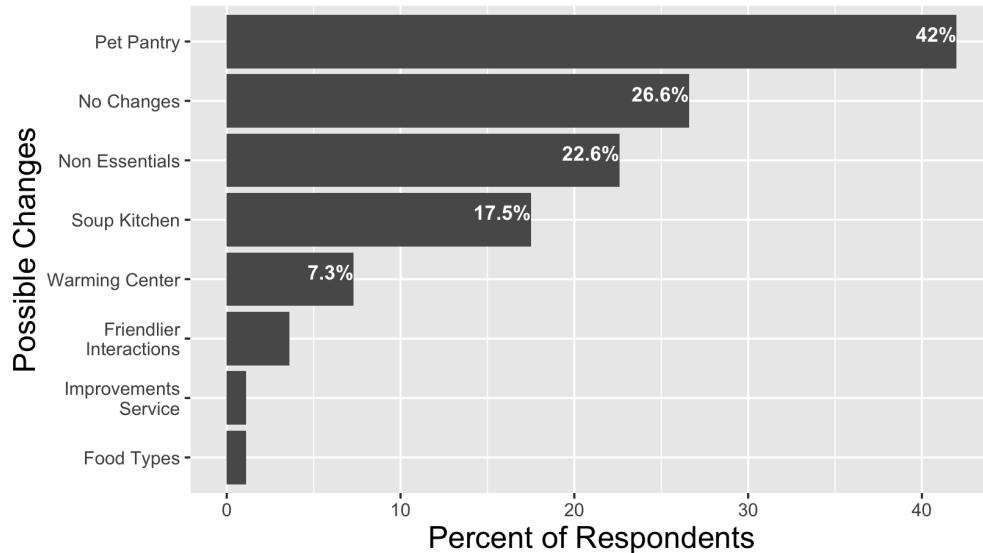


Question 6: Would you like to see any additions or changes to WCC service or programs?

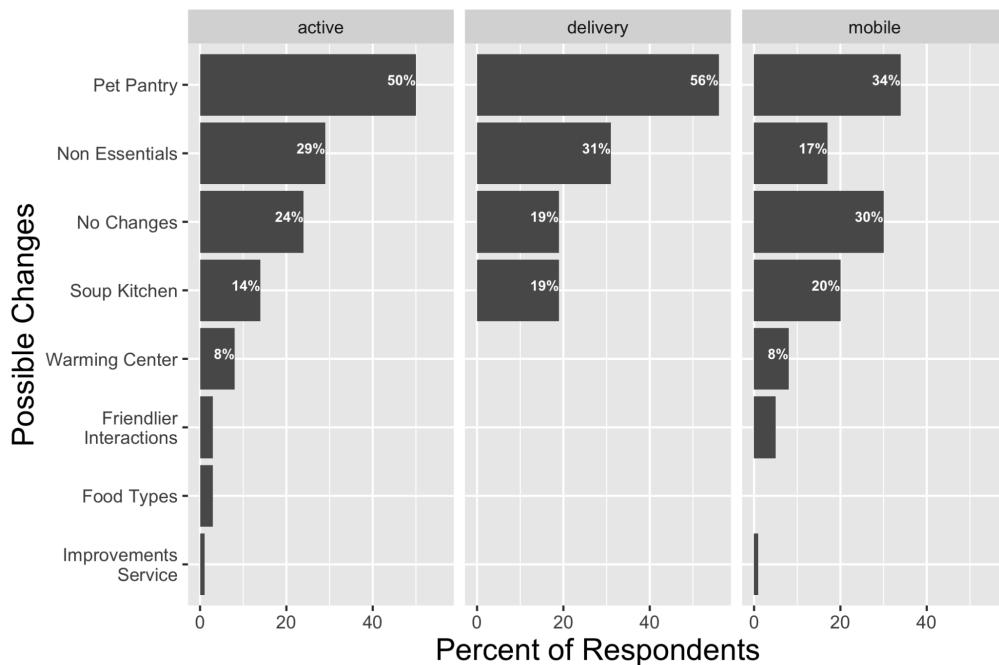
Over 40% of respondents indicated they would like a pet pantry. Around 27% do not feel the WCC needs any changes. Again, the way the question was worded, we assumed those who skipped the question did not want any changes. It is hard to differentiate between those who accidentally skipped the who or chose not to respond and those who feel the pantry does not need any changes. 23% would like a non-essentials pantry and 18% requested a soup kitchen. When splitting by target population, 50% of the active population requested a pet pantry and 56% of the delivery population as well. This indicates that there is a lot of support for adding in

additional services to support pets. Mobile pantry clients were less likely to request a pet pantry but more likely to request a soup kitchen than active and delivery clients. Mobile pantry clients were also less likely to request a non-essentials pantry than active and delivery.

What Changes Would you Like

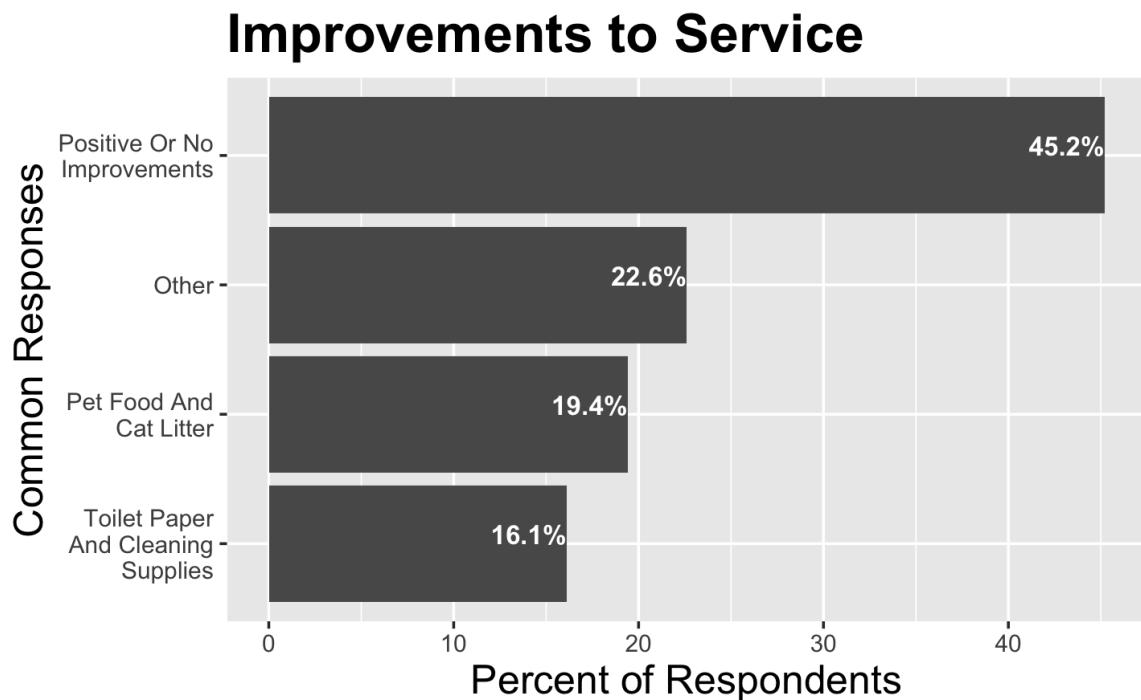


What Changes Would you Like

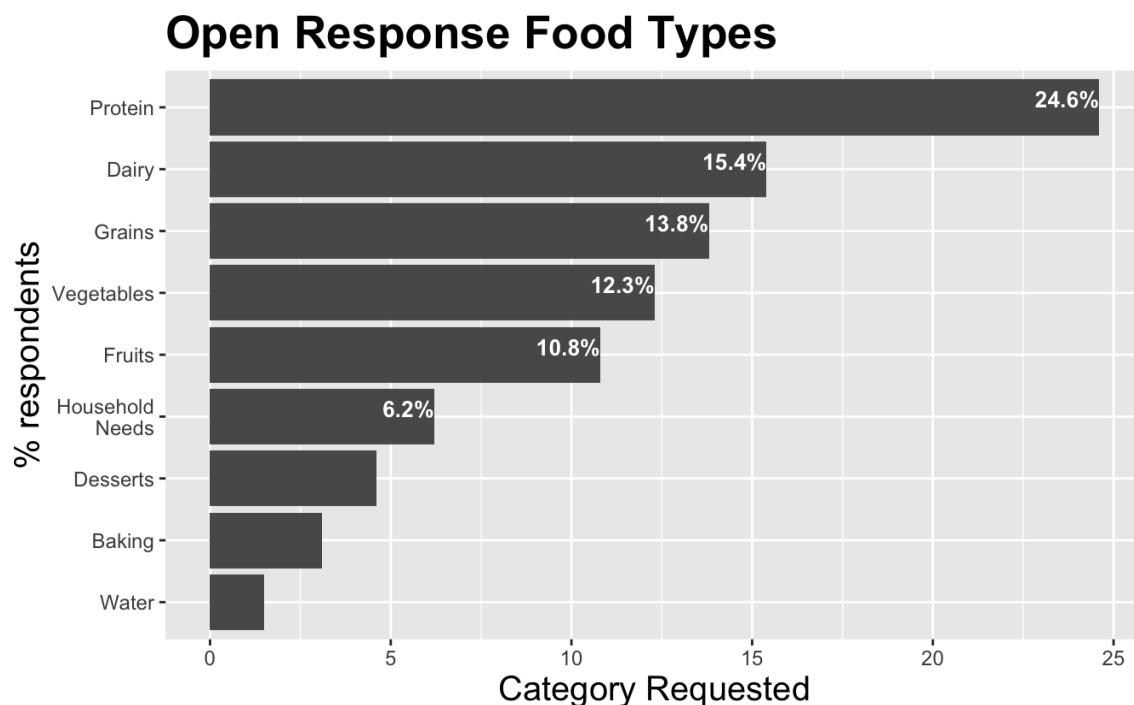


Question 6: continued

31 respondents filled in the open response question regarding improvements to service. Of this amount, around 45% mentioned positive experiences and gratitude for the existence of the WCC. Around 20% further emphasized a desire for having a pet pantry through specifically requesting pet food, cat litter or listing the number of pets they own. One respondent shared that “ *I have 1 dog and put her first she's my baby. Sometimes lately I have to choose between her and I and may not need to if this was a option.* ” This demonstrates the desire within the community to have support for pets. Lastly a number of people requested toilet paper and cleaning supplies such as paper towels and laundry soap.



We asked the question “More types of foods or specific items (If so, please explain further)”, and then had a multiple choice section, however, we also had a free response section associated with that table as well. We re-coded each free response as the five food categories listed by the USDA (protein, dairy, grains, vegetables, fruits); as well as household needs, desserts, baking goods, and water. The percentages listed are out of the participants who answered this question, and each percentage represents what percent of respondents included that category in their response. Respondents may have included more than one category in their response.



Children Under 2

Question C1: Do you use other government assistance programs designed for young children (WIC, ...) to help meet the child's needs?

Responses indicated that very few people (9 respondents) use government support programs to help with children under the age of two. The only programs listed were the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

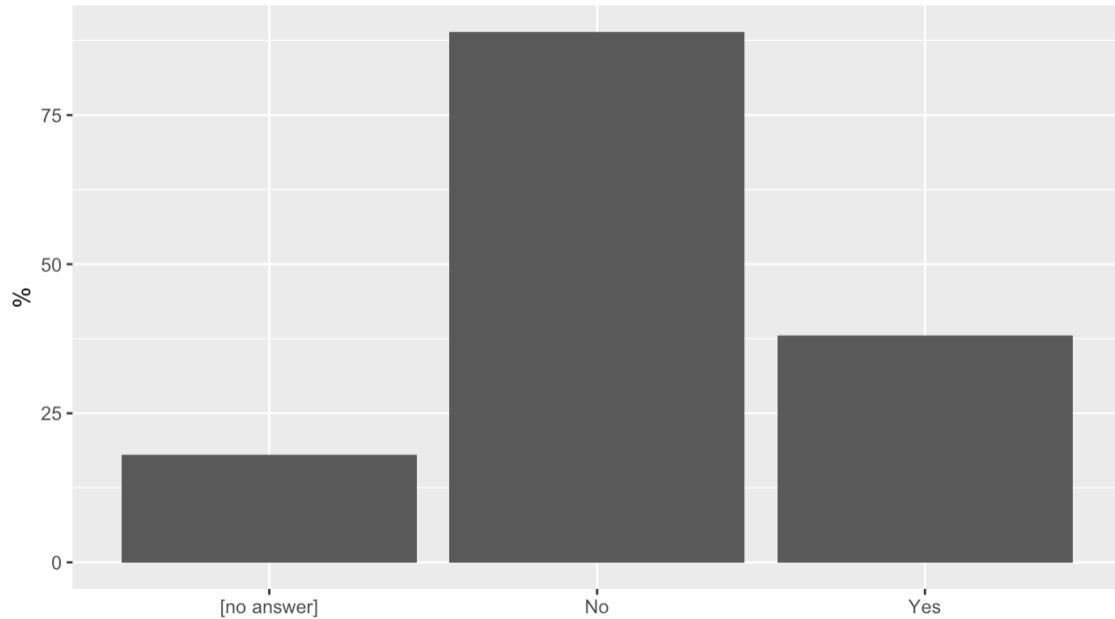
Question C2: What else could we be doing to help meet the child's needs? What type of baby food or formula could we try to provide? What other items could we try to offer more often? (health items, ...)

- Wipes
- Milk-meats
- Pullups
- Tylenol
- Healthy Snack Foods

Trailer

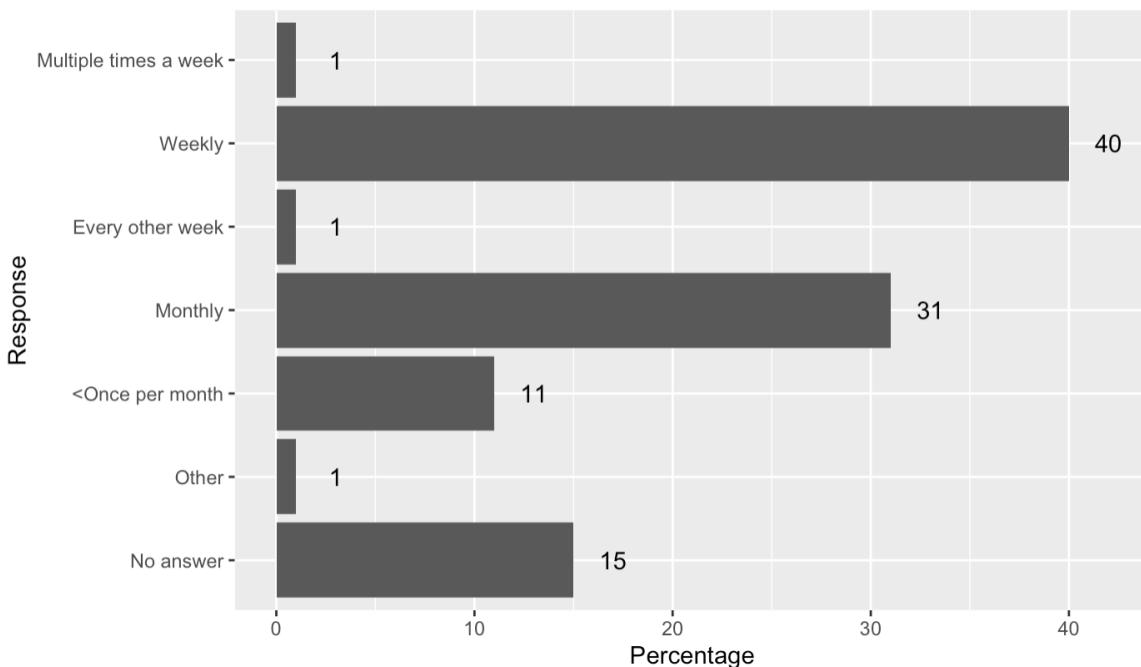
Trailer Question 7: Do you go to multiple WCC Mobile Pantry (food trailer) sites?

The majority of WCC Trailer clients do not go to multiple WCC mobile pantries.



Trailer Question 8: How often do you come to any of the WCC mobile sites?

The majority report going weekly followed by monthly and then less than once per month.



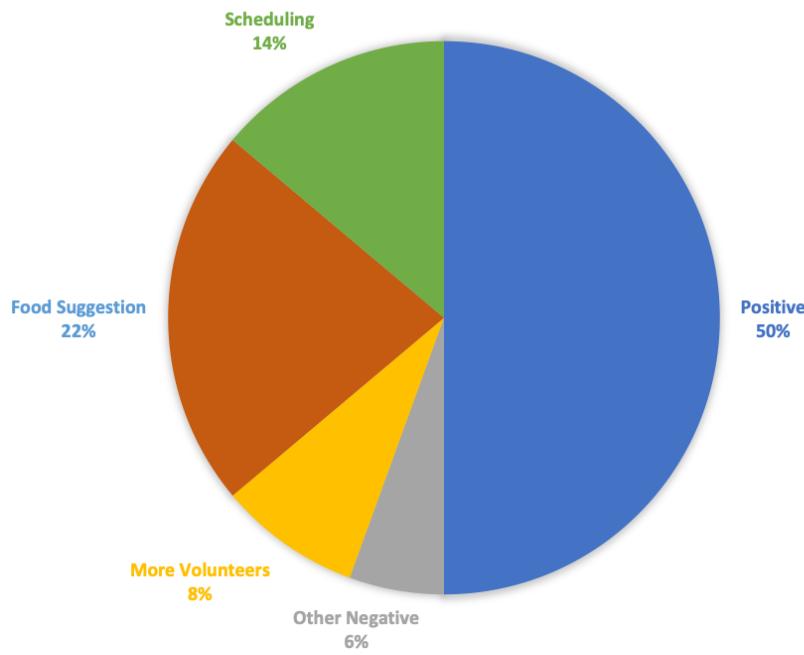
Trailer Question 8 continued: Are there specific reasons for your frequency of visiting?

There seems to be a similar amount of WCC trailer clients who report using the mobile pantries for supplemental food source and closeness to home. Cost of food does not seem to be a primary reason in this population.

Supplemental Food Source	33%
Close to Home	27%
Cost of Food	1%

Trailer Question 9: In what ways do you think we can improve the Mobile Pantry?

Of those who answered this question, 50% of individuals expressed satisfaction, highlighting the organization's successful service. Food variety enhancements, particularly in meat and dairy, were suggested by 22%, while 14% requested more flexible scheduling. An additional 8% saw a need for more volunteers to improve services. Although most feedback was positive, there was a minority calling for better communication and respect towards clients.



Notable responses praising the WCC:

- I am grateful for it as it is now. Thanks so much!
- They're the best, always friendly
- Excellent Service Already
- Keep going (heart emoji)
- It is great!!!!
- I think you do a wonderful job
- really well managed

Responses suggesting more volunteers:

- Volunteers - more of them
- More Volunteers
- Have more volunteers
- More community partners informing clients that WCC is option

Responses regarding scheduling:

- More times in a month
- More sites
- Later Hours
- I guess you could be open more days or longer hours at certain places

Responses with food suggestions:

- More meat products
- More dry goods
- More bread + hot dog rolls
- Maybe more green veggies, but anything is good
- Going good so far - thank you. Maybe more canned foods?
- Fruits and veggies was a huge help maybe milk and meat as it gets colder.
- Canned foods more cheese + butter

Negative responses:

- Sometimes we don't know when they're canceled + rescheduled
- Often I have been scolded for taken 2 of items. I'm fine with just one but there are three in my household.
- Make sure the food provided hasn't already spoiled.
- Communicate, label amounts periods, treat people with respect , don't be glib and superficial

Other notable responses:

- Put out donated goods (maybe from churches or other groups) , maybe laundry detergent, laundry cards, etc.

Trailer Question 10: Is there anything else you would like us to know? Would you like to provide any additional details about the questions above?

The feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with community members valuing the accessibility and the provision of fresh food, and some highlighting their role in sharing with those in need. While praises for the service and its impact were common, there were suggestions for improved worker patience and consistent operating hours.

Positive feedback

- I appreciate the fact that this location is open to the public while I don't qualify for food assistance I use this food to cook + share regularly with seniors + others who struggle with prices + I share the joy of being able to cook + visit
- WCC is amazing
- Very much pleased with the help in food and food items
- This is a great service to the communities because they don't ask a lot of questions like some of the pantries.
- Thank you. The help in getting fresh veggies and fruit is much appreciated.
- No thank you. You guys are amazing. God bless you all donors and volunteers
- It's very welcoming & easily accessible
- I really appreciate what I get here because it helps to supplement and help stretch money.
- I'll pray God blesses everyone.
- No (said by 7 individuals)
- Great job! Thank you!
- Helping elderly people is helpful thank you

Negative feedback

- Some of the workers here could have a little more patience and maybe be a little friendlier
- I don't go to other sites because the hours keep changing

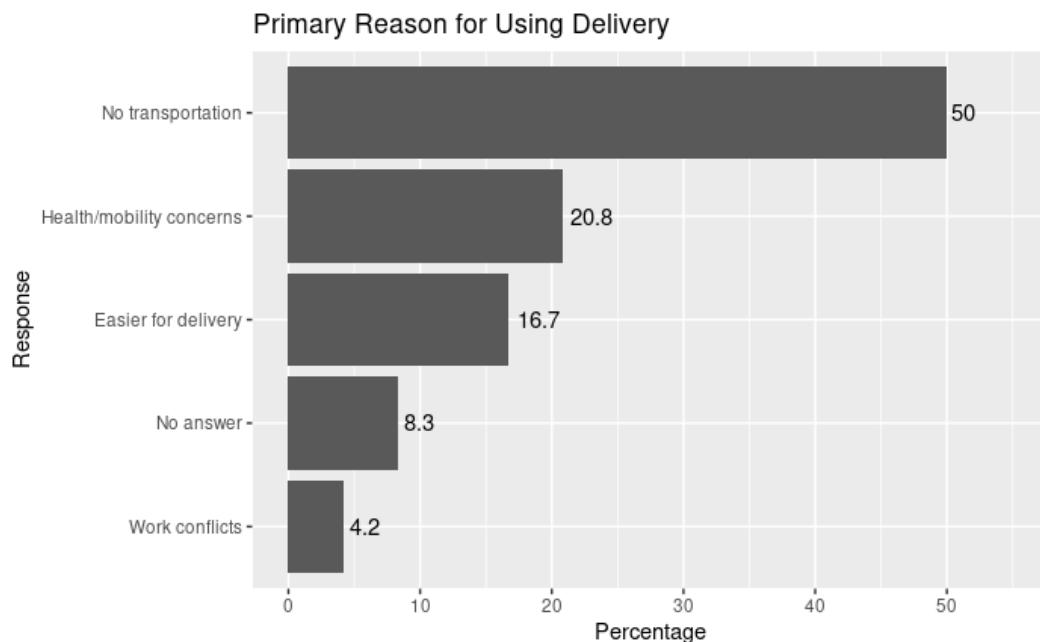
Other notable comments

- A place to bring good used clothing to give away

Delivery

Delivery Question 7: What is the primary reason you choose delivery instead of attending the WCC in person?

Responses indicate that the most prominent reason for using delivery is the respondents' lack of transportation (50.0%). This is emphasized in the write-in responses where respondents describe their lack of transportation or inability to drive. Other reasons for delivery instead of attending WCC in person are health and mobility concerns (20.8%), having it be easier for them to have the WCC deliver the food (16.7%), and work conflicts (4.2%) No responses were recorded for the reasons of Childcare responsibilities, Concerns about privacy and associated stigma when visiting in person, and Don't like to wait in the line at WCC.



Other Write-In Responses

- No transportation
- I thank you so much I don't own a car, and can't drive

Delivery Question 8: How often do you get WCC food delivered?

Respondents reported they order delivery either every time the food bank is open (35.3%) or every other time/once a month (35.3%). The higher frequencies of delivery (either every time the food bank is open, or every other time) are the most popular.

Delivery Q8	%
Every time the food bank is open	35.3
Every other time (once a month)	35.3
Every 2-4 months	5.9
Less often than every 4 months	0
No answer	23.5

Delivery Question 9: In what ways do you think we can improve the food deliveries?

Respondents gave mainly positive feedback and are thankful for the delivery services provided by the WCC. A suggestion by a respondent was to have increments of deliveries every 2 weeks.

Responses provided:

- Every 2 weeks
- None, you all do so very good. Thank you!
- Be safe upstairs, keep doing a wonderful job, thank you.
- They are great
- None

Delivery Question 10: Is there anything else you would like us to know? Would you like to provide any additional details about the questions above?

Respondents are very grateful and thankful for the WCC and the services they are providing, no further comments.

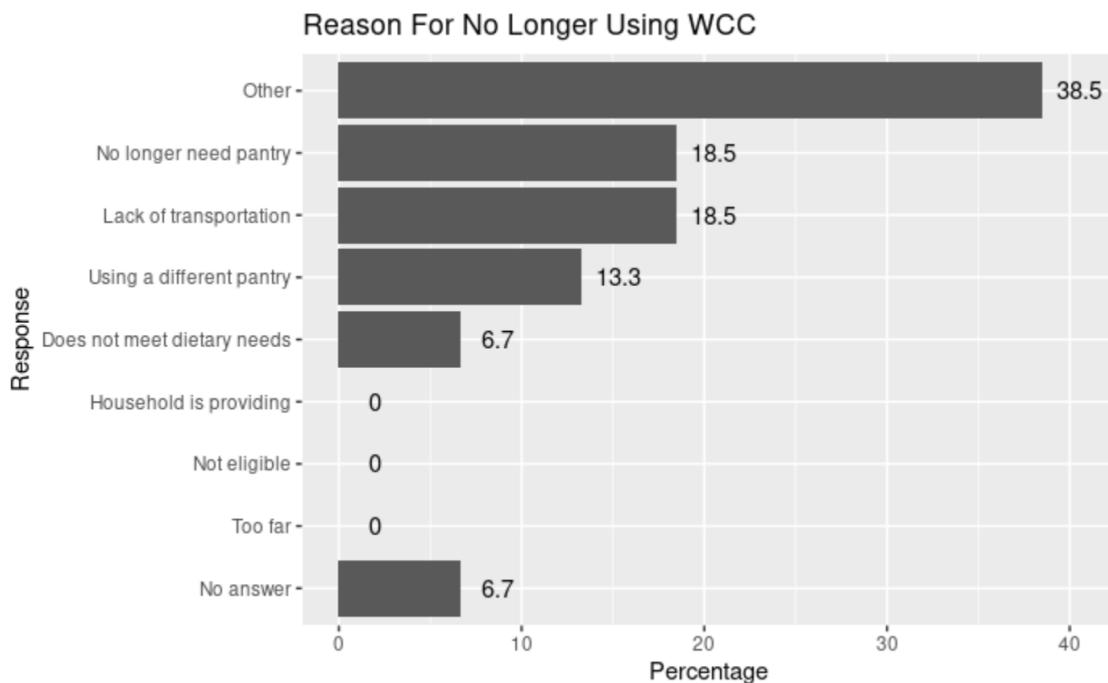
Responses provided:

- Very thankful for everyone's services
- Please know how thankful we are for you! Your time, dedication and hard work plus your sacrifices improve so many lives including mine. Thank you!
- I feel that you are all angels for providing this lovely very needed service!
- Thank you for your help!
- No

Inactive

Question 1: Why did you stop attending WCC?

Some inactive clients no longer need the services of food pantries. For those who stopped attending for other reasons, inactive clients report using different food pantries, a lack of transportation, and that the WCC food options do not meet their needs. However, most inactive clients reported other reasons as to why they have stopped attending. Common reasons include having conflicting times with the WCC schedule and not knowing the WCC schedule. Many inactive clients reported having conflicting times with the WCC.



Other reasons provided:

- Do not know the WCC schedule
- Cannot do the scheduled hours/days
- Though I do qualify, I feel that others have more need than I at this time
- Changed our consumption of food to better quality

Which of these was your primary reason?

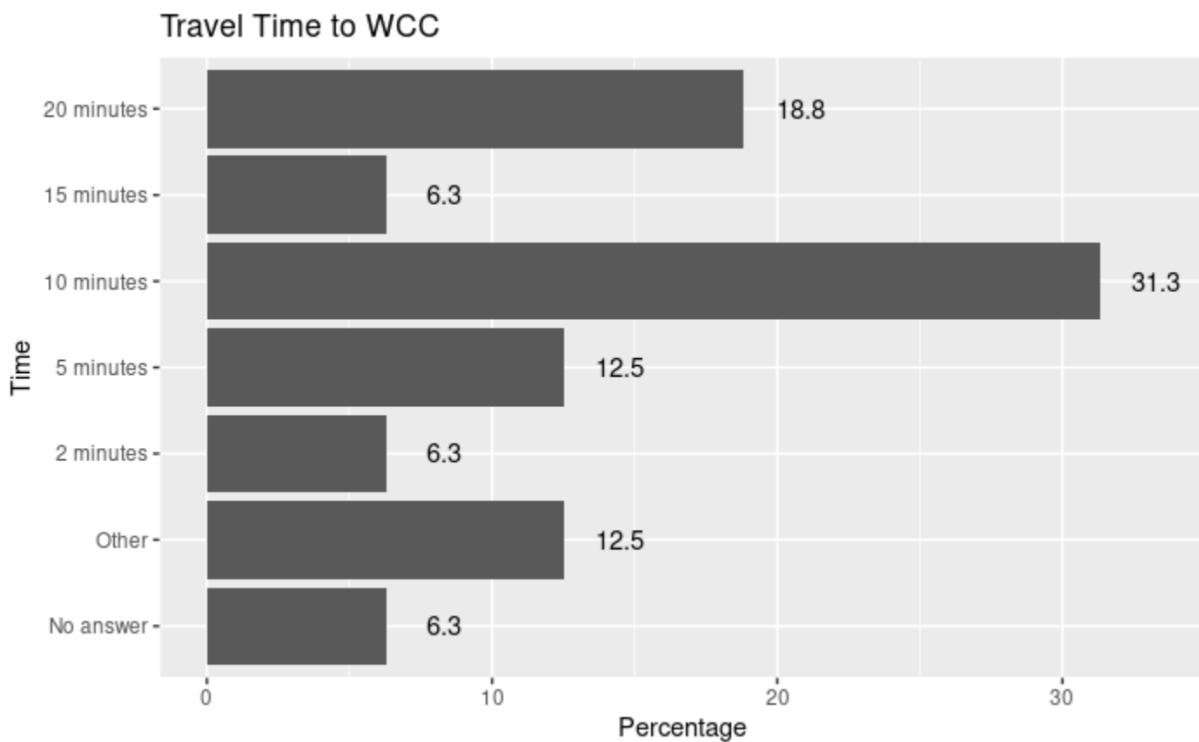
- Too busy
- Not needed at this time
- Lack of transportation
- Limited income
- Conflicting schedule with the WCC

Please explain further:

- Too busy working
- Disability limits freedom and prevents me from getting to the WCC
- Buying as much whole food as possible. Will use WCC if needed again.
- No car
- Open times for pantry conflict with my ability to get there

Question 2: When you attended WCC, how long did it take you to travel to a WCC site to pick up food?

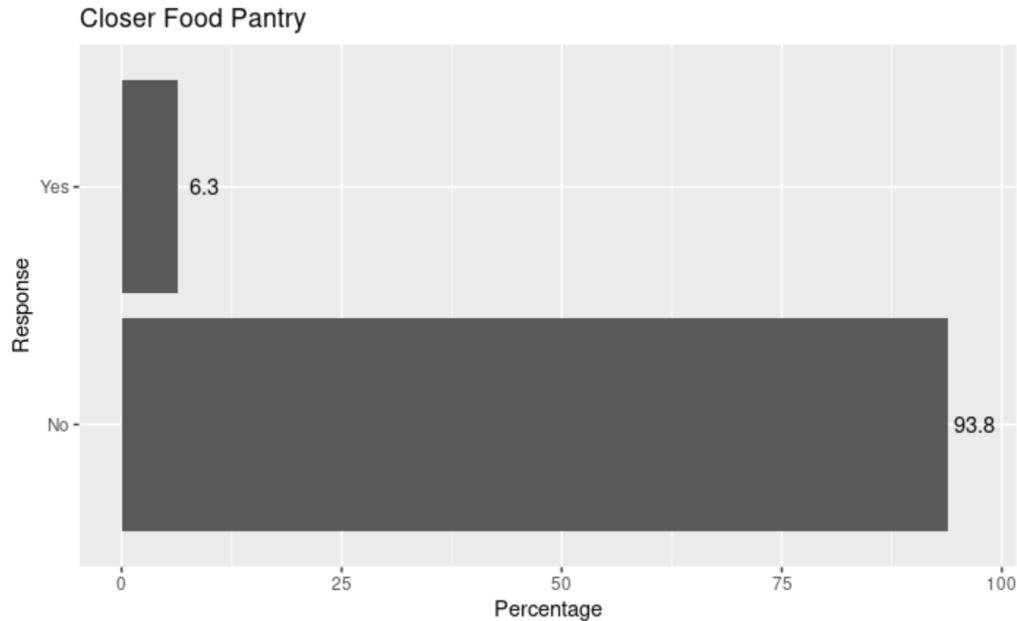
The majority of former WCC clients were able to travel to the WCC within 10 or fewer minutes.



Question 3: Were there other food pantries that were closer to you?

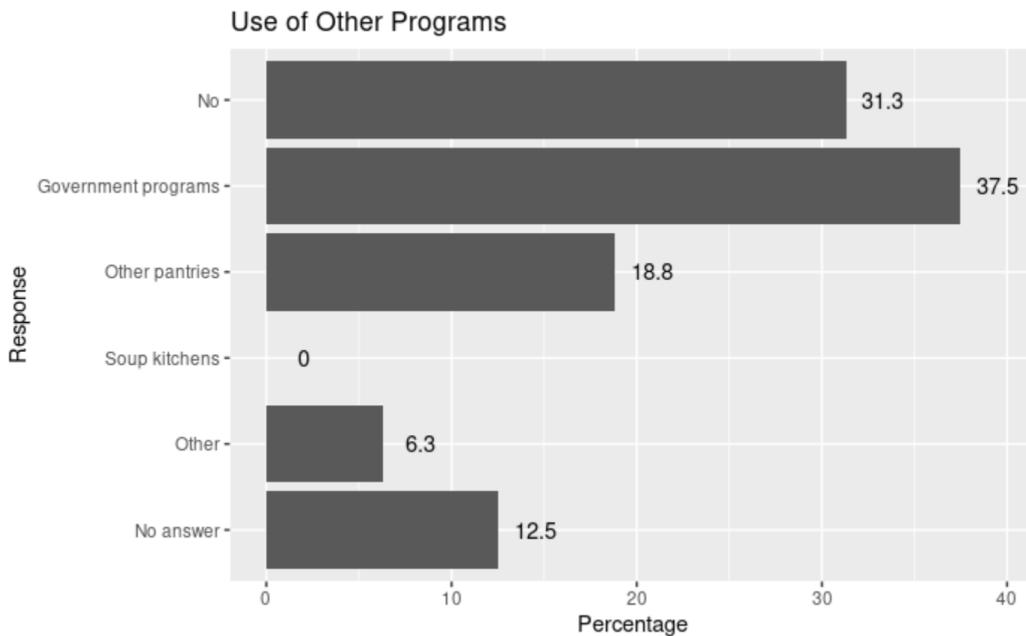
The majority of WCC inactive clients do not have food pantries that are located closer to them.

The location of the WCC does not seem to impact the attendance of the inactive clients.



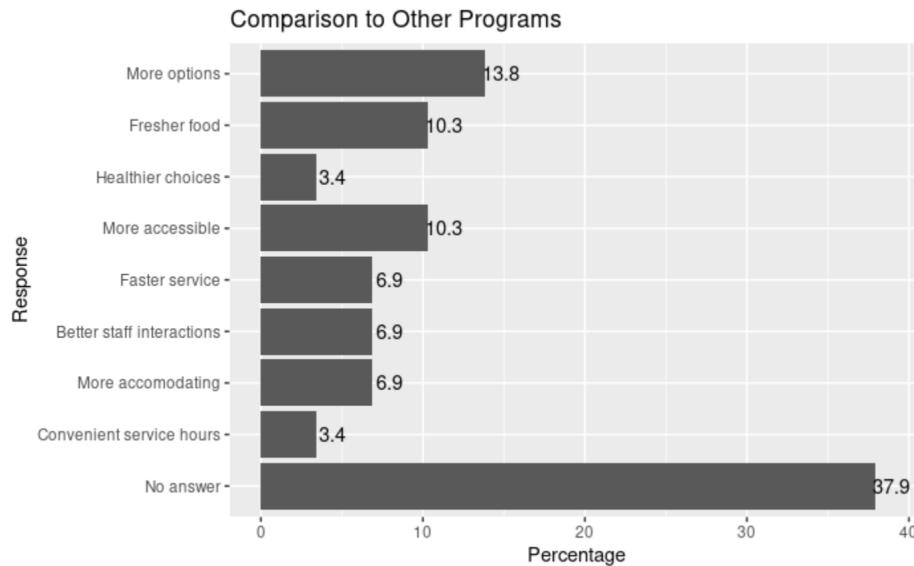
Question 4: Have you used other food assistance programs besides WCC?

Many inactive WCC clients have not used other food assistance programs. Of the inactive clients that have used other food assistance programs, government assistance programs are the most common answer, followed by other food pantries.



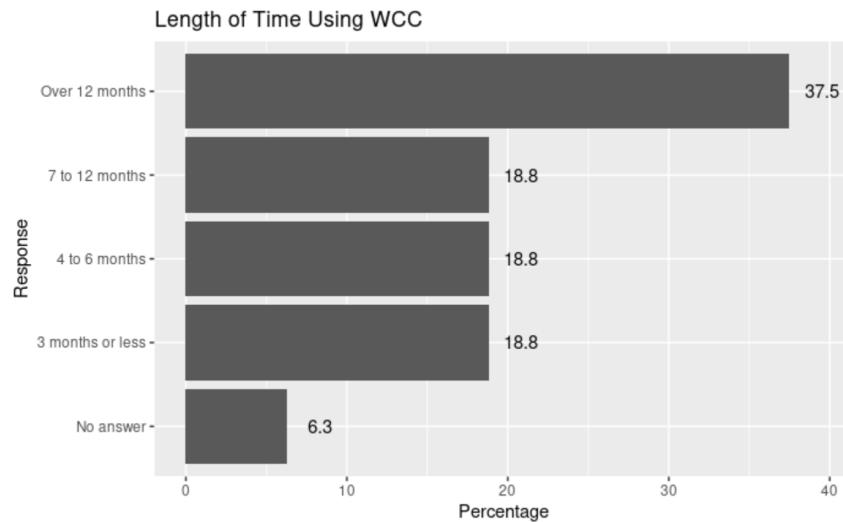
Question 5: If you have used other non-WCC food pantries, how do they compare to WCC services?

We asked respondents to elaborate upon their answer to Question 4. However, explanations did not differ from what was stated earlier in the General Questions section. Common responses include that the WCC offers healthier choices, fresher food, plenty of options, and that the WCC is more accessible. Inactive respondents do not often report that the WCC has convenient service hours, which is consistent with previous questions.



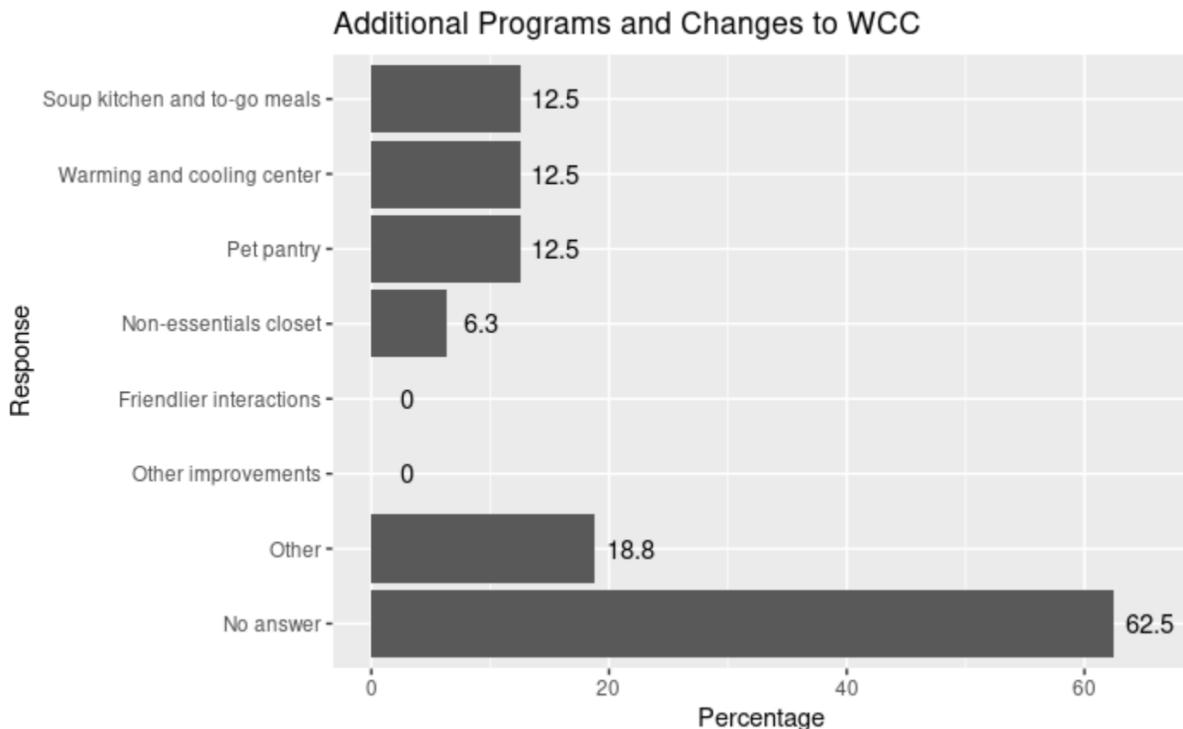
Question 6: How long did you use WCC services before you stopped?

The length of attendance at the WCC is varied across inactive clients. Inactive clients most frequently reported that they used the WCC for over 12 months. Of those who used the WCC less than 12 months, the inactive clients are spread evenly across 3 months or less, 4 to 6 months, and 7 to 12 months.



Question 7: Are there any additions or changes to WCC service or programs that would bring you back?

Many inactive clients report that their attendance does not have much to do with the performance of the WCC. Of those that report wanting additional programs, the soup kitchen, warming/cooling center, and pet pantry received an equal amount of responses. If the WCC is to add more food items, low salt options, fresh fruit and vegetables, and dairy products are requested.



Other reasons provided:

- My attendance had nothing to do with the performance of the WCC
- Do not need services right now

If so, please explain further:

- My schedule conflicts with that of the WCC
- Do not need services right now

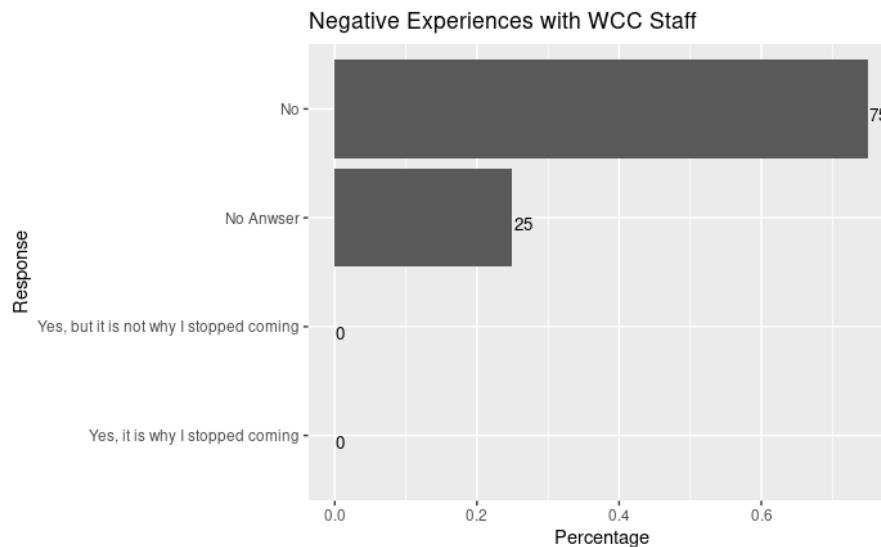
If so, what types of food / specific items?

- More low salt options
- Fresh fruit and vegetables
- Dairy products

Section A: Respondents were asked to fill out Section A only if they *have* used another food pantry besides WCC in the last 6 months.

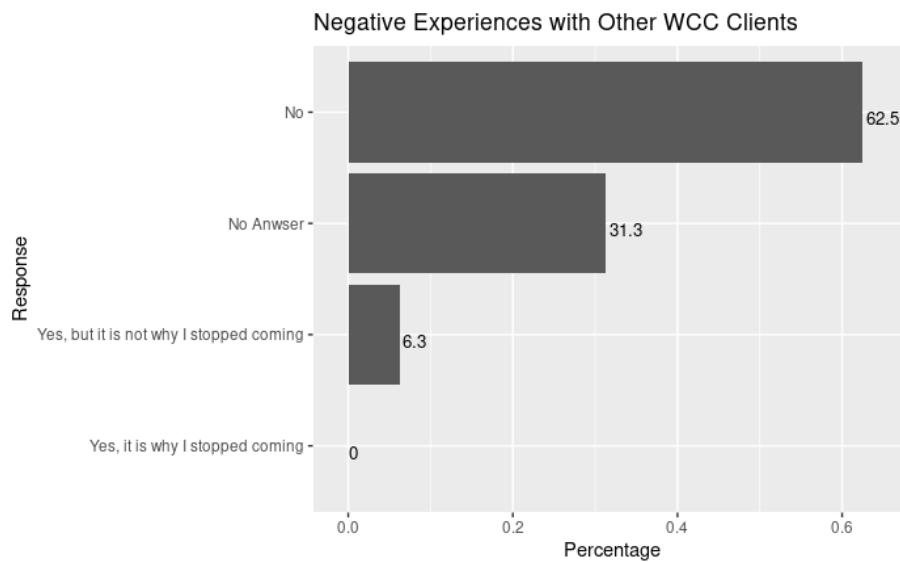
Section A, Question A1: Have you had a negative experience with any WCC staff?

The vast majority of the inactive clients never had a negative experience with any WCC staff. There was not a single response indicating that a respondent had undergone a negative experience with a staff member.



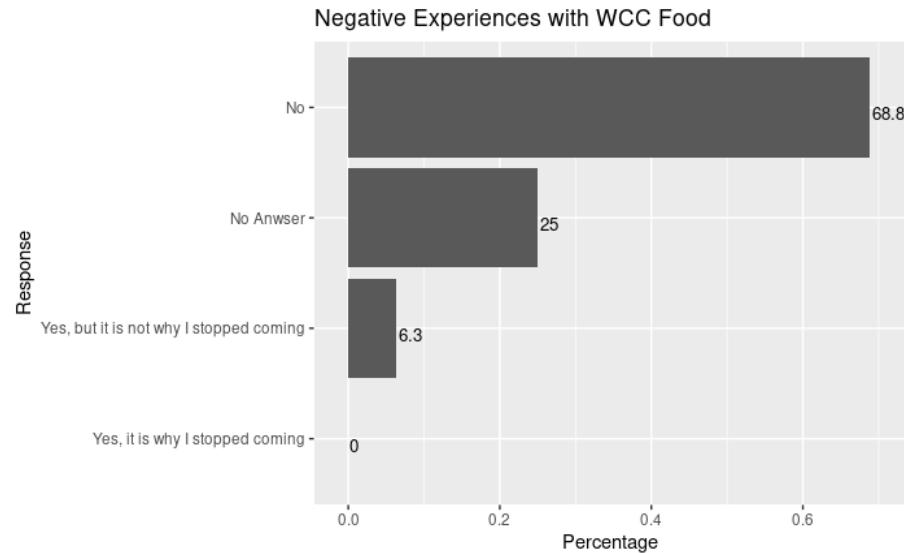
Question A2: Have you had a negative experience with other WCC clients?

The majority of respondents had no negative experiences with another WCC client. One respondent reported that they had undergone a negative experience with another client, but it was not the reason that they stopped attending. No respondent listed a negative experience with another WCC client as the reason why they stopped coming.



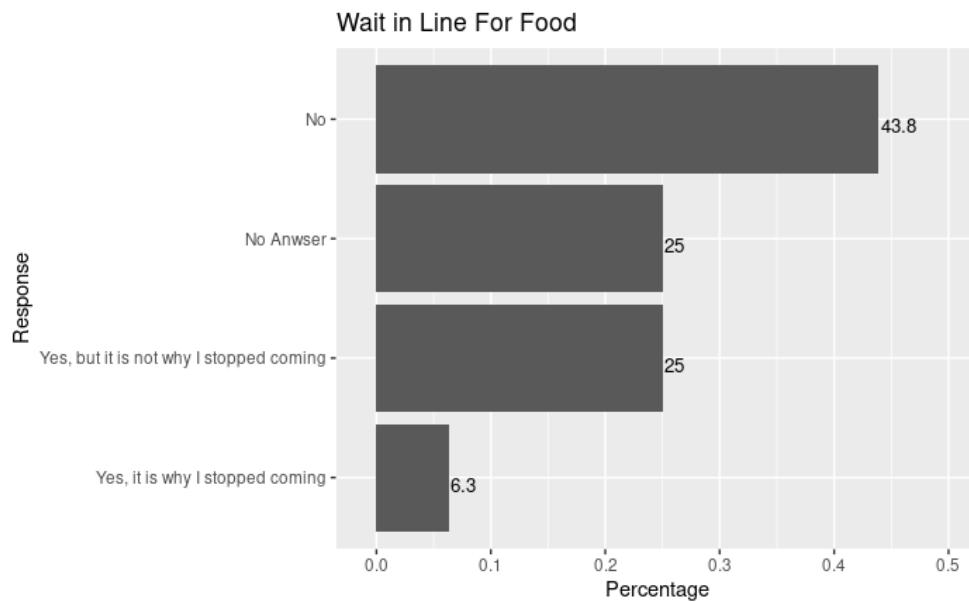
Question A3: Have you had a negative experience with WCC food, such as expired food?

Once again, the majority of respondents had no bad experiences with WCC food, including things like spoiled/expired food. One respondent had a bad experience with food, but it is not why they stopped coming. No respondent listed a bad food experience as the reason why they stopped coming.



Question A4: Have you had to wait a long time in line to get your food at WCC?

There are a range of answers here. About a third of people reported having to wait in lines for their food, but very few respondents listed that as the reason why they stopped coming to the WCC. Slightly under half of the respondents reported no wait.



Question A5: Did you have any other negative experiences with WCC that made you not want to return?

Reasons Provided:

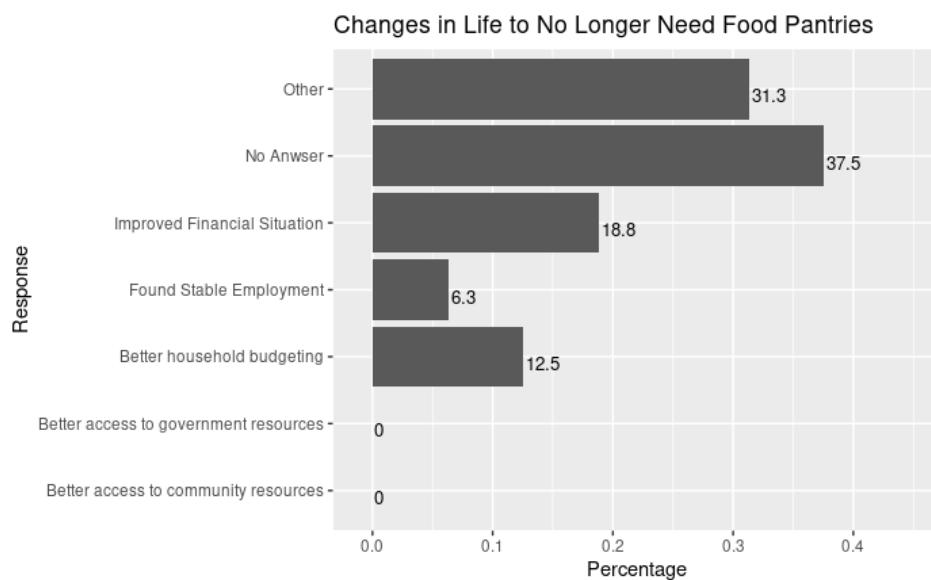
- Simply lack of transportation
- WCC is excellent in every way. Food and non-food items are greatly appreciated. Staff at WCC is always kind and very helpful.

The vast majority of respondents did not answer this question. There were only two responses. One was a positive response towards the WCC, and one involved a lack of transportation.

Section B: Respondents were asked to fill out Section B only if they *have not* used any food pantries in the last 6 months.

Section B, Question B1: What changes in your life led to you no longer needing food pantry services?

Responses here were quite varied. Some cited an improved financial situation, better household budgeting, or stable employment. Other responses had to do with a feeling that their need wasn't as great as others, better meal prepping with items on hand, or once again a lack of transportation. No respondents cited better access to community/government resources.

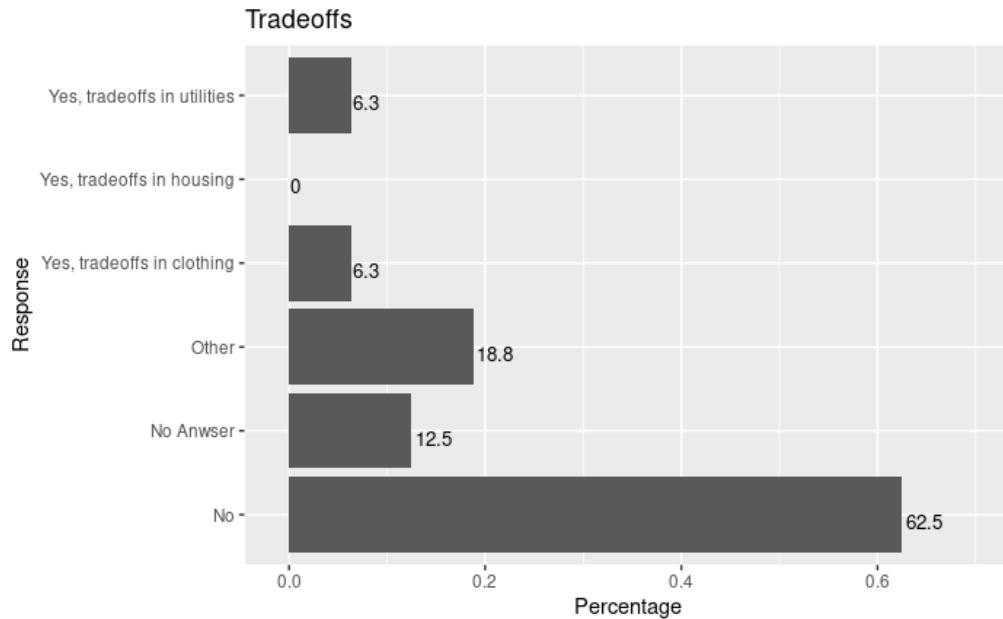


Other Write-In Responses

- I felt that my need was not as great as others
- Trying to better prepare meals with items I have on hand
- Lousy phone connections
- No transportation

Question B2: In order to stop using food pantries, did you have to make tradeoffs in other areas of your life?

The majority of respondents cited no tradeoffs in order to stop using food pantries. A minority cited tradeoffs in utilities or in housing. Various write-in responses cited being more careful with spending on food or household budgeting.



Other Write-In Responses

- More careful with what they spend on food
- Household budgeting - try to be more thrifty
- Sold my car

Question B3: Are there resources you could tell us about that might help other community members who still use WCC?

The majority of responses were either “No” or unanswered. Responses suggested accessing community resources such as St John the Baptist church in Winslow, and encouraging individual contributions to the food pantry. A response also suggested instructional food prep/cooking tutorials, for example, using the ingredients and food items from the WCC.

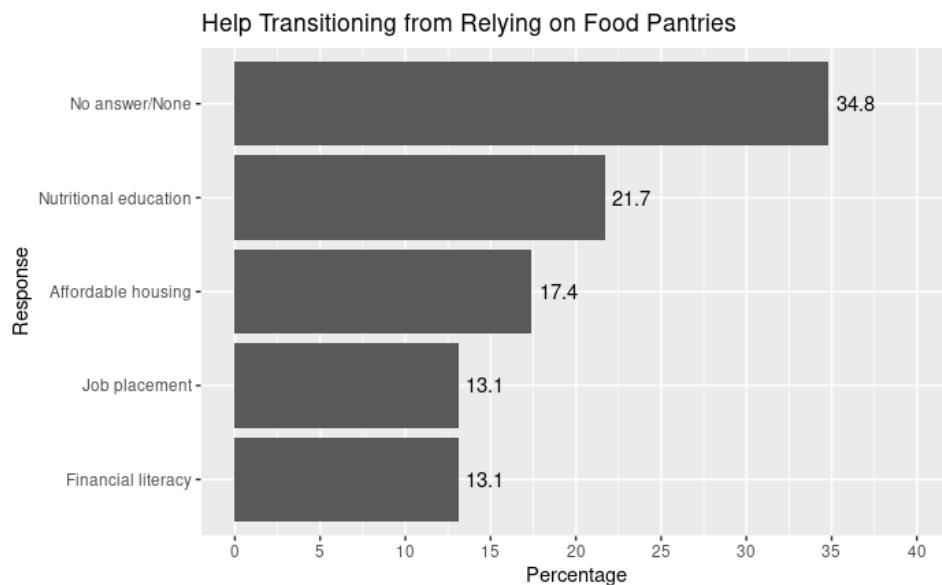
Write-In Responses

- Remember St John’s- we can benefit from visiting you and St John’s
- We will try to keep saving food for the community cupboard. As soon as we have a box full, we again bring it over.

- Those individuals that have a REAL need are those WCC helps tremendously. As with most things, there are those individuals that feel entitled + get everything that's free whether they need it or not.
- I'd love to see food prep/cooking tutorials to teach how to prepare whole foods instead of using processed foods

Question 8: In your opinion, what services or assistance could WCC provide to help people transition away from relying on food pantries?

Questions 8 and 9 were for all respondents, regardless of whether the answered Section A or B. Responses indicate that the most helpful resources when transitioning away from relying on food pantries are nutritional education programs (21.7%) and access to affordable housing resources (17.4%). Other helpful resources suggested were financial literacy workshops and job placement services. The write-in responses stressed the importance of greater education efforts to help those in need, as well as asking for cooking workshops.



Other Write-In responses

- Increase EBT - could use more \$
- Any + all assist to be self-reliant

If so, please explain further:

- Just a reduction in the price of food. People tend to buy only bare essentials and are unable to buy good fruits and veggies due to prices.
- Budget workshops, cooking workshops, farmers market team ups maybe
- I think nutritional programs would help people
- No amount of education is too much when it comes to truly helping those in need

Question 9: Is there anything else you would like us to know? Would you like to provide any additional details about the questions above.

The responses indicate that hands-on training and education on cooking and budgeting would be helpful services the WCC could provide to help people transition away from relying on food pantries. This response is similar to feedback received from Question 8.

Responses provided:

- Unfortunately there are many folks out there who are not domestic. They have little or no skills in meal planning and budgeting. They need hands-on training to teach them how to make homemade soup, biscuits, etc.
- No

Demographics

We report general demographics across the active, delivery, inactive, and mobile pantry clients. To protect anonymity of the low-response groups, we only report the combined demographics for delivery & inactive clients merged with active clients. The population skewed older with over 60% of participants over the age of 55 and almost 40% over 65. Those who filled out surveys were predominantly female. This may indicate that primarily female heads of household pick up food more in general or that those in couples usually had the female partner fill out the form. The population filling out the survey was predominantly white which reflects the general demographics of Maine. Also most respondents lived in private homes.

We compare our survey respondents to baseline numbers from U.S. Census Bureau data from the 2022 American Community Survey, for heads-of-household in Kennebec County households that fell below 185% of the poverty line. This 185% income-to-poverty ratio was chosen to match the eligibility cutoff mentioned in the WCC's intake forms. This specific subset allows for comparison to see that the data we collected was roughly representative of the central Mainers who are eligible for some food assistance.

Demographic Questions: What is your race / ethnicity? What is your primary housing type?

Nearly all our respondents identified as white non-Hispanic and as living in private housing. These answers were given at rates slightly higher and lower, respectively, than Census Bureau estimates for central Maine heads-of-household below 185% of the poverty line.

Demographic of Interest	% white non-Hispanic	% private housing
Census Bureau estimates	91.8%	100%
Our survey: Active/delivery/inactive	98.4%	96.2%
Our survey: Mobile	98.3%	94.8%

Demographic Questions: What is your age? What is your gender?

Our respondents tend to skew older, and women are generally more likely to be the ones filling out the form. We are unsure whether this indicates that women are more likely to fill out the survey or if they're more likely to pick up the food. Perhaps the gender distinction could be better discussed in a future survey. The age seems to trend older, perhaps due to a lack of social security funding.

Age by Sex, from Census Bureau estimates

Age	Male	Female
18 to 24	1%	0.8%
25 to 35	12.1%	7.9%
35 to 44	3.4%	12.1%
45 to 54	6.0%	4.8%
55 to 64	8.1%	6.7%
65+	14.1%	23.1%

Age by Sex, for active/delivery/inactive clients

Age	Male	Female	No Answer for Gender
18 to 24	0%	1.4%	0%
25 to 35	1.4%	2.8%	0%
35 to 44	0%	9.8%	1.4%
45 to 54	1.4%	13.3%	0.7%
55 to 64	9.1%	15.4%	0%
65+	13.3%	24.5%	2.1%
No Answer Age	0%	0%	5.6%

Age by Sex, for mobile pantry clients

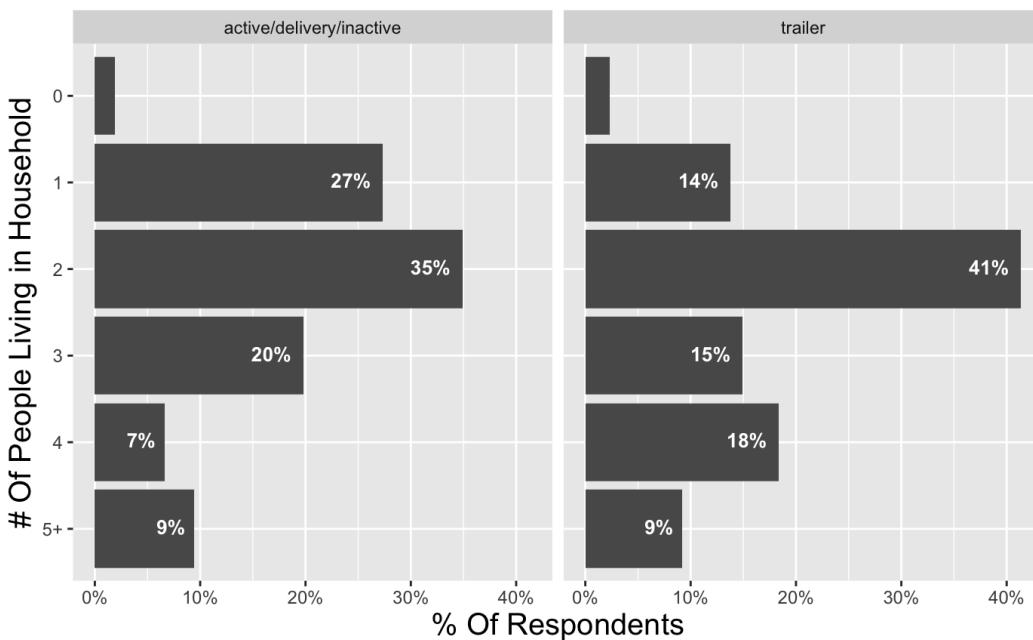
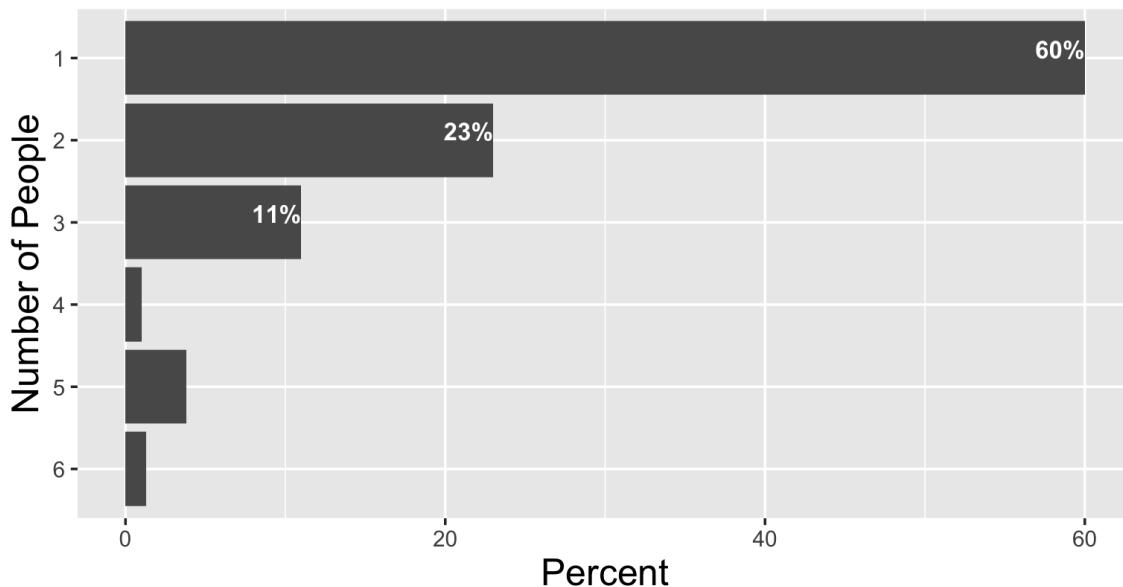
Age	Male	Female	No Answer for Gender
18 to 24	0%	0.7%	0%
25 to 35	0.7%	4.1%	0%
35 to 44	2.1%	9.7%	1.4%
45 to 54	1.4%	6.9%	0.7%
55 to 64	6.2%	15.2%	0%
65+	9.0%	24.8%	2.8%
No Answer Age	0%	0%	9.7%

Demographic Question: How many people live or stay with you, including yourself?

We do not see much difference between the active/delivery/inactive groups vs the mobile clients. However, our survey respondents were more likely to belong to larger households compared to the Census Bureau data: households of size 1 are common among the central Maine population but it appears that the WCC often serves larger households. However, we note with caution that a couple of our survey respondents recorded 0 for the number of people, which we believe to mean 0 other people in the household. This indicates that we could have phrased the question a bit clearer, as it asked for people to count all household members including themselves.

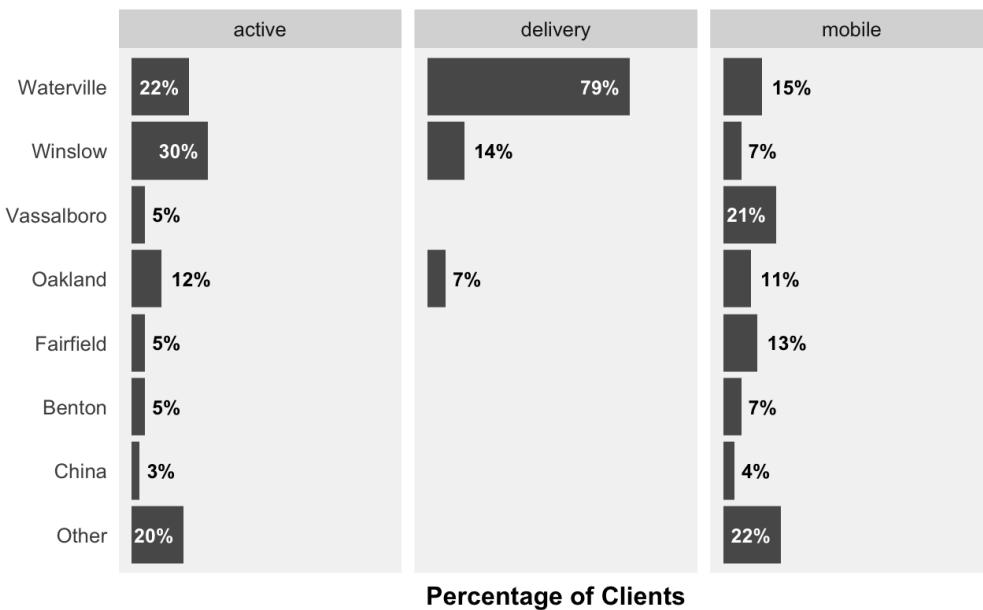
PUMS Number of People per Household

Residents of Kennebec County that make 185% less than the poverty line

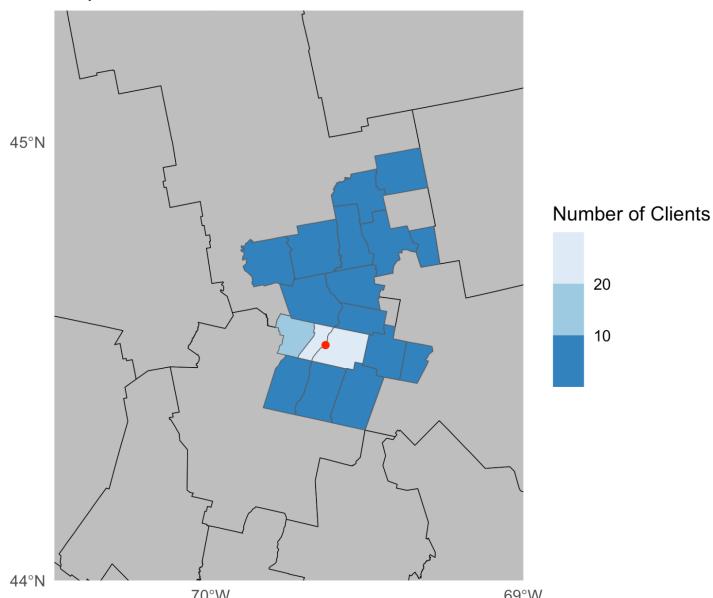


Demographic Question: What is your town of residence?

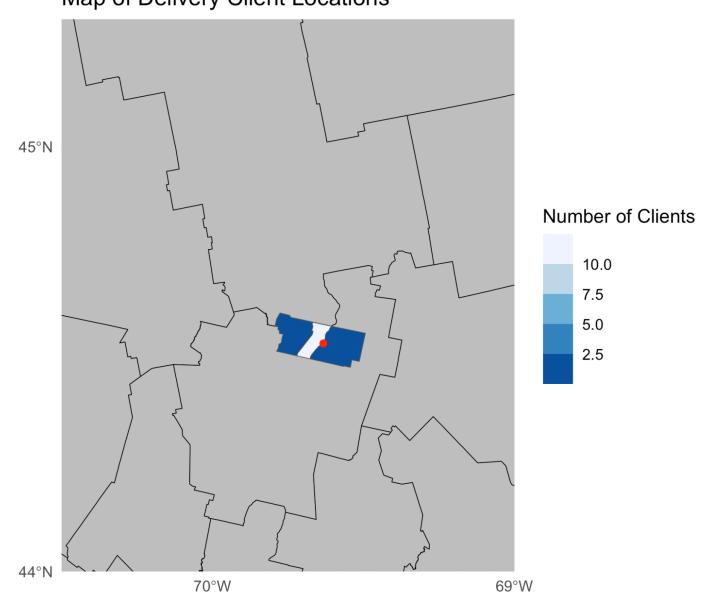
In general, the active clients at the WCC food pantry in Winslow seem to have the largest range of locations. The delivery towns are highly localized to the Winslow/Waterville/Oakland area. The trailer sites help to serve a range of towns in more localized areas. For example, the Vassalboro trailer serves a greater number of towns in southern Kennebec County whereas the Oakland trailer serves northern Kennebec County and the Fairfield trailer serves Northern Kennebec and Southern Somerset County. The Fairfield trailer appears to have the most extensive range, serving people from a couple more southern and northern locations. In all cases, most of the clients served came from the town of origin for the site which is shown in red at its exact location on the maps. Please note that the inactive clients were all sampled from Winslow addresses, which is why they are not mapped here.



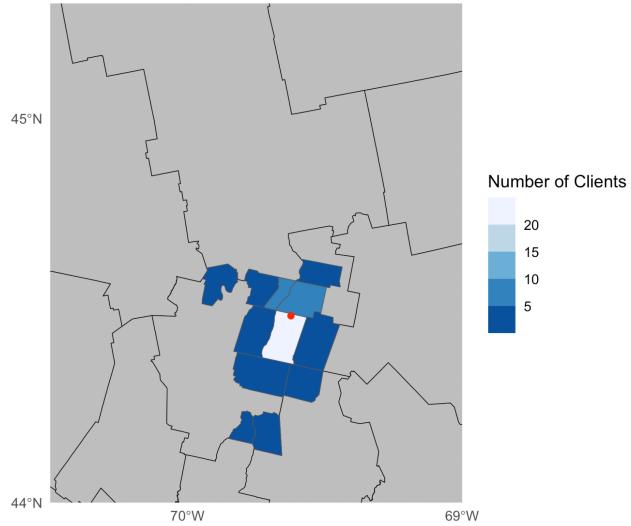
Map of Active Client Locations



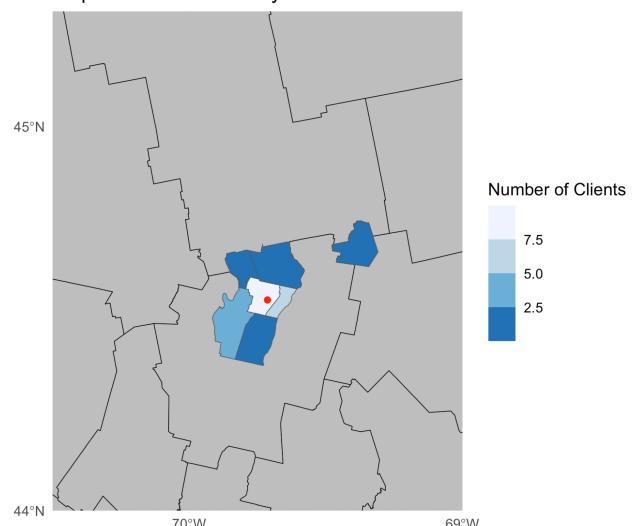
Map of Delivery Client Locations



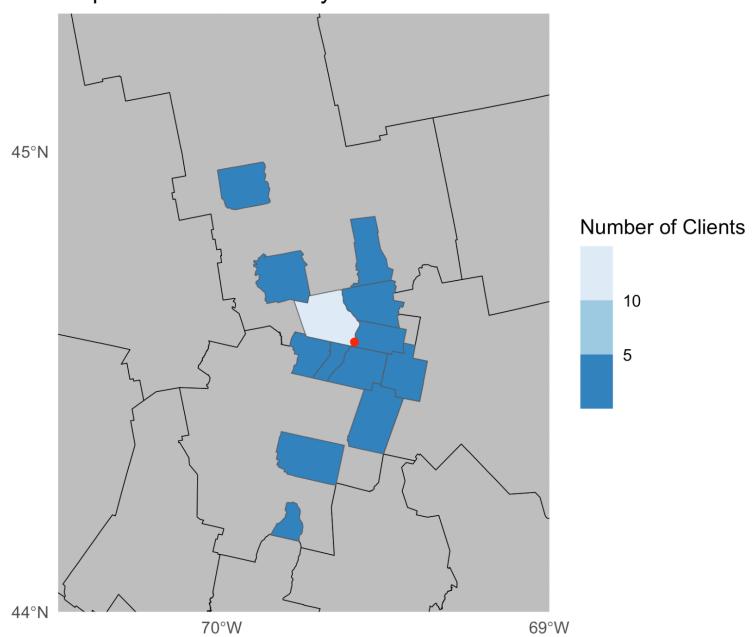
Map of Towns Served by the Vassalboro Trailer



Map of Towns Served by the Oakland Trailer



Map of Towns Served by the Fairfield Trailer



Discussion

General Questions

In our research investigating the food beneficiary composition within Winslow Community Cupboard services, we found that about 66% of clients said that they pick up food for themselves, while 51% also said that they pick up food for their immediate family. Active clients were likely to be collecting food for themselves alone, but the categories of delivery and mobile clients were equally or more likely to be picking up food for their immediate family versus for themselves. Mobile pantry clients also had the highest percentage of respondents who said that they picked up for family members outside their household, indicating this service's contribution to the wider community.

Across all of these beneficiaries, the largest proportion suggested that the WCC contributed a moderate amount to their food needs, followed by the proportions who responded with a small and majority amount of food needs in that order. Once again, the data divided by each population of interest showed that active and delivery clients rely on the WCC for a larger share of food needs, while the mobile pantry contributes to a smaller share of food needs, perhaps given its nature as a supplementary option with fewer options and reduced quantity. It's also important to note that we received feedback implying that the case-by-case contributory status of the WCC can often fluctuate on a weekly basis, which might mean that these results oversimplify the true food contributions to the community.

We also found that the primary reason for using the WCC as a food resource was high food costs, with approximately 64% of respondents affirming this conclusion. "Other High Costs" was the second most selected option, followed by low income and temporary financial hardship. For mobile pantry clients, however, temporary financial hardship appears to be more of a strain than low income and lack of government support. This, in addition to the mobile pantry-specific observations discussed so far, might point to the fact that this service in particular reaches a wide demographic that may not have the ability to frequent other food assistance programs.

In terms of specific assistance programs that the surveyed population reported relying on, there was some diversity and a seemingly large proportion of individuals whose needs are met by the WCC alone. "Government Assistance" was the most frequently cited non-WCC assistance program, with 36% of individuals selecting this choice. The second most selected option for this question was "No Outside Help," which was selected by 20% of all respondents. Question 4 on the survey was worded such that skipping the question would indicate that the respondent didn't use any assistance programs outside of the WCC. Therefore, the 20% who we've deemed as not relying on outside help is a metric that could be somewhat skewed. This was a flaw in our survey design that might compromise the ability to generalize these results.

Similarly, the phrasing of the next question also left room for ambiguity of non-response. We've interpreted a respondent not answering this question on the survey (Question 5) as an indication that they haven't used non-WCC pantries, which is the highest proportion among options. In future research, we would include an option that explicitly reads "I do not use other food assistance programs," so as to more accurately discern between this choice and non-responsiveness. Nonetheless, those who had used other food assistance programs noted the "Healthier Choices" of the WCC as a major point of differentiation, while also noting the fresh food and variety of options at the WCC. The higher quantity of options were particularly appealing to delivery clients, as well as the accessibility, which both make sense given the nature of this particular service.

Finally, we found that the biggest change WCC clients would like to see is additional support for their pets. Over 40% of the population, including over half of the active and delivery groups, said that they would be interested in a pet pantry. Non-essential items and a soup kitchen were also changes for which respondents advocated but were both selected at lower response rates. Overall, though, the surveyed population seemed thankful for WCC and content with the way they operate their locations. Respondents also commented on their positive experiences with the WCC as a whole, with nearly half of the written comments regarding improvements to the services articulating some form of gratitude towards the WCC.

Considering the trends across all of these questions helps us make hypothesized big-picture generalizations about the WCC clientele as a whole. For example, it seems that active clients can generally be categorized as the individuals who are most reliant, both on the WCC and other programs, to satisfy their individual food needs. Delivery and mobile clients, on the other hand, often use the WCC to help meet their families' needs but have a comparatively lower level of reliance on the WCC to carry this burden entirely. Mobile clients are the most likely to not use other food assistance programs at all, while delivery clients use other assistance programs to supplement what the WCC already contributes to their lives. Delivery clients also seem to prefer how the WCC meets their needs as opposed to these other programs.

Trailer

Given the majority of people that responded that they only visit one trailer site, we can conclude that clients at our 3 trailer sites are roughly twice as likely to only visit one trailer site versus more than one. We can also conclude that most people tend to choose to visit the trailer site closest to their residence and thus proximity is a key factor in trailer attendance. However, when people chose to use multiple sites, they often cited differing hours or insufficient quantities of food. This underscores the importance of both geographic accessibility and operational flexibility in addressing the diverse needs of the community.

A substantial 40% of trailer respondents reported weekly visits, while approximately 31% indicated monthly visits. The fact that so many respondents engage with these resources on a weekly basis suggests a high level of dependence on the support provided by these mobile sites. This data underscores the consistent and essential role that WCC mobile sites play in addressing

the ongoing needs of the community, highlighting the pressing need for continued support and resource allocation to ensure the sustained effectiveness of these vital community services.

A noteworthy 33% of trailer respondents identified the need for a supplemental food source as their primary motivation. This finding underscores the critical role that food pantries play in addressing nutritional needs for a substantial portion of the surveyed population. Additionally, proximity to home emerged as the second most prevalent reason at 27%, suggesting that convenience plays a significant role in shaping individuals' choices regarding food assistance resources. Conversely, the cost of food ranked comparatively low at 1%, emphasizing that economic considerations are not the primary determinant in the trailer clients' decision-making processes.

Delivery

With only 17 responses from the delivery clients, we should be careful generalizing these results to a larger population. From the responses, we can conclude that the main reason people choose delivery services are due to a lack of transportation. This could be caused by lack of access to a car or not knowing how to drive. After lack of transportation, respondents cited health and mobility concerns and convenience of delivery services as other reasons for not attending the WCC in person. Of delivery clients, most are using the WCC delivery service as often as it is provided or once a month, demonstrating the demand for the delivery services.

Inactive

With only 16 responses from the inactive clients, we should be careful generalizing these results to a larger population. Given the responses from the inactive survey, respondents answered most often that they no longer attend the WCC because they no longer need the pantry, use a different pantry, lack transportation, or have another reason not listed. Very few responses cited the wait time for food or negative experiences with food/other clients/staff at the WCC as a reason for stopping attendance at the WCC. Of those inactive clients who responded that they no longer needed food pantry services, the most common reasons were an improved financial situation, better household budgeting, or stable employment. The most popular suggestions for resources that the WCC could provide to help others transition away from relying on food pantry services include nutritional education programs and affordable housing resources.

Children Under 2

Since only 3% of the total survey respondents (including delivery, trailers, and on location at the WCC) answered that they use other government services to assist with their childrens' food needs, the results from these questions cannot be generalized to any population. However, the results did show that people who did respond "yes" indicated the use of the Special

Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Items they requested included wipes and diapers.

Overarching Trends

It seems that many of the clients fall into the 55+ age categorization as discussed in our demographics part of the report, and this may shed some light onto clients not knowing when the hours are. This was not just something that was seen on surveys but also heard from multiple clients while filling out the survey. The WCC currently posts many of its hours and communications online. However, this may be challenging for many people in the older generation to access. One possible way to address this could be by mailing out calendars with general times that the pantry is open, as well as instructions on how to get to the proper website with hours and updates.

Many clients also requested dairy products when asking for specific types of food, and this seemed to also be a common trend among those with young children.

Appendix

Data Collection Dates, Times and Response Rates

WCC In person

- November 9, 2023
 - 113 responses from 205 families

WCC Deliveries

- October 25, 2023
 - 17 responses from 67 families

Food Trailers

- Vassalboro Trailer: October 29, 2023
 - 70 responses from 129 families
- Fairfield Trailer: November 6, 2023
 - 48 responses from 132 families
- Oakland Trailer: November 7, 2023
 - 27 responses from 80 families

Inactive

- 16 response from 206 mailings

Overall, we had a higher response rate for in-person survey at the WCC and trailer sites (258 out of 546, or around 47%) than for mail surveys to delivery and inactive clients (33 out of 273, or around 12%).

Notes on Coding Text Responses

While coding text responses we attempted to categorize commonly reported answers. The “other” category was left for text responses that did not fit any of the categories. Some notable elements from these uncategorized responses are mentioned next to the text accompanying the graphs. Some judgment calls were made for which category to place certain responses. When possible we tried to consult team members to generate a consensus on placement.

Demographics Process Notes

Census Bureau estimates were calculated from the Public Use Microdata Sample (“PUMS”) based on 1-year American Community Survey (ACS) data for 2022, using both person-level and household-level records. We first merged the person level data for head of household with the

household level data, created a survey design object with weights and then subset the design to Kennebec County households under 185% of the poverty line.

Data Anonymity

Regarding the data collection process, for the active, delivery, and mobile surveys we attempted to ask everyone who received food from these sites on specific days to take the survey. This did not involve any identification of respondents beforehand from us at the site in each different survey. In the active and mobile surveys we handed out questionnaires. However, there was no indication to who was taking the survey besides seeing their faces. We did not have any access to the intake forms or the sign in sheets that clients normally fill out as they attend the pantry and mobile sites. At both sites the surveys were dropped off into a drop box after the client finished filling the survey out. There also were separate drop boxes for an optional raffle that was used as incentive. For the raffle, the respondents put their name and address on a card and it was placed into the separate drop box. As for the respondents of the delivery surveys, the delivery drivers were likely aware of who they are delivering to; however, none of us were present for the handing out of the surveys for the delivery group. The delivery respondents also had the option to enter the raffle, in which case their raffle tickets were separated from their surveys previous to data entry.

For the inactive surveys, we obtained the names and the last known address of the inactive clients from Winslow by sorting through the WCC client database, in collaboration with WCC staff. Then the names and addresses of the clients were sent to a local printing press (SBS Carbon Copy) which mailed the surveys to each address. The clients who responded sent the completed surveys back to the WCC pantry location in Winslow. The mailed-back surveys were given back to us and the address on the envelopes were then separated from the surveys before data entry. If a client sent back a raffle ticket with the survey, the raffle ticket was separated from the survey previous to data entry.

As for data entry, we entered the handwritten responses into a custom Google Form created specifically for our data entry process. Those of us entering data were present at either the active or mobile sites, or both sites.

In displaying the data, due to a low amount of responses on some of the survey questions, all of the graphs were displayed using percentages to avoid any identification of respondents. Some rare responses such as rare demographic groups were grouped together in an “Other” category or suppressed to preserve anonymity. All written text responses were reviewed for privacy before being quoted in the report.

Suggestions for Future Surveys

Although our survey was largely successful, there are certainly some aspects that we would change if we were to conduct another survey. First, our samples from the delivery and inactive populations were both very small (17 and 16, respectively). As a result, we cannot be

confident that our results from those samples are representative of their respective populations. If we were to do another survey, we should think of methods we could implement to increase our response rates. We tried to offer an incentive by entering respondents into a raffle (if they opted in), but perhaps a guaranteed smaller incentive like a \$5 gift card for all respondents would be a more effective way to get responses. Additionally, we could send follow-ups to people from whom we did not receive a response.

We also noticed some minor flaws in our earliest attempts to hand out the surveys. At first, both pages of the survey were clipped to the clipboard and some respondents did not realize there were multiple pages. We fixed this by clipping only the back page to the clipboard so it was easier to notice that there were multiple pages.

We also would like to change some of the phrasing in the survey questions. Certain questions, like ‘Have you used other food assistance programs besides WCC?’ and, ‘If you have used other non-WCC food pantries, how do they compare to WCC services?’ are hard to interpret if the respondent left the question blank. It isn’t clear if they left it blank because they don’t apply – i.e., they don’t use other food assistance programs or other non-WCC food pantries – or if they left it blank simply because they were skipping over the question. It was noted by the participants at the mobile pantry sites that there was some confusion over both what the WCC acronym stands for (including some who confused it with WIC), as well as the fact that the mobile pantries are supplied their food by the WCC, despite not being in Winslow. This may lead to some participants believing they go to food pantries outside the WCC by visiting other trailer sites. It may also leave some survey respondents confused by the fact that the question assumed they were at a WCC location, a fact that some participants were unaware of. The two sources of bias, both not understanding the acronym and being unaware that their location is supported by the WCC, may lead to non-response biasing the final statistic in either direction. Given the high completion rate for the survey in general, we coded skips as saying that they do not use outside sources, since not using outside sources was not an option, and it seems as though many other questions have a high response rate.