

Linn County Hunger Free Network

Food Survey

December 2009/January 2010

The Linn County Hunger Free Network, with the cooperation and assistance of food pantries and meal sites across Linn County, distributed a Food Survey to clients utilizing the services of 13 organizations. The survey consisted of 21 questions, ranging from household demographics, to food issues and food access. Most of the questions were multiple-choice, with additional spaces provided for narratives. 182 surveys were completed. 92 respondents were reached at meal sites and 90 at food pantries.

Note: Survey responses will not always add up to 100%, as respondents were allowed to select multiple responses to certain questions, and not all questions were answered by all respondents.

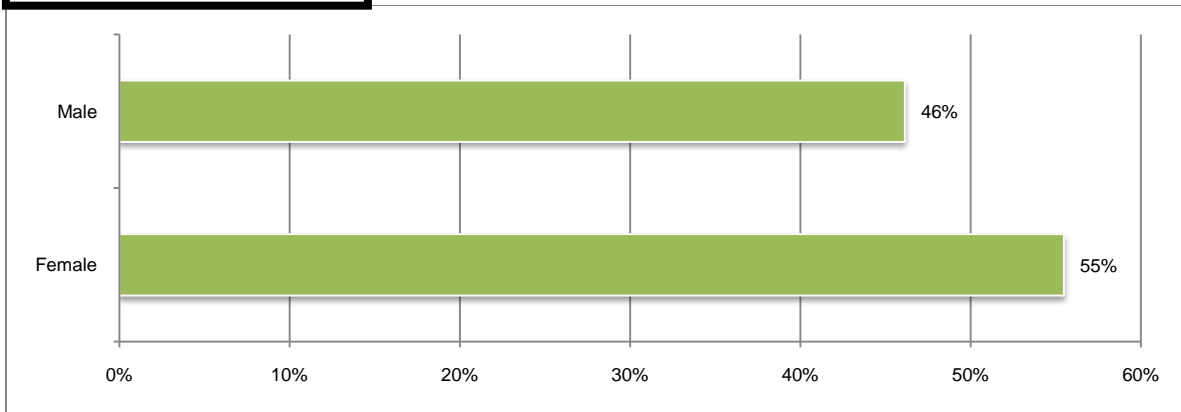
Below is the list of participating organizations:

Meal Sites & Zip Codes		Food Pantries & Zip Codes	
First Lutheran	52403	Churches of Marion Food Pantry	52302
Green Square Meals	52401	Abundance of Love	52402
Salvation Army	52405	St. Vincent De Paul	52403
Mission of Hope	52403	Foundation 2	52403
1st Presbyterian	52401	Linn Community Food Bank	52401
		Olivet	52405
		Mission of Hope	52402
		Loaves & Fishes	52403
		Open Hands	52405

- 6 area meal sites were given the opportunity to participate in the survey; of those, 5 participated.
- 9 out of 26 HACAP food reservoir pantries participated in the survey.

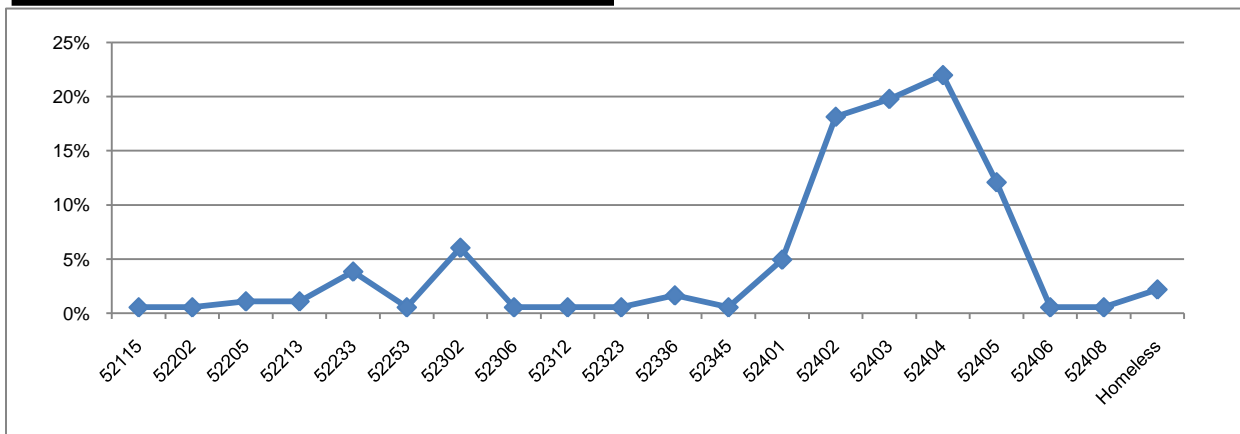
Survey Respondents Residency by Zip Code & Location			
52115		52336	Springville
52202	Alburnett	52345	Urbana
52205	Anamosa	52401	Downtown CR
52213	Center Point	52402	NE CR
52233	Hiawatha	52403	SE CR
52253	Lisbon	52404	SW CR
52302	Marion	52405	NW CR
52306	Mechanicsville	52406	CR (PO Box)
52312	Morley (PO Box)	52408	CR (PO Box)
52323	Oxford Junction		

Gender



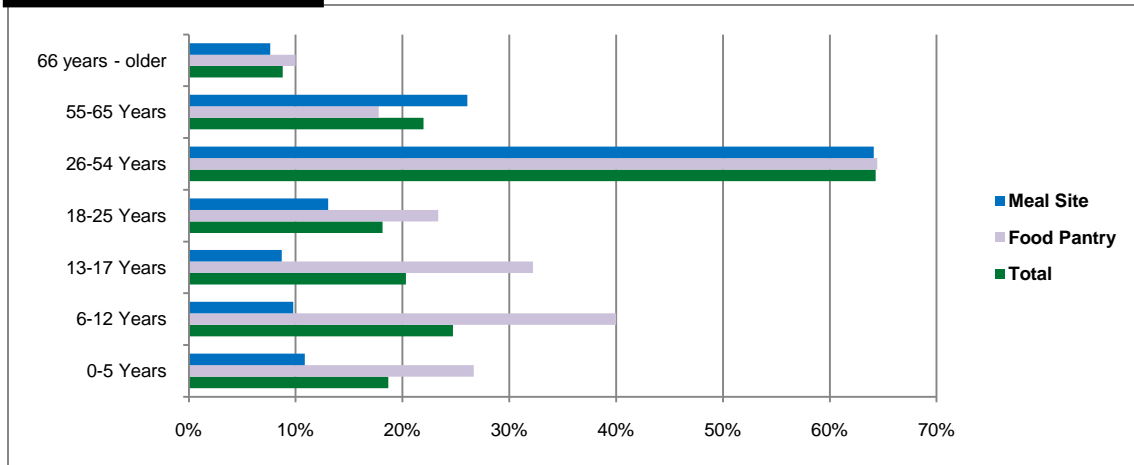
- 55% of respondents were female and 46% were male.
- About 1% of surveys completed were by couples.

Respondents Residency by Zip Code



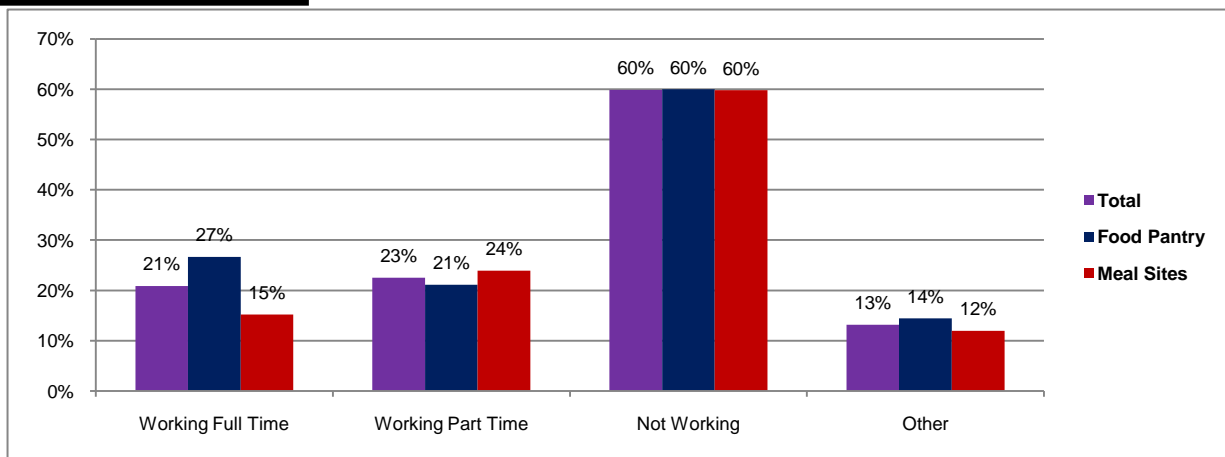
- 73% of respondents were from the Cedar Rapids area.
Note: All of the participating meal sites and food pantries are located in the Cedar Rapids area.

Age of Householders



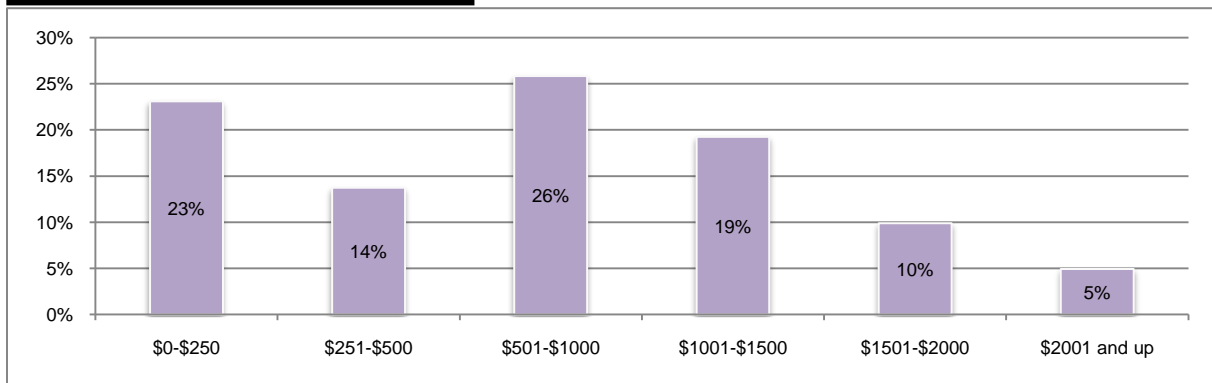
- 64% of respondents indicated that at least 1 person in their household is between the ages of 26-54 years.
- 64% of respondents indicated that there are children under age of 18 in their household.
*This trend is consistent with the family composition of those having received emergency shelter and transitional housing services.
Source: FY 2009 Linn County Homeless Data Report
- Of the 116 respondents with children under 18 in their households, 77% were reached at food pantries.
- For households with members between the ages of 26-54, there were no disparities between meal site and food pantry usage.

Employment Status



- 73% of all respondents indicated that at least 1 person in their household is disabled, retired, a student, or not working.
- Of the respondents who reported someone in their household is not working, 65% indicated they used both food pantry and meal site services.
- Of the respondents who replied "other", 58% reported receiving SSI/SSD.

Monthly Household Cash Income



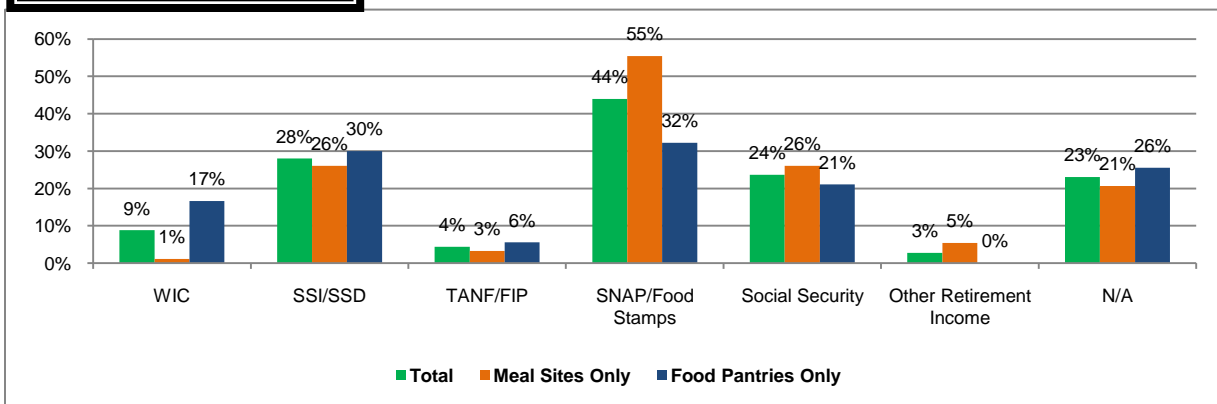
- 63% of respondents reported a household monthly cash income of \$1,000 or less. 17% of respondents with an income of \$1500 or less has a household member working full time.
- 15% of respondents reported a household cash income above \$1500. 42% of households indicating a cash income of \$1500 or less had a child under 13 years living in the household.

2009 Poverty Guidelines

Family Size	Annual Poverty Guideline	Monthly Poverty Guideline
1	\$10,830	\$903
2	14,570	\$1215
3	18,310	\$1526
4	22,050	\$1838

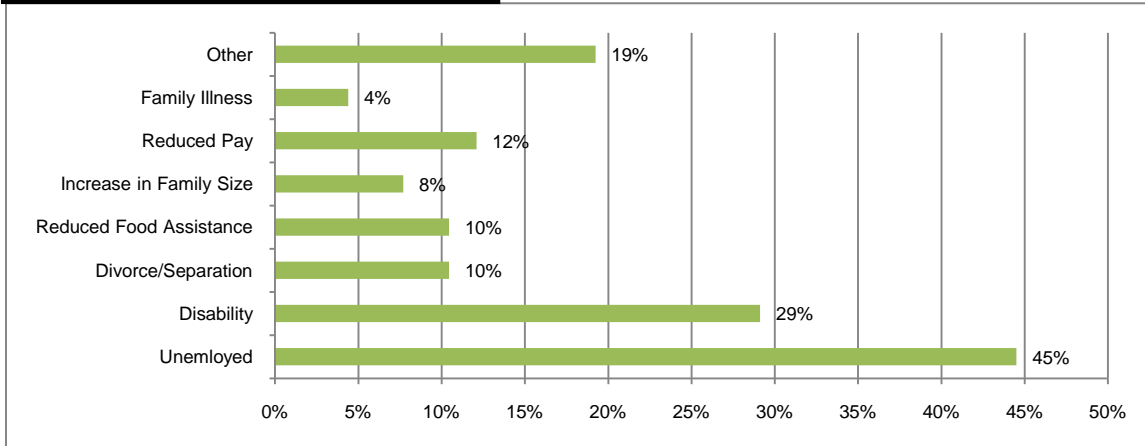
Poverty is determined by households size and income.

Supplemental Benefits



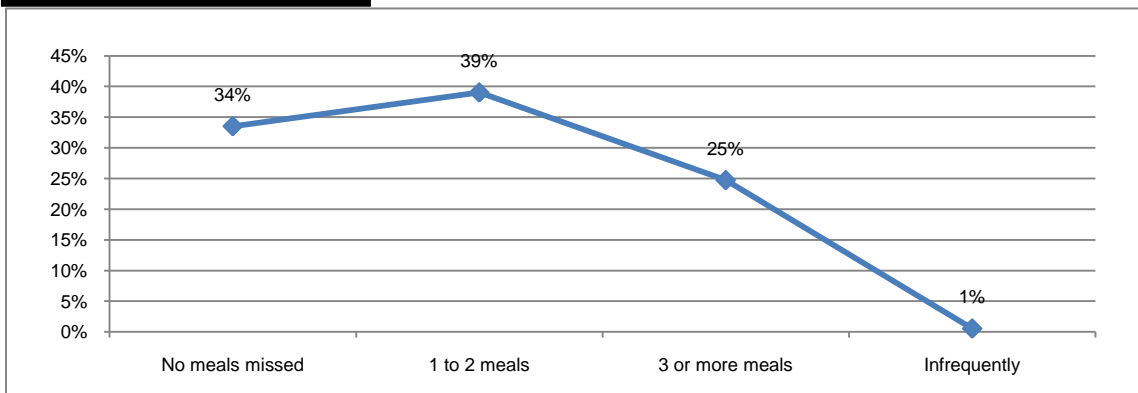
- 53% of respondents indicated their households received food assistance from sources other than pantries and meal sites.
- 85% indicated their households are receiving public benefits other than social security.
- Of the respondents who indicated members of their households received SNAP/Food Stamps, 66% indicated at least one adult in their household was not working.
- Of the households with members receiving social security benefits, 67% of them had an adult member of their household not working.

Contributing Factors to Food Needs



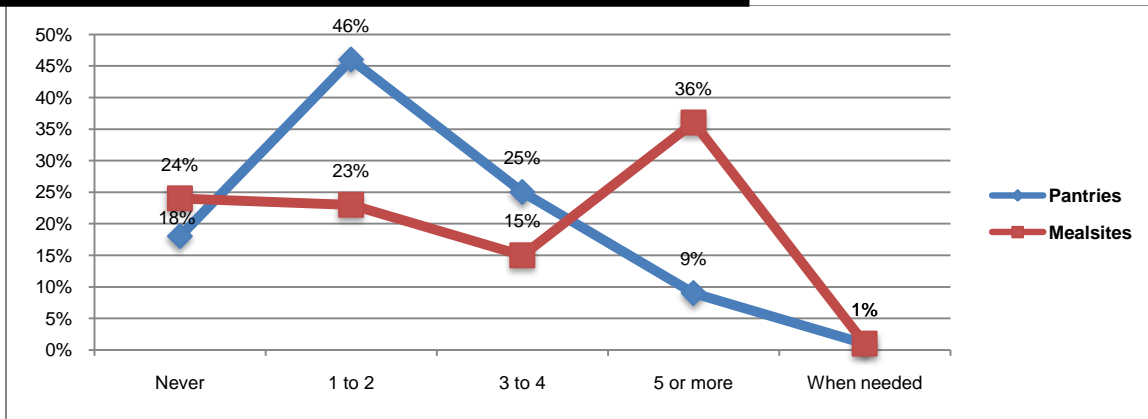
- 45% of respondents stated that unemployment was a contributing factor to their food needs.
- Of those with disability as a contributing factor to needs, 53% had a household member receiving SSI/SSD.
- Of the respondents who listed “other” as a contributing factor, 40% referred to bills and a lack of income as factors; 14% referred to the flood.

Meals Missed in 1 Week



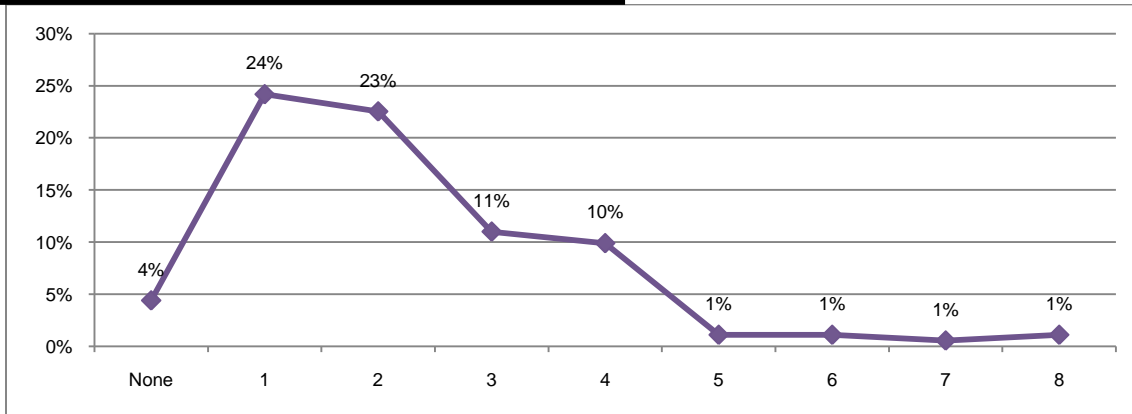
- 64% of respondents had at least 1 family member missing 1 or more meals a week due to a lack of food or money.
 - 39% of respondents stated that at least 1 person in their household missed 1 to 2 meals a week due to a lack of food or money.
 - 25% of respondents had at least 1 person in their household who missed 3 or more meals per week due to a lack of food or money; of those 35% used 3 or more food pantries to meet their food needs.

Frequency of Meal Sites & Pantry Usage (Within a month)



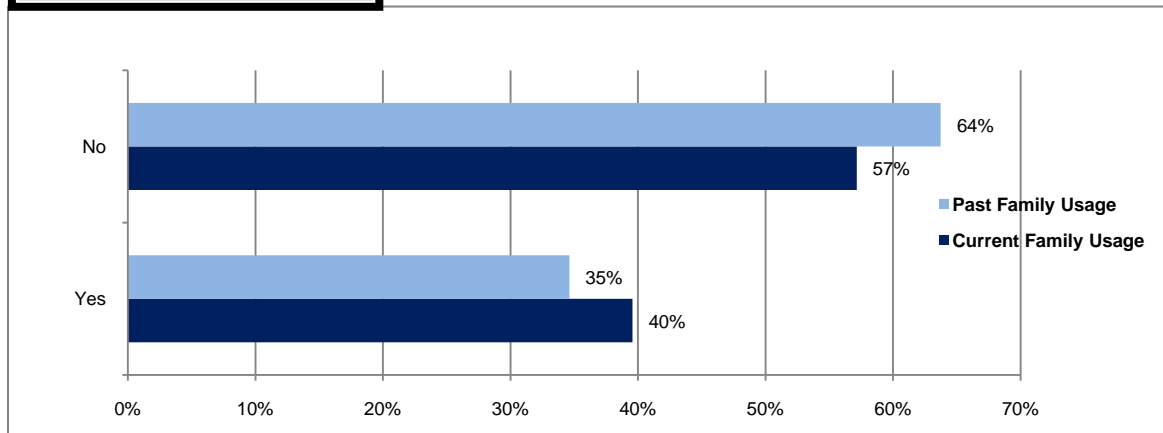
- 64% of all respondents indicated they used both meal site and food pantry services.
 - 71% of respondents indicated they use a pantry 1-4 times a month to meet their food needs; as compared to 38% of respondents who used meal sites with the same frequency.
 - 36% of respondents indicated they use meal sites more than 5 times a month; some of whom indicated they used a meal site at least 5 days/week.
- Note: Three of the meal sites surveyed provided daily meals Monday through Friday.

Number of Different Pantries Used per Month



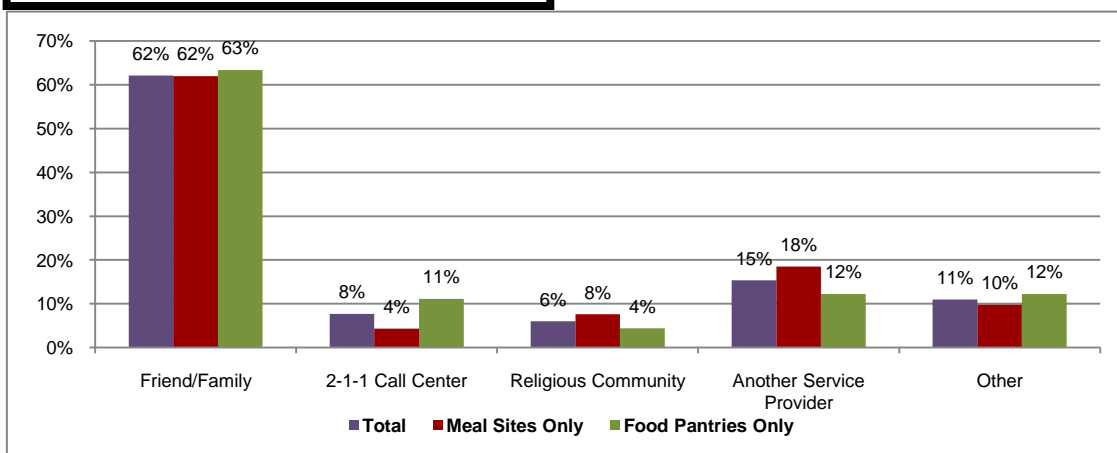
- 47% of respondents used 1 to 2 different pantries in a month to meet their needs.
- 21% of respondents used 3-4 different food pantries in one month to meet their needs.
- 4% of respondents indicated they use 5 or more pantries in a month to meet their needs.
- Of those who access 3 or more different food pantries to meet their needs, 78% access pantry services 3 or more times per month.

Family Use of Services



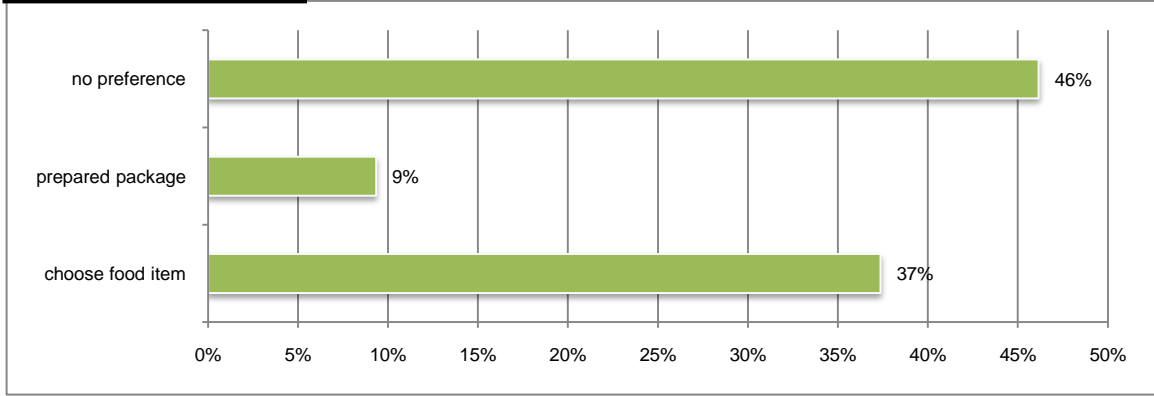
- 57% of respondents do not have any other family member currently utilizing either food pantry or free meal site services. Of those, 78% did not grow up in a household where the services were utilized.
- 40% of respondents have immediate or extended family members currently using food pantry and meal site services. Of those, 57% also grew up in a household where services were utilized.
- Of the 81 respondents who indicated unemployment as a contributing factor to food needs, 44% stated that no one in their immediate or extended family currently use the services; and 42% noted that their families did not utilize food services while growing up.

How Respondents Learned About Sites



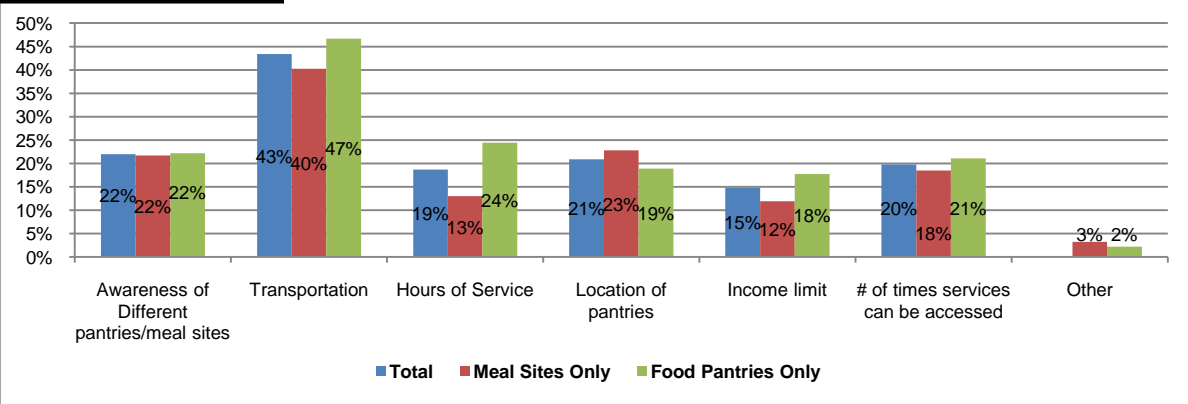
- 62% of all respondents heard about the service provider through a friend or family. There was little difference between respondents reached at meal sites and food pantries.
- 15% of all respondents heard about services from another service provider.
- “Walk-in” and “volunteer” were the two most frequent explanations provided for “other” responses.

Service Preference



- 46% of respondents have no preference over whether they receive a prepared food package or have a choice of putting together their own food package.
- 80% of the respondents that do have a preference would prefer to choose their own food items.

Access Barriers

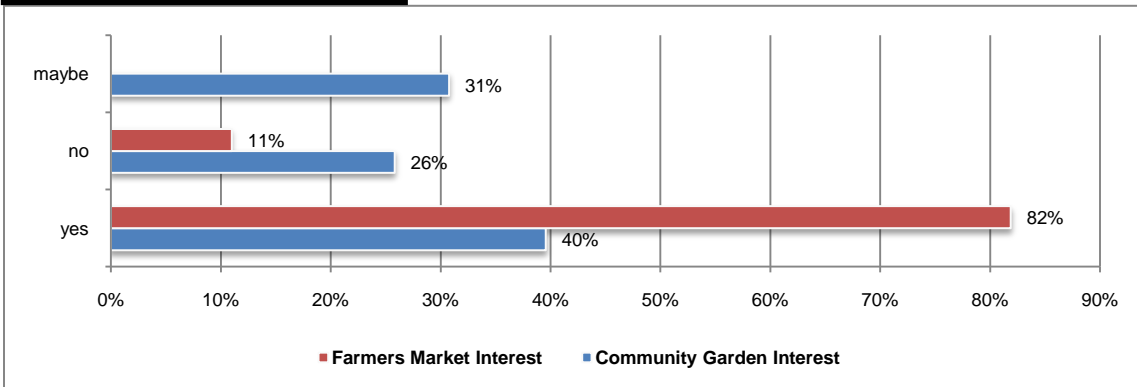


- 43% of respondents stated that transportation was a barrier to accessing services. Of those, 61% utilize two or more pantries per month to meet their food needs.
- Of the 21% who cited location of pantries as an issue, 53% utilized two or more food pantries to meet their needs.
- 55% of respondents who listed transportation as a barrier to accessing services lived within the zip codes of 52402 (NE-CR), 52403 (SE-CR), and 52404 (SW-CR). 60% of those who listed location of pantries as an access barrier also lived within the same zip codes.

Food Issues

- 80% of respondents indicated that there are no food allergies or restrictions in their household.
- 73% of respondents indicated that they have been able to get the type of food they need from food pantries.
- Of the 19% who responded that there were food items they couldn't get from a food pantry, 54% referenced meat and/or dairy products.

Interest in Fresh/Local Food



- 40% of respondents would be interested in a community garden. An additional 31% of respondents may be interested in a community garden if they had more information.
- The zip codes with the highest rates of interest in community gardens were: 52302 (10%), 52402 (13%), 52403 (26%), and 52404 (24%). 13% of the respondents from zip code 52405 might be interested if they had more information.
- 82% of respondents would be interested in using a farmers market if transportation was available and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program- SNAP (formerly known as food stamps) could be used.

14% of clients had additional comments to make outside of the survey questions, at least half of which were positive feed back for the pantries and meal sites. Clients do appreciate the services they receive from these organizations.

Narratives from Respondents

“Food banks are great.”

“I really appreciate the free meal sites; they are very helpful in stretching the income I do have coming in. Thank you”

“I just go to churches; I work 2nd shift, so I'm not up in daytime.”

“Ride the bus, is my only transportation, disabled in arm, cannot lift heavy bags & boxes”

“Use farmers market with WIC”

*Prepared by:
United Way of East Central Iowa
March 2010*