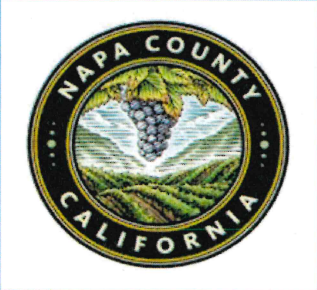
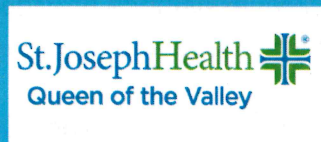
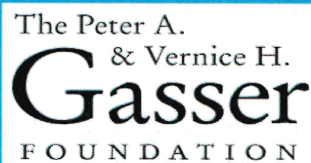


NAPA COUNTY EMERGENCY FOOD SYSTEM STUDY: FINAL REPORT



Prepared by Public Health Institute and
Napa County Health & Human Services Agency

Issued: August 20, 2018



Napa County Health and Human Services Agency: Agreement #180151B

Report authors:

Kyli Gallington, MPH
Rebecca L. Garrow, MPH
Sue Grinnell, MPH
Jennifer Henn, PhD
Holly Nishimura, MPH
Jennifer Palmer
Dana Pearlman, MSc
Suzanne Ryan-Ibarra, PhD, MPH

Acknowledgements:

We are grateful to the following staff from the Public Health Institute's Survey Research Group and Napa County Health and Human Services for their assistance with proofreading: Rocio Canchola, Maricsa Gutierrez, Albany Magallanes, Mayra Sandoval, and Eva Weinstein.

We thank numerous stakeholders from diverse organizations in Napa County who engaged in the forums and provided valuable feedback and guidance to the project. Specifically, we are grateful for the collaborative work of all of the organizations and community groups throughout Napa County that provided inspiration and direction to this project. We are also thankful for the support of numerous staff from the Napa County Health and Human Services Agency, in particular Krystal Barker for her tireless enthusiasm in coordinating the administrative details that occur "behind the scenes" to make the many community meetings supporting this study happen.

We are deeply grateful to the generous funders who provided grants and resources to make this study possible: Kaiser Permanente Northern California Community Benefit Grant Program, Peter A. and Vernice H. Gasser Foundation, Queen of the Valley Community Benefit Program, and Napa County Health and Human Services Agency. We are equally grateful for and indebted to the technical assistance provided through the Invest Health grant at the very outset of this project to frame the need and role of a user-centered study.

Of the utmost importance were the residents of Napa County who took time to share their stories and provide feedback on the emergency food provision system via a self-administered survey or participation in a focus group, and the 2017 Napa Wildfire Disaster donors and food providers who provided theirs through key informant interviews. Your contributions to this project are invaluable and we appreciate the time and the honest input you provided!

CONTENTS

Executive Summary	4
Background	4
Methods	5
Results	5
Conclusion	6
Recommendations	7
Local context: A Data-Driven Case for Study Need	8
Study Framework	10
Food Donation in the Context of a Wildfire Disaster	11
Phase 1: Discovering Shared intent - Food Study Design Convening 1	12
Phase 2: Defining the Systemic Perspective - Food Program Survey	13
Purpose/Intent	13
Methods	13
Results	14
Participants	14
Food Security	16
Food Assistance Program Participation	17
Barriers to Accessing Food Assistance	21
Notes on Survey administration	24
Phase 3: Make Meaning - Food Study Design Convening 2	25
Phase 4: Prototype – Priority Population Focus Groups	26
Purpose/Intent	26
Methods	26
Results	28
Participants	28
Barriers	29
Population-Specific Findings	43
Notes on Focus Groups	46
Study Phase 5: Scale - Food Study Design Convening 3	47
Study Addendum: Food Donation in the Context of a Wildfire Disaster	48
2017 Napa Wildfire Disaster Impact on Emergency Food: Study Addendum	48
Wildfire Addendum Convening: Exploring Emergency Food Provision During a Wildfire Disaster	48
2017 Napa Wildfire Disaster Key Informant Interviews	49

User-Centered Study & Wildfire Study Addendum Summary	57
Conclusions & Recommendations	57
Indicator Dashboard: Food Insecurity, Health Impacts, and Health and Racial Equity	59
Purpose/Intent	59
Inclusion Criteria for Data	59
Appendix I: Convening Agendas, TEMPLATES and Notes	60
Wildfire Component Convening	60
Food Study Design Convening 1	64
Food Study Design Convening 2	70
Food Study Design Convening 3	75
Appendix II: Graphic Renderings	84
Appendix III: Instruments	87
Wildfire Donor Interview Guide	87
Food Bank Director Interview Guide	89
Focus Group Discussion Guide (English)	93
Focus Group Discussion Guide (Spanish)	96
Focus Group Demographic Survey (English, Spanish)	99
Food Program Survey (English, Spanish, Tagalog)	103
Appendix IV: Additional Results	110

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

This study is a result of public and private partnerships across Napa County working on a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation grant (Invest Health) exploring the local intersections of health, equity and economic development. Local emergency food access data reveals service agency partners, policy makers, and community residents need a better understanding of the barriers to access to existing emergency food services (including cash aid, bulk and prepared food) from the standpoint of the user and eligible non-user, in order to identify opportunities to improve program services, system coordination and service expansion. The end goal of the study is a blueprint of emergency food service improvements that result in an end to food insecurity in Napa County. Ending food insecurity in Napa County will require significant community engagement and sustained commitment by a diverse array of stakeholder groups working in partnership to achieve collective impact.

The Live Healthy Napa County (LHNC) community collaborative has served as a principal convener for this study. LHNC completed a strategic planning cycle in 2017 to identify its three focus areas for work and the focus of the next Community Health Assessment starting in 2018. Food Access/Food Insecurity emerged as the number one priority area. The work of the user-centered Napa County Emergency Food System Study is a central component of the data for the work of that group and the Community Health Assessment.

The study was made possible by grant funding from Kaiser Permanente Northern California Community Benefit Program, The Peter A. and Vernice H. Gasser Foundation, Queen of the Valley Community Benefit Program, and Napa County Health & Human Services Agency, and extraordinary collaboration and partnership with more than forty community partner agencies who serve the demographic and geographic spectrum of Napa County.

The network of programs and providers of emergency food in Napa County include service agency partners, policy makers, community and faith-based organizations, and residents. With the exception of federally funded WIC and CalFresh cash-aid programs, the majority of bulk and prepared emergency food programs receive little-to-no public funding, relying primarily on private and philanthropic donations and volunteer labor. No one local entity receives enough funding nor controls the services of emergency food distribution, and therefore making an impact will require broad engagement and collaboration. Within that context, the Emergency Food System Study was initiated by Napa County Health & Human Services Agency, in close partnership with the diverse array of stakeholder groups serving residents experiencing food insecurity. The study's intent is to provide the necessary data to the broader network of food-aid partners in order to improve access to emergency food. At all phases of the study design and execution, community engagement and collaboration have been the hallmarks of progression and determination of next steps. Successful improvements to program services, system coordination and service expansion are dependent upon the interconnected network of providers from different sectors working together to end to food insecurity in Napa.

METHODS

To gather stakeholder and decision-maker input, inform the design of the study and determine next steps, three convenings were held with community stakeholders. The aim of the convenings was to understand the context of the emergency food system in Napa County, identify priority populations and research questions for the study, to make meaning of the survey data collected from users and non-users of emergency food in order to determine key areas of further inquiry via focus groups, and begin prototyping solutions based on the study findings and recommendations. To monitor and disseminate the findings from this study and other important indicators related to food security, food access, and related health and socioeconomic factors, a publicly available electronic data dashboard will be built. Additional convenings will occur throughout the remainder of the year to continue prototyping solutions with community partners and residents experiencing food insecurity in order to identify new areas of service improvement, coordination and delivery to end food insecurity.

To identify barriers in accessing emergency food in Napa County, in-person, self-administered pen-and-paper surveys were conducted in English, Spanish, and Tagalog with 351 users and eligible non-users of the emergency food provision system at community liaison organizations. To better understand potential barriers and solutions for priority population groups accessing emergency food in Napa County, focus groups were conducted in English and Spanish using a structured focus group discussion guide. Focus groups were held with each of the following priority populations: adults experiencing homelessness (n=9), low income older adults (n=10), and low-income, Spanish-speaking adults (n=12).

Finally, an addendum to the study was added following the 2017 Napa County Wildfire Disaster. The purpose of this study addendum was to understand, from the standpoint of the **donor** (as opposed to the core study, which is from the standpoint of the **user**), what spurred them to donate during the time-sensitive and acute emergency. The goal is a better understanding of donor motivation to help inform overall strategies and recommendations to improve the system of emergency food provision. Five interviews were conducted with owners/operators of businesses who donated food during the wildfire disaster, and one in-depth interview was conducted with the food bank director.

RESULTS

There were a total of 351 surveys collected from users and non-users of the emergency food provision system in Napa County. Survey respondents shared that they appreciated the quality of food and the provision of healthy food and fresh fruits and vegetables from food assistance programs they attend. Lack of awareness about the programs, not qualifying (or the perception of not qualifying) to participate, not being able to attend at the time or day the program is offered, having difficulty getting to the program, and not feeling comfortable attending the program were the top barriers to accessing food assistance programs identified in survey responses.

Focus groups were selected as a method of further exploring barriers identified in the survey responses with three priority populations: low income older adults, adults experiencing homelessness, and Spanish speaking low income adults. Focus group participants engaged in a voting process to identify the top three barriers facing their group. The top barriers discussed among low-income, older adults, included lack of transportation, difficulty using the food provided by programs (due to dietary restrictions, lack of refrigerated storage, etc.), and lack of awareness of emergency food system programs. Among adults experiencing homelessness, the top barriers discussed were stigma, difficulty using the food provided by programs, and lack of transportation. Finally, among low-income, Spanish speaking adults, the top barriers discussed were the dates and times emergency food programs are offered, income eligibility requirements for programs, and immigration status. Within the focus groups, solutions were identified to help address these barriers and improve access to food assistance programs.

For the wildfire addendum, in-depth interviews were conducted with owners/operators of locally owned businesses and the food bank, all of whom provided food assistance during the 2017 Napa Wildfire Disaster. Interviewees from local businesses donated coffee and pastries, prepared meals, bagged lunches, and meat to evacuation centers, shelters, first responders, and churches. Common challenges to donating during the wildfires included a lack of coordination or organization, not knowing where to drop off food, and not having a centralized contact or system. Barriers to becoming active in Napa County emergency food provision on a regular basis included lack of time, money, and resources. According to the director of the food bank, there has been an influx of new clients in the wake of the 2017 Napa County Wildfire Disaster, many of whom are seeking food assistance after losing employment during the wildfires. There was an overwhelming response to the wildfires and the food bank received more donations than they could take in.

CONCLUSION

The focus, design, and methods of this study were informed by the strong collaboration of over 40 organizations and groups in Napa County, with non-profit and community-based organizations, healthcare, local government, education, local funders, and other sectors represented. Through community meetings with key stakeholders along with surveys and focus groups with users and non-users of the emergency food system, key populations were identified, liaisons to those populations were selected to facilitate surveys, barriers to accessing food assistance in Napa County were identified, key areas for further inquiry were determined, and possible solutions to improve access were shared. The findings and recommendations of this study will help to inform service agencies, policy makers, funders and community residents as they work together to develop new ways to improve food access and eliminate food insecurity in Napa County. Key informant interviews with wildfire disaster donors and the food bank director identified barriers and facilitators of food donations, from the standpoint of the donor, in order to inform strategies to improve the emergency food system following the user-centered study.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Communication is central to ending food insecurity and should be approached with consideration of the entire ecosystem of potential participants in the emergency food system, including those experiencing food insecurity, donors of goods and services, service providers and funders. In addition to communication, the ability to access and utilize available healthy food is central to ending food insecurity in Napa County. The data gathered during this study support five key recommendations designed to address cross-cutting findings for barriers users and eligible non-users face when accessing emergency food in Napa County: Awareness, Transportation, Using the Food, Stigma and Fundraising

1. **Awareness:** Develop easily accessible, multi-lingual, multi-media regular communication about available emergency food assistance programs and services, eligibility criteria and location-date-time information.
2. **Awareness & Fundraising:** Develop a human-centered story-telling campaign designed to decrease the stigma of food insecurity and serve as a platform for potential donors to experience empathy for fellow residents who are experiencing food insecurity.
3. **Transportation:** Expand food access locations and minimize transportation barriers by leveraging existing place-based service locations and operations to include food distribution within the scope of services offered.
4. **Using the Food & Stigma:** Large economic anchor institutions in the community (such as healthcare, education and government institutions) should include supporting access to healthy food for all residents as an essential part of future policy and planning activities.
5. **Fundraising:** Non-profit service providers should explore ways to engage individual, institutional and private industry donors in funding opportunities via new and emerging technology such as social networks and crowd funding tools.

Table 11. Key findings, conclusions and recommendations from the Napa County Emergency Food System Study.

Survey respondents who do not participate in food assistance programs identified not knowing about them as the primary reason why.

Finding

Conclusion

Users and eligible non-users of emergency food identified lack of awareness of programs, service locations and times, and eligibility criteria as primary barriers to accessing emergency food.

Recommendation #1

Develop easily accessible, multi-lingual, multi-media regular communication about available emergency food assistance programs and services, eligibility criteria and location-date-time information.

Donors identified the compelling nature of a time-sensitive emergency as a primary motivator for taking extraordinary steps (including crowd funding) to bring food to those in need during the 2017 Napa Wildfire Disaster.

Finding

Conclusion

Helping the community and a clear understanding of the urgency of the situation are together key facilitators of food donation for individuals and business owners in the community.

Recommendation #2

Develop a human-centered story-telling campaign designed to decrease the stigma of food insecurity and serve as a platform for potential donors to experience empathy for fellow residents who are experiencing food insecurity.

Awareness of programs, transportation and program dates and times were identified by users and non-users of the emergency food system as being primary barriers to access in the community.

Finding

Conclusion

Vital food safety net providers like the food bank struggle to provide essential services with little-to-no Federal or State funding, diminishing donations and shrinking volunteer pools.

Recommendation #3

Expand food access locations and minimize transportation barriers by leveraging existing place-based service locations and operations to include food distribution within the scope of services offered.

Users and eligible non-users of emergency food lack adequate access to the transportation, food storage and food utilization resources necessary to maintain food security.

Finding

Conclusion

Increasing the availability of locally grown and/or produced low-cost healthy food options will support efforts to increase the number of programs and locations that are able to provide emergency food.

Recommendation #4

Large economic anchor institutions in the community (such as healthcare, education and government institutions) include supporting access to healthy food for all residents as an essential part of future policy and planning activities.

During the 2017 Wildfire Disaster, cash aid and food donations to providers of emergency food significantly increased as a result of clear and urgent communication over social and print media regarding the need and how to donate.

Finding

Conclusion

Outside of time-sensitive disaster(s), potential funders and donors to the emergency food system lack direct connection to immediate, clearly defined opportunities to provide financial assistance.

Recommendation #5

Non-profit service providers should explore new ways to engage individual, institutional and private industry donors in funding opportunities via new and emerging technology such as social networks and crowd funding tools.

