Appendix E3: Detailed Results

Food Security

Food security refers to the assured access to sufficient food for a healthy and active life. Food insecure households may worry about not having enough food, eat inadequate foods, or skip meals due to lack of money. Hunger is a severe form of food insecurity. To assess household food security, the survey asked three questions taken from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Standard Six-Item Indicator Set for Classifying Households by Food Security Level[1]:

During the past 12 months, were the following statements, often, sometimes, or never true for you or the other members of your household?

A) *The food we bought just didn't last, and we didn't have money to get more.*
B) *We worried whether our food would run out before we got money to buy more.*
C) *We were hungry but didn't eat because we couldn't afford enough food.*

A household is labeled food secure if the answer to all three questions is *never true*. Food insecure households answered *often true* or *sometimes true* to A, B, or C. A household is food insecure with hunger if A or B is *often true* or *sometimes true* and C is *often true* or *sometimes true*.

Food security status	% of Survey Total	% of 44 Senior Low-Income Households[2]
Food secure	20%	58%
Food insecure	67%	39%
Food insecure with hunger	26%	12%

As shown in the table above, food security status for older adults is very different from the general low-income survey population. Across geographic groups, food security status did not vary significantly with the following exceptions: 32% of low-income respondents from northern Waushara County are food insecure with hunger, and only 14% of eastern low-income households are food secure.

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[1] *Guide to Measuring Household Food Security*, written by Gary Bickel (USDA Food and Nutrition Service [FNS], Office of Analysis, Nutrition, and Evaluation), and Mark Nord (USDA Economic Research Service [ERS], Food and Rural Economics Division), 2000.

[2] Seniors are defined as age 60 and older. A seniors-only household may include any number of seniors but no one under age 60. 44 of the 451 surveys represent seniors-only households. We studied this population to identify food-related issues that are faced by seniors.

Appendix E3: Detailed Results

Food Shopping Patterns

On average, how often does your household shop for food?	
Daily	3%
Two or three times per week	28%
Once a week	37%
Twice a month	22%
Once a month	9%
No response	1%

Across the county, the two most important factors for choosing a primary grocery store are location and lower prices. The average survey respondent chooses a primary grocery store first for location (46%) and second for cheaper prices (33%). However, the relative importance of price and location vary significantly among the sub-populations we studied. Store location is more important than prices to households of southern Waushara County and to senior low-income households (55% of southern low-income households choose a store based on location and 25% based on price; 59% of senior low-income households decide based on location and 16% based on prices). Northern Waushara County low-income households choose price and location as deciding factors equally often (42% for each). Eastern and western households choose their primary grocery store first because of cheaper prices and second because of location. (Price is chosen as the leading factor by 50% of respondents in the East, and by 56% of those in the West.)

After store location and price, the third most important factor in choosing a primary grocery store is a better selection or quality of food. 13% of survey respondents said food quality/selection is their main reason for choosing their grocery store, and this percentage held true for most of the sub-populations we studied. However, a better selection or quality of food seems not to be as important to eastern Waushara County low-income households: only 5% choose their primary grocery store for this reason; and is more important in western Waushara County, where food selection and quality is the primary deciding factor for 20% of low-income households surveyed. Low-income households of eastern Waushara County shop less frequently than the average low-income survey respondent. Senior low-income households shop more often.

Why did you choose this store? (**Most important reason**):	
Store location[3]	46%
Prices are cheaper than at other stores	33%
Better selection or quality of food than other stores	13%
No response	8%

[3] Included in "store location" is the separate survey response "No transportation to go to a different store," which 2.4% of respondents selected.

Appendix E3: Detailed Results

The following table summarizes sources of food purchased by survey respondents. Copps, Redgranite Piggly Wiggly, and Stone Ridge Meat & Country Market are the three largest grocery stores in Waushara County. They are also located near the center of the county. Walmart and Aldi are full service discount stores located outside of Waushara County in the Fox Valley, Berlin, Waupaca, and the Stevens Point area.

Where does your household buy most of your food?

	All Respondents	Western Residents	South Central Residents	Northern Residents	Eastern Residents	Seniors-Only Households
Copps	31%	13%	40%	26%	5%	34%
Piggly Wiggly-Redgranite	19%	0%	23%	13%	36%	25%
Walmart (out-of-County)	15%	44%	10%	8%	19%	2%
StoneRidge Meat & Country Market	10%	5%	12%	9%	0%	14%
Aldi’s (out-of-County)	7%	13%	3%	17%	14%	2%
Other stores (each listed by 2% or less of survey respondents)	16%	24%	12%	26%	26%	20%

Appendix E3: Detailed Results

The following table shows our survey respondents' top five grocery stores by reason chosen and distance from home.

Why did you choose this store? *(*Most important reason*)* ***About how far is this store from your home?***				
Grocery Store	Location[4]	Price	Selection/ quality	*Miles from home (average)*
Piggly Wiggly	74%	18%	2%	10
Copps	61%	20%	10%	7
StoneRidge Meat & Country Market	39%	14%	41%	7
Wal-Mart	4%	68%	21%	32
Aldi's	0%	97%	0%	30

Respondents seem to be willing to travel farther to a less expensive grocery store. Among local grocery stores, there is a large range (2% - 41%) of respondents who choose the store based on food selection and quality.

[4] Included in "store location" is the separate survey response "No transportation to go to a different store."

Stretching Food Dollars

Low-income residents try to stretch food dollars using a variety of methods. Only about 1% of respondents said that they made no attempt to stretch food dollars in the last year. Senior low-income households reported significantly lower levels of stretching food dollars for each given method except for preparing food at home. Respondents from northern and west Waushara County were more likely than average to make a big shopping trip rather than several small ones, and to buy food in bulk. The use of coupons and sale-shopping is also more popular in the west, while low-income households of northern Waushara County were also more likely to buy food and prepare it at home rather than buying ready-made foods. Eastern Waushara County low-income households were more likely to have gone to several different stores to purchase food at better prices.

In the last 12 months, what are some of the ways that your household "stretched" food dollars?	
Used coupons	65%
Looked for sales and bought items on sale	84%
Went to several different stores to purchase food at better prices	43%
Made a big shopping trip rather than several small ones	46%
Bought food in bulk	31%
Bought food and prepared it at home rather than buying ready-made foods	63%
Not applicable: Did not stretch food dollars	1%

Appendix E3: Detailed Results

Food Assistance Programs

Are the following statements true for your household?	
We don't know how to apply for food benefits	3%
We don't know where to find food pantries, churches, or other places that provide food at no cost to families in need.	14%

Eastern Waushara County low-income households and senior low-income households (7% for both) were less likely than average to know how to apply for food benefits; households of northern (19%) Waushara County were less likely to know how to find food pantries. Senior low-income households and low-income households of the west and east of Waushara Countywere more knowledgeable than average about where to find food pantries.

During the past 12 months, did anyone in your household receive:	
FoodShare benefits/ Food Stamps/Quest Card/EBT Card?	55%
Free or reduced-cost lunches at school?	38%
Food or food vouchers through the WIC program?	20%
Food from a food pantry, church, or other place that provides food at no cost to families in need?	44%

Senior low-income households participated in FoodShare (57%) and food pantries (52%) to a greater-than-average extent; survey households in eastern Waushara County had a lower-than-average rate of participation in FoodShare (43%)

Eligibility for and participation in the FoodShare Program for 292 Survey Respondents below 130% of the Federal Poverty Level	
Participated in past 12 months	62%
Appear income-eligible but did not participate[5]	35%

Based on respondent's answers to household income and household size, eligibility for the FoodShare Program, the free and reduced school lunch program, and the WIC Program were determined. For the FoodShare Program, it was conservatively estimated that 292 of the survey respondents were eligible for FoodShare, yet only 62% of those respondents replied that they participate in the FoodShare Program.

[5] Eligibility for FoodShare is estimated based on reported income and household size. We used 130% of the 2009-2010 Federal Poverty Level as our eligibility guideline. However, the eligibility rules for FoodShare are complex, and some households that meet the income limits might still not qualify, while other households above 130% of the Federal Poverty Level may still be eligible to receive benefits.

Appendix E3: Detailed Results

Eligibility for and participation in free and reduced price school lunch program: for the 155 survey respondents below 185% of the Federal Poverty Level with at least one child age 6-17	
Participated in past 12 months	85%
Appears income-eligible but did not participate[6]	15%

Eligibility for and participation in WIC program: for the 175 survey respondents below 185% of the Federal Poverty Level with at least one child age 0-5	
Participated in past 12 months	38%
Appears income-eligible but did not participate [7]	51%
No response	9%

Not everyone who is eligible to participate in food assistance programs utilize the programs. At 85% participation, the free and reduced price school lunch program is the most utilized of the three programs reviewed. It appears that half of the households eligible for the WIC program do not utilize the program. The food share program is only utilized by approximately two-thirds of those that are eligible. These are conservative estimates based on family size and imcome..

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[6] Eligibility for the free and reduced price National School Lunch Program is estimated based on reported income and household size. Our survey question combines free lunch (eligibility guideline 130% below Federal Poverty Level) and reduced-cost Lunch (eligibility guideline 185% below Federal Poverty Level). Consequently, to include both free and reduced cost lunch programs, we used 185% of the 2009-2010 Federal Poverty Level as our eligibility guideline, and assumed that a child in the household age 6-17 would be enrolled in a school that participates in the National School Lunch Program. Because our survey used the age ranges of 0-5 and 6-17, our eligibility study cannot include children ages 5 and 18 who may be eligible for free and reduced-cost lunch.

[7] Eligibility for the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program is estimated based on reported income and household size. We used 185% of the 2009-2010 Federal Poverty Level as our eligibility guideline and assumed that respondent s with child(ren) ages 0-5 would be eligible for the program. It is possible that a male survey respondent who was not eligible for WIC, or two parents of the same child(ren) where only one parent was eligible, were incorrectly included in this target population (175 survey respondents below 185% of the Federal Poverty Level with at least one child age 0-5). An additional limitation to our WIC eligibility analysis is that the survey did not ask respondents about pregnancy status, so our analysis cannot include pregnant respondents in the WIC-eligible population.

Appendix E3: Detailed Results

Alternate Food Sources

Survey respondents get food in a variety of ways. During the last year, 46% of respondents grew vegetables or fruit in a garden, 36% hunted or fished for food, and 50% bought food at a farmer's market or farm stand. Less than 1% bought food online.

Vegetable gardening, hunting and fishing were most popular among survey respondents from the East (62% had grown vegetables and 60% had hunted or fished in the last year). Residents of Northern also had higher than average participation rates in those activities (55% and 42% respectively), while seniors-only households gardened and hunted or fished for food less often than average (39% and 20%). Seniors, northern households and western low-income households were more likely to shop at a farmer's market/stand (64% of seniors, 60% of northern respondents, and 59% of western households bought food at a farmer's market or farm stand last year).

During the past 12 months, did anyone in your household…	
Grow vegetables or fruits in a garden?	46%
Hunt or fish for food?	36%
Buy food online (on the internet)?	1%
Shop at a farmer's market or farm stand?	50%
Get food in another way?	14 %

Transportation

On average, the store at which respondents buy most of their food is 16 miles from home. Senior low-income households drive the shortest distance to their primary food store, 13 miles, followed by respondents from the south part of Waushara County (14 miles).Those who live in the western part of the county drive the farthest, about 25 miles.

How do you, or others in your household, usually get to this store?	
Drive our own vehicle	80.7%
Get a ride with someone	12.6%
Walk or ride a bike	2.7%
Department of Aging Minibus	0.4%
No response or other	3.6%

A few sub-populations deviated significantly from the norm: in the western part of the county, 92% of low-income households drive their own vehicles to the store, while 7% get a ride with someone and 0% walk or ride a bicycle to their primary food store. Seniors, on the other hand, are less likely to drive themselves to the grocery store (77%) and more apt to get a ride with someone (16%) or walk/ride a bike (5%) compared to the average survey respondent.

"We didn't have the transportation needed to get food." ***During the last 12 months, was this statement often, sometimes, or never true for you or the other members of your household?***	
Often lacked transportation	1.8%
Sometimes lacked transportation	16.6%
Never lacked transportation	74.7%
Blank	6.9%

Confirming the data above, when asked the reason for choosing their primary grocery store, 2.4% of survey respondents answered "No transportation to go to a different store." Interestingly, seniors-only households are less likely to lack transportation to the grocery store: only 9% said they sometimes or often didn't have the transportation needed to get food. Also unexpectedly, eastern low-income households, who typically drive farther to the grocery store, had less of a problem with transportation to food shopping: only 7% of eastern households often or sometimes had this problem. For approximately 75 of the low-income households never lack transportation to get needed food.

Solutions

As reported in the section on alternate food sources, low-income county residents are used to getting fruit and vegetables from gardening and from farmers. Initiatives involving these activities may be well-accepted, as the following two tables indicate.

If it were available in your community, would you or other members of your household buy food at a farmer's market?	
Yes	82%
No	11%
Blank	7%

Buying food at a farmer's market was a more attractive option for low-income households of northern (91%) and western (90%) Waushara County; these two populations also had higher than average current rates of shopping at farmer's markets and stands (60% and 58% respectively compared to a survey average of 50%).

While half of all survey respondents had bought food at a farmer's market or farm stand in the last year, 82% said they would buy food at a farmer's market if one were available to them. Our conclusions regarding this data are unclear. Our question, "Would you or other members of your household buy food at a farmer's market?" does not explicitly include farm stands. It may be that respondents define farm stands and farmer's markets differently, and that farmer's markets (82% said they would buy food there) are more attractive shopping options than farm stands (50% had bought food at a farmer's market or farm stand in the last year). It is also possible that a stand and a market are seen as the same, leading to the conclusion that the demand for farmer's markets and farm stands seems to exceed their availability. We will look to the information gathered through our focus groups to clarify this point.

If it were available in your community, would you or other members of your household grow vegetables in a community garden?	
Yes	50%
No	41%
Blank	9%

Growing vegetables in a community garden would be more popular among low-income households of the east and west (55% and 56% responded positively) and less popular among senior households and low-income households of northern (27% and 43% affirmative responses, respectively).

As reported in the Alternate Food Sources section, during the last year, 46% of low-income households grew vegetables or fruit in a garden. (Rates were higher in northern and the east and lower among senior households.) A moderately higher percentage, 50%, said they would grow vegetables in a community garden if one were available to them. An interesting note: of the 46% of respondents who do garden, 53% said they would grow vegetables in a community garden, while 40% would not.

If it were available in your community, would you or other members of your household use public transportation to get food?	
Yes	38%
No	53%
Blank	10%

Using public transportation to get food is less attractive to residents of the east and west (both regions travel farther than average for groceries) and to seniors who live alone (24%, 33%, and 27% would use public transportation for food shopping, respectively.) Residents of Northern (45%), on the other hand, would be more likely to use public transportation to go grocery shopping.

Appendix E3: Detailed Results

The following table illustrates the answers to the open-ended question, **"What changes in the community would make it easier for your household to meet your food needs?"**

Suggestion	**All Respon-dents %**	**# of South Central Residents** (out of 100)	**# of Eastern Residents** (out of 17)	**# of Northern Residents** (out of 30)	**# of Western Residents** (out of 28)
Open an inexpensive chain grocery store [such as Aldi's(10 responses), Wal-Mart (8), Woodman's (1), or Sam's Club(1)] in Waushara County	13%	15	0	5	3
Improve local stores: lower prices (5 responses), "better stores" (1), bigger stores (1)	3%	4	0	0	2
Open a local grocery store (1 "in Hancock"); open additional stores	2%	1	0	0	2
Lower food prices [including 3 re: sale prices ("more coupons," "Discount to all that shop—get rid of money saving gimmicks,") "more fresh fruits and vegetables with reasonable prices," better prices on gluten-free foods, sell in bulk at lower prices	21%	17	4	9	7
Transportation, including food delivery (1), public transportation (4, including one specifying for doctor appointments and groceries), gas vouchers (2), licenses for those without Social Sec. #s,	8%	10 (1 in Spanish)	1 (in Spanish)	2 (in Spanish)	1 (in Spanish)

Appendix E3: Detailed Results

Suggestion	**All Respon-dents %**	**# of South Central Residents** (out of 100)	**# of Eastern Residents** (out of 17)	**# of Northern Residents** (out of 30)	**# of Western Residents** (out of 28)
Cooking Classes/Food Education: "understanding what is in our foods and what we should buy," cooking classes for those on a budget, "how to make meals with small amounts of food"	1%	2	0	0	0
Changes in Food Pantries: includes offer more food (5), offer additional items (5, including: soap, dishes, paper products, clothes, more raw food, more meat, and greater selection: "items offered aren't for meals, i.e. ketchup, cake mix"), open more pantries (5, including open pantries at churches), keep longer hours, allow people to come more often, more food drives for pantries, pantries shouldn't only provide for their town: "everybody needs to work together," make it easier to find food pantries	10%	16	2 including "a food pantry closer than Wautoma"	1	0
Gardens including community gardens (3), and "if I had room for a garden."	3%	2	0	1	2
Lower other bills: utilities (2), mortgage interest rates, cost of living, gas prices (2, including 1 for older adults on Social Security)	4%	4	0	3	0

Appendix E3: Detailed Results

Suggestion	All Respondents %	# of South Central Residents (out of 100)	# of Eastern Residents (out of 17)	# of Northern Residents (out of 30)	# of Western Residents (out of 28)
Improve jobs/the economy/ "more money" including more jobs (10), better jobs, better paying jobs (4), including 1 specifying "in Waushara County," better economy, more Social Security	**9%**	**9**	**0**	**1**	**5**
Other understandable comments: including more doctors, government should change (2: "stop closing job bills," "start using money wisely"), local WIC clinic, make it easier to find clothes banks	**3%**	**3**	**0**	**0**	**1** "WIC clinic back in Plainfield"
Positive Comments: about food pantry(4) & helpful friends.	**7%**	**3**	**3**	**6**	**0**

To summarize the suggestions above, the surveyed low-income residents of Waushara County believe that their food needs would better be met through these popular solutions: lower food prices, either through existing grocery stores or by opening a discount grocery store (such as Wal-Mart or Aldi's) closer to home; improving the local economy; making changes in food pantries; and improving transportation options.