

Go Fresh Mobile Farmer's Market Satisfaction Survey Results

2016



Go Fresh Mobile Farmer's Market

Report prepared by

Partners for a Healthier Community, Inc.

The Public Health Institute of Western Massachusetts

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Introduction

The Go Fresh Mobile Farmer's Market is a not-for-profit, multi-organizational collaboration that includes city departments, a public health institute, three farms, a community action organization, and a nonprofit community loan organization. With its mobile setup, the market is a key access point for low income residents, bringing fresh produce to multiple locations in Springfield, from July through October, during the New England growing season. This collaborative experience helps to provide access to fresh, affordable, healthy, culturally appropriate locally grown produce in Springfield.

History of the Go Fresh Mobile Farmer's Market Program

The Go Fresh Mobile Farmer's Market in Springfield has been in operation since 2011, offering a variety of affordable locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables. Four partners cooperated to develop and implement this food access project: Springfield Housing Authority, City of Springfield Department of Elder Affairs, Enterprise Farm, and Partners for a Healthier Community (PHC).

During that first year, the market had two stops per week. It then expanded incrementally over the next three years, by adding more farms, market stops, and a greater variety of fruits and vegetables. This was possible with the support of the partners and funding from a range of sources, including: sponsors, federal grant funds, foundation funds, and partnerships with other local organizations.

Originally, the market operation was under the leadership of Enterprise Farm. With the help of Springfield based organizations like Partners for a Healthier Community and City of Springfield Department of Elder Affairs, relationships with market sites were strengthened and funding secured, to support the project. Partnerships with Gardening the Community and New Lands Farm, two other local farming organizations, were established in the second year.

With support from the Go Fresh Advisory Team and dedicated PHC staff, the many Go Fresh Mobile Farmer's Market needs have been covered year to year as transitions between operators have been necessary to sustain the project.

Over the past two years, the Go Fresh Advisory Team, which is convened by PHC, raised funds to support operations, upgraded the market vehicle, expanded market promotion, and established annual community engagement efforts; such as nutrition education and SNAP match. PHC has also conducted educational workshops in various community centers, organized access to community based nutrition education, and led efforts to assess the impact of the project. Go Fresh is an initiative of the Live Well Springfield coalition, which leads a community movement to support healthy eating and active living in Springfield, Massachusetts.

In 2014, Go Fresh Mobile Farmer's Market operated three days a week, with weekly stops at 12 locations in eight of Springfield's seventeen neighborhoods. Market locations included subsidized housing complexes, senior centers, and other sites of congregation such as the Caring Health Center.

The 2016 season saw two major enhancements to the Go Fresh Mobile Farmer's Market. First, the project received a donated bus from PVTA and with funds from PeoplesBank and STCC Foundation, was able to retrofit the bus to making shopping easier, to allow for greater variety and to keep produce cooler longer. Second, the Go Fresh Mobile Farmer's Market was introduced to new neighborhoods through three new stops; Caring Health Center - Forest Park, Robinson Garden, and the Riverview Apartments.

The Go Fresh Mobile Farmer's Market continues to be a multi-organizational endeavor, with partners and operators including: Partners for a Healthier Community, City of Springfield Department of Elder Affairs, Gardening the Community, Common Capital, Springfield Partners for Community Action, and Springfield Housing Authority. Each organization plays an important role in helping the Go Fresh Mobile Farmer's Market meet its goals.

Goals

The Go Fresh Mobile Farmer's Market aims to serve residents who live in 'food deserts' by improving access to locally grown fruits and vegetables, as well as providing social interaction for elders, and a sense of community for everyone. All of the produce at the market sites has been competitively priced to be similar to, or less than local supermarket prices. The market accepts senior Farmers Market Coupons, WIC vouchers, and SNAP dollars. The market has consistently provided a 50% discount on items for all Supplemental Nutrition Assistant Program (SNAP) participants.

Sales and Reach Summary

Go Fresh Mobile Farmer's Market sales data is collected on a weekly basis, as well as data collected from an annual customer survey. It is compiled from point of sale software that reports on how much was purchased at each stop, what payment method was used, and the variety of produce that was purchased by customers. It is included here to provide further program context for the survey data presented below.

Customer reach and total sales have continued to increase over the last six years. The market began in 2011 with only two stops per week and has increased to 13 stops per week during the 2016 season. The current market stops serve 12 of the 17 neighborhoods in Springfield, however customers come from at least 16 neighborhoods to shop. This expanded reach is reflected in the increase in average weekly sales transactions, which rose from 260 transactions in 2015 to 277 transactions in 2016. Total sales for the Go Fresh Mobile Farmer's Market have also increased each year for the last six years (shown in figure 1) and average weekly sales increased to \$2,582 in 2016 from \$1,720 in 2015. Most sales (70%) are for customers using SNAP EBT, vouchers or coupons. For more details on payment method, see Figure 2.

Figure 1. Total Sales Over Go Fresh Mobile Market Seasons, 2011-2016

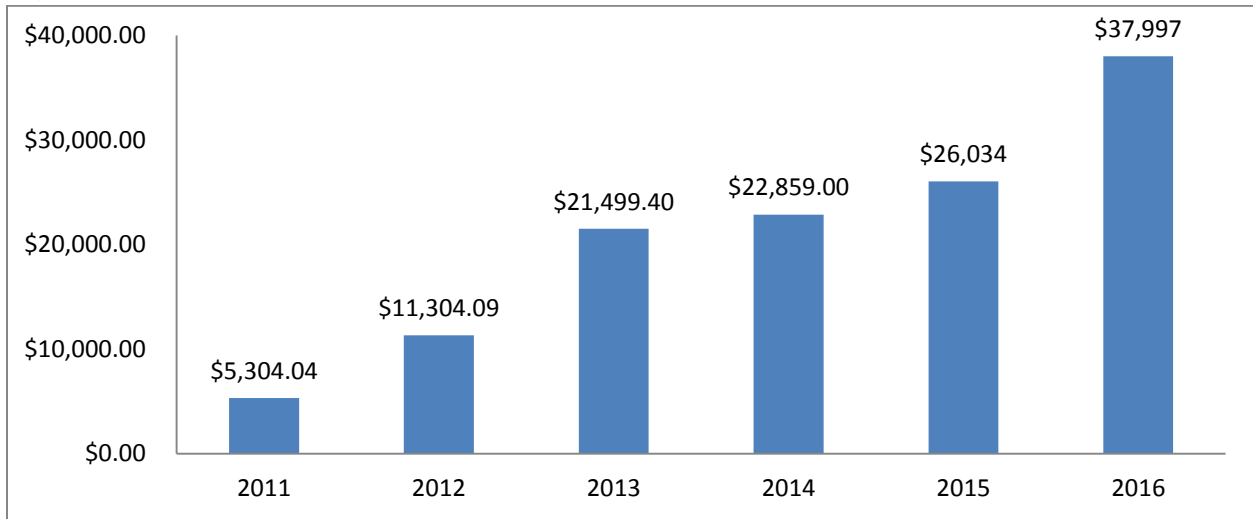
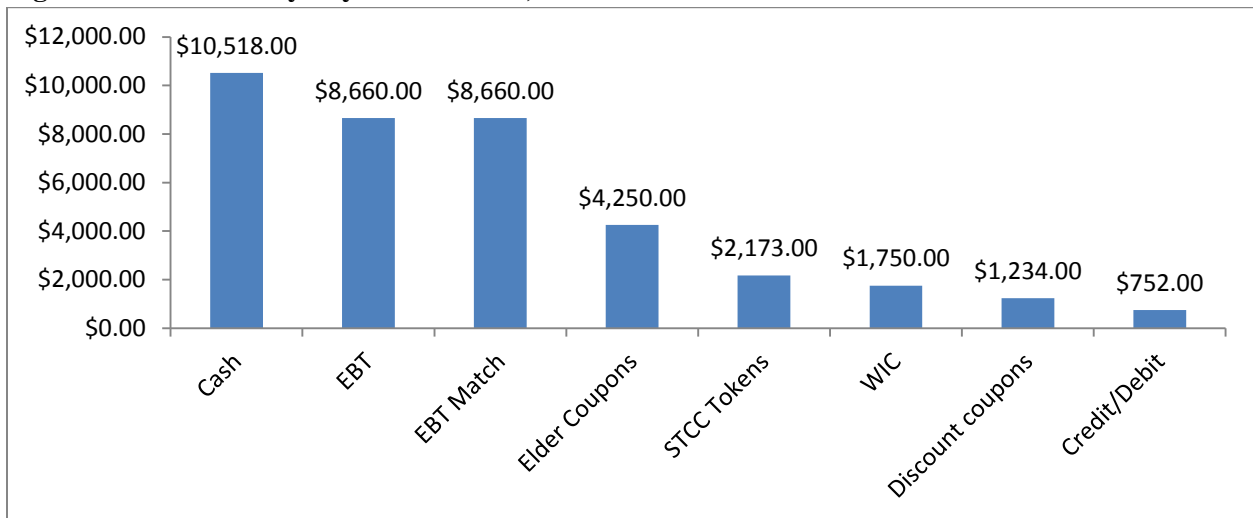


Figure 2. Total Sales by Payment Method, 2016



Executive Summary of the 2016 Customer Satisfaction Survey

The Go Fresh Mobile Farmer’s Market is a source of high quality food, socialization and a key access point for families shopping for produce that results in increased fruits and vegetable consumption. Respondents of the survey report that they use the Go Fresh Mobile Farmer’s Market frequently and purchase food to feed more than one person. Based on the responses from 164 people, at least 325 people were fed from shopping done by those 164 individuals. This suggests that the **reach is at least double the number of shoppers**. Most shoppers reported having chronic health problems. The market feeds many individuals with poor health and various chronic health conditions that are effected by diet. **Fruit and vegetable consumption increased by about one serving per day on average** after respondents started shopping at the market. Socialization and mental health are often correlated in older adults (47%

of survey respondents were over 60 years old). The Go Fresh Mobile Farmer's Market provides an opportunity for people to socialize; **67% reported that they look forward to the market** in order to meet new people, to go with friends or neighbors, or just to get out of the house. Finally, over three quarters (80%) were interested in buying frozen vegetables and over half (60%) were interested in buying frozen soup over the winter, suggesting there is an opportunity for the Go Fresh Mobile Farmer's Market to extend its season. Survey respondents represented 16 neighborhoods in Springfield as well as various neighboring towns, most commonly West Springfield. They found out about the market through various means, but commonly through flyers or other communications from the site hosting the market. Seeing the market when it was there, word of mouth, newspapers/newsletters, and nutrition programs were also common ways people heard about it. Respondents overwhelmingly (**99%**) **plan to shop there again next year.**

Description of 2016 Survey

Satisfaction surveys were conducted in person at 12 of the 13 Go Fresh Mobile Farmer's Market stops in October of 2016. Overall, there were 166 survey respondents. Surveys were self-reported by participants on paper. The survey was available in English, Spanish, and Russian. Interpreters in Spanish were used at four stops and a Russian interpreter was used at one stop. Satisfaction surveys have been implemented since 2012. Customers are consistently reporting high satisfaction with the market and its ease of access. Over the years, customers also report that they have shopped at the market for more than one year and that they are eager to come back the next season.

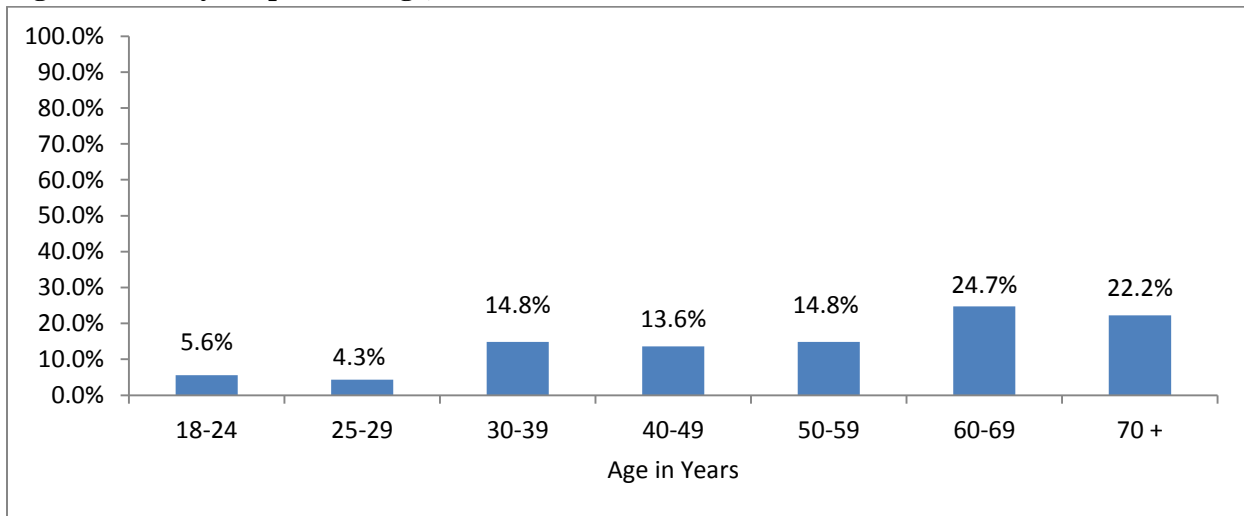
The 2016 survey had three additional questions, compared to the 2015 survey, related to extending the Go Fresh Mobile Farmer's Market season during the winter months. Historically, the season has begun in early July and ended at the end of October. The Go Fresh Mobile Farmer's Market advisory team wanted feedback on whether participants would be interested in purchasing locally produced frozen vegetables and soups as one strategy to continue to focus on local produce and extend season. Survey results support that there is interest in exploring the possibility of extending the season.

Demographics

Most survey respondents (22%) shopped at the STCC stop, followed by Caring Health Center (CHC) (11%), the East Springfield Library (10%), Linden Towers (10%), Clodo Concepcion Community Center (10%), Saab Court (9%) and other stops in smaller proportion. Go Fresh Mobile Farmer's Market survey respondents were mostly women (76%). Just over half (53%) were between 18 – 59 years old and 47% were over 60 years old (see figure 3 for more detail). Most shoppers identified as White (46%), but many also identified as Latino (33%) and Black (20%) (Figure 4). More than a third (38%) of respondents live alone, 30% live with a partner or spouse, 31% live with children, 7% live with parents and 7% live with other relatives or non family members. Survey respondents represented 11 zip codes, 16 Springfield neighborhoods (Figure 5) and also areas outside of Springfield. Towns outside of Springfield included West Springfield, Palmer, Holyoke, East Longmeadow, Ludlow, Three Rivers and even a town in CT. Only three Springfield neighborhoods were not represented; Memorial Square, Six Corners, and Upper Hill.

Survey demographics were similar to past years. In 2014, 2015 and 2016, 70% or more of respondents have been female. Similarly those identifying as Latino has made up about a third (29-37%) in all three years, and those identifying as Black was 20% for 2015 and 2016 (but 40% in 2014). Those over 60 years of age has ranged from 42% in 2014 to 59% in 2015 with 2016 in between at 47%. The percentage of respondents between age 40-59 years old has been similar across all three years ranging from 28-31%. The top five neighborhoods with the most respondents has consistently included Liberty Heights, Sixteen Acres and East Springfield all three years. This year the sample size was the largest with 166 respondents compared to 144 in 2014 and 94 in 2015.

Figure 3. Survey Respondent Age, 2016*



*of 166 survey respondents

Figure 4. Survey Respondent Race/Ethnicity, 2016

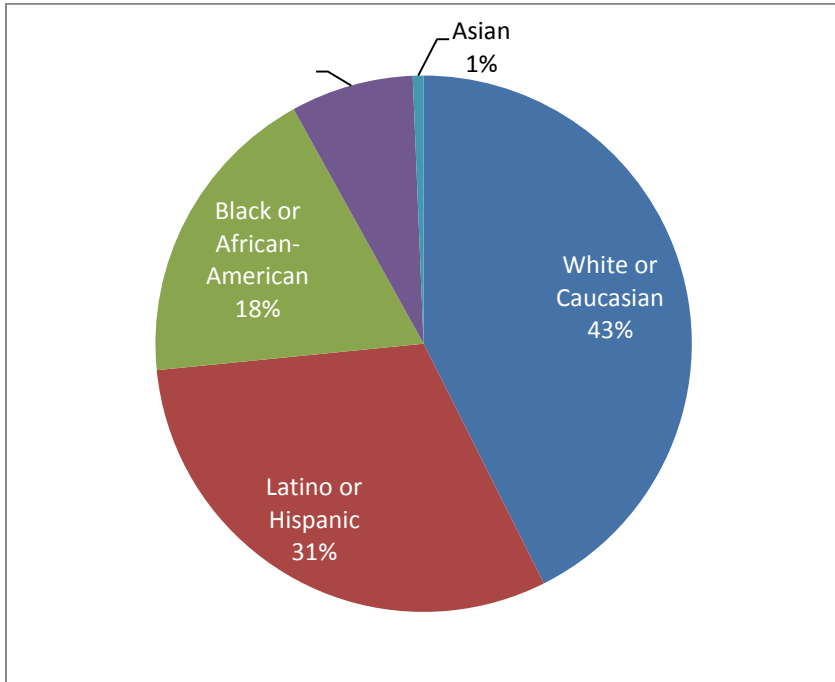
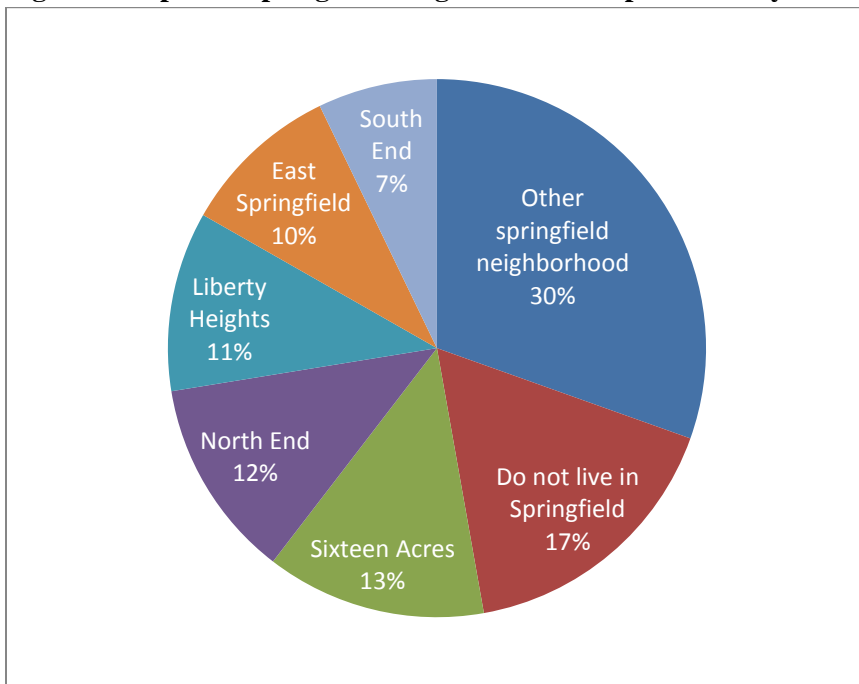


Figure 5. Top Five Springfield Neighborhoods Represented by Survey Respondents, 2016



Results of 2016 Survey

Reach and Frequency

Most shoppers were shopping for more than one person and came back to the market frequently in 2016. In addition, many had been shopping at the Go Fresh Mobile Farmer's Market for more than one year. Seventy percent of shoppers surveyed had shopped at the market three or more times in 2016 and nearly a third (31%) had shopped at the market more than 10 times during the 2016 season (Figure 6). For less than half (47%) it was their first year, but about a third (32%) had shopped there for 2 years in a row, and 21% shopped there 3 or more years in a row (Figure 7). Respondents were buying predominantly for 2-3 people (52%), 15% were buying for 4 or more people and about a third bought only for themselves (Figure 8). Over the past three years, most shoppers have been buying for 2-3 people with a high of 59% in 2014, and a low of 48% in 2015. Survey respondents had found out about the market most frequently from a flyer (24%), from the site holding it (20%), by seeing it (16%), by word of mouth (9%), somewhere else (9%), from a newspaper or newsletter (8%), from a nutrition program (8%, commonly SNAP or WIC), or at work (6%) (Figure 9). 2014 survey results were similar with many hearing about the market through the market host site organization, flyers, word of mouth, and seeing it.

Figure 6. Number of Visits during 2016 Season

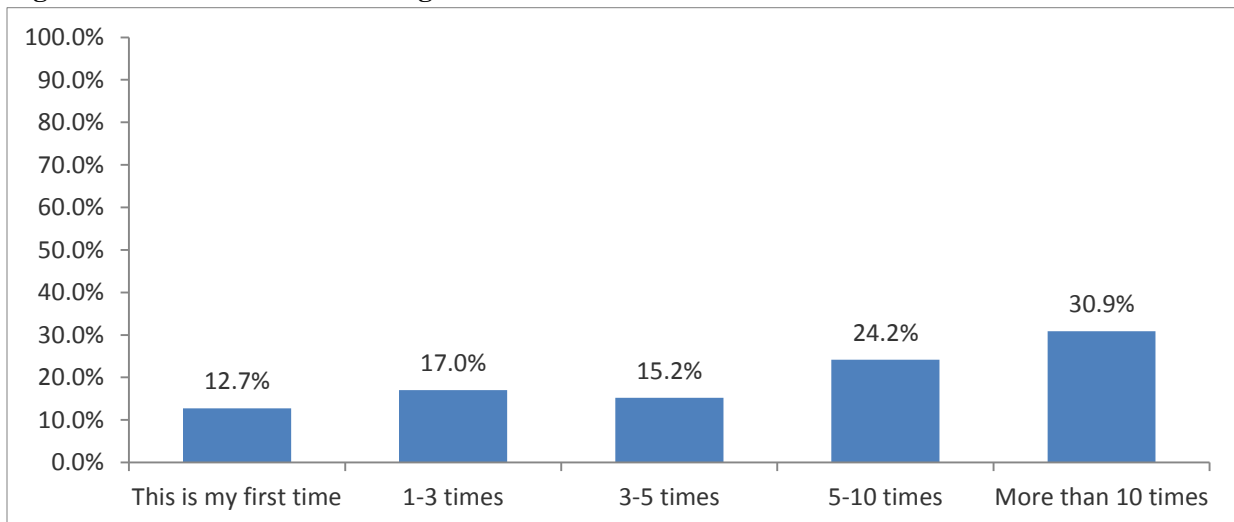


Figure 7. Number of Years Shopping at Go Fresh Mobile Farmer’s Market

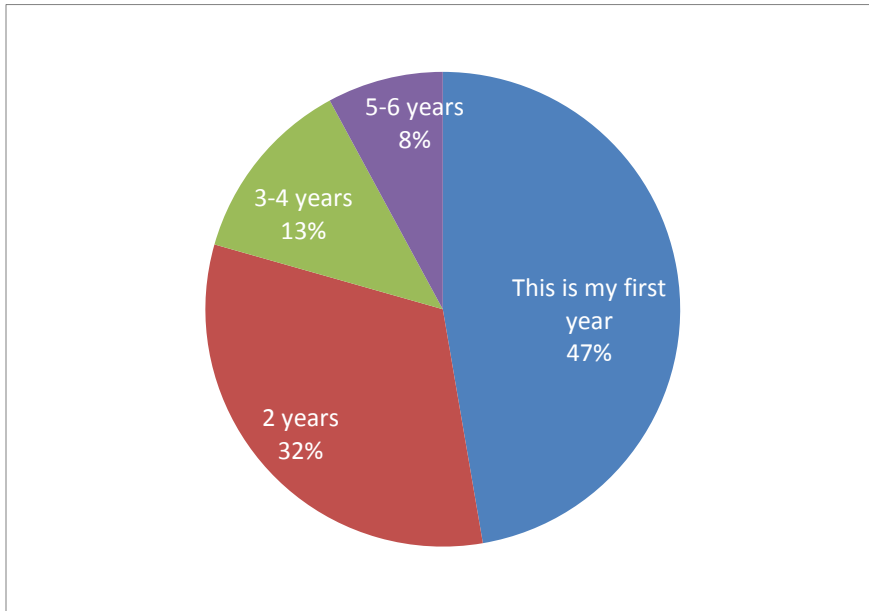


Figure 8. Number of Individuals Shopper is Purchasing for at Go Fresh Mobile Farmer’s Market, 2016

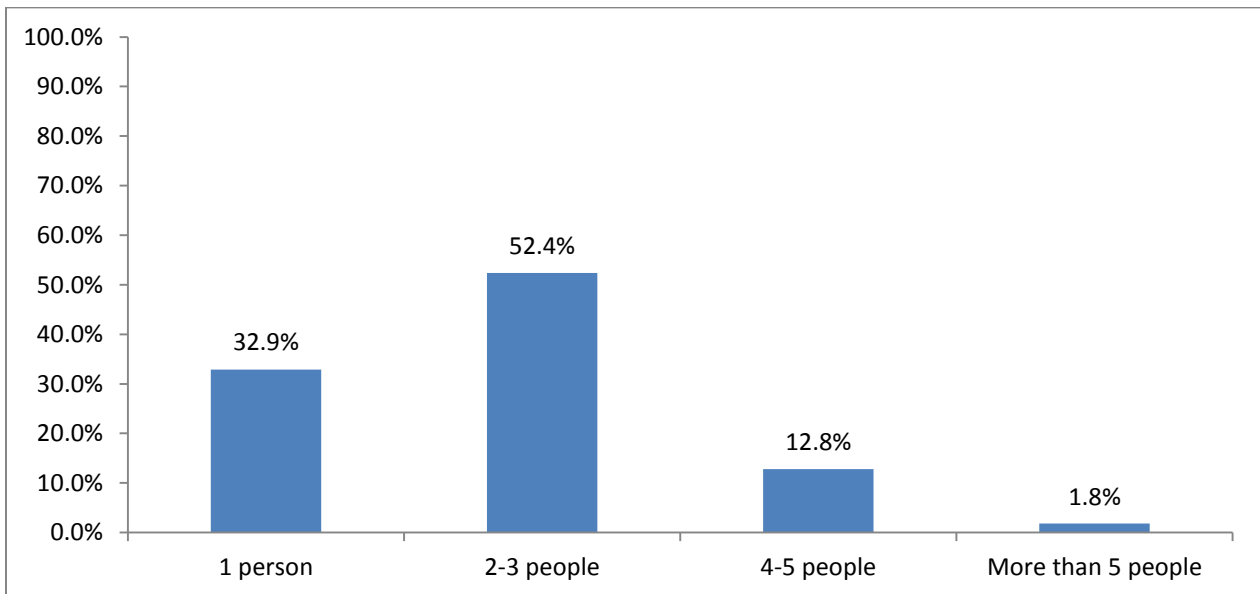
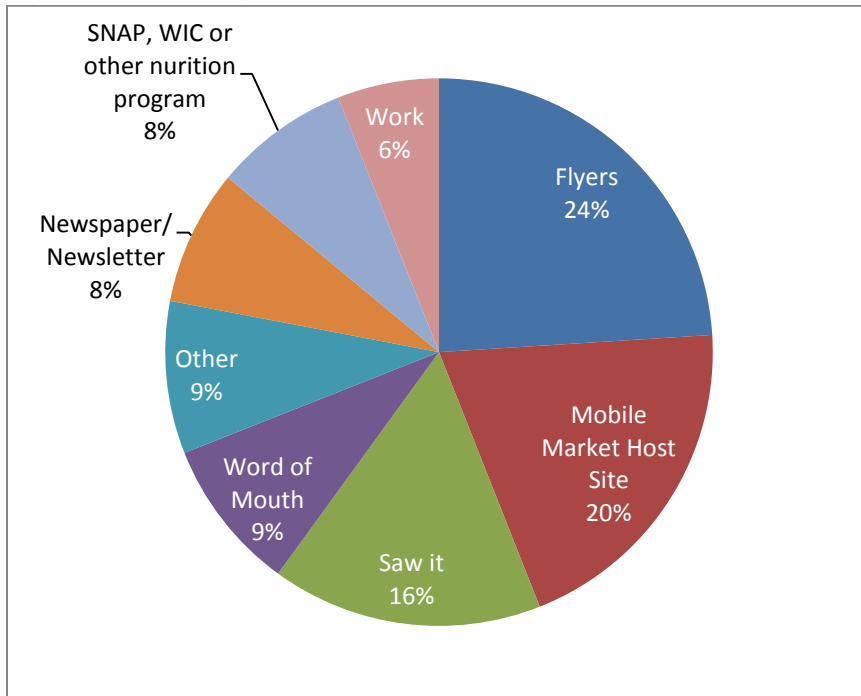


Figure 9. How Respondents Heard About Go Fresh Mobile Farmer’s Market, 2016



Health

Go Fresh Mobile Farmer’s Market survey respondents generally had chronic health problems. Of respondents, 21% rated their health as either “fair” or “poor” (see Figure 10 for details). Over two thirds of survey respondents had chronic health problems, including 44% with high blood pressure, 26% overweight or obese, 24% with high cholesterol, 23% with diabetes, 17% with asthma, 13% with heart disease and/or a history of stroke, and 10% reported problems with their teeth (Figure 11).

Diet and exercise have been shown to have a positive impact on many chronic health conditions. Survey **respondents reported an average increase in fruit and vegetable intake by about one serving per day** after they started shopping at the market (see Figure 12 for more detail). In addition, the majority (41%) reported walking to the market, likely because 32% reported they lived where the market was held. An additional 30% drove to the market, only 1% biked and less than 1% used public transportation. These results are similar to 2015 survey results with most reporting they walked (68%) and about 27% driving.

Socialization also plays a role in health, especially mental health in older adults. Most respondents (over 65% for each community organization) were never involved with a senior center, an educational organization, community center, community garden or the YMCA. However, 60% were involved “Often” or “Sometimes” with a church or religious center.

Figure 10. Overall Health, 2016

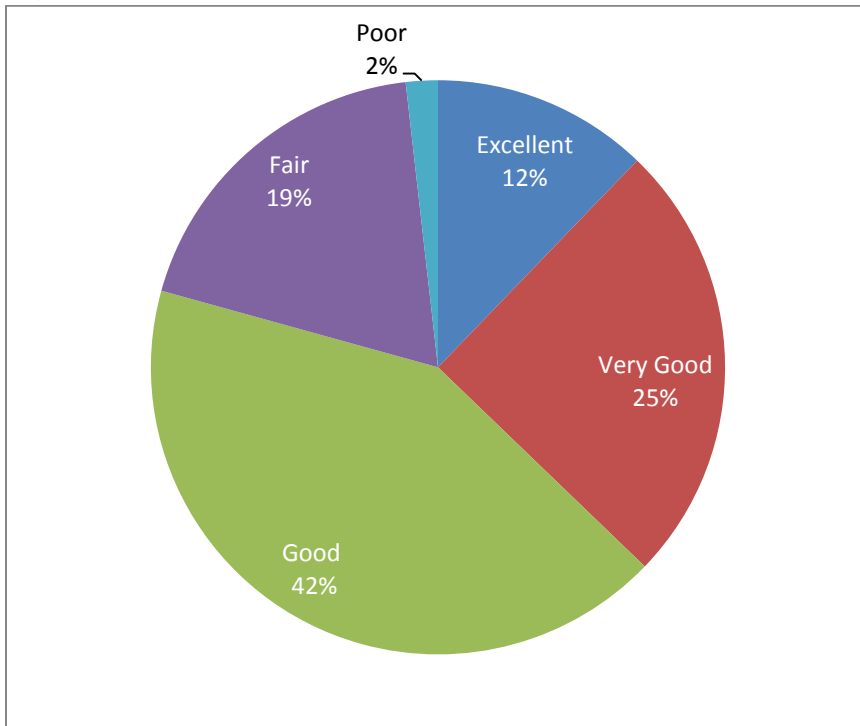


Figure 11. Chronic Medical Conditions, 2016

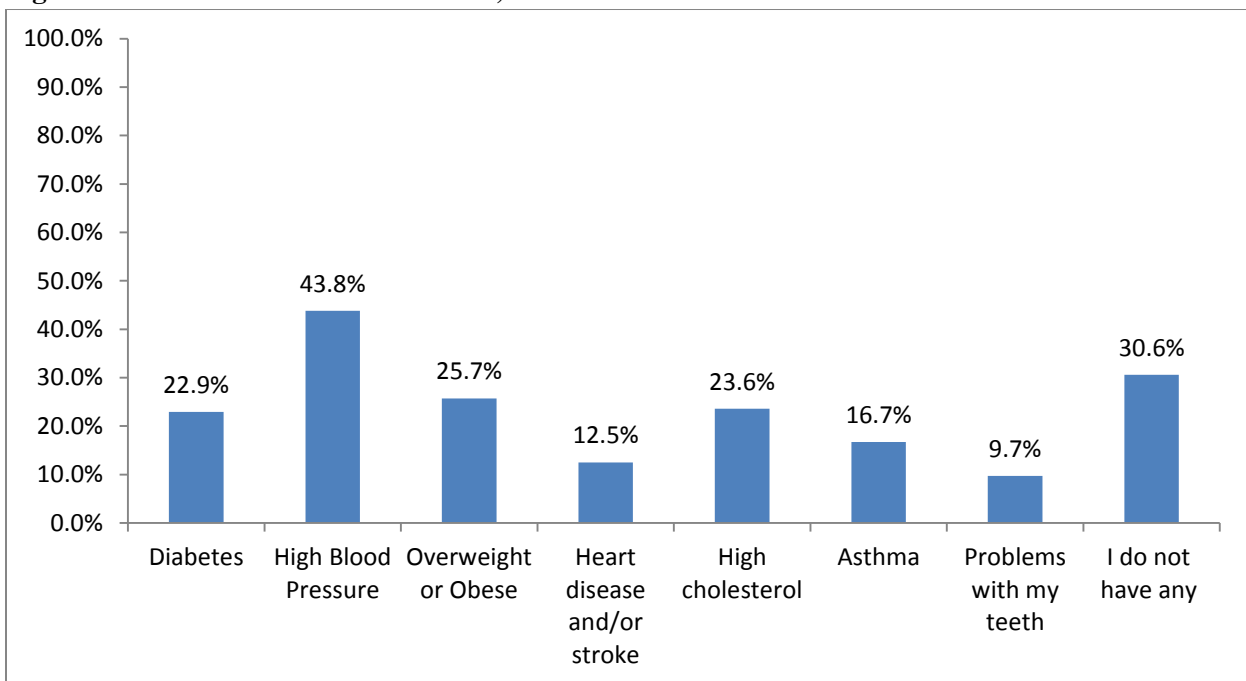
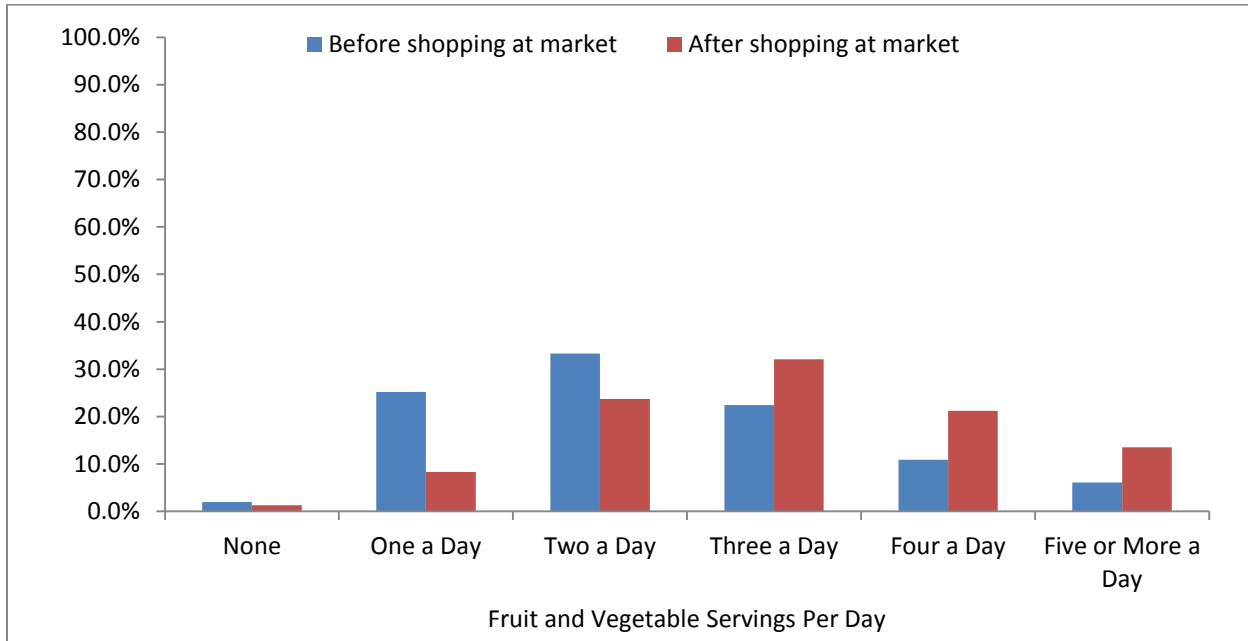


Figure 12. Change in Fruit/Vegetable Intake, 2016



Season Extension

A majority of respondents knew that frozen food is nutritionally the next best thing after fresh produce (73%). Most said they would be interested in getting frozen produce in the winter (80%). However, some write in answers said they preferred fresh produce, or to go to the store for frozen vegetable products. Various people were not sure if they would buy frozen vegetables or not. One person noted that it would be harder for them to get to the market in the winter due to their health. Many respondents also said they would be interested in frozen soups during the winter (60%). However, a few were concerned about the salt/sodium content, and some said it would depend on the type and that they would want to try it first.

Future Outlook

Survey respondents reported positively on the Go Fresh Mobile Farmer’s Market. Respondents look forward to the market for a variety of reasons including, fresh local vegetables (90%), convenience (44%), getting information about health and nutrition (38%), meeting new people (27%), getting to share and learn about food prep and health (23%), going with friends/neighbors (21%), to get out of the house (19%), and also because of the produce quality, produce variety and the ability to support local farmers. Nearly all shoppers surveyed (99%) plan to shop at the market next year.



**Partners for a Healthier
Community, Inc.**