



PUBLIC HEALTH INSTITUTE  
OF WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS  
PARTNERS FOR HEALTH EQUITY



YMCA OF GREATER SPRINGFIELD

# Go Fresh Mobile Farmer's Market 2019 Season Report



Thank you to all our funders who continue to make this project successful and to support its growth!

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Community Foundation of Western MA	
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YMCA of Greater Springfield Public Health Institute of Western MA Caring Health Center City of Springfield Health and Human Services Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture Gardening the Community Mosque 13 Wellspring Cooperative Corporation	      

## OVERVIEW

The Go Fresh Mobile Farmer’s Market (Go Fresh) has been serving residents of Springfield since 2011, successfully increasing access to fresh fruits and vegetables as a strategy of the Live Well Springfield campaign. A large portion of Go Fresh customers experience food insecurity, chronic disease and participate in the SNAP program. Go Fresh continues to be a critical healthy food access point for residents.

Go Fresh is managed by the Public Health Institute of Western Massachusetts (PHIWM) while the YMCA of Greater Springfield oversees all of the day to day operations. The partners advising the project include representatives from city departments, local farms, health centers and community organizations. We are grateful to our sponsors who make each season possible.

## 2019 SEASON

The 2019 season ran from July 9 to November 27, four weeks longer than the previous year. There were 15 stops (see box at right) that covered 12 of 17 neighborhoods in Springfield. Sales totaled \$28,582 for close to 28,000 pounds of food sold or donated.

## Customer Survey

Customer satisfaction surveys were conducted in person at all 15 Go Fresh stops in late October 2019. Thirty-six customers completed the survey, which were self-administered on paper. The survey was available in English and Spanish and a Spanish-speaking interpreter was available.

## Who We Serve

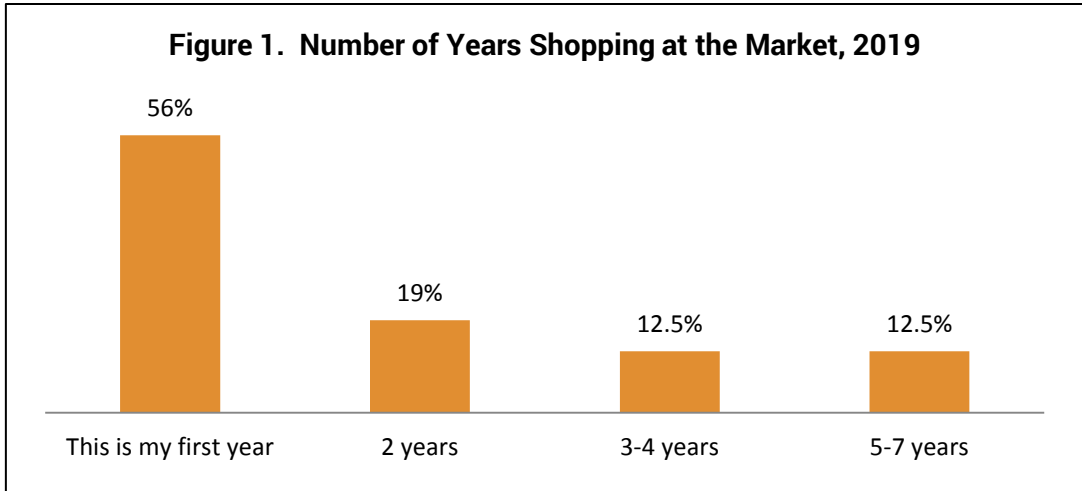
- The neighborhoods most represented by the survey include Liberty Heights, Bay, South End, North End, Mason Square, and Brightwood.
- Go Fresh serves across the lifespan.
- 46% were Latino, 31% White, 20% African American, and 3% other/declined to answer.

## 2019 GO FRESH STOPS

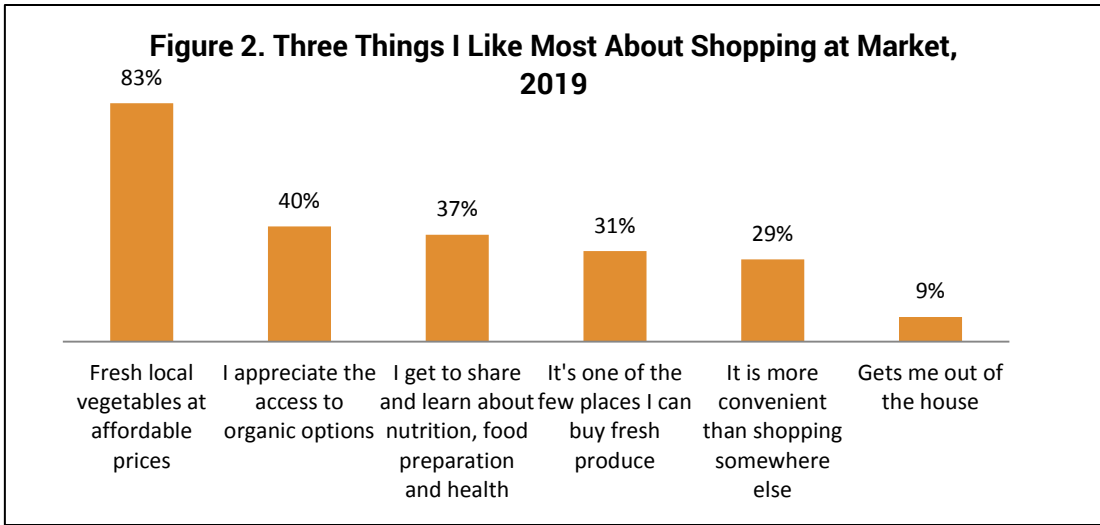
- BaystatePlace
- Baystate High Street Health Center
- Caring Health Center
- Children’s Study Home
- Colonial Estates
- E. Springfield Library
- Gentile Apartments
- Independence House
- Linden Towers
- Mercy Medical Center
- Mosque 13
- Raymond A. Jordan Senior Center
- Riverview Senior Center
- Saab Court
- Sullivan Apartments

## A Trusted Source of Local Fruits & Vegetables

- Go Fresh has a strong customer base: 86% had visited Go Fresh previously this year, and almost half (44%) had visited the market in previous years (Figure 1).



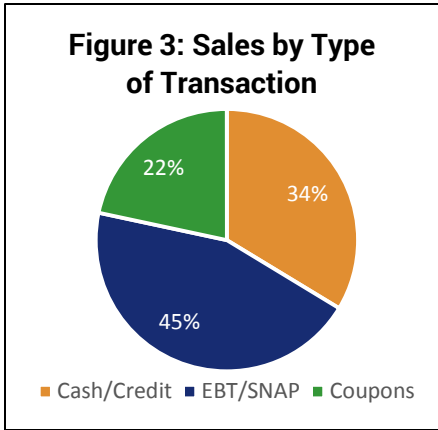
- Go Fresh customers report the things they most like about the Mobile Market include fresh local vegetables at affordable prices, access to organic options, and learning about nutrition, food preparation, and health (Figure 2).



**Increasing Food Access**

Two-thirds of sales were using low income sources including SNAP and coupons including WIC, Elder and BMCHP (Figure 3).

Go Fresh is one of only four Springfield locations for residents to participate in the Healthy Incentive Program (HIP), which allows individuals who are eligible for Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) to double the amount of fruits and vegetables that they can purchase. Nearly half of Go Fresh customers took advantage of the HIP benefits to increase their access to fresh, healthy food.



## Food Insecurity

Through multiple years of surveying, we understand that Go Fresh is an important access point for Springfield residents who are experiencing food insecurity. The 2019 survey results again show this to be true.

A large number of Go Fresh customers report food insecurity: Of the Go Fresh customers surveyed in 2019, **40% ran out of food and didn't have money to get more**. This is more than double the estimate for Springfield as a whole (17%, Coalition on Hunger).

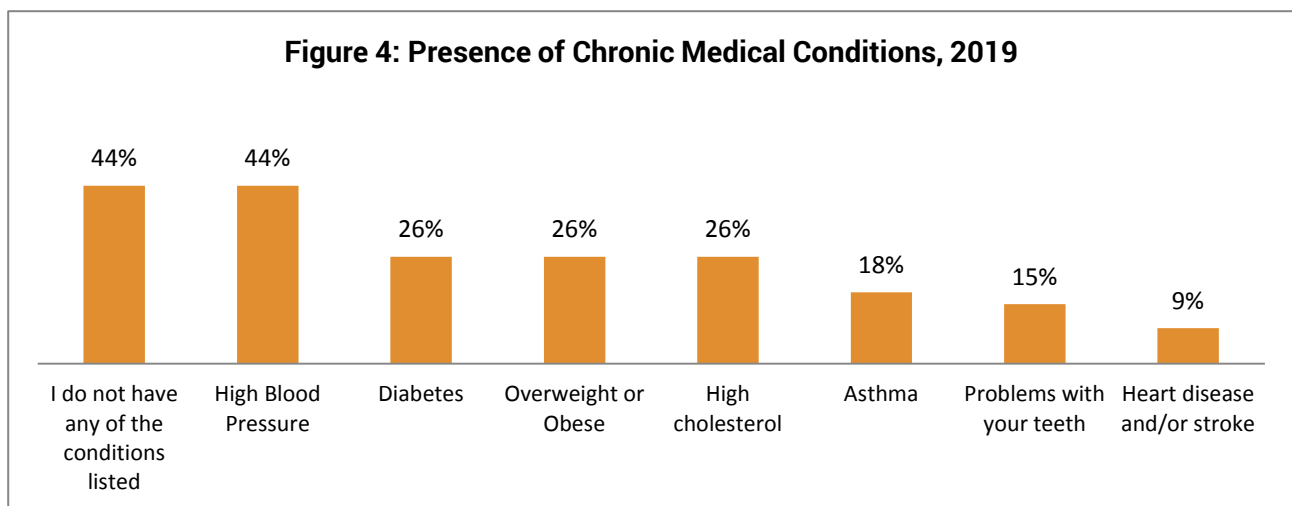
## Nutrition Education

By partnering with the UMass Extension, Go Fresh provides an opportunity for nutrition education. UMass Extension provided 13 cooking demonstrations using food available from the market for 375 people throughout the 2019 season.

Overall, there was an increase of fruit and vegetable consumption by customers. 18% reported they achieved the national recommendation of five servings or more daily.

## Health

Go Fresh is an important source of healthy food for residents with health problems. Over one-half (56%) of survey respondents reported at least one chronic health problem, including 44% with high blood pressure, 26% overweight or obese, 26% with high cholesterol, 26% with diabetes, 18% with asthma, 15% with problems with their teeth, and 9% with heart disease and/or a history of stroke (Figure 4).





## Impact: Customer Stories

Go Fresh has a loyal following. The following comments are just some of the favorable feedback we have heard from customers this season.

- “Buying is a pleasure, as they have good and fresh produce well organized.” – Brenda.
- “Good vegetables and fruits and nice people working for the market” – Eric.
- “Best fruits and veggies” – Shakira.



Clarence is a resident at the Riverview Apartments and a faithful supporter of the mobile market, which stops there each Wednesday at 9 AM. His favorite produce selection was fruit. He enjoyed oranges, cherries and peaches. For vegetables he'd grab a sampling of what was offered that week: cabbage, tomatoes and greens. Sometimes he would return to the market after getting home to see that he was out of another item. As a veteran who has lost his two legs, he found shopping at the mobile market convenient and was welcomed by the staff and his neighbors.



As mobile market staff and project coordinator, we have been witness to people's generosity to each other. Neighbors, and even strangers, help each other out when they've run out of money or their SNAP benefits to buy produce. We heard the customers swap hellos, talk about how their families are doing and share their recipes on how to prepare their favorite, or least favorite, vegetables. We saw the amazement on customers' faces when we would explain how HIP worked and then saw how they felt they were walking away with a blessing in their hands. Once they caught wind of this program, they'd share the information with their neighbors. The only negative experience faced was when a customer left because we ran out of their favorite vegetable, fruit or honey.