Howard County LHIC
Local Health Improvement Coalition

HOWARD COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

8930 Stanford Blvd | Columbia, MD 21045
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www.hclhic.org

Howard County Community Food & Nutrition Security Survey Report

Overview
- Purpose: To assess food insecurity rates and needs among under-resourced populations in Howard County to inform interventions to reduce food and nutrition insecurity among residents
- Survey Design: The 24-question survey was designed using the two-item Hunger Vital Sign™ screening tool and questions from partners of the Howard County Food Security Committee
- Languages: English, Spanish, French, Mandarin, Korean

Process
- Timeframe: October 2022 – January 2023
- Partners:
    - Columbia Community Care
    - LindaBen Foundation
    - Early Childhood Centers of Community Action Council of Howard County
    - Women, Infant and Children Program
    - Others
- Number of Responses: 406

Food Insecurity Rates
- Overall: 78.62%
- By Race/Ethnicity:
    - Whites: 49.06%
    - Asians: 68.75%
    - Blacks: 80.56%
    - Hispanics: 91.41%
- By Language spoken at home:
    - English only: 63.12%
   - Spanish only: 96.84%
    - Bilinguals: 87.76%

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DATA BY QUESTIONS

Q1: Within the past 12 months, how often did you worry whether your food would run out before you got money to buy more?

Never	27.34%
Sometimes	55.44%
Always	17.22%
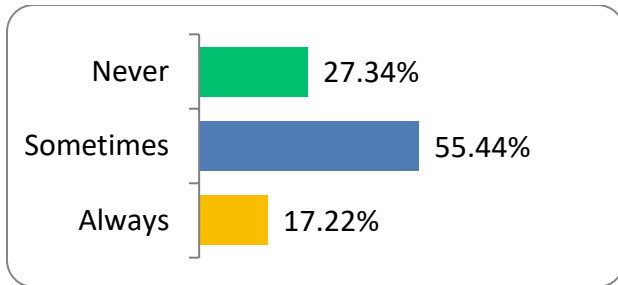
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Never	27.34%	108
Sometimes	55.44%	219
Always	17.22%	68
TOTAL		395

Q2: Within the past 12 months, how often did the food you bought just didn't last and you didn't have money to get more?
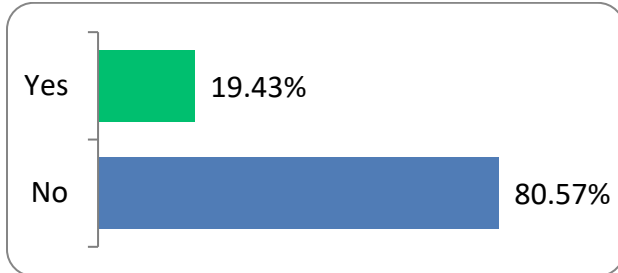
Never	28.39%
Sometimes	57.03%
Always	14.58%
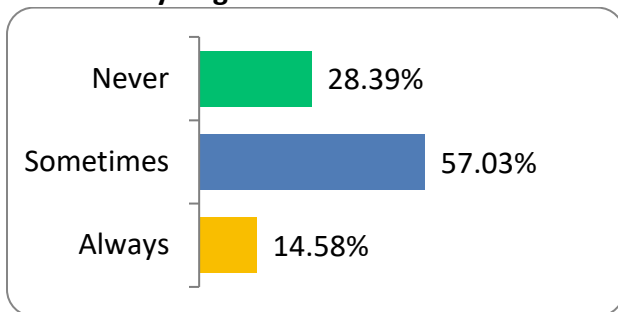
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Never	28.39%	111
Sometimes	57.03%	223
Always	14.58%	57
TOTAL		391

Q3: Where do you typically get your food? Check all that apply.

Dollar Store	19.69%
Food Bank	21.52%
Food Pantry	16.80%
Grocery…	81.36%
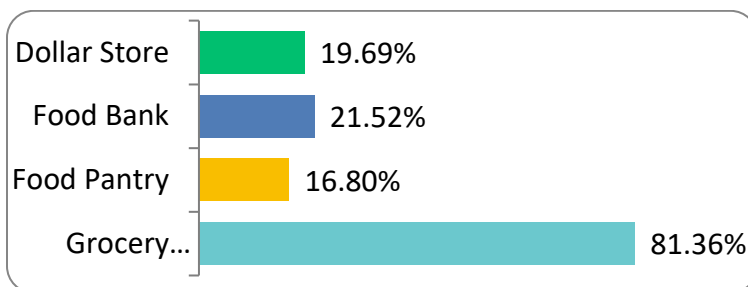
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Dollar Store	19.69%	75
Food Bank	21.52%	82
Food Pantry	16.80%	64
Grocery store	81.36%	310
TOTAL		531

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Q4: Do you use grocery delivery services?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	19.43%	68
No	80.57%	282
TOTAL		350

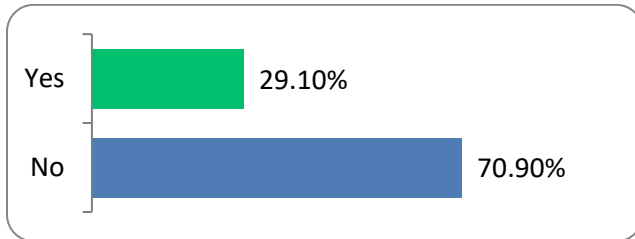**Q5: If you answered "Yes" to the previous question, how useful are the grocery delivery services?**
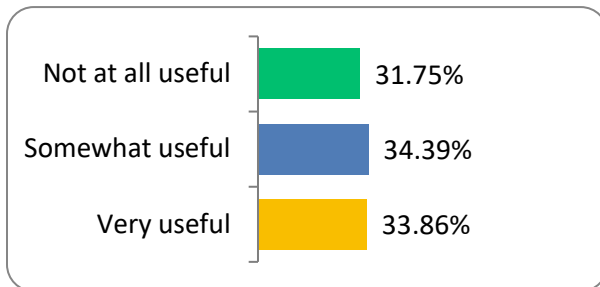
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Not at all useful	31.75%	60
Somewhat useful	34.39%	65
Very useful	33.86%	64
TOTAL		189

Q6: Which of the following are barriers to accessing food? Check all that apply.
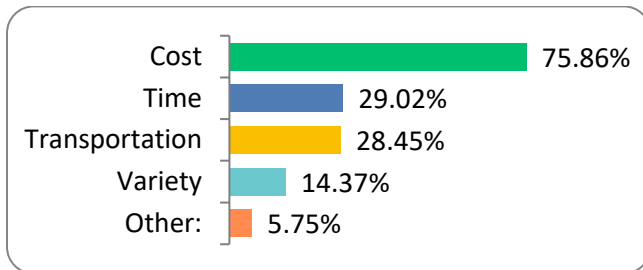
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Cost	75.86%	264
Time	29.02%	101
Transportation	28.45%	99
Variety	14.37%	50
Other:	5.75%	20
TOTAL		534

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Q7: Do you know all the places to get free and/or low-cost food in your community?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	29.10%	110
No	70.90%	268
TOTAL		378

Q8: How do you usually travel to get your food? Check all that apply.

Other responses: taxi, food bank delivery, ride by friend
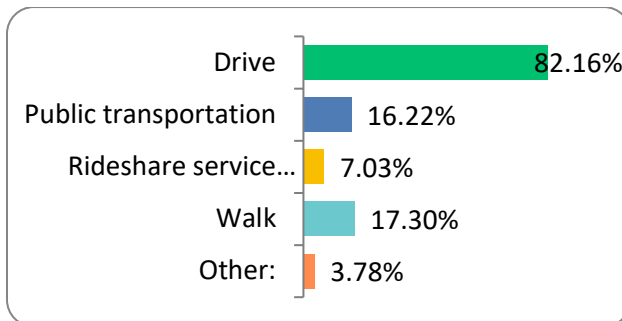
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Drive	82.16%	304
Public transportation	16.22%	60
Rideshare service (Uber, Lyft, etc.)	7.03%	26
Walk	17.30%	64
Other:	3.78%	14
TOTAL		468

Q9: Not including restaurants, how long does it typically take to get to your closest food place?
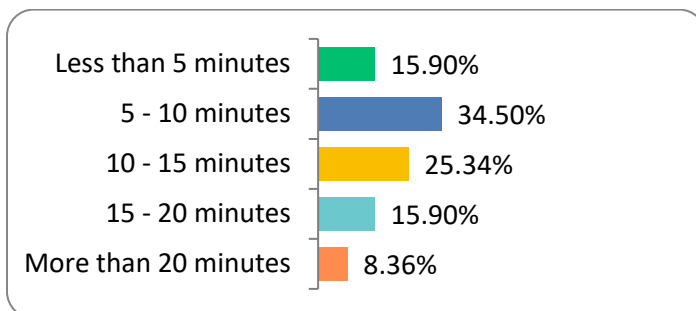
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Less than 5 minutes	15.90%	59
5 - 10 minutes	34.50%	128
10 - 15 minutes	25.34%	94
15 - 20 minutes	15.90%	59
More than 20 minutes	8.36%	31
TOTAL		371

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Q10: How easy is it to prepare healthy meals?
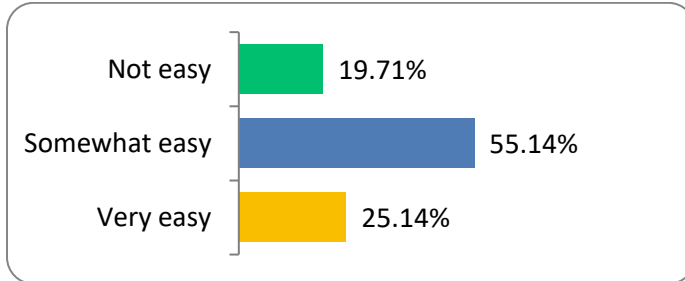
ANSWER CHOIC	RESPONSES	
Not easy	19.71%	69
Somewhat easy	55.14%	193
Very easy	25.14%	88
TOTAL		350

Q11: How comfortable are you in your ability to prepare healthy meals from the available food items?
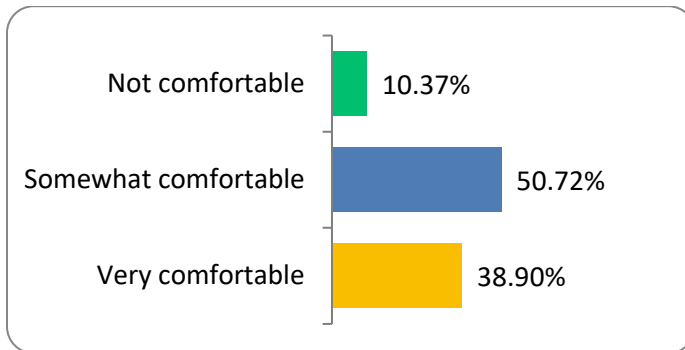
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Not comfortable	10.37%	36
Somewhat comfortable	50.72%	176
Very comfortable	38.90%	135
TOTAL		347

**Q12: Do the available food items meet your religious, personal and/or medical needs?**
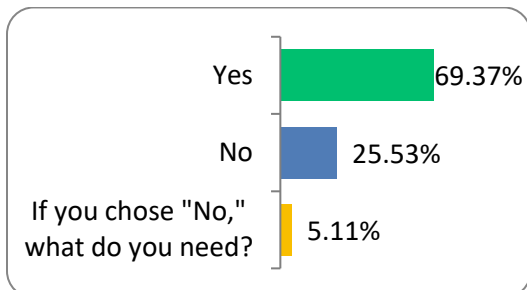
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	69.37%	231
No	25.53%	85
If you chose "No," what do you need?	5.11%	17
TOTAL		333

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FOOD NEEDS
- Kosher; Halal; vegetarian; plant-based meats
- Diabetes support; high cholesterol; Vitamin D deficiency; vitamins
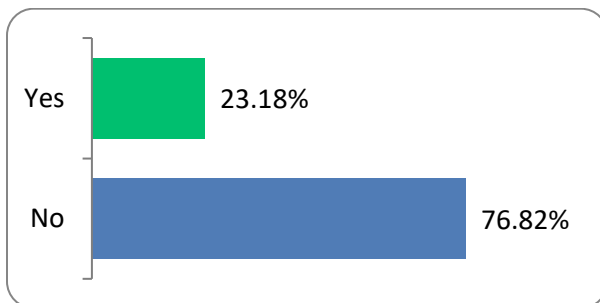- Gluten-free
- Fruits, greens
- Baby formula
- Detergent

"After making rent and utility payments, we have little money to buy food, so sometimes we can't buy everything we need." – Translated from Spanish

Q13: In your opinion, how healthy is the food that you eat?

Not at all healthy 7.58%
Somewhat healthy 65.01%
Very healthy 27.41%
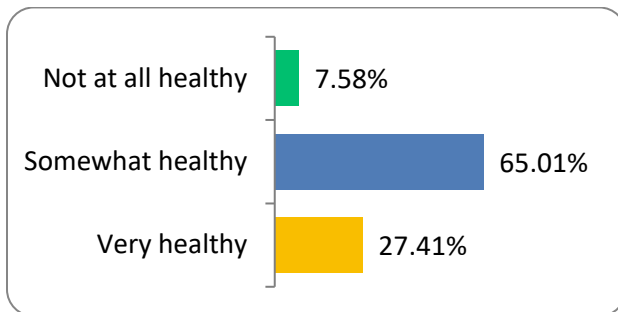
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Not at all healthy	7.58%	26
Somewhat healthy	65.01%	223
Very healthy	27.41%	94
TOTAL		343

Q14: Do you or anyone in your household have food allergies?

Yes 23.18%
No 76.82%

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	23.18%	83
No	76.82%	275
TOTAL		358

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Q15: If you answered "Yes" to the previous question, which food allergy do you or your family members have? Check all that apply.
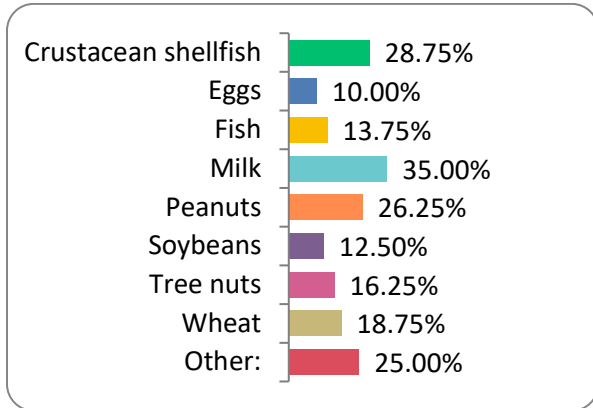
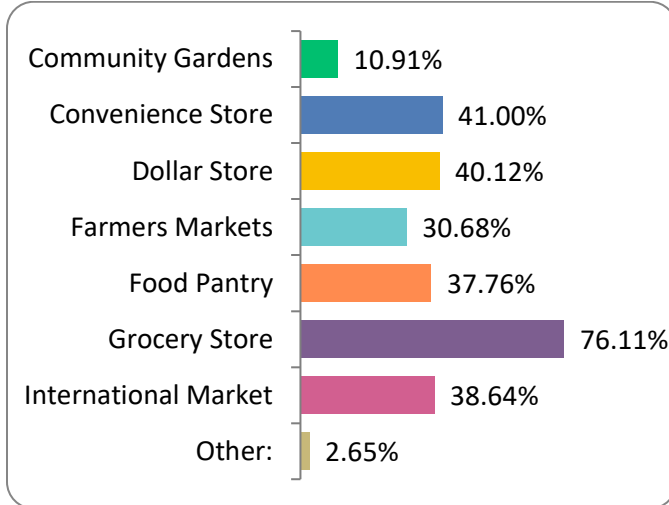| ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Crustacean shellfish	28.75%	23
Eggs	10.0%	8
Fish	13.75%	11
Milk	35.00%	28
Peanuts	26.25%	21
Soybeans	12.50%	10
Tree nuts	16.25%	13
Wheat	18.75%	15
Other:	25.00%	20
TOTAL		149

Q16: How easy is it to get food without the item (s) selected in the previous question?
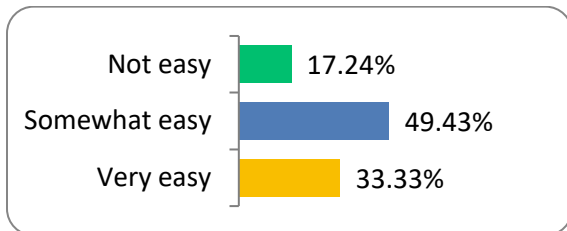
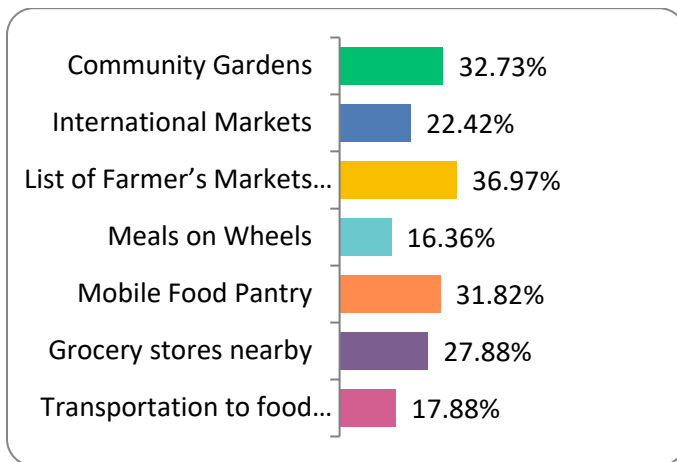| ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Not easy	17.24%	15
Somewhat easy	49.43%	43
Very easy	33.33%	29
TOTAL		87

Items are more expensive and hassle to get; many items have canola or soy – hard to get without; label says items are gluten-free, but it is enough to make a person sick; non-dairy is not always in stock. Direct quote from Spanish: "The price is higher in these products so sometimes milk is simply not consumed until it can be bought."

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Q17: What food services are currently available in your community? Check all that apply.

Community Gardens	10.91%
Convenience Store	41.00%
Dollar Store	40.12%
Farmers Markets	30.68%
Food Pantry	37.76%
Grocery Store	76.11%
International Market	38.64%
Other:	2.65%

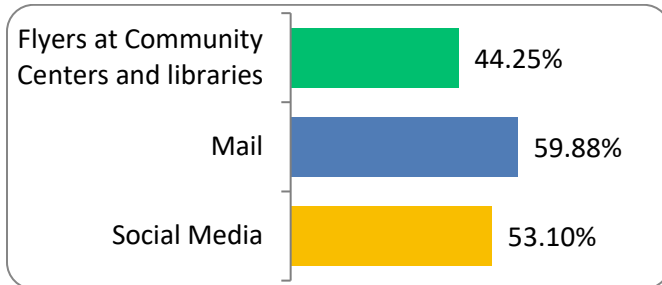| ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Community Gardens	10.91%	37
Convenience Store	41.00%	139
Dollar Store	40.12%	136
Farmers Markets	30.68%	104
Food Pantry	37.76%	128
Grocery Store	76.11%	258
International Market	38.64%	131
Other:	2.65%	9
TOTAL		942

Q18: What is needed in your community to help you access healthy food? Check all that apply.

Community Gardens	32.73%
International Markets	22.42%
List of Farmer's Markets…	36.97%
Meals on Wheels	16.36%
Mobile Food Pantry	31.82%
Grocery stores nearby	27.88%
Transportation to food…	17.88%

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Community Gardens	32.73%	108
International Markets	22.42%	74
List of Farmer's Market nearby	36.97%	122
Meals on Wheels	16.36%	54
Mobile Food Pantry	31.82%	105
Grocery stores nearby	27.88%	92
Transportation to food stores	17.88%	59
TOTAL		614

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Q19: How can we get information about food services to you? Check all that apply.

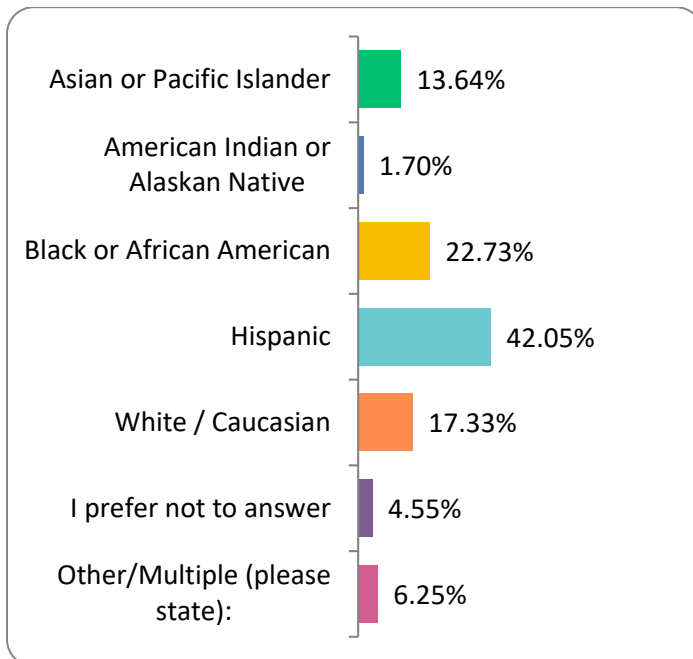| ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Flyers at Community Centers and libraries	44.25%	150
Mail	59.88%	203
Social Media	53.10%	180
TOTAL		533

OTHER COMMUNITY NEEDS
- **Affordable housing/living**; shelters for homeless
- Job training; skills training; youth services; English classes
- Childcare; Head Start
- **Physical activities; free kids places; playgrounds; STEM activities; family centers**
- Transportation; walking access to grocery stores
- Utilities: electricity, water bills
- Single mom support
- School lunches: free for all students and those who take home on weekends; grab meals aren't enough on short school days
- Convenience stores
- Lists and schedules for food pantries
- Free healthcare; free clinic
- Diapers
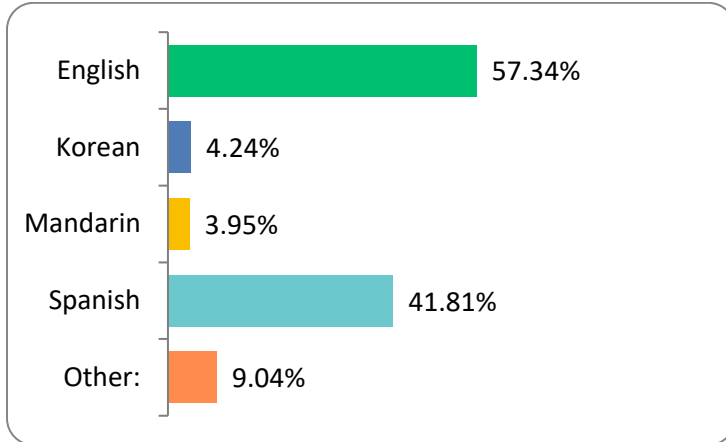- Bilingual information
- Resources to grow vegetable garden

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Q22: What is your age?
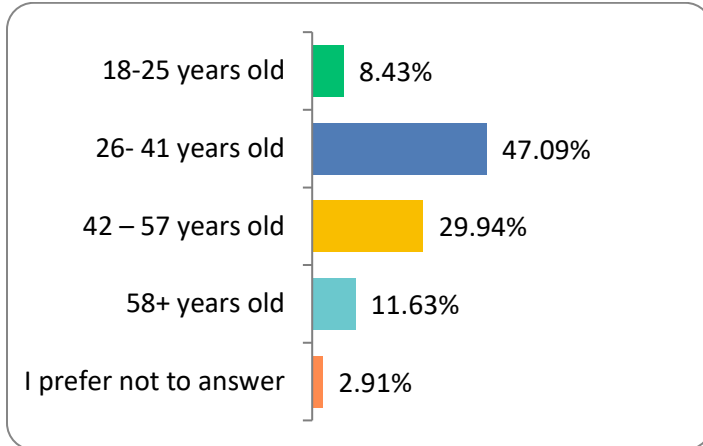
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
18-25 years old	8.43%	29
26- 41 years old	47.09%	162
42 – 57 years old	29.94%	103
58+ years old	11.63%	40
I prefer not to answer	2.91%	10
TOTAL		344

Q23: What is your race and ethnicity? Check all that apply.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Asian or Pacific Islander	13.64%	48
American Indian or Alaskan Native	1.70%	6
Black or African American	22.73%	80
Hispanic	42.05%	148
White / Caucasian	17.33%	61
I prefer not to answer	4.55%	16
Other/Multiple (please state):	6.25%	22
TOTAL		381

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Q24: What language(s) do you speak at home? Check all that apply.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
English	57.34%	203
Korean	4.24%	15
Mandarin	3.95%	14
Spanish	41.81%	148
Other:	9.04%	32
TOTAL		412

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DATA BY ZIP CODES

Zip Code	City	Food Insecurity Rate	Services in Community (Top four)	Community Needs (Top four)
21045	Columbia	86.11%	• Grocery store • Dollar store • Intl. market • Food pantry	• List of farmer's markets nearby • Intl. markets • Mobile food pantry • Community gardens
21075	Elkridge	77.97%	• Grocery store • Dollar store • Convenience store • Intl. market	• List of farmer's markets nearby • Community gardens • Mobile food pantry • Grocery stores nearby
20723	Laurel	82.14%	• Grocery store • Intl. market • Convenience store • Food pantry	• Community gardens • Mobile food pantry • List of farmer's markets nearby • Grocery stores nearby
21044	Columbia	66.07%	• Grocery store • Convenience store • Intl. market • Dollar store/ food pantry	• List of farmer's markets nearby • Mobile food pantry • Transp. to food stores • Community gardens
20794	Jessup	88.89%	• Grocery store • Convenience store • Dollar store • Intl. market	• List of farmer's markets nearby • Mobile food pantry • Community gardens • Meals on Wheels
21043	Ellicott City	70.00%	• Grocery store • Intl. market • Convenience store/ Dollar store/ Food Pantry	• Community gardens • Mobile food pantry • List of farmer's markets nearby • Grocery stores nearby
21046	Columbia	66.67%	• Grocery store • Convenience store • Food pantry • Farmers Markets	• List of farmer's markets nearby • Mobile food pantry • Meals on Wheels • Grocery stores nearby

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VILLAGES

Village	Community Needs (Most Common)
Long Reach	• List of farmer's markets nearby • Mobile food pantry
Oakland Mills	• Mobile food pantry • International markets/ Grocery stores nearby
Owen Brown	• Community gardens/ List of farmer's markets nearby/ Mobile food pantry
Kings Contrivance	• List of farmer's markets nearby
Wilde Lake	• List of farmer's markets nearby • Grocery stores nearby
Harpers Choice	• Community gardens/ List of farmer's markets nearby/ Meals on Wheels/ Transp. to food stores
Hickory Ridge	• Community gardens • Mobile food pantry