

The Food Bank of Central New York
An Evaluation of the “No Soda and No Candy” Donation Policy
And Guests’ Food Preferences

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I. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Food insecurity is a growing concern in the United States, particularly in view of the current economic recession and rising food prices. An estimated 12% of U.S. residents have incomes below the federal poverty line (US Census Bureau 2007), and in the last national survey, an estimated 11% of the U.S. population were considered food insecure (Nord 2007).

Food insecurity, as defined by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), occurs when a household does not have access to enough food for active, healthy living. In households with very low food security, at least one household member over the course of a year has a reduced food intake and their normal eating patterns are disrupted due to a lack of resources. Food insecure individuals and households often maximize their monthly food dollars by supplementing food supplies through the Emergency Food Network (EFN).

The EFN is described by Feeding America – the nation’s food bank network – as a sector of the food system that utilizes donations of food and money from corporations, government funding, private donations, and local and national distribution networks to serve over 25 million food insecure Americans every year. The network consists of over 200 food banks that glean, purchase, store, and distribute foods to their subsidiary emergency food programs (EFPs) such as food pantries, soup kitchens, and shelters. While food banks are the equivalent in the commercial food distribution system of wholesalers (receiving, storing and distributing food to EFPs), EFPs are equivalent to food retailers in that they receive food from a variety of sources, including but not limited to food banks, and distribute foods directly to guests. Thus, EFPs are responsible for direct service to food insecure guests.

Food banks were uncommon prior to the 1980s; they existed to aid in disaster relief and emergency household situations and were relatively small and limited in number (Poppendick 1999). During the past two decades, the food bank network has grown

considerably, and now serves many individuals who suffer from chronic food insecurity. According to Feeding America (Cohen 2006), since 2001 65% of pantries, 61% of soup kitchens, and 52% of shelters have seen an increase in the number of guests who come to their programs; and, those programs reported that the food bank network is their largest food supplier.

While food insecurity and the demand for emergency food continue to increase, the nation is simultaneously facing an obesity epidemic. Food insecurity is associated with poorer quality diets and obesity (Olsen 1999, Townsend 2001, and Adams 2003). Links between food insecurity and obesity are not well understood, but it appears that one contributor is the lower cost of energy-dense foods compared to their higher cost nutrient-dense counterparts (Drewnowski 2007). Those with low incomes and limited budgets that seek to minimize spending on food will aim to maximize calories for food dollars spent. In addition, in recent years many food banks have seen increased donations of energy-dense foods of minimal nutritional value. Indeed the food bank system partly relies on donations, particularly those from large food producers and processors, and nutritional quality may not be a key consideration in acceptance of donations by food banks. There are disincentives for food banks to discriminate between types of foods and beverages they accept because funding is associated with the number of pounds an organization accepts and distributes throughout the fiscal year.

The role of food banks as major food suppliers to the chronically food insecure and nutritionally vulnerable necessitates consideration of the nutritional impact of their food donation and distribution policies and practices. While many food banks have become interested in nutritional improvements, the FBCNY was at the forefront of this movement. Prior to 2004, they were active in nutrition promotion by providing cooking demos, recipes, and nutrition workshops; supporting community gardens in local neighborhoods; educating guests about gardening; supporting farmers' markets in low-income neighborhoods; and, educating legislators on the important link between diet, obesity, and food insecurity. On February 1, 2004, they adopted a "No Soda and No Candy" Donation Policy—the first of its kind in the US—that banned all soda and candy

donations into their warehouse. Soda was defined as all carbonated beverages and candy was defined as (but not limited to) the following food items: hard candy (lollipops, Jolly Ranchers), gum, chocolate bars (not including meal replacement bars or dietary supplements), and soft candy (caramels, wrapped chocolates, taffy, licorice, gum products, gummy bears). The FBCNY determined that they would focus on the procurement and distribution of healthier foods such as fruits and vegetables—that are more difficult for guests to access—rather than soda and candy.

A major criticism of the “No Soda and No Candy” policy from those in the Emergency Food Network is that this approach limits the food choices of EFP guests. This is based on the assumption that foods and beverages being solicited, donated, and ultimately distributed through the EFPs are meeting guest demand. However, there is only very limited evidence about what foods EFP guests would prefer to receive through food banks and on what factors EFP directors base their decisions about what foods to distribute . Studies suggest that guests want more fresh fruits and vegetables (Verpy 2003), but more information is needed on what types of foods and beverages guests prefer to obtain from the EFP as well as what they prefer and can afford to buy. Such information is required for both EFP and Food Bank administrators to understand the needs of their guests and how to modify their policies and practices to support the health and preferences of their guests.

Research on the nutritional quality of foods supplied through food banks is also limited, but it appears that they are generally poor sources of vitamins A and C and calcium, and that foods rich in these nutrients including fruit, vegetables and dairy products have limited availability through EFPs (Akobundu 2004). The food and beverage preferences of emergency food guests are not well known or understood.

Thus, the recent changes made to the food donation and distribution policy at the FBCNY provided an excellent opportunity to examine the changes in the inventory, as well as guest preferences and food pantry director perceptions, and barriers to providing healthy foods.

II. EVALUATION OBJECTIVES

The UC Berkeley Center for Weight and Health (CWH) collaborated with the Food Bank of Central New York (FBCNY) to:

Objective 1: Evaluate the impact of the FBCNY’s “No Soda and No Candy” policy on the types of donated foods and beverages accepted by the FBCNY prior to and after implementation of the policy.

Objective 2: Assess Emergency Food Program (EFP) guests’ preferences for foods and beverages they would like to see available at the food pantry and factors that influence their preferences including the extent to which they prefer to receive foods of high nutritional quality.

Objective 3: Assess the EFP directors’ perceptions of guests’ food and beverage preferences and the EFP directors’ perceptions of factors influencing their own decisions about what foods and beverages to stock and distribute through EFPs.

This report describes the study design, methods, and results of these objectives.

III. METHODS

Objective 1: Food Bank Donated Inventory Analysis

Study Design

This study employed a pre-post design that assessed the impact of the FBCNY’s ‘No Soda and No Candy Policy’ on the donated product mix available through the FBCNY as measured during a one-year period prior to (February 1, 2003 to January 31, 2004) and a two-year period after (February 1, 2004 to January 31, 2006) the policy introduction. Additional soda and candy donation data from 2006-07 and 2007-08 was reviewed following the preliminary analysis. Key informant interviews were conducted with FBCNY staff including the food donor solicitor, director of food sourcing and nutrition,

finance director, and executive director to capture qualitative data regarding the implementation of the policy and lessons learned.

Data Analysis

Data from the FBCNY's electronic donation records were entered into a database. Each food item on the inventory list was then classified into one of twelve food groups as outlined by MyPyramid with the addition of the following groups: beverages, non-meat proteins, non-dairy substitutes, snack foods, combination foods, condiments, and miscellaneous. Foods in each group were categorized into subgroups based on their nutritional profiles, e.g. sweetened beverages, diet beverages, etc. See Appendix 1 for details. Total pounds of donated soda, candy, fruit, vegetables, meats, grains, and dairy for each of the study years were compiled.

Objectives 2 and 3: Food Pantry Guest and Director Interviews

Study Design

A cross sectional design using an interviewer administered questionnaire was used to gather information about EFP guests' food preferences and EFP directors' perceptions of guests' food and beverage preferences as well as factors influencing EFP directors' food selection process. Fifteen food pantries from the FBCNY service area were randomly selected from all large and extra large, urban and rural (55% urban; 45% rural) programs to reflect the ratio of urban to rural for all programs. All guests attending the programs during open hours for one day at each pantry were approached to participate in the study.

A pilot study was conducted in December 2008 to test study methods and survey questions. An interviewer administered questionnaire was used with 20 guests at two food pantries from the FBCNY service area and included card sorts for ranking food preferences, a Likert scale used to determine importance of receiving specific food items, and questions regarding considerations in choosing foods received at the food pantry. A similar Food Pantry Worker/Director questionnaire was administered to the two directors at the selected programs. Surveyors from the FBCNY and CWH reviewed the

survey questions and the administration process and revised questionnaires based on feedback from this review process.

Data collection for the full study was conducted during the months of May and June 2009. Food pantry inventory and pantry bag checklists were used to capture what foods were offered and which foods guests chose on the data collection day. See Appendices 2-5 for data collection instruments.

Table 1: Data Collection Summary

Pantry Name	Guests Approached	Refusals	Complete Surveys	Bag Analyses	Director Surveys
Little Falls	6	3	3	2	1
Dolgeville	15	5	10	1	1
DePauville	6	0	6	3	1
Carthage	6	0	6	3	1
Opportunity Shop	7	1	6	4	1
Rome Rescue Mission	2	0	2	0	1
Temple Society of Concord	19	5	14	4	1
SA Herkimer	3	0	3	2	1
Calvary Food Pantry of CNY	20	8	12	2	1
St John's Outreach	12	5	7	2	1
Basilica of Sacred Heart	8	0	8	4	1
Elmwood Interfaith	20	7	13	3	1

Pantry Name	Guests Approached	Refusals	Complete Surveys	Bag Analyses	Director Surveys
Helping Hands	7	0	7	2	1
CCCC Roots and Wings	11	1	10	5	1
Canton Neighborhood Center	9	0	9	6	1
Totals	151	35	116	43	15

Data Analysis

Data from guest and director interviews and food pantry bag and food pantry inventory checklists were entered into an EpiData database and analyzed using SAS. Descriptive statistics were analyzed for all responses. Guest preferences were categorized by food group and average rank was determined for each food group. Differences in mean rank for rural and urban food pantry guests were assessed by t-tests. Each food pantry director's ranking of foods and of considerations in selecting foods was compared to his or her guests' responses by a Spearman's rank correlation to assess the extent to which each director accurately matched their guests' food preferences and considerations.

IV. RESULTS

Objective 1: Food Bank Donated Inventory Analysis

Food Bank Inventory Data

Trends in Selected Groups of Donated Food

Data were collected from the FBCNY inventory records for the following three time periods: February 1, 2003 to January 31, 2004; February 1, 2004 to January 31, 2005; and February 1, 2005 to January 31, 2006. Table 2 provides a breakdown of percent of total poundage for each food group and subgroup in the evaluation objectives.

Table 2. Trends in Selected Foods Donated to FBCNY, 2003-2006

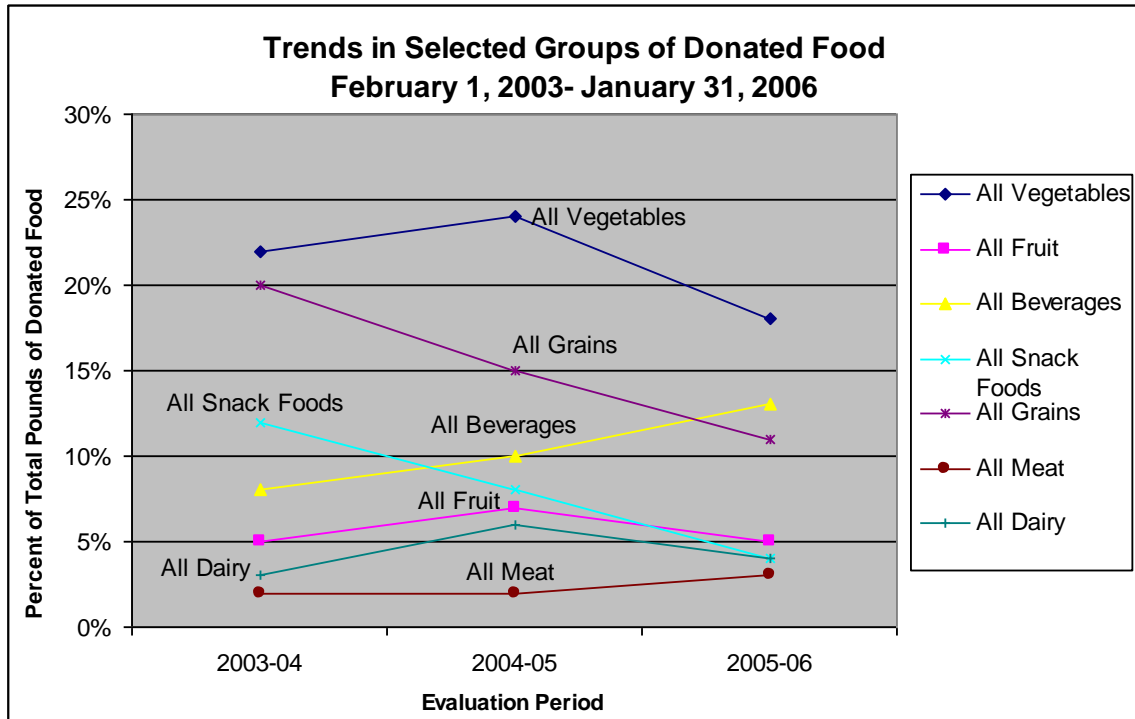
Food Groups	Classification Sub Group	2003-04 Total Pounds	2003-04 (% of Total pounds)	2004-05 Total Pounds	2004-05 (% of Total pounds)	2005-06 Total Pounds	2005-06 (% of Total pounds)
All Snack Foods		400,697	12%	250,452	8%	140,837	4%
	Candy	19,407	0.6%	30,790	1%	18,739	0.6%
	Sweets/Pastries	122,636	4%	84,350	3%	114,215	3%
All Beverages		272,038	8%	335,069	10%	427,486	13%
	Sweetened Beverages	187,773	5%	276,349	9%	393,750	12%
	Soda	75,313	2%	126,428	4%	10,230	0.3%
All Vegetables		760,560	22%	784,974	24%	588,215	18%
	Fresh Vegetables	552,173	16%	690,955	22%	448,916	13%
All Fruit		168,310	5%	209,423	7%	160,324	5%
	Fresh Fruit	57	<0%	20,839	0.7%	19,723	0.6%
Total Donations		3,469,744		3,210,760		3,338,657	

(Columns do not add to 100%)

- Data illustrated in Figure 1 show that vegetables comprise a significant amount of donated product ranging from 18% to 24% of total pounds throughout all three years. There was a slight increase in the total vegetable donations in the year the policy was implemented but a substantial reduction was observed in year three. Whether these changes reflect usual year-to-year fluctuations or a change in practices in soliciting foods, or other factors is not clear.
- A notable reduction in snack foods was observed from 12% to only 4% of total pounds of donated food from one year before to two years after policy implementation.
- Fruit donations remained consistently low throughout all three years.

- Data show a trend towards increasing amounts of donated beverages from 8% to 13% of total pounds of donated foods from one year prior to two years post implementation.

Figure 1. Trends in Selected Groups of Donated Food to FBCNY, 2003-2006.



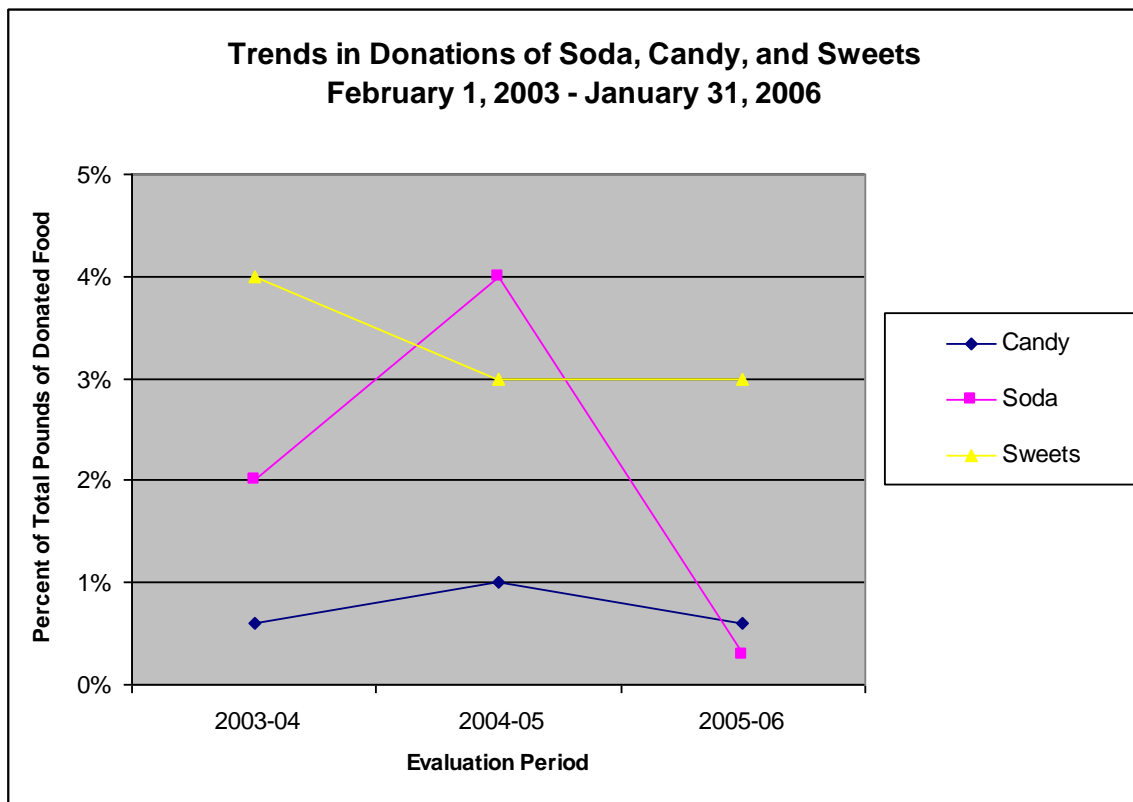
Trends in Donations of Soda, Candy, and Sweets

- As shown in Figure 2, soda donations decreased to less than 1% of total pounds of donated foods (from 4%) between year 1 and year 3 of the study. This represents a substantial decrease in the absolute quantity of soda available for distribution to guests from approximately 75,000 pounds per year to **about** 10,000 pounds. Both candy and soda donations actually spiked immediately following the policy implementation.
- Candy donations were relatively low as a percent of total weight donated, and although there was a decrease in the total pounds of candy donated from year 1 to

year 3, the percent of total donations did not change (0.6%, 1.0% and 0.6%) between years 1 and 3.

- Although the “No Soda and No Candy” donation policy did not specifically target sweets, there was a decrease from 4% to 3% of total pounds of donated sweets (e.g. cookies, cakes, and donuts) from one year prior to two years post policy implementation.

Figure 2. Trends in Donations of Soda, Candy, and Sweets to FBCNY, 2003-2006



Trends in Donated Beverages

- While soda donations decreased substantially two years after the policy was introduced, there was a steady increase in sweetened beverage donations over the study period (Figure 3).

- Sweetened beverages such as sports drinks and fruit drinks increased from 69% to 92% of total pounds of donated beverages from one year prior to two years post policy implementation.
- Since soda has significantly more calories and sugar than most other sweetened beverages (e.g. 150 calories and approximately 12 teaspoons of sugar per 12 oz soda, versus 100 calories and approximately 7 teaspoons of sugar for a 12 oz sports drink), the reduction in soda donations was an excellent first step towards improving the nutrition quality of beverages distributed through the FBCNY.
- The increase in sweetened beverage donations, despite the significant drop in soda donations, provides an opportunity to review the existing policy to examine the possibility of further clarification and expansion of coverage to other sweetened beverages.
- The Food Bank of Central New York appears to do an excellent job of soliciting donations of fresh vegetables, which comprised 16%, 22%, and 13% of total pounds of donated food over the three years of the study period, respectively (Table 3).
- Fruit donations were low compared to vegetable donations, which contributed less than 1% of total pounds of donated food.
- Soliciting fresh fruit donations of locally grown fruits, such as apples in the fall, may be an area of opportunity for the food solicitor.

Figure 3. Trends in Donated Beverages to FBCNY, 2003-2006

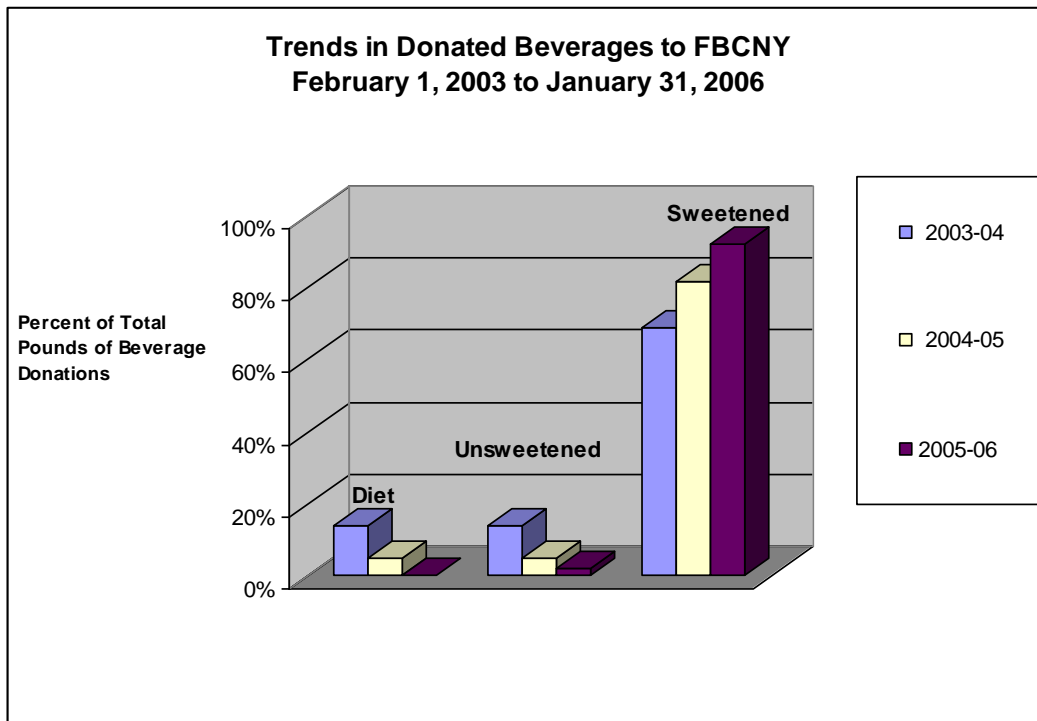


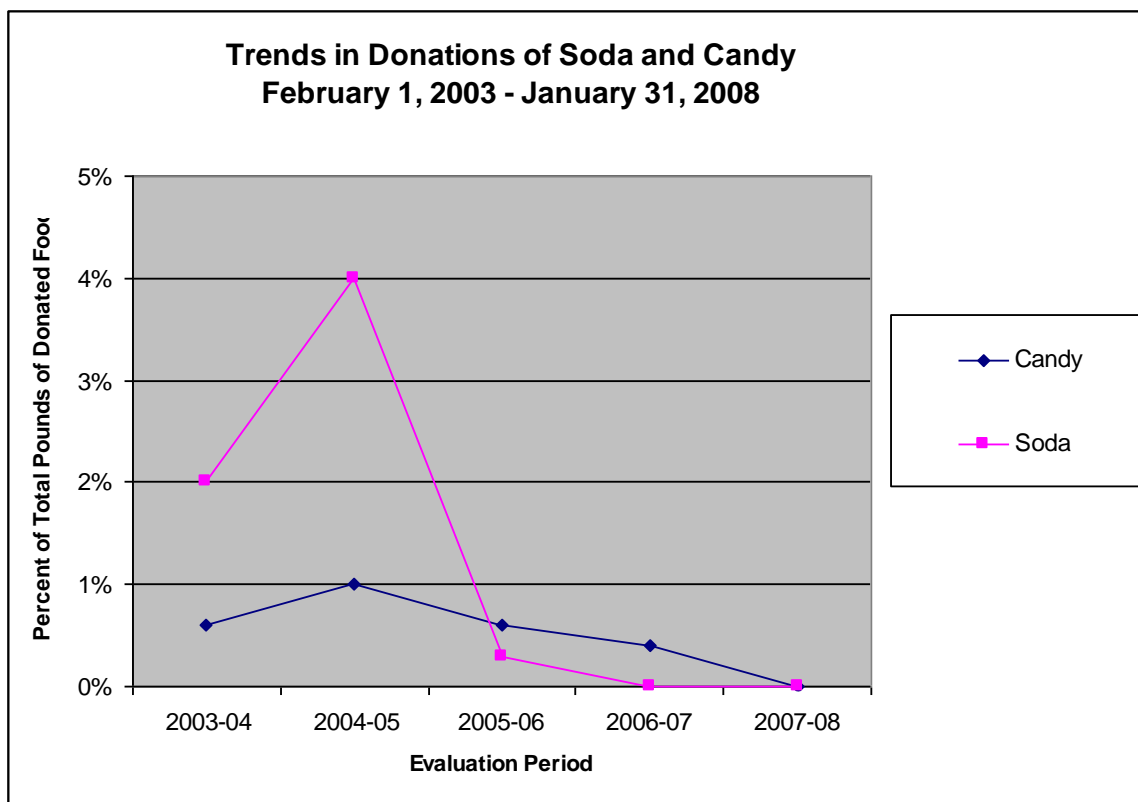
Table 3: Percent of Total Pounds of Donated Fruits and Vegetables by Fresh, Frozen, or Canned Categories

	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
<i>Vegetables</i>			
Fresh	15.91%	21.52%	13.45%
Frozen	3.09%	0.54%	3.89%
Canned	2.92%	2.38%	0.29%
<i>Fruit</i>			
Fresh	0.00%	0.65%	0.59%
Frozen	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Canned	4.85%	4.85%	4.21%

Trends in Donations of Soda and Candy, 2003-08

- As shown in Figure 4, after submission of the mid-year report, the FBCNY provided soda and candy donation data from February 1, 2006 to January 31, 2008. No soda was received during that time period while only 12,120 pounds of candy were accepted during 2006-07. No candy was accepted during 2007-08. It appears that three years post policy implementation that soda and candy donations have been eliminated.

Figure 4: Trends in Donations of Soda and Candy, 2003-08



Key Informant Interviews

A summary of responses from the key informant interviews is shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Summary of Key Informant Interviews

Question 1: In your opinion, what were/are some of the greatest challenges to implementing a “No Soda and No Candy Donation Policy”?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Educating the staff and the emergency food programs to the benefits of such a policy• Getting buy-in from the staff• Overcoming pounds as the measurement of success rather than quality of donations• The actual implementation of the policy internally with staff• How to handle soda and candy that is dropped off in a mixed load of donated product
Question 2: In your opinion, what would you have done differently to prepare for the implementation of the “No Soda and No Candy Donation Policy”?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Following the off-site management retreat to introduce the policy to management staff, I would have followed up with individual managers to ensure that the expectations were clear and there was manager buy-in• More vigilant and less trusting with the implementation• Would have emphasized the small financial sacrifice of the elimination of soda and candy as compared to the significant statement being made about the importance of nutrition and health of our guests• Provided more education on the importance of distributing nutritious product and the potential adverse effects of distributing all things available• Spent more time with programs prior to implementing the policy• Brought in more community members to discuss this change• Better/more precise communication with guests and food donors
Question 3: When you review the data, soda donations actually increased one-year post policy implementation. What were some of the causes for this?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It took time to articulate the new policy internally and externally

- The policy was implemented as a new staff person was hired to manage donations
- There was a willful disregard of the policy by some good-intentioned employees who did not agree with the policy
- There was an anticipated overproduction and influx of soda into the emergency food system, which happened shortly after the Choice System was introduced
- It was very tempting to take in any product while donations seemed to decrease nationally for those who bought into pounds as a measurement of success
- Not educating donors enough prior to the change in donation policy
- When we accepted a mixed load there was soda and candy---important to have a policy to handle drop-offs

Question 4: Did you feel that there was a “champion” who helped push the policy through? How important was that role to the implementation process?

- The dietitians on staff were the champions because they educated staff on health issues, introduced the concept of measuring success by quality of donations, and followed-up with issues throughout implementation
- The executive director was the champion because he supported the policy and ideological shift, which gave it the legs it needed to move forward
- The food donor solicitor was the champion because he delivered the message to donors through education and respectful dialogue
- The role of the champion(s) is essential to implementing organizational change
- Change is not easy, so it is key to have someone(s) who is committed to seeing the change and can stand by the difficult times of a transition

Question 5: In your opinion, what were some of the things you thought went well/are going well with the implementation of the “No Soda and No Candy” Donation Policy?

- Able to articulate the reason and the purpose of the policy throughout the organization well
- The public (cash donors, food donors, news outlets) has responded well when we are able to explain the big picture
- The discussion of the obesity epidemic was critical and timely

- Employee wellness program was essential and showed immediate results for improving staff health, which helped create buy-in among the staff for the policy
- It is succeeding without complaint or repercussion from internal or external stakeholders
- There were very few issues with donors or with guests; the negative assumptions were internal and did not come to fruition
- Staff realize there is no benefit to the end user by distributing soda and candy
- Successfully addressed the issue of handling soda and candy through mixed load donations
- Kept relationships with the food donors

Question 6: Would you encourage other food banks to implement a similar policy? If yes, what kind of advice would you give them? If no, why not?

- Yes, it is our responsibility to feed people well
- The health issue demands accountability on our part
- This is not right or wrong, this is just an evolution of food banking
- It is a simple step to target the limited resources available in the emergency food system towards moving healthy foods
- If we would like to see a behavior change among our guests, we need to help provide the environment that will enable that change
- Change can come in increments and each change makes a large difference
- I think it is the right thing to do, but you need to be sensitive to your own market for donations; in other words, just because it works for us, I don't know if it would work for you the same way
- Yes, the emergency food system should consider limiting certain types of foods
- My advice would be to educate the programs, staff, and food donors as to why you are making this ideological shift
- Your implementation plan should include what you will do with unsolicited donations when they reach your warehouse

Objectives 2 and 3: Food Pantry Guest and Director Interviews

Findings from Guests' Food Preference Surveys

Characteristics of Respondents

Table 5 shows the following demographic characteristics of guests:

- The majority of guests were white females between the ages of 35 and 64.
- Only 64% of guests indicated that they or a member of their household received food stamps.
- Twenty-eight percent of guests reported that someone in their household participated in the School Lunch Program but only nine percent participated in the Summer Food Service Program.
- Most guests interviewed were unemployed.

Table 5: Characteristics of Respondents (n=116):

Characteristic	Percent (%)
<i>Gender</i>	
Male	33
Female	67
<i>Age</i>	
35-64 years old	58
18-34 years old	27

>65 years old	13
Declined to Respond	2
<i>Ethnicity</i>	
White	68
Native American	6
Black	20
Latino	7
<i>Household composition & food program participation</i>	
Household with Children Ages 0-10 years old	29
Household with Children Ages 11-17 years old	27
Household Member Participating in Food Stamp Program	64
Household Member Participating in WIC	10
Household Member Participating in School Lunch	28
Household Member Participating in School Breakfast	24
Household Member Participating in the Summer Food Service Program	9
<i>Employment</i>	
Employed Full-Time	10
Employed Part-Time	13
Unemployed	75
Declined to Respond	3

Guests' Considerations for Food Choices at Food Pantries

Guests were asked to rank the importance of stated considerations (Nutritious, Staple Items, Tasty, Filling, Easy to Store, Familiar, Varied, Easy to Prepare, and Treats) in choosing food from the food pantry on a four-point scale of very important, important, somewhat important, and not important (Table 6).

- Ninety-eight percent of guests indicated that having nutritious food available for them to choose at the food pantry was either very important or important; however, 94% reported that taste was also a very important/important consideration when choosing food for their households.
- Approximately 70% of guests did not place a priority on receiving snacks at the food pantry by reporting it was somewhat or not important to them.
- Guests (94% very important/important) placed a high priority on the availability of staple items, so that they could make a meal for their families.

Table 6: Guests' Considerations for Food Choices at Food Pantries

	Very Important/Important (%)	Somewhat Important/Not Important (%)
Nutritious	98	3
Staple Items	94	6
Tasty	94	6
Filling	87	13
Easy to Store	83	17
Familiar	82	18
Varied	68	32
Easy to Prepare	64	36
Treats	32	68

*Due to rounding, columns may not add to 100%

Guests' Critique of Food Pantry Performance

- In general, guests were very satisfied with food pantry performance as shown by the large percent of excellent and good ratings outlined in Table 7.
- However, most guests did report that the distribution of high quality produce seems to be an area where most pantries could make improvements (Table 7).

Table 7: Guests' Critique of Food Pantry Performance on Providing the Following Types of Foods

	Excellent (%)	Good (%)	Fair (%)	Poor (%)
Easy to Prepare	47	50	2	1
Staple Items	46	45	8	2
Filling	39	50	10	1
Tasty	29	56	14	1
Nutritious	45	46	8	1
Familiar	42	46	11	1
Varied	28	47	23	2
Easy to Store	50	47	3	0
High Quality Produce	24	38	28	11

Mean Rank Scores of Food Pantry Items

- Guests ranked items they would most prefer to receive from the food pantry from a list of 16 foods (1=most prefer to receive; 16=least prefer to receive).
- The mean rank for meat/poultry/fish was 3.7 indicating that guests preferred to receive these items more than any other on the list (Table 8).
- Vegetables and fruits were reported as the second and third most preferred item respectively (Table 8).
- Candy was the item least preferred to receive at a food pantry by guests; soda, snack foods, and beans also ranked among the least preferred (Table 8).

Table 8: Mean Rank Scores for Food Pantry Items preferred by Guests

Food Item	Mean Rank	Food Item	Mean Rank
Meat/poultry/fish	3.70	Cereal	7.86
Vegetables	4.28	Soup	9.54
Fruit	4.52	Frozen meals	10.18
Eggs	5.74	Peanut butter	10.44
Milk	6.18	Beans	10.53
Bread	6.39	Snacks	12.81
Cheese	6.83	Soda	14.42
Pasta/rice	7.64	Candy	14.77

Guests’ Level of Importance for Foods to Receive at a Food Pantry

Guests indicated which foods were most important to receive at the food pantry using a scale from very important to not important.

- Ninety percent or more of guests reported that meat/poultry/fish, vegetables, fruit, cheese, eggs, and milk are very important or important to receive at a food pantry (Table 9).
- On the contrary, more than 85% of guests reported that soda, candy, and snacks were somewhat or not important (Table 9).

Table 9: Guests’ Level of Importance for Foods to Receive at a Food Pantry

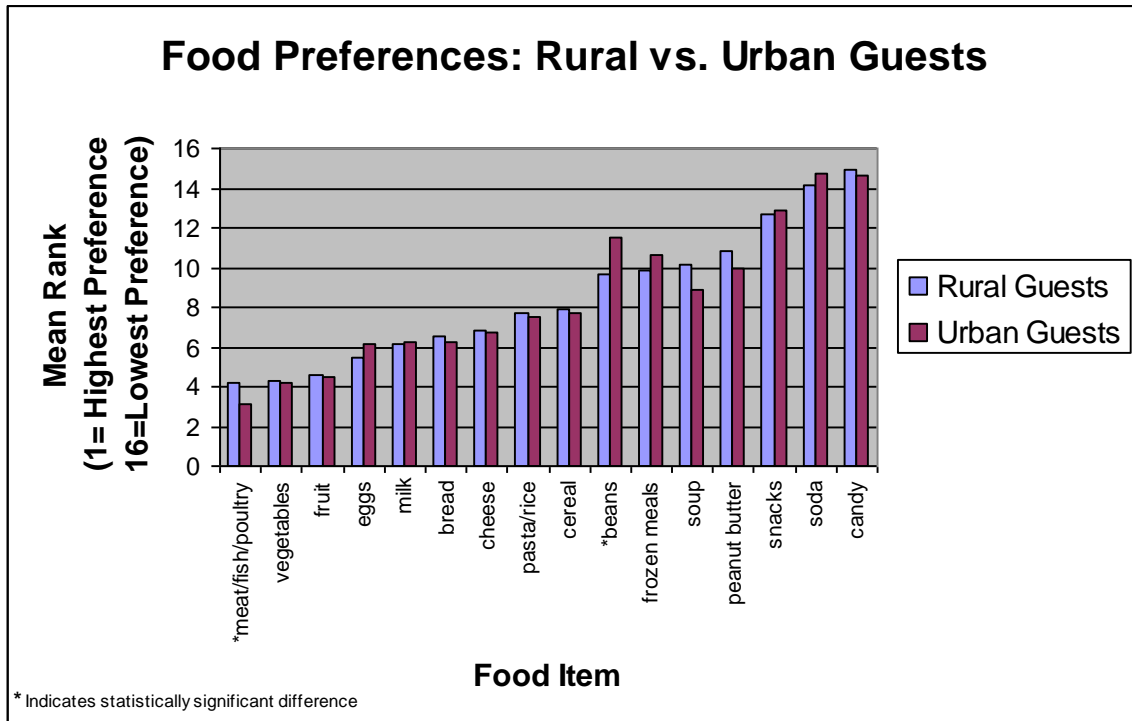
	Very Important/Important (%)	Somewhat Important/ Not Important (%)
Meat/poultry/fish	93	8
Vegetables	93	7
Fruit	91	9
Cheese	91	9
Eggs	90	10
Milk	90	10
Bread	85	15
Cereal	85	15
Pasta/rice	77	23
Soup	66	34
Beans	54	46
Frozen meals	35	65
Snacks	8	92
Candy	5	95
Soda	4	96

*Due to rounding, columns may not add to 100%

Differences in Food Preferences: Rural vs. Urban Guests

- In general, rural and urban food pantry guests have the same preferences for foods distributed at a food pantry (Figure 5). Both prefer meat/poultry/fish, vegetables, and fruit while they place little or no preference on snacks, soda, and candy.
- However, urban guests have a statistically significantly higher preference for meat/poultry/fish and soup than their rural counterparts (Figure 5).
- Rural guests have a statistically significant greater preference for beans than urban guests (Figure 5).

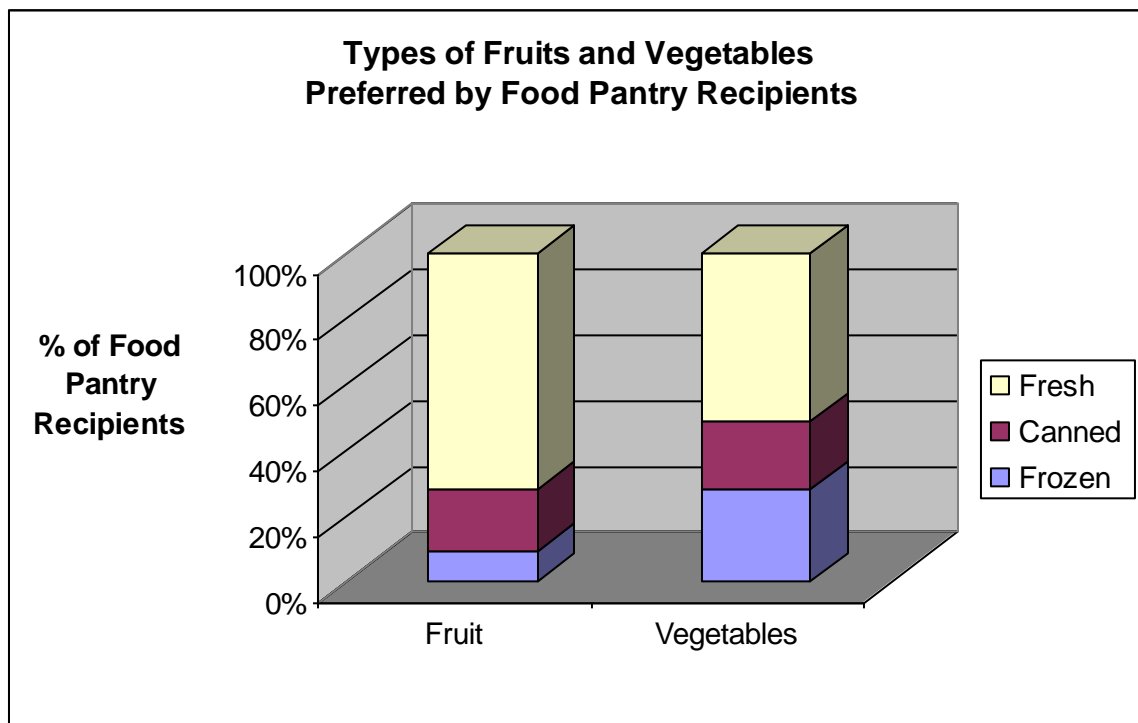
Figure 5: Food Preferences: Rural vs. Urban Guests



Types of Fruit and Vegetables Preferred

- A majority of guests reported that they preferred to receive fresh fruit (72%) rather than frozen or canned (Figure 6).
- 51% of guests said they would rather receive fresh vegetables than frozen or canned (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Types of Fruits and Vegetables Preferred by Pantry Guests



Additional Specific Food Preferences Identified by Guests

- Guests indicated that they preferred canned beans, frozen meat, and white rice (Table 10).
- Guests reported a preference for refrigerated, 2% milk (Table 10).

Table 10: Additional Specific Food Preferences Identified by Guests (n=116)

Food Item	Fresh/Dry	Frozen	Canned	
Beans	33%		53%	
Meat		84%	10%	
	Skim	1%	2%	Whole
Milk	11%	16%	40%	33%
	Dry	Refrigerated	Shelf-stable	Would Not Use
Milk	9%	75%	13%	3%
	White	Brown	Neither	
Rice	65%	28%	7%	

Specific Items Preferred by Guests in Rank Order

- Guests who reported a preference for fresh vegetables were asked to identify which fresh produce items they would prefer to receive.
- The majority of guests preferred tomatoes and apples (Table 11).

Table 11: Specific Items Preferred by Guests in Rank Order

Food Group	Preference #1	Preference #2	Preference #3	Preference #4	Preference #5
<i>Vegetables</i>	Tomatoes	Broccoli	Green Beans	Lettuce	Potatoes
<i>Fruit</i>	Apples	Oranges	Bananas	Grapes	Strawberries
<i>Meat</i>	Chicken	Hamburger	Fish	Beef	Ground Beef
<i>Beans</i>	Kidney	Pork & Beans Black Eyed Peas	Pinto	Lima/Great Northern	Black

<i>Cereal</i>	Corn Flakes	Cheerios	Raisin Bran/ Rice Krispies	Shredded Wheat/Oatmeal	Fruit Loops
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Findings from Food Pantry Directors' Food Preference Surveys

Characteristics of Directors

The majority of Food Pantry Directors were white females, which mirrors the gender and ethnicity breakdown of the guests interviewed.

- A little more than half of the directors are paid employees.
- Forty percent of directors had more than 10 years of experience in the emergency food network.

Table 12: Characteristics of Directors (n=15):

Characteristic	Percent (%)
<i>Gender</i>	
Male	13
Female	87
<i>Ethnicity</i>	
White	100
<i>Employment Status</i>	
Volunteer	47
Paid Employee	53
<i>Years of Experience</i>	
Less than 1 year	7
1-4 years	27
5-10 years	27
More than 10 years	40

*Due to rounding, columns may not add to 100%

Directors’ Perceptions of Guests’ Considerations

Food Pantry Directors were asked to answer a series of questions from their guests’ point of view including what were the most important considerations while choosing food from the food pantry (Table 13).

- All 15 directors agreed that guests wanted foods that are easy to prepare - ranked as either very important or important (Table 13).
- Directors believed that guests put a high priority on nutritious food, but only 47% said that guests would rank receiving treats as very important or important (Table 13).

Table 13: Directors’ Perception of Guests’ Considerations for Food Pantry Food

	Very Important/Important (%)	Somewhat Important/ Not Important (%)
Easy to Prepare	100	0
Staple Items	93	7
Filling	93	7
Tasty	93	7
Treats	47	53
Nutritious	93	7
Familiar	94	7
Varied	46	53
Easy to Store	93	7

*Due to rounding, columns may not add to 100%

Mean Rank Scores

- Directors’ ranked meat/poultry/fish as the most preferred food item by guests at the food pantry followed by fruit, milk, eggs, and vegetables (Table 14).
- Directors’ reported that guests rank candy, soda, and snacks as least important to receive at the food pantry (Table 14).

Table 14: Mean Rank Scores: Directors’ Perceptions of Guests’ Preferences

Food Item	Mean Rank	Food Item	Mean Rank
Meat/poultry/fish	2.13	Pasta, rice	8.60
Fruit	5.40	Peanut butter	9.00
Milk	5.53	Soup	9.87
Eggs	5.60	Frozen meals	10.60
Vegetables	5.73	Beans	12.00
Cereal	6.40	Snacks	12.47
Cheese	6.53	Soda	13.67
Bread	7.33	Candy	15.13

Directors’ Perception of’ Level of Importance for Foods to Receive at a Food Pantry

- As shown in Table 15, directors’ unanimously agreed that guests put the greatest priority on meat/poultry/fish and cereal.
- Directors’ reported that 67% of guests believe that receiving snack foods at the food pantry is very important or important (Table 15).

Table 15: Directors’ Perceptions of Guests’ Level of Importance for Food Pantry Items

Food Item	Very Important/Important (%)	Somewhat Important/Not Important (%)
Meat/poultry/fish	100	0
Cereal	100	0
Eggs	94	7
Beans	94	7
Vegetables	93	7
Milk	93	7
Bread	93	7
Cheese	93	7
Pasta/rice	93	7
Fruit	86	13
Soup	86	13
Snacks	67	33
Frozen meals	40	60

Candy	13	87
Soda	7	93

*Due to rounding, columns may not add to 100%

Directors' Perceptions vs. Guests' Stated Food Preferences

- Table 16 shows the correlation coefficient for each food pantry director's mean rank compared with the guests who attended their pantries. The closer the directors' answers matches his/her guests' scores, the closer the correlation coefficient will be to 1, while directors' answers that are different than their guests, have correlation coefficients closer to 0.
- There was a large range of correlation coefficients (0.865-0.125) suggesting that some pantry directors more accurately perceive their guests' preferences than others.

Table 16: Food Preferences: Directors' Perceptions vs. Guests' Stated Preferences

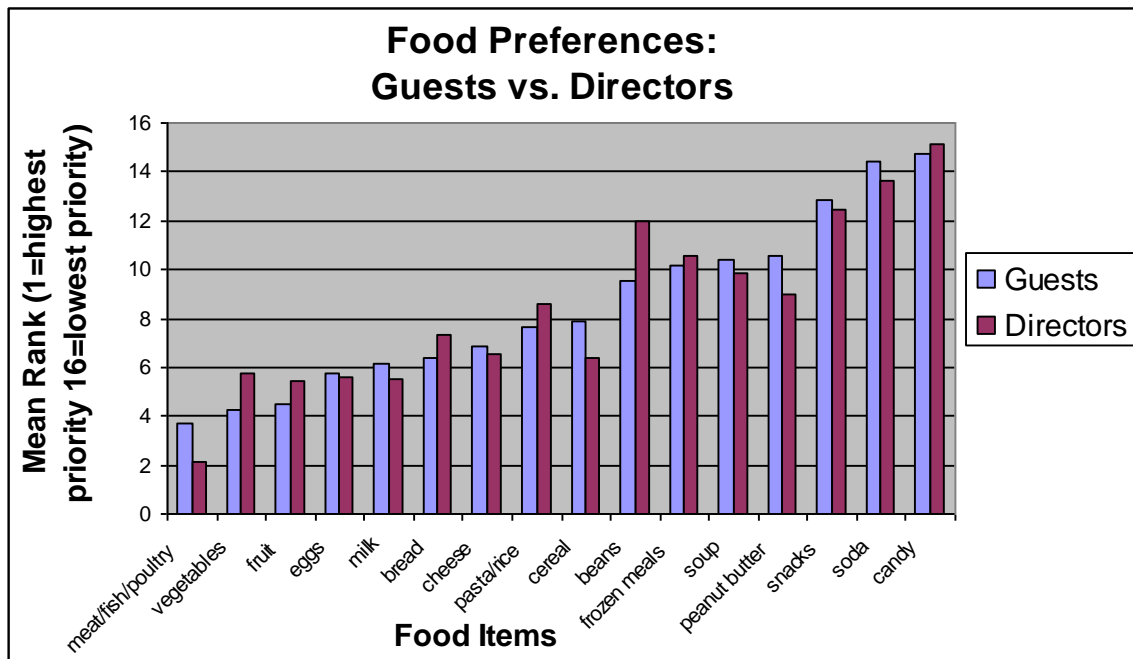
Site	Correlation
St John's Outreach	0.865981471
Calvary of CNY	0.863652279
Little Falls	0.861116683
Elmwood Interfaith	0.857565162
Temple Society of Concord	0.812925554
Dolgeville Area	0.770356418
Rome Rescue Mission	0.721803812
Basilica of Sacred Heart	0.70567091
SA Herkimer	0.682425557
CCCC Roots and Wings	0.679466958
DePauville	0.651591745
Helping Hands	0.649781438

Opportunity Shop	0.200875833
Canton Neighborhood	0.153050807
VEM of Carthage	0.125312828

Directors' Perceptions vs. Guests' Stated Preferences by Food Item

- In general (Figure 7), food pantry directors and guests placed foods in similar rank order. For example, guests' and directors' mean rank scores placed meat/poultry/fish as the most important item offered at a food pantry. However, directors consistently ranked meat/poultry/fish as more important than guests.
- Directors were more likely to place a lower priority on vegetables, beans, and fruit than the guests.

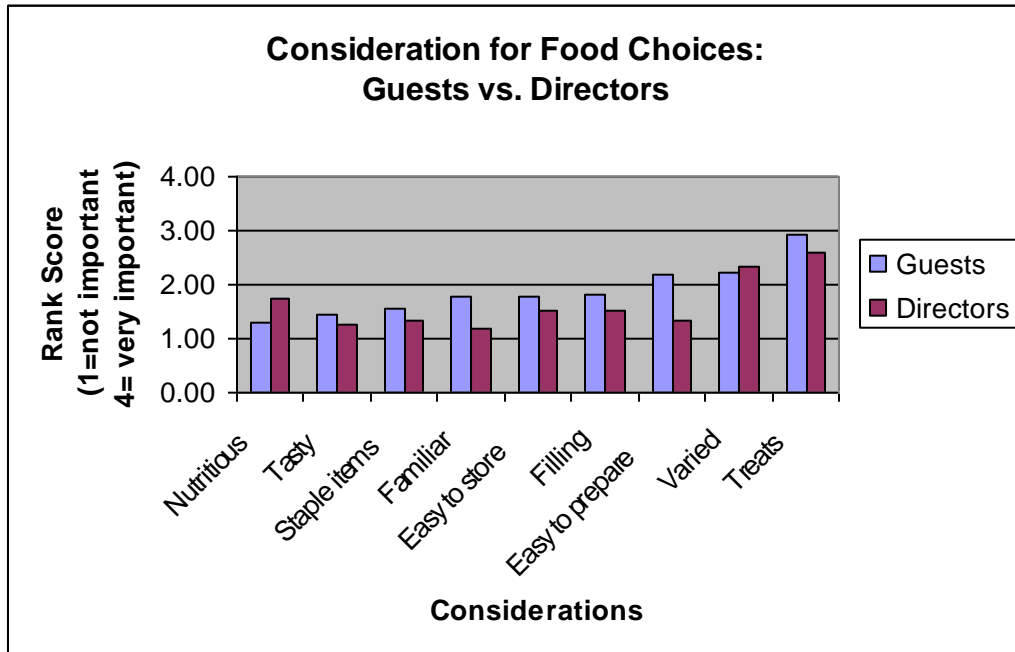
Figure 7: Food Preferences: Guests vs. Directors by Food Item



Directors' Perceptions vs. Guests' Stated Considerations in selecting foods

- A wide range of correlation coefficients were found for the pantry directors' views compared with their guests' ($r = 0.87$ — 0.27 , data not shown) on important considerations in selecting foods indicating that some directors more accurately perceive their guests than others.
- Guests tend to rate ease of preparation, familiarity, filling and treats somewhat higher than do Pantry Directors (Figure 8).

Figure 8: Pantry Directors' Perceptions vs. Guests' Considerations in selecting food from food pantries



Directors’ Perspectives of Food Pantry Distribution

- As shown in Table 17, a large majority of directors (80%) indicated that food pantries should only distribute healthy foods while only 27% of directors reported that the role of the food pantry is to provide a variety of foods including soda and candy.
- It appears that most directors (86%) are familiar with the Food Bank of Central New York’s “No Soda and No Candy” donation policy (Table 17).

Table 17: Directors’ Perspectives of Food Pantry Distribution

Food Distribution Statement	Strongly Agree/Somewhat Agree (%)	Somewhat Disagree/Strongly Disagree (%)
The role of the Food Pantry is to provide healthy food items only	80	20
The role of the Food Pantry is to provide a variety of foods including soda and candy	27	74
The Food Bank of Central New York does not accept or distribute soda or candy	86	14

Barriers Identified by Directors

- As show in Table 18, directors reported that inconsistent availability is the greatest barrier to providing fresh fruits and vegetables.
- The cost of meat/poultry/fish, refrigerated milk, and whole wheat bread were identified as barriers to distribution (Table 18).
- Directors also noted the inability to store milk and fresh fruit properly as a barrier to distribution (Table 18).

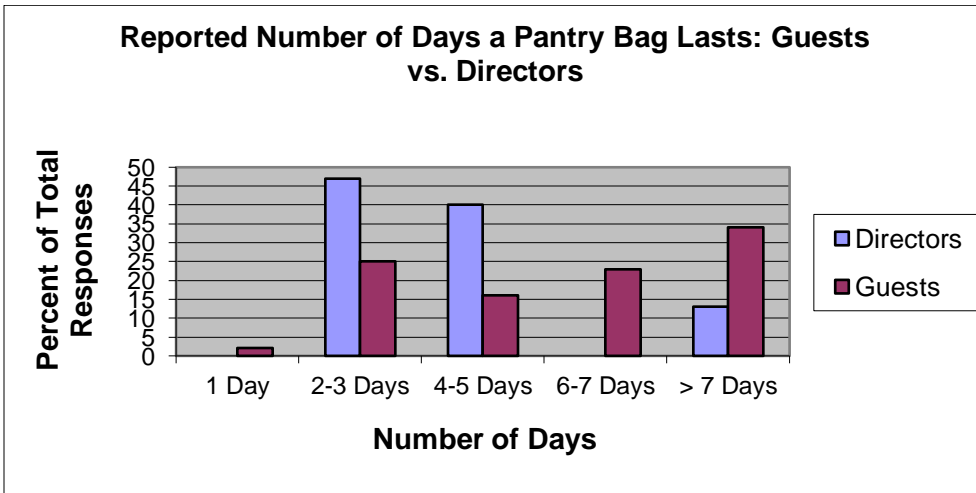
Table 18: Barriers Identified for Distribution of Healthy Food (n=15)

	Costs too much (%)	Inconsistent Availability (%)	Food pantry storage problems (%)	Guests do not like it (%)	Guests cannot store it (%)	Guests cannot cook it (%)	No problems (%)
Fresh Fruit	20	67	40	0	7	0	20
Fresh Vegetables	7	73	27	13	7	0	20
Meat/Poultry/Fish	33	7	20	7	0	7	40
Refrigerated Milk	40	27	40	0	7	0	13
Whole Wheat Bread	33	7	7	33	0	0	33
Brown Rice	7	7	0	53	0	20	33
Dry Beans	0	7	0	40	0	40	40

Reported Number of Days a Pantry Bag Lasts: Guests vs. Directors

- As illustrated in Figure 9, the majority of guests reported that pantry bags lasted them more than 7 days while most directors reported the bag should last 2-3 days.
- This information may be helpful in determining the quantities for distribution. Guests reported the importance of having staple food items available.

Figure 9: Reported Number of Days a Pantry Bag Lasts: Guests vs. Directors

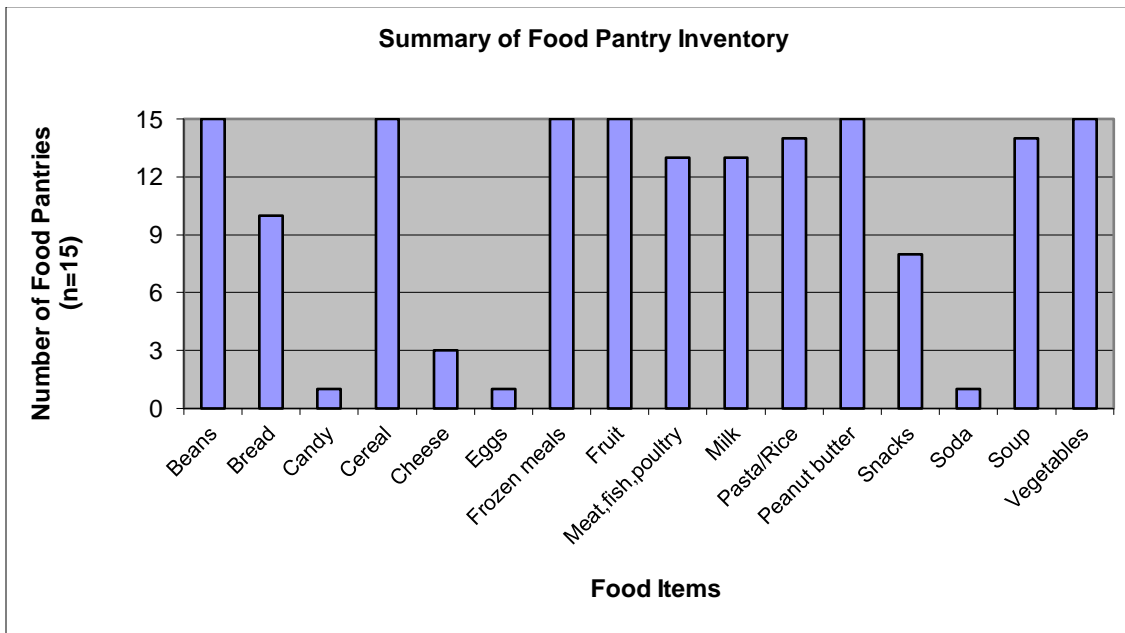


Findings from Food Pantry Inventory Analysis

Summary of Food Pantry Inventory

- All 15 food pantries carried vegetables, peanut butter, fruit, frozen meals, cereal and beans (Figure 10).
- Only 1 food pantry carried eggs even though it was ranked as the 4th most important food to receive at a food pantry by guests (Figure 10).
- Only 3 food pantries offered cheese on the day of data collection (Figure 10).
- Only 1 food pantry offered soda on the day of data collection (Figure 10).
- Only 1 food pantry offered candy on the day of data collection (Figure 10).

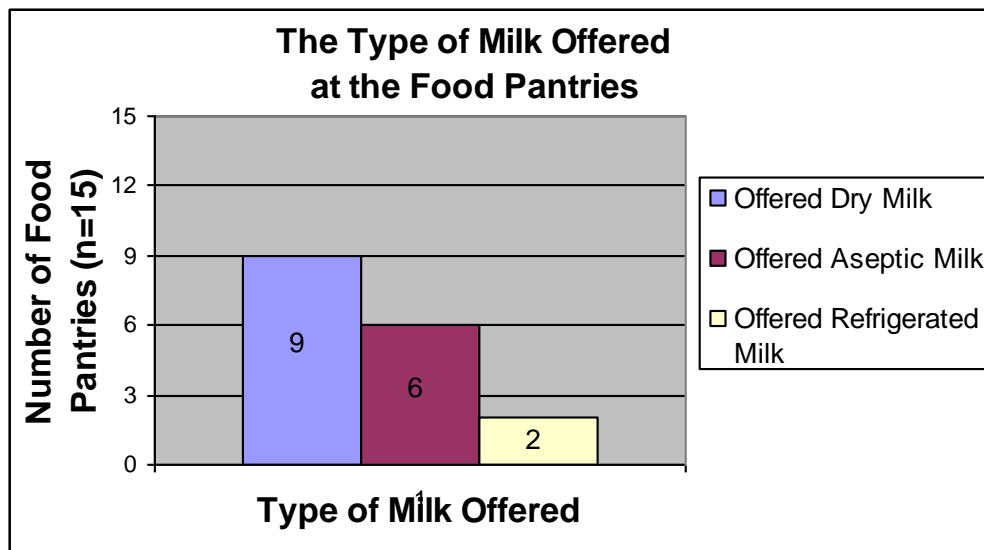
Figure 10: Summary of Food Pantry Inventory



Milk Offered at Food Pantries

- As shown in Figure 11, although 13 out of 15 food pantries offered milk, only 2 offered refrigerated milk.
- Seventy-five percent of guests preferred refrigerated milk.

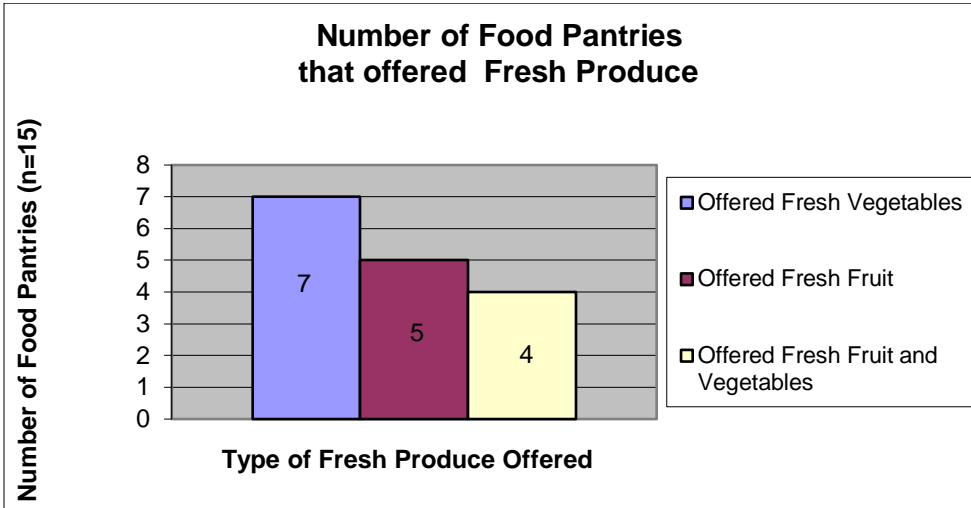
Figure 11: The Type of Milk Offered at Food Pantries



Fresh Produce

- Less than half (7/15) of the food pantries offered fresh vegetables on the day of data collection (see Figure 12) although 51% of guests reported a preference for fresh vegetables over frozen or canned.
- Only 33% of food pantries offered fresh fruit on the day of data collection (Figure 12) however, 72% of guests reported preferring fresh fruit over frozen or canned.
- Approximately 25% of pantries (4/15) offered both fresh fruits and vegetables on the day of data collection (Figure 12).

Figure 12: Number of Food Pantries that Offered Fresh Produce



Specific Fresh Produce offered on Day of Data Collection

- Apples, oranges, and grapes were offered on the day of data collection (Table 19) and were reported among the top 5 preferred fruits by guests; carrots and potatoes were offered on the day of data collection and were reported among the top 5 preferred vegetables by guests.
- The FBCNY’s Produce of the Month program provided 3 of the 5 vegetables offered. This program helps improve access to fresh fruits and vegetables for pantry users and may be a key component for any strategy to increase fruit and vegetable consumption of guests.

Table 19: Specific Fresh Produce offered on Day of Data Collection

Fresh Fruit	Grapes	Apples	Oranges	Cantaloupe	
Fresh Vegetables	Carrots*	Potatoes	Green Beans	Eggplant*	Cucumbers*

*Indicates Produce of the Month Item

Select Findings from Food Pantry Bag Analysis

Guests that Preferred Fresh Fruit: Offered vs. Chosen

- There were a limited number of food pantry bags that reviewers had the opportunity to analyze. In addition, there were only four sites that offered fresh fruit, which resulted in a small sample.
- Of the ten guests that had their pantry bags reviewed and reported a preference for fresh fruit, nine took fresh fruit when offered on the data collection day (Table 20).
- Only one guest that had a preference for fresh fruit did not take it on data collection day (Table 20).

Table 20: Guests that Preferred Fresh Fruit: Offered vs. Chosen

Site	Guests w/ Preference for Fresh Fruit	Chose Fresh Fruit When Offered	Did Not Choose Fresh Fruit When Offered
Canton Neighborhood	5	4	1
DePauville	2	2	0
Helping Hands	1	1	0
Little Falls	1	1	0
Totals	9	8	1

Guests that Preferred Fresh Vegetables: Offered vs. Chosen

- There were a limited number of food pantry bags that reviewers had the opportunity to analyze. In addition, there were only six sites that offered fresh vegetables, which resulted in a small sample.
- Of the eight guests that had their pantry bags reviewed and reported a preference for fresh vegetables, seven took fresh vegetables when offered on the data collection day (Table 21).
- Only one guest that had a preference for fresh vegetables did not take it on data collection day. This could be an important trend to acknowledge. If healthier food items, that guests reportedly prefer, are available, guests may choose those items for their pantry bag (Table 21).

Table 21: Guests that Preferred Fresh Vegetables: Offered vs. Chosen

Site	Guests w/ Preference for Fresh Vegetables	Chose Fresh Vegetables When Offered	Did Not Choose Fresh Vegetables When Offered
Canton Neighborhood	3	3	0
DePauville	1	0	1
Roots and Wings	0	0	0
Little Falls	1	1	0
Dolgeville	0	0	0
Elmwood	2	2	0
Totals	7	6	1

V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Objective 1: Food Bank Donated Inventory Analysis

Analysis of the food bank donations showed a substantial decrease in the amount of soda and a decrease in the pounds of candy accepted at the FBCNY two years after the implementation of the “No Soda and No Candy” policy.

There are many potential benefits of these changes. Perhaps most importantly, the calories saved by reducing the soda donations by 65,000 pounds could have averted considerable weight gain among food pantry guests (3,000 pounds divided by the number of unduplicated guests).

It is notable that there was an increase in soda and candy donations (in absolute amounts and in the percentage of total weight of donations) in the year immediately following the introduction of the policy. This may simply reflect a delay effect in the implementation of the “No Soda and No Candy” policy, or possibly the year-to-year fluctuations. And yet, changes of this magnitude were not observed in other food groups. Alternatively, there may have been yearly changes in food procurement practices or in the foods available. It may also be considered that the year 2 increases may reflect a delayed adjustment to the new policy on the part of some FBCNY staff. In fact, this is the likely explanation as suggested by the FBCNY staff interviews who indicated that it took some time to persuade the staff that the policy was in the organization’s and the guests’ best interests.

It appears that the policy was successful in reducing donations of soda, and to a lesser extent, candy, by the second year after its implementation. To confirm that the FBCNY policy is responsible for the reduction in soda donations, we would need to continue monitoring the annual inventory to ensure that the policy is being implemented as well as to look for trends in other food groups that FBCNY may want to encourage or discourage among guests.

These findings should provide a useful basis for considering further changes to food policies and practices within the FBCNY. Such measures would include ways to increase, store, and handle donations of fresh fruit, more fresh vegetables, and other foods of high preference. In addition, this feedback can provide support for the expansion of the “No Soda and No Candy” policy to other foods of minimal nutritional value, particularly sweetened beverages and sweets. Providing this feedback and a discussion with staff about the barriers to meeting policy goals may prove valuable in overcoming barriers.

Inventory data provide powerful information about the implementation of food policy changes in organizations such as food banks. Policies that change fundamental and complex aspects of food procurement and operations are not easily introduced or fully implemented overnight. Often, many years are required to reach policy goals. In the case of FBCNY, excellent progress appears to have been made in the area of soda and candy donations. Additional strategies to increase fruit donations and sustain the level of vegetable contributions are indicated.

Objectives 2 and 3: Food Pantry Guest and Director Interviews

Findings from the food ranking question suggests that food pantry guests prefer to receive meat, vegetables, and fruit over soda, candy, and snack foods. In addition, respondents reported a greater interest on receiving vegetables, fruit, and meat than in getting soda, candy, and snack foods during a pantry visit. This supports the effort by the FBCNY to limit foods of minimal nutritional value while focusing on increasing the distribution of both donated and purchased fruits and vegetables. Notably, a majority of guests stated that they would prefer to receive fresh fruits (72%) and vegetables (51%). In general, food pantry guests at both rural and urban sites preferred the same type of foods.

Data from the food preferences study suggest that the Food Bank of Central New York’s “No Soda and No Candy” donation policy is in line with the food preferences of guests and philosophy of food pantry directors. Most directors (80%) reported that food pantries should only provide healthy foods.

In general, the data suggests that food pantry directors accurately perceive the food preferences of their guests. However, there were still only four food pantries that offered fresh fruit and seven food pantries that offered fresh vegetables. Notably the fresh produce items offered were from the FBCNY's Produce of the Month program. From the limited food pantry bag analysis data available, it appears that most guests that reported a preference for fresh fruit and vegetables took them when offered. Additionally, guests reported a high preference for eggs and milk. Only one food pantry carried eggs on the day of data collection; and although thirteen out of the fifteen food pantries provided milk, only two carried refrigerated milk, which was the overwhelming preference of guests (75%). While it is thought that food pantry directors may not accurately perceive food preferences of their guests, this was refuted in our study. The data suggest that the biggest challenges to providing preferred foods are not attitudinal but relate to cost, inconsistent availability, and storage capacity.

Findings from this study should be used to support internal discussion regarding improvement to the infrastructure of food pantries to help support the improvement of foods distributed at food pantries. Guests' preferences may be used to guide food donors, purchasers, and dietitians when determining the product mix to distribute as well as what types of foods may need promotion. Guests overwhelmingly reported that nutrition was a very important consideration when choosing foods at the food pantry.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

Food Bank of Central New York

1. Implement a monitoring system (routine annual or semi-annual summaries of donations arranged by food groups as per the analysis in this report) to identify areas for improvement and acknowledge accomplishments. This may be helpful for work plan development and department goal setting.
2. Review donation trends in order to improve and/or amend current donation policy.
3. Present the findings of this study to FBCNY staff and Pantry Directors and facilitate discussion on how to improve the infrastructure to eliminate barriers to distribution of healthy foods and to provide foods preferred by guests.
4. Discuss ways to expand the Produce of the Month program, which will help to provide fruits and vegetables that guests prefer as well as improve the nutrition quality of their diets.
5. Discuss ways to expand the milk gift card program, which may eliminate storage barriers, to meet guests' preferences.
6. Reexamine donation solicitation and food purchasing practices to ensure that guests' preferences are met when possible at the food bank level.
7. Disseminate findings of this study, via published articles and presentations at meetings, to share lessons learned regarding progress in organizational change in food banks to provide healthier foods supported by evidence of food preferences of guests.

Emergency Food Network in General

1. Consider routine auditing of food bank donations using the methods described in this study to assess the extent to which healthier foods are obtained in donations and distributed.
2. Consider local studies of food preferences of guests and the barriers to healthy food distribution for use in developing action plans for organizational change.

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APPENDIX 1. Inventory Classification System

Food Group Classification Categories:

- Fruit
- Vegetable
- Grain
- Meat
- Dairy
- Beverage
- Non-Dairy Substitute
- Combination Foods
- Snack Foods
- Miscellaneous
- Condiment
- Non-Meat

Food Group Sub Group Categories:

- Apples
- Applesauce
- Apricots
- Assorted
- Assorted Bakery
- Beans
- Beef
- Bologna
- Bread
- Bread Mix
- Butter Substitute
- Cabbage
- Candy
- Carrots
- Cauliflower
- Celery
- Cereal
- Cereal Bars
- Cheese
- Cherries
- Chicken
- Chips
- Chocolate Drink
- Coffee
- Coffee Creamer
- Collard Greens
- Corn
- Crackers
- Cranberry
- Cream Cheese
- Dietary Aide
- Dip
- Dough
- Eggs
- Fish
- Flour
- Fruit Juice
- Lettuce
- Main Entrée
- Mandarin Orange
- Mayonnaise
- Milk
- Miscellaneous
- Mushrooms
- Non-Food
- Nuts
- Oatmeal
- Onions
- Orange
- Other
- Pasta
- Pastries
- Peaches
- Peanut Butter
- Pineapple
- Pizza
- Pork
- Potatoes
- Relish
- Rice
- Salad Dressing
- Salad Mix
- Sauce
- Side Dish
- Soda
- Soup
- Sour Cream
- Squash
- Sweets
- Tea
- Tomatoes
- Topping
- Turkey
- Venison
- Water
- Yogurt

Food Preparation Sub Group Categories:

- 100% Juice
- Canned
- Fresh
- Frozen
- Sweetened
- Unsweetened

APPENDIX 2. Food Pantry Guest Food Preference Survey

The Food Bank of Central New York

Food Preference Survey (interview schedule)

(Use response cards for most questions where indicated)

Hello, my name is _____. I am working with the Food Bank of Central New York. We are doing a survey to better understand the types of foods that people prefer to receive through food pantries and what influences their choices, so that we can provide the best service to guests. I would like to get your ideas and opinions by asking you a few questions. The information you give me will be confidential – your name will not be on the form, so no one will know what you said. Completing this survey is voluntary and will take about 15 minutes. Would you be willing to help us with this important information? yes_____ no____ reason for refusal:

The first few questions are about the foods that you and your household would prefer to receive from the food pantry, if the pantry was able to provide them.

1. Which of the following foods are most important to you and your household to receive from the food pantry? I would like you to rank them by sorting these cards into order from most important to least important...put the most important to you and your household on top of the pile and the least important on the bottom of the pile... *(Ideally, allow them to spread out on a table, or a large lap mat board; when guest completes ranking, rubber band cards and place in manila envelope. Record answers at end of day.)*

1=Highest Priority and 16= Lowest Priority

<i>Food</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Food</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Food</i>	<i>Rank</i>
Fruit		Bread		Soup	
Vegetables		Soda		Frozen Meals	
Meat/Poultry/Fish		Candy		Milk	
Beans (not including green beans)		Snack Food (chips, cookies)		Cereal	
Pasta/Rice		Cheese		Peanut Butter	
Eggs					

2. Now, let's talk about the same food list. This time I would like you to tell me how important it is to you and your household to receive EACH type of food item: very important, important, somewhat important, or not important. Think about each food item individually without comparing it to the other foods while answering this question. For example, you may have ranked peanut butter as least important in the last question, but you may feel it is still very important for you to receive it at the food pantry.

(Response card)

		Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
a.	Fruit	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b.	Vegetables	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c.	Meat/Poultry/Fish	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d.	Snack Foods (chips, cookies)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e.	Soda	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f.	Candy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g.	Milk	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h.	Cheese	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i.	Beans (not including green beans)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
j.	Bread	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
k.	Cereal	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
l.	Frozen Meals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
m.	Pasta/Rice	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
n.	Soup	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
o.	Eggs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3. Of any food items that you can think of, which do you MOST want available at your food pantry? (List only one)

4. Which of the following would you most prefer to receive at your food pantry? (Mark only one)

- Canned vegetables
- Frozen vegetables
- Fresh vegetables (if they answered fresh, go to question 4a)
- None of the above

4a. Name the fresh vegetables that you would like to receive at your food pantry:

5. What would you say are the two vegetables most frequently eaten in your household?

1. _____

2. _____

6. Which of the following would you most prefer to receive at your food pantry? (Mark only one)

- Canned fruit
- Frozen fruit
- Fresh fruit (if they answered fresh, go to question 6a)
- None of the above

6a. Name the fresh fruit that you would like to receive at your food pantry:

7. What would you say are the two fruits most frequently eaten in your household?

1. _____

2. _____

8. Which of the following would you most prefer to receive at your food pantry? (Mark only one)

- Canned meat/poultry/fish
- Frozen meat/poultry/fish
- None of the above

8a. Name the meat/poultry/fish that you would like to receive at your food pantry:

9. What would you say are the two meat/poultry/fish most frequently eaten in your household?

1. _____

2. _____

10. What type of beans (not including green beans) would you most prefer to receive at your food pantry? (Pick One)

- Dry beans
- Canned beans
- None of the above

10a. Name the beans (not including green beans) that you would MOST like to receive at your food pantry:

11. Which, if any, are the two kinds of beans (not including green beans) most frequently eaten in your household?

1. _____
2. _____

12. Now think about how milk is packaged. Which of the following would you MOST prefer to receive at your food pantry? (Pick One)

- Dry milk
- Refrigerated milk
- Shelf-stable/boxed/aseptic milk
- I wouldn't use milk from the pantry <skip to Q14>

13. And which of the following, if any, would you MOST prefer to receive at your food pantry? (Pick One)

- Skim/Non-fat milk
- 1% milk
- 2% milk
- Whole milk

14. Which would you most prefer to receive at your food pantry?

- White rice
- Brown rice
- None of the above

15. Which breakfast cereals would you like to receive from your food pantry?

15a. Which two kinds of breakfast cereals are most frequently eaten in your household?

1. _____

2. _____

16. How important is each of the following in choosing food from the pantry for you and your household—very important, important, somewhat important, or not important?

The foods you get from the food pantry should be...

	Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
a. Easy to prepare	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Staple items that you (and your household) can make a meal out of	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Filling	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Tastes good to you/members of your household	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Treats for you/members of your household	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Nutritious and good for your health/health of your household	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. familiar to you/your household	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. varied ...to give you/your household a break from the foods you would normally eat	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i. Easy to store	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

16a. How would you rate the food pantry's performance in providing these types of foods?

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
a. Foods that are easy to prepare	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Foods that are staple items that we can make a meal out of	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Foods that are filling	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Foods that are tasty	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Foods that are nutritious and healthy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Foods that are familiar	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Foods that are varied ...to give some break from the same foods we would normally eat	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. Foods that are easy to store	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i. High quality produce	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

17. How often do you usually visit this food pantry or any other food pantry?

- Less than once a month
- Once a month
- Twice a month
- Three to four times a month
- More than four times month

18. How long would you say the food you get from the pantry usually lasts in your household?

- 1 day
- 2-3 days
- 4-5 days
- 6-7 days
- More than 7 days

19. How often do you or members of your household *usually* shop for groceries? (Response card.)

- Every day
- Several times a week;
- Once a week
- A couple of times a month;
- Once a month
- Less than once a month

20. Which of the following places would you say you get **MOST of your food from each month?**

- Discount stores, such as Wal-Mart, Target, Aldi, and the Dollarstore
- Supermarkets
- Warehouse clubs, Sam's Club, BJ's,
- Convenience stores or small neighborhood grocery stores such as Byrne Dairy, Stewart's, and Nice n Easy
- Ethnic food stores, such as bodegas, Asian food markets, or Caribbean markets
- Farmers' market
- Food pantry
- Other: _____
- None of the above

21. What food items do you want to have in your household that you can not afford?

22. What kitchen equipment do you currently have or have access to? (Tell me all that apply)

- Microwave
- Refrigerator
- Freezer
- Stove
- Oven
- None of the above

23. Thinking about the last week, how many times did you or members of your household eat or drink anything from a fast food restaurant? (For example: McDonald's, Pizza Hut, KFC,)

- 0
- 1 time
- 2-3 times
- 4-6 times
- 7-10 times
- More than 10 times

24. Do you (or anyone in your household) participate in . . .[Mark all that apply]

- Food Stamps (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program)
- Senior centers that serve lunch?
- Home delivered meals or Meals-on-Wheels?
- The WIC program (Women, Infants and Children program)?
- Free or Reduced School lunch programs?
- Free or Reduced School breakfast programs?
- After-school snack programs?
- Child care food programs such as free or low price meals at child care centers?
- Summer food programs providing free lunches for children
- None of the above

Now, I would like to ask you a few details about your household.....

25. Are you: [*Presumably can be completed without asking*]

- Male
- Female

26. Which of these age groups best fits you?

- 18-34 years
- 35-64 years
- 65 or more years
- Rather not say

27. Please tell me the age groups of people in your household not including yourself?

How many people in your household are . . .

	Number in Household
Seniors (age 65 or older)	
Adults (ages 18-64)	
Children (ages 0-10)	
Children (ages 11-17)	
Rather not say	

28. Can you tell me which of these categories best describes you currently? (Mark only one)

- employed full time for pay
- employed part-time for pay
- unemployed
- rather not say

29. Which of the following groups best describes you... (Mark all that apply)

- Caucasian or White
- Asian
- American Indian or Native American
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latino
- Other: _____
- Rather not say

30. Do you have any comments/suggestions about the food and service at food pantries?

APPENDIX 3. Food Pantry Director Survey

**The Food Bank of Central New York
Food Pantry Director Survey**

Hello. My name is _____. I am working with the Food Bank of Central New York to better understand food preferences of food pantry guests and the challenges food pantry directors experience in obtaining and providing foods. I would like to get your ideas and opinions by asking you a few questions. Completing this survey is voluntary and will take about 15 minutes.

1. How would you best describe the ethnicity of the guests you serve? What percentage of your guests are: Caucasian or White, Asian, American Indian or Native American, Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino?

Ethnicity	Percent (%)
Caucasian or White	
Asian	
American Indian or Native American	
Black or African American	
Hispanic or Latino	
Other:	
Total	100%

We're interested in how you think your guests would answer the following questions, so please answer the next few questions from your guests' point of view.

2. Here are 16 cards with items typically distributed at a food pantry. Thinking from your guests' point of view, how do you think they would rank the importance of receiving these foods from the food pantry? I would like you to rank them by sorting these cards into the order from most important to least important....put the most important on top of the pile and the least important on the bottom of the pile... *(Ideally allow them to spread out on a table, or a large lap board; when respondent completes ranking, rubber band cards and place in manila envelope. Record answers at end of day.)*

1=Highest Priority and 16= Lowest Priority

<i>Food</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Food</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Food</i>	<i>Rank</i>
Fruit		Bread		Soup	
Vegetables		Soda		Frozen Meals	
Meat/Poultry/Fish		Candy		Milk	
Cheese		Snack Food (chips, cookies)		Cereal	
Pasta/Rice		Beans (not including green beans)		Peanut Butter	
Eggs					

3. Again, thinking from your guests' point of view, I would like you to tell me how important YOU THINK it is to them and their households to receive each food item: very important, important, somewhat important, or not important. Think about each food item individually without having to compare it to the other foods. For example, you may have ranked peanut butter as your guests' lowest priority in the first question, but it may still be important for them to receive.

		Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
a.	Fruit	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b.	Vegetables	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c.	Meat/Poultry/Fish	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d.	Snack Foods (chips, cookies)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e.	Soda	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f.	Candy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g.	Milk	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h.	Cheese	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i.	Beans (like kidney or pinto; not including green beans)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
j.	Bread	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
k.	Cereal	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
l.	Frozen Meals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
m.	Pasta/Rice	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
n.	Soup	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
o.	Eggs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4. What one food item do your guests MOST want available at your food pantry (List One)?

5. Which of the following do your guests most prefer to receive at your food pantry? (Pick One)

- Canned vegetables
- Frozen vegetables
- Fresh vegetables

6. In your opinion, which two vegetables do your guests most prefer to receive at the food pantry?

1. _____
2. _____

7. In your opinion, which of the following do your guests most prefer to receive at your food pantry?

- Canned fruit
- Frozen fruit
- Fresh fruit

8. In your opinion, which two fruits do your guests most prefer to receive at the food pantry?

1. _____
2. _____

9. In your opinion, which of the following do your guests most prefer to receive at your food pantry? (Pick One)

- Canned meat/poultry/fish
- Frozen meat/poultry/fish

10. In your opinion, which two meat/poultry/fish items do your guests most prefer to receive at the food pantry?

1. _____

2. _____

11. In your opinion, what type of beans (not including green beans) do your guests most prefer to receive at your food pantry?

- Dry
- Canned

12. In your opinion, name the top two types of beans (not including green beans) that your guests most prefer to receive at your food pantry?

1. _____

2. _____

13. Now think about how milk is packaged. In your opinion, which type of packaging of milk do your guests most prefer to receive at your food pantry? (Pick One)

- Dry
- Refrigerated
- Shelf-stable/boxed/aseptic
- They wouldn't use milk from the pantry <skip to Q15>

14. In your opinion, what type of milk do your guests most prefer to receive at your food pantry? (Pick One)

- Skim/Non-fat
- 1%
- 2%
- Whole

15. In your opinion, what kind of rice do your guests most prefer to receive at your food pantry?

- Brown rice
- White rice

16. In your opinion, what are the two breakfast cereals that your guests MOST prefer to receive at your food pantry?

1. _____

2. _____

Again, thinking from the point of view of your guests and their households.....

17. How important do you think the following are to your guests and their households – Very Important, Important, Somewhat Important or Not Important?

Guests think that the foods they get from the food pantry should be...

	Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
a. Easy to prepare	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Staple items that they can make a meal out of	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Filling	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Tasty to them	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Treats for them	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Nutritious and good for them	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Familiar to them	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. Varied ...to give some break from the foods they would normally eat	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i. Easy to store	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please answer the next few questions thinking from your own point of view.

18. The food pantry bag usually lasts my guests...

- 1 day
- 2-3 days
- 4-5 days
- 6-7 days
- More than 7 days

19. How much do you agree with the following statements – strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree?

I think that . . .

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a. The role of the food pantry is to provide healthy food items only.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. The role of the food pantry is to provide a variety of foods including soda and candy.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. The Food Bank of Central New York does not accept or distribute soda and candy.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

20. Running a food pantry can be very difficult especially considering the financial limitations. Please indicate what level of service your food pantry is able to provide for the following items:

My food pantry is able to...

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
a. Distribute food that is easy to prepare for guests	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Distribute foods that are staple items that guests can make a meal out of	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Distribute food that is filling	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Costs too much	Inconsistent availability	Food pantry storage problems	Guests do not like it	Guests can not store it	Guests can not cook it	No problems
e. Whole Wheat Bread	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Brown Rice	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Dry Beans	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

22. Do your guests have culturally-specific food preferences?

- Yes
- No

If yes, how would you describe these preferences?

23. What nutrition education resources, if any, do you provide for your guests? Please indicate who provides each service. (Mark as many as apply)

- Recipes: Provided by_____
- Food demonstrations: Provided by_____
- Taste tests: Provided by_____
- Written information/handouts: Provided by_____
- Displays: Provided by_____
- Classes: Provided by_____
- Other:_____ : Provided by_____
- I do not provide nutrition education resources

24. How long have you worked in the food pantry system (please include all food pantry experience)?

- Less than 1 year
- 1-4 years
- 5-10 years
- More than 10 years

25. Are you a paid employee or a volunteer?

- Paid employee
- Volunteer

26. Gender: *[Presumably can be completed without asking]*

- Male
- Female

27. Which of the following best describes you.... (Mark all that apply)

- Caucasian or White
- Asian
- American Indian or Native American
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latino
- Other: _____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP WITH THIS IMPORTANT SURVEY!

APPENDIX 4. Food Pantry Inventory Checklist

Food Pantry Inventory Checklist:

Using an "X", indicate which foods were available at the time of data collection.

Food Item	Available	Food Item	Available	Food Item	Available
1. Fruit (list below)		6. Bread		11. Soup	
2. Vegetables (list below)		7. Soda		12. Frozen Meals	
3. Meat/Poultry/Fish (list below)		8. Candy		13. Milk (list below)	
4. Beans (list below)		9. Snack Food (chips, cookies)		14. Cereal	
5. Pasta/Rice		10. Cheese		15. Peanut Butter	

<i>Fruit (List)</i>	<i>Fresh</i>	<i>Frozen</i>	<i>Canned</i>
<i>Vegetables (List)</i>	<i>Fresh</i>	<i>Frozen</i>	<i>Canned</i>
<i>Meat/Poultry/Fish (List)</i>	<i>Fresh</i>	<i>Frozen</i>	<i>Canned</i>

APPENDIX 5. Food Pantry Bag Checklist

Food Pantry Bag Checklist (Interview Schedule):

Thank you so much for your time answering my questions. It was very helpful. There is one more step that would help us evaluate the food and services provided to you today. When you are finished getting your food, may we quickly write down the items in your bag? The information will be confidential – your name will not be on the form. Completing this survey is voluntary.

Yes ___ No ___ reason for refusal

Using an “X”, indicate which food items were found in the guest’s pantry bag.

Food Item	Selected	Food Item	Selected	Food Item	Selected
1. Fruit (list below)		6. Bread		11. Soup	
2. Vegetables (list below)		7. Soda		12. Frozen Meals	
3. Meat/Poultry/Fish (list below)		8. Candy		13. Milk (list below)	
4. Beans (list below)		9. Snack Food (chips, cookies)		14. Cereal	
5. Pasta/Rice		10. Cheese		15. Peanut Butter	

<i>Fruit (List)</i>	<i>Fresh</i>	<i>Frozen</i>	<i>Canned</i>

<i>Vegetables (List)</i>	<i>Fresh</i>	<i>Frozen</i>	<i>Canned</i>
<i>Meat/Poultry/Fish (List)</i>	<i>Fresh</i>	<i>Frozen</i>	<i>Canned</i>

<i>Beans (List)</i>	<i>Dry</i>	<i>Canned</i>

<i>Milk (List)</i>	<i>Dry</i>	<i>Aseptic</i>	<i>Refrigerated</i>

<i>Additional Items (List with as much detail as possible)</i>
