

Summary of Community Food Assessment Results

295 clients of food bank agencies (pantries, soup kitchens and pantries) were interviewed on barriers to fruits and vegetable consumption and physical activities, etc. This is a preliminary summary of the results of this survey. Data is available both broken into zip codes and into the types of site.

5 a Day Consumption Rates

38.2% of the low-income individuals surveyed stated that they eat 5 fruits and vegetables a day every day. The statewide average for daily consumption of 5 a Day among the general population (2004 CNN Benchmark Survey) is 36.5%. Among low-income mothers the rate is 39.9% and among food stamp recipients, it is 39.6%.

- ❖ At Pantries- 43.8%
- ❖ At Soup kitchens- 30%
- ❖ At Shelters- 10.7%

These results indicate a need to add more fruits and vegetables to the menus at soup kitchens and shelters, and to increase access to produce to these clients (transportation, resources to purchase, etc.).

Barriers to 5 a Day

The following were cited as the barriers to eating enough fruits and vegetables:

- ❖ Produce too expensive where subjects shop 51.4% Watsonville 58.8%
- ❖ Don't have transportation to quality produce 15.5% Watsonville 20%
- ❖ Family doesn't like vegetables 12.2%
- ❖ Few stores with produce in neighborhood 12.2%
- ❖ No time to prepare fruits and vegetables 9.8%

Factors in Selecting Produce

- ❖ Price 70.9%
- ❖ Quality 68.2%
- ❖ Organic 27.6%
- ❖ Locally grown 19.3%
- ❖ Culturally appropriate 19.6%
- ❖ Social justice 12%

The preeminent concern for food bank clients on produce from the two questions above is price and access (location or transportation) to quality produce. A notable percentage are also concerned about whether the produce is organic and locally grown.

Where Do You Purchase Produce (were able to choose more than one)?

Supermarkets	65.5%	Watsonville	56.5%
Ethnic Markets	22%	Watsonville	26.5%
Fruterias	40.2%	Watsonville	58.2%
Produce Stands	17.9%	Watsonville	22.4%
Farmers Market	23.6%	Watsonville	22.9%
Flea Market	17.6%	Watsonville	20.9%

Transportation to Purchasing Produce

Drive	49.3%		Pantries	4.5%		Soup Kitchens		10%		Shelters	3.6%
Bus	18.6%		Pantries	12%		Soup Kitchens		32%		Shelters	46.4%
Walk	36.1%		Pantries	25.8%		Soup Kitchens		74%		Shelters	50%

The lack of transportation indicated by shelter and soup kitchen subjects, may contribute, as well as lack of resources to purchase, and insufficient fruits and vegetables in the meals served, to their lower percentages on 5 a Day daily, than pantry clients.

Barriers to Farmers' Market Participation

Those who noted that they don't shop at farmers' markets were asked why not. These were the most common answers in order of priority, with price, again, at the top:

- ❖ Fruits and vegetables too expensive at farmers' markets 25.7%
- ❖ Didn't know about farmers' markets 18.9%
- ❖ Inconvenient days and times 17.9%
- ❖ Didn't know what days and times they operate 13.2%
- ❖ Location inconvenient 13.2%
- ❖ Don't like to carry heavy bags on public transit 6.4%
- ❖ Don't like quality or variety of produce 6.1%

What Would Improve Your Diet?

Subjects were asked what food groups would improve their diet. Again, in order of their priority:

❖ Fruits and Vegetables	47%	Pantry	45.2%	Kitchens	60%	Shelters	42.9%
❖ Protein Sources	47%	Pantry	44.2%	Kitchens	56%	Shelters	53.3%
❖ Dairy Products	32.4%	Pantry	29.5%	Kitchens	48%	Shelters	28.6%
❖ Low or no fat items	24.7%	Pantry	24.4%	Kitchens	28%	Shelters	21.4%
❖ Low or no sugar items	23%	Pantry	23.5%	Kitchens	22%	Shelters	21.4%
❖ Low salt items	20.9%	Pantry	21.2%	Kitchens	20%	Shelters	21.4%
❖ Vegetarian options	14.5%	Pantry	12.9%	Kitchens	16%	Shelters	25%

Across the board there is a strong demand indicated among food bank recipients for more produce, for protein and more dairy products. Between 1 in 4 and 1 in 5 clients also points out a need for items low in fat, sugar or salt. And between 13% (pantries) and 25% (shelters) would like to see vegetarian meals.

The News on Fast Food, Chips, Soda and Sweets

Item	Eats Daily	A Few Times a Week	A Few Times a Month	Never
Fast Food	1.4%	15.5%	50.3%	29.7%
Chips	5.1%	27%	44.7%	27%
Soda	11.5%	28.4%	33.1%	24%
Sweets	11.1%	27.7%	41.6%	15.7%

Very few cited daily meals at fast food restaurants or consumption of snacks like chips. A higher percentage eat sweets and soda daily.

Are you or someone in your household diabetic?

Yes 24.7% Watsonville 27.6% Pantries 28.6% Kitchen 16% Shelters 10.7%

This compares with the average of those diabetic out of the general population in Santa Cruz County of 6%.

Interest in free classes and nutrition resources:

	Overall	Watsonville
Nutrition classes	61%	72.9%
Healthy cooking classes	66.2%	76.5%
Diabetic cooking classes	51.4%	65.9%
Vegetarian cooking classes	54.4%	60%
Class on managing diabetes	48.6%	59%
Tasting fruits and veggies	62.8%	67.1%
Recipes for healthy meals	67.2%	72.4%
Buying clubs	61.5%	58.8%
Organic gardening classes	54.1%	57.6%
Gardening supplies	55.4%	58.2%
Seeds and seedlings	52.4%	59.4%

Community Garden Interest

	Yes	Pantry	Kitchen	Shelter
Do you have a garden?	22.3%	26.3%	16%	3.6%
Would you grow in a community garden?	62.5%	56.25	96%	53.6%

Interest in Buying a Community Supported Agriculture Share:

	Yes	Pantry	Kitchen	Shelter
Interest in participating in CSA	54.4%	53%	58%	60.7%
May be interested in CSA	13.9%	15.2%	10%	10.7%

Physical Activity

Due in part, perhaps, to many clients working in agriculture and other physical work, and in part to the homeless clients doing extensive walking, their daily physical activity is at a healthier level than California averages in the general population (41.8%), low-income mothers (42%) or food stamp recipients (39.9%).

	Overall	Pantry	Kitchen	Shelter
Gets ½ hour of physical activity daily	56.4%	48.8%	84%	67.9%
Gets ½ hour several times a week	22.6%	27.6%	8%	10.7%

Barriers to Physical Activity

Though many in this sampling cite regular exercise, those who find barriers cited:

No time to exercise	29.4%
Disability	10.8%
Expensive exercise facilities	9.5%
Safety of neighborhoods and streets	8.4%

Clearly many are probably affected by the time restraints of work, making worksite wellness programs and education on how to get exercise within a tight schedule important. Other needs indicated are programs for the disabled, affordable exercise facilities and advocacy towards safer neighborhoods and streets.

How To Improve Nutrition and Physical Activity in Our Communities

Asked what factors would most improve nutrition and physical activity in community, the responses were:

	Overall	Pantry	Kitchen	Shelter
Improving food available through food banks	47.6%	40.1%	70%	67.9%
Improve school meals	46.3%	48.4%	40%	42.5%
Improve access to federal food (food stamps, etc)	44.9%	42.9%	44%	64.3%
Improve food in restaurants	40.2%	36.9%	44%	60.7%
Nutrition advocacy, food policy councils	36.8%	32.7%	44%	57.1%
More recreation facilities and programs	36.5%	33.6%	36%	60.7%

Interest in Job Training or Training In Starting a Business

Interested in job or business training	46.3%	41.9%	62%	53.6%
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Preliminary Recommendations

- ❖ Explore means to create more access to *affordable* fruits and vegetables
- ❖ Get more quality, affordable, locally grown, culturally appropriate and organic fruits and vegetables into Watsonville neighborhoods (consider Farm Fresh Choice type program)
- ❖ Explore transportation options (bus vouchers, lift-line type transport to farmers markets and pantries)
- ❖ Encourage pricing strategies to increase produce sales (coupons, specials)
- ❖ Improve food bank agency access, especially for soup kitchens and shelters, to produce, protein, dairy, low and no fat, low and no sugar, and vegetarian options
- ❖ Encourage Go For Health, recreation departments, Diabetes Collaborative and others to increase nutrition, diabetes, cooking and other classes as indicated above.
- ❖ Explore opening a community garden, especially with access to those served by soup kitchens and shelters.
- ❖ Explore low-income access to Community Supported Agriculture and buying clubs
- ❖ Work with Go For Health to encourage more workplace physical activity programs, teach time-efficient exercise programs, explore exercise options for the disabled, and develop free and affordable exercise program and equipment access, do policy work to improve safety of streets and neighborhoods
- ❖ As noted strongly by clients as recommendations, improve access to nutritious food through food bank network, improve school meals, improve access to food stamps and other federal programs, improve restaurant foods, develop more recreation programs, and create means for advocating on public policy.

