



# NETWORK OPPORTUNITY SURVEY INSIGHTS & OUTCOMES

## Overview:

Our partners' connection to the community gives voice to our neighbors' needs. Learning more about our partners through feedback loops helps us to understand what to prioritize and where to focus our resources. This page represents the results of our 2021 Network Opportunity Survey, what we learned, our response to your needs, and plans for what's coming next.

## By the numbers:

- Total surveys sent: 526 (food pantries, soup kitchens, and shelters)
- Unique survey responses: 295
- Total response rate: 56%
- NJ Counties represented: 11
- Survey time frame: August - October 2021

## Top 6 things we heard our partners need & want:

### #1 PRIORITY: Increase the number of people pantries can serve



### 2 Better technology

Partners need technology to track how clients use their pantries, monitor inventory, and place orders.

- 78% aren't equipped to do this.
- 43% use a paper-based system.
- 27% have no access to a computer or internet.
- 12% rely on volunteers to bring their own computers.



### 3 More refrigerators, freezers, & storage space

Partners named providing more fresh produce, meat, and eggs to neighbors as the top way to serve more people.

- 60% expressed the need for more storage capacity.
- Partners reported that purchased and donated **fresh food** is important - the ability to keep it fresh is imperative.



### 4 More transportation options to ensure consistent access to food & opportunities to expand operations

- 67% of partners say transportation challenges threaten their ability to keep current operations running or prevent them from expanding operations.
- 37% of partners lack consistent and reliable transportation resources.



## Addressing our partners' needs: what we're doing & what's coming



### Network-wide Investment in Technology

- Commitment to purchase hardware and software and to onboard and train all partners on an electronic registration platform through a phased approach by FY25. Investment of more than **\$540K in technology** through FY23 Network Operational Grants to support initial phases.
- Funding to support partners with no working technology.



### Funding to Support Storage Needs

- Investment of more than **\$500K in cold (refrigerators and freezers) and dry (shelving) storage** through FY23 Network Investment Operational Grant, impacting nearly 230 Network Partners.



### More Transportation Options

- Support vehicle purchases to qualified partners through the Network Investment Capacity Grant (Spring, 2023).
- Engaged a third-party consultant to assess transportation logistics and develop best in-class systems, processes, and training.
- Investment in fleet replacement and redesign to ensure availability of equipment to meet delivery needs.

## 5 Better food quality & food options - specifically meat, protein, fruits, & vegetables

- 38% of partners say they want to serve more people more food.
- 23% of partners say they want to increase their offerings of meat, protein, culturally appropriate foods, and fresh produce to meet their neighbors' preferences.



## 6 Importance of Customer Experience

- Nearly half our partners want to reach CFBNJ staff in "real time" with quicker responsiveness to emails and phone calls.
- 21% of our partners want more accurate delivery times.



## Better Food Quality & Options

- Increased fresh produce allocation by 800% over the last two fiscal years.
- Increased purchase volumes and variety of fresh produce, including retail pack and produce boxes, resulting in over 11.4 million pounds of fresh produce allocated for distribution.
- Increased frozen protein by 53%, providing over 1.2 million pounds for distribution.
- Expanded variety of frozen proteins to include Turkeys, Ground Turkey, Roasters, and Ground Beef.



## Process Improvement to Enhance our Partner Experience

- Organizational restructure within Network Relations, designed to provide clearer lines of communication and dedicated technical support. Plans to develop a call center allowing partners to reach CFBNJ staff in "real time" underway for 2024.
- Newly created internal customer satisfaction team to ensure quality food and safe distribution. New positions include: Quality Assurance Supervisor and Pest Control Specialist.
- Restructured transportation function, enabling the team to be more responsive to day-to-day partner needs.
- Purchased a new semi-automatic pallet wrap machine for increased product protection.
- Overhauled pick-up process (Hillside) to provide partners with quicker and safer access to orders at the new North Dock.



## What we know is important to neighbor needs:

1. Integrated programs, such as benefit referrals and assistance, provide neighbors access to health and resource benefits that will help them to save money and support their families.

- 52% have low to no levels of benefit assistance (i.e., SNAP).
- 69% have low to no levels of Nutrition Education, such as SNAP-ED.
- CFBNJ has identified expanding partner & neighbor participation in programming as a strategic priority. We plan to provide more opportunities to pair food, education and resource access services to help our partners fill gaps where they have few benefit assistance or nutrition education programming.

2. Client Choice models encourage partners to distribute food to neighbors in a dignified way, providing food choice to maintain a healthy lifestyle and a reduced stigma around food insecurity.

- 12% of the network currently uses a supermarket-style, client choice set-up.
- We will support growth of Client Choice and Innovative Projects
- Our FY23 Network Investment Capacity Grants (applications opening Spring 2023) will provide \$5.2M in funding for large projects, such as projects that support and enhance services that promote dignity and access to nutritious foods, like the adoption/expansion of healthy pantry/client choice models.