Stakeholder Engagement Initiative

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Part 1 (of 3), Spring/Summer 2021

Greater Pittsburgh community food bank

Engaging our community, responding to new challenges

Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank (the Food Bank) is a non-profit organization that distributes millions of meals annually across 11 counties in southwestern Pennsylvania through a network of more than 600 partners and programs. In the last year alone, we provided enough food for more than 46 million meals (more than 55 million pounds of food). Founded in 1980, the Food Bank is a member of Feeding America, the leading domestic hunger-relief charity in the U.S.

Why are we doing this, and who are we talking to

The Food Bank is launching this Stakeholder Engagement Initiative to identify how we can make our work even more effective.

The Food Bank succeeds when it is best able to respond to the needs of the people it serves. We want to hear from those who use Food Bank services – as well as those who qualify but don't use Food Bank services – about their needs, and work together over the next year to explore how we can evolve to best provide our services.

We also want to hear from our other stakeholders – our outstanding staff, our network of hundreds of partners (as well as those we don't partner with yet), thousands of volunteers, donors and many others – about what's working well, what's not working well and opportunities to consider for the future.

How it will work

Over the next year, the engagement process will unfold in three parts, with information shared and feedback sought from a wide variety of voices representing each of our stakeholder groups every step of the way. We will be asking questions, holding meetings, summarizing the feedback we receive and sharing it in an open and transparent process. Our Food Bank team will be proposing ideas that respond to feedback received and testing those ideas with you. In early 2022 we will have a proposed path forward that has been informed by all of this input and will help us respond even better to the needs of the community. Read more and share your thoughts at **pittsburghfoodbank.org/feedback**.

SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS!

This Discussion Guide includes questions for you (see page 6).

Share your thoughts online at pittsburghfoodbank.org/feedback or through a mail-in survey, available on request by contacting us at 412-460-3663 ext. 498.

A discussion in three parts

1 Spring/Summer 2021

Understand what works well, what's not working well and identify suggestions to consider for the future.

2 Summer/Fall 2021

Test ideas that respond to the strengths, challenges and opportunities in our communities and region.

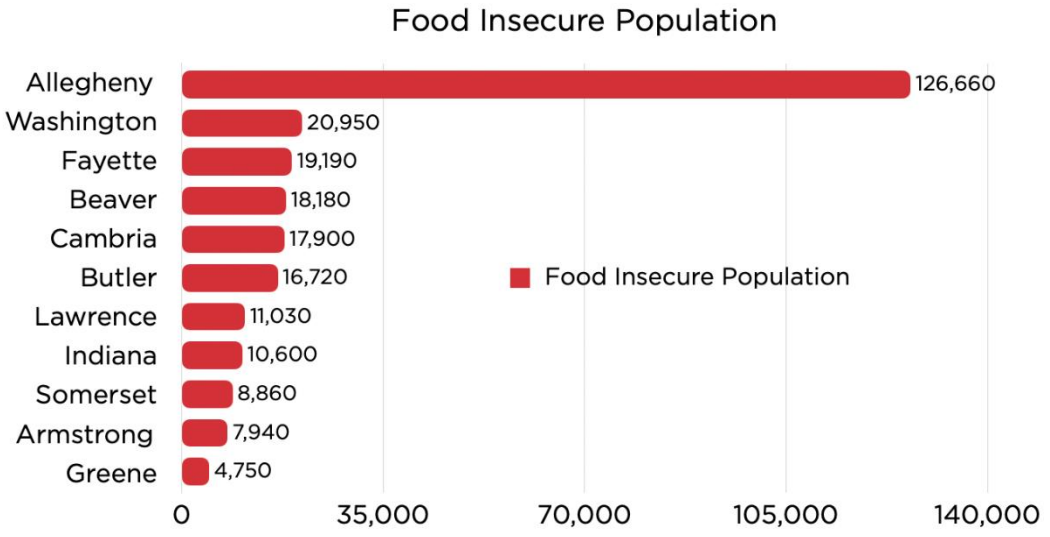
3 Fall 2021/Winter 2022

Share and refine a proposed path forward informed by feedback on ideas tested.

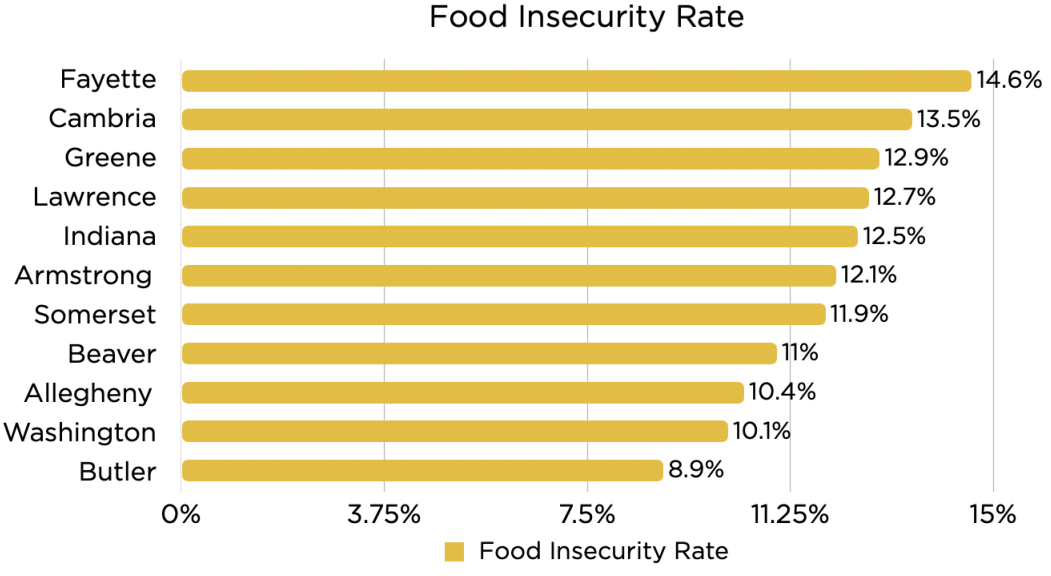
Hunger affects every community

In our region, 1 in 7 of our neighbors does not have access to enough food to live a healthy, productive life. People and neighborhoods most vulnerable to food insecurity include communities of color and rural communities, and groups such as children, seniors, veterans, people with disabilities and those that are underemployed and unemployed.

People experiencing food insecurity have to make difficult decisions every day. When we asked the people we serve about their needs, we learned that more than half of them have to choose between food and housing (53%) and between food and utilities (53%). More than 40% have to make choices between food and transportation (47%) and between food and medications (41%).



Source: Feeding America 2019 Data for Food Bank Service Area by County



Source: Feeding America 2019 Data for Food Bank Service Area by County

Did You Know?

Feeding America estimates that in our service area the overall food insecurity rate increased by 31% over 2019 levels due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In children, that increase was 41%.

During the pandemic, March 2020 – February 2021, the Food Bank:

- Distributed 17 million more pounds of food than during the previous 12 months.
- Received more than 30,000 calls from people in need of food assistance.
- Distributed more than 12 million pounds of fresh produce.
- Made more than 18,000 direct deliveries of food to people age 60 and over who are homebound in Allegheny, Beaver and Butler counties through our Doorstep Delivery program.

Annually, the Food Bank:

- Collects more than 2.3 million pounds of fresh, donated food from local Pennsylvania farms.
- Works with hundreds of retail stores to rescue millions of pounds of food that otherwise would go to waste.
- Provides up to 5 meals with every $1 donated.
- Purchases 31% of the food distributed.
- Engages nearly 6,000 volunteers who contribute more than 48,000 hours.

The Food Bank absolutely could not do what it does without these incredible volunteers!

11 counties and hundreds of partners

One way the Food Bank addresses food insecurity is by sourcing food through community donations, manufacturers, retailers, food brokers, farmers and government entities and storing it in our warehouse until it is distributed. We provide food and other necessities to more than 600 partners and programs across 11 counties that serve many different people.

Partners range from food pantries to soup kitchens to a wide variety of nonprofits, as well as Partner Distribution Organizations (PDOs) that distribute food to their local member agencies. During the pandemic, we've added more than 130 new community-based distribution sites (places like doctors' offices, social service organizations, etc.) to reach people where they are.

The map below provides a snapshot of our network. The Food Bank network is very flexible, responsive and continuously evolving – as is this map. Note that many organizations often deliver multiple programs at the same location. In some counties, our partners and other organizations are responsible for delivering certain programs (e.g. Senior Boxes or Child Nutrition Programs), and those locations are not shown on this map.

LEGEND:

Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank Headquarters
(also an emergency food location)

6 Counties directly served by the Food Bank

5 Counties served by Partner Distribution Organizations (PDOs)

Served independently by the Westmoreland County Food Bank

600 Partners and Programs
(food pantries, soup kitchens, PDOs & wide variety of non-profits that distribute food)

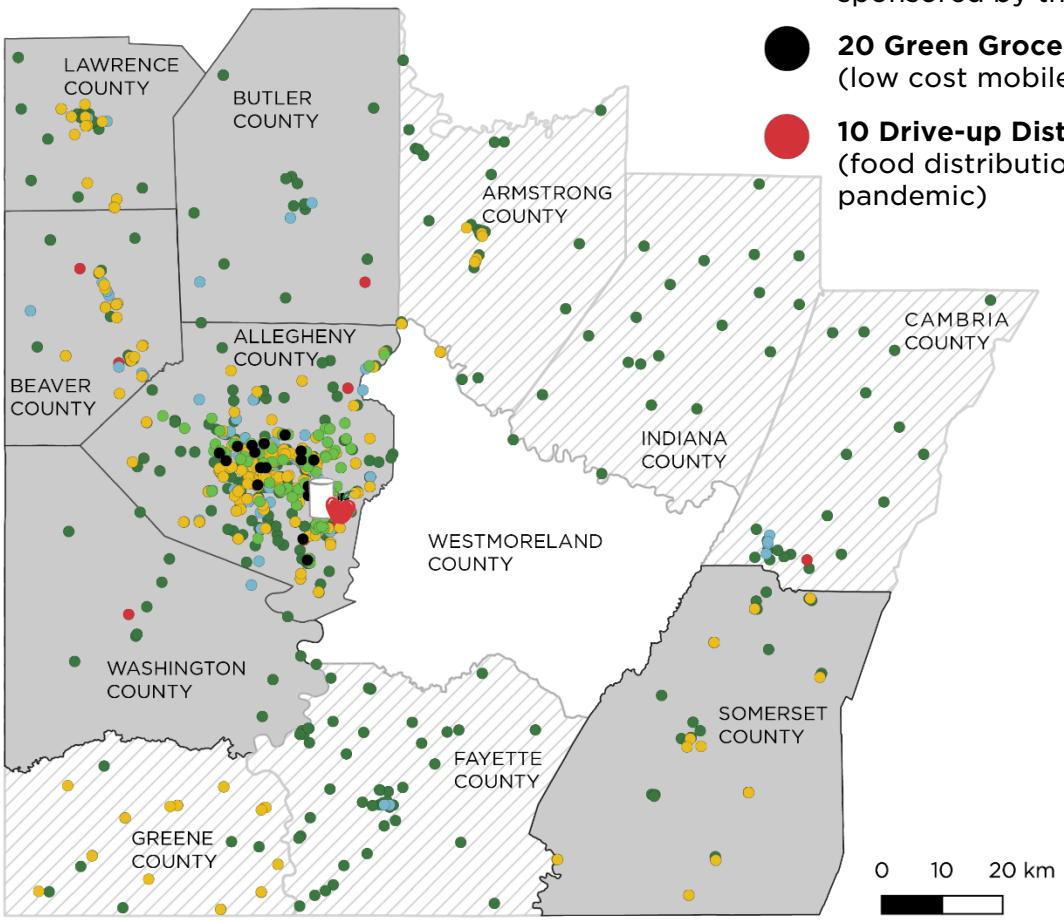
229 Senior Boxes Locations
(non-member & member agency sites distributing pre-packed senior boxes)

136 Community-Based Distribution Sites
(new food distribution sites in response to COVID-19 pandemic)

82 Child Nutrition Sites
(After-School and Summer Food Program sites sponsored by the Food Bank)

20 Green Grocer Market Sites
(low cost mobile market)

10 Drive-up Distributions
(food distribution in response to COVID-19 pandemic)



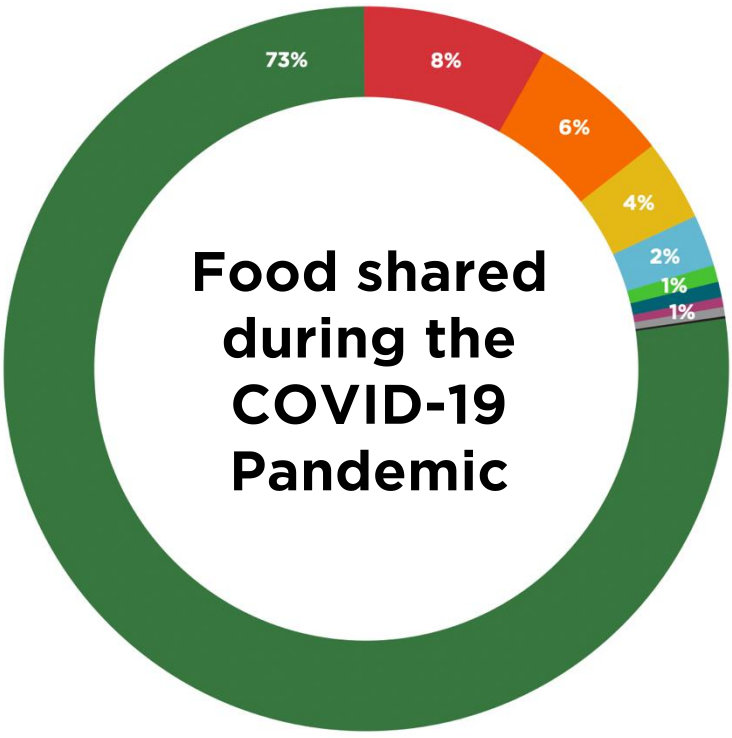
Millions of pounds of food shared

During the pandemic, our network shared more than 55 million pounds of food – 17 million more pounds than the previous year. The main channels for food distribution are reflected in the ring below. It shows that most of the food – more than 40 million pounds of food – was shared through our network of 600 partners and programs.

But the volume of food shared through these channels tells only part of the story.

What is harder to see are the many smaller volume programs that are critical to serving people who might otherwise be unable to meet their food and nutrition needs. Not only is this about getting food to people where they are, it's also about providing healthy (and often high cost) foods like fresh fruits and vegetables, lean meats and dairy that otherwise may be hard to access. Here are a few examples of Food Bank programs that address this need:

- **Doorstep Delivery** provides a food delivery service to seniors who are homebound in Allegheny, Beaver and Butler counties.
- **Community-based distribution sites** give people access to food at the same time as they access other community services, like at doctors' offices and at a wide variety of social service organizations.
- **Child Nutrition Programs** are Afterschool and Summer Youth Cafe program sites sponsored by the Food Bank that provide meals for kids when school is not in session.
- **Senior Boxes** provide extra help by making boxes of shelf-stable foods available monthly to seniors.
- **SNAP** (Food Stamps) application assistance provides access to the help needed to supplement the cost of grocery shopping each month.
- **Green Grocer** is a low cost mobile market that goes to communities where access to fresh fruits and vegetables is more difficult.



**New program in response to the COVID-19 pandemic*

LEGEND:

Partners & Programs (food pantries, soup kitchens, PDOs and wide variety of non-profits that distribute food)

Drive-up Distributions* (food distribution in response to COVID-19 pandemic)

SNAP Applications (applications submitted directly by the Food Bank and select partners)

Senior Boxes Program (non-member and member agency sites distributing pre-packed senior boxes)

Community-Based Distribution Sites* (new food distribution sites in response to COVID-19 pandemic)

Child Nutrition Programs (After-School and Summer Youth Cafe sites sponsored by the Food Bank)

Doorstep Delivery* (provides a food delivery service to homebound seniors in Allegheny, Beaver and Butler counties)

Emergency Food (Compassion Corner located at the Food Bank warehouse)

Backpack Program (weekend meals and snacks for children)

Green Grocer Market (low cost mobile market)

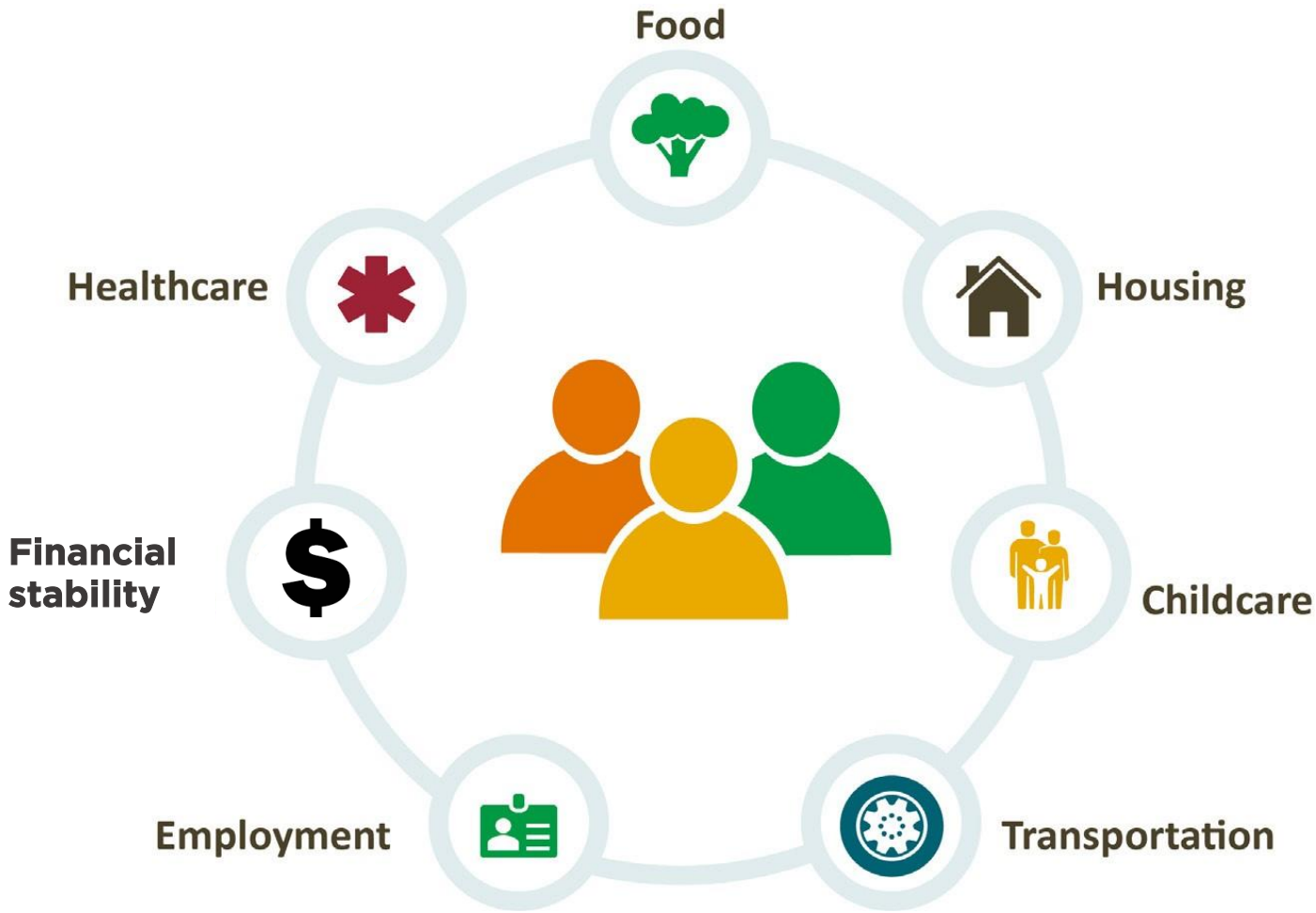
The Food Bank is part of a system of diverse supports

We know how interconnected food security is with housing, employment, healthcare and other basic needs seen on the graphic below. Over the past year, disparities between those who have access to these resources in our society and those who do not have become even more clear.

The Food Bank is one part of a rich system of supports available to help stabilize people's lives. We are working hard to better coordinate our efforts with these other supports to help address the needs of the whole person, and not treat each issue in isolation.

For example, we are working on referring people to organizations for needs beyond food, and taking referrals from organizations in other life stabilizing sectors when they find food insecurity as a need. Distributing food through non-traditional partners like doctors' offices or social service organizations is another example.

As we think about the future of the Food Bank through this engagement process, we're reflecting on the work we have done to provide food to the growing lines of people facing food insecurity. We're also thinking about how we can shorten the lines so that more people are able to lead healthy, productive lives and not need the support the Food Bank provides.



Share your thoughts

We have questions for those who use Food Bank services, partners, members, staff, volunteers, donors, those who could potentially use our services or partner with us in the future, the general public and others:

1. What **do you like** about your experience with the Food Bank? What's working well?
2. What **don't you like** about your experience with the Food Bank? What's not working well?
3. What **suggestions** do you have to help strengthen or improve the Food Bank's operations and services?
4. What's your **vision for the future** of the Food Bank?
5. How can the Food Bank do a better job of **connecting with people that could benefit from its services** that it doesn't currently reach?
6. How can the Food Bank do a better job of **connecting with partners** that it doesn't currently work with?

If you have any other comments or advice as we kick-off this process, please let us know. For example, who else needs to be part of this discussion?

As you answer these questions, think about your overall experience receiving food from the Food Bank and/or working with the Food Bank, including:

WHO
we serve

WHAT
we serve

WHEN
we serve

WHERE
we serve

HOW
we serve

How to participate

We aim to connect with a wide range of people and organizations through this engagement process. Please feel free to share this Discussion Guide with your networks along with the link to our website where we have a survey available **from now until June 30, 2021**.

We'll summarize and share all feedback received during Part 1 in July 2021 and will be back again in the Fall of 2021 for Part 2. In Part 2, we'll be focusing on testing ideas in response to the feedback received.

Learn more and share your thoughts online at **pittsburghfoodbank.org/feedback.** You can also participate by mail on request.

pittsburghfoodbank.org/feedback

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