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## Background

Food insecurity can be defined as “a household-level economic and social condition of limited or uncertain access to adequate food.”<sup>1</sup>

- To support those facing food insecurity, the federal government launched programs like the SNAP & WIC.

### SNAP

Provides food benefits to low-income families that are used at stores to purchase food. SNAP is administered by state and local agencies.<sup>2</sup>

### WIC

Offers supplemental foods, health care referrals, and nutrition education to low-income pregnant and recently pregnant people, infants and children up to age 5 at nutritional risk<sup>3</sup>

- These programs are often insufficient and recipients rely on additional resources from local charitable organizations to meet nutritional needs
- In 2021, **14%** of Durham County residents were food insecure.<sup>4</sup>
  - 39% Hispanic/Latinx, 15% Black, 7% White<sup>5,6</sup>

### Research Objectives

- Gain further insight into **food accessibility/food insecurity among Durham residents**
- Understand residents' use of **federal food programs (SNAP and WIC) and local resources** to uncover possible participant preferences
- Explore **capacities of organizations providing local food resources** to meet Durham residents' needs

## Methods

### Organizations Case Study

#### Comparative Case Study Design:

- 2 Durham food security organizations
- 3 distribution observations
- 6 volunteer interviews

#### Organization A:

- Monthly drive-up distribution to over 150 families
- Food sourced from regional food bank through federal program
- Religious affiliation
- Community-led

#### Organization B:

- Food-as-medicine approach; targeting nutrition insecurity
- Weekly delivery and walk-up distribution to over 200 families
- Variety of food sources: local grocery stores; local farm

### Organization B Client Survey

Group 1: Residents attending in-person walk-up table on one Saturday:  
**30 survey responses**

Group 2: Families receiving home food deliveries from Organization B over four Saturdays:  
**54 survey responses**

**84 total survey responses**  
(70 English, 14 Spanish)

## Results

**74%** of respondents are **food insecure**

**45%** of respondents have **very low food security**

**26%** of walk-up respondents receive SNAP benefits compared to **51%** of delivery respondents

Figure 1: Reasons Why Individuals Are Not Enrolled In SNAP

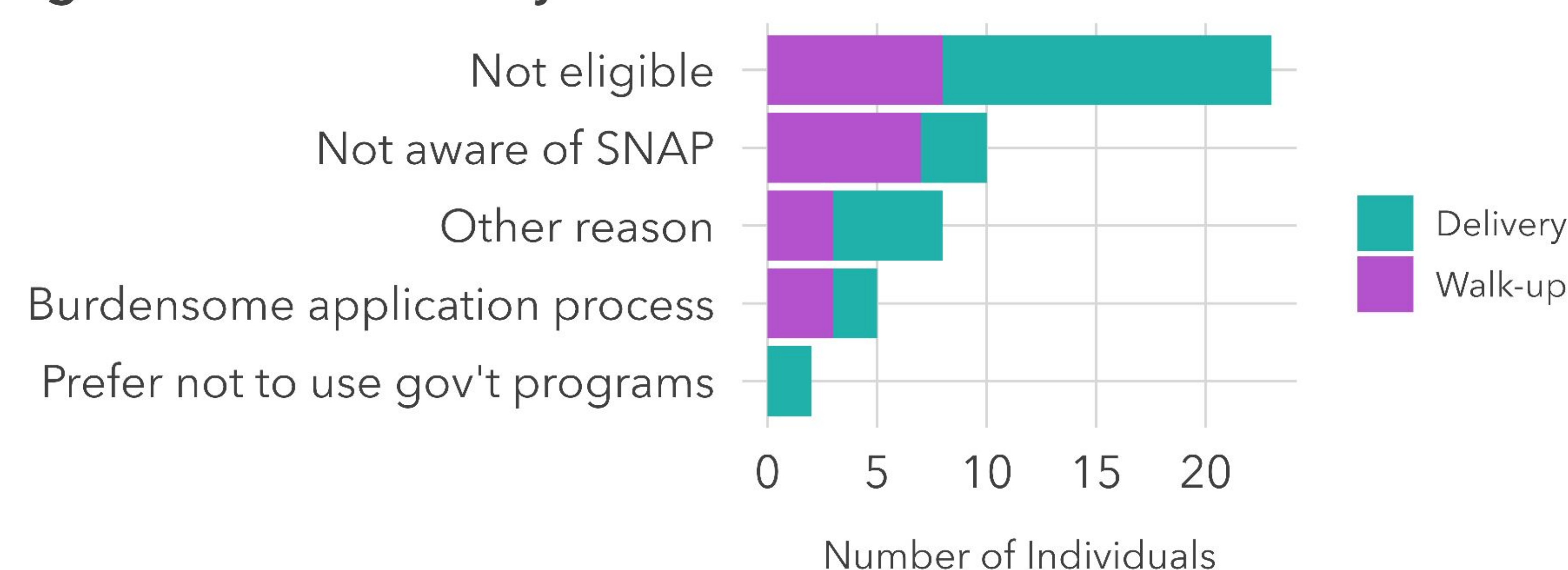





Table 1: Capacities of Charitable Organizations to Meet Client Needs

Focal Areas	Organization A	Organization B
<b>Staffing as Vital Resource</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volunteer shortage; “never have consistent volunteers”</li> <li>Less established roles for incidental volunteers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Institutionalized division of labor for both recurring (seasonal) and incidental volunteers</li> </ul>
<b>Diffusion of Operational Knowledge</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Director holds majority of operational knowledge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Operational knowledge more diffuse through volunteer leaders; still reliant on directors</li> </ul>
<b>Community Relationships</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Led by members of clientele’s community</li> <li>Strong relationships between clients and volunteers cultivated over time</li> <li>“Our clients that come are pretty much the same people... <b>I miss them when I don’t see them.</b>”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strong and recurring partnerships with related local food and health-oriented organizations</li> <li>“<b>Relationships are the linchpin</b> of a community organization... [they] keep you connected to your purpose.”</li> <li>“I look forward to seeing them.”</li> </ul>
<b>Resource Constraints</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inconsistent funding; “the occasional grant”</li> <li>“We never know how much [food] we are going to get.”</li> <li>Operating in shared space with limited room for storage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unpredictability in long-term funding sources</li> <li>Funding sources limit clientele eligibility</li> <li>Operating in shared space with limited timed access</li> </ul>
<b>Longevity Concerns</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concerns about sustainability rooted in <u>staffing</u></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concerns about sustainability rooted in <u>funding</u></li> </ul>

## Community Feedback

“I have to be here at 7am in order to get a good place in line that open at 9am... when it is cold or bad weather, there are people that do not have vehicles like I do with young children.”

“We adore the fresh foods because we are both disabled... we don't have a car and are wheelchair bound so struggle with accessing food.”

-Walk-up, SNAP recipient

-Delivery, SNAP recipient

## Recommendations

### Organizational Level

- Institutionalize volunteer structures
- Provide resources to clients for SNAP/WIC and other local resources
- Leverage community relationships to support clients' nutritional needs holistically (e.g., connect clients to resources beyond nutrition assistance)
- Partner with local food vendors to increase predictability of supply and divert food waste

### Policy Level

- Expand eligibility requirements for SNAP (income, citizenship) to bridge gaps between food insecurity and SNAP enrollment
- Increase funding and capacity building efforts to local organizations that address food insecurity in unique ways (e.g., fresh fruit, transportation)
- Reduce administrative burden involved in programs like SNAP

## Acknowledgements & References

Our team would like to thank the community members and organization representatives who shared their experiences. Scan the QR Code for more information.

