ADDRESSING HUNGER: USING MIXED METHODS TO IDENTIFY HIDDEN BARRIERS AND OPPORTUNITIES

"Tampa Bay Network to End Hunger Annual Conference"

October 22, 2015

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Family Resiliency Center | Strengthening families for life's challenges.

FAMILY RESILIENCY CENTER

- Collaborative Process
- Strengths Based
- Mixed Methods
- Research to Practice
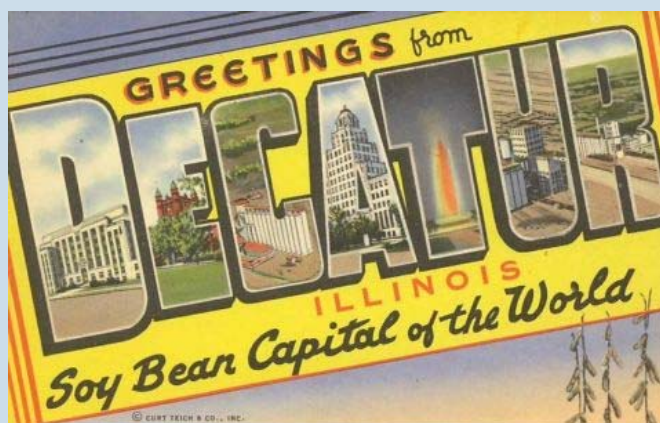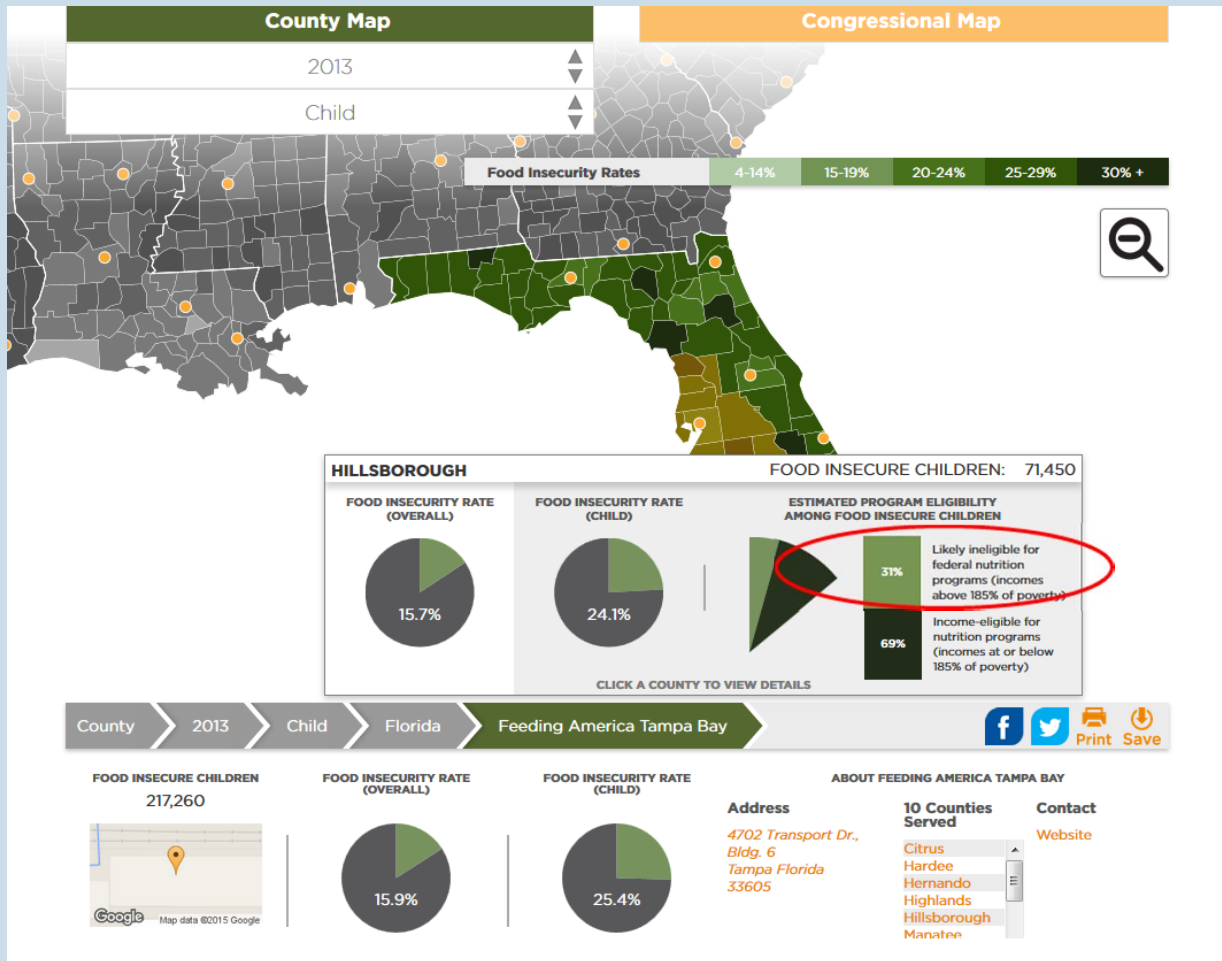- Evidence Informed Policy

Backpack Program Evaluation

Balancing Household Needs

Assessing Food Security in Decatur

Out of School Feeding Programs Evaluation

MAP THE MEALGAP

31% of Hillsborough County children above 185% of the poverty line and likely ineligible for SNAP, NSLP, etc.

SAFETY NET

Below 185% Poverty

- SNAP
- NSLP & NSBP
- CACFP
- WIC

Above 185% Poverty

- Food Pantry
- Soup Kitchen
- Weekend Feeding Programs
- School Pantries

BACKPACK PROGRAM EVALUATION

- Does providing elementary school children with a backpack of food over the weekend have an appreciable effect on school attendance?

- How is the food used?

- What accounts for food security above and beyond income?

Longitudinal Surveys of 300 families across school year

In depth interviews of 60 families

School attendance Comparison group of children eligible for program but not enrolled due to limited resources

EFFECT ON ATTENDANCE

** p < .01

BackPack

Comparison

12
10
8
6
4
2
0

Monday-Thursday Absences

Friday Absences
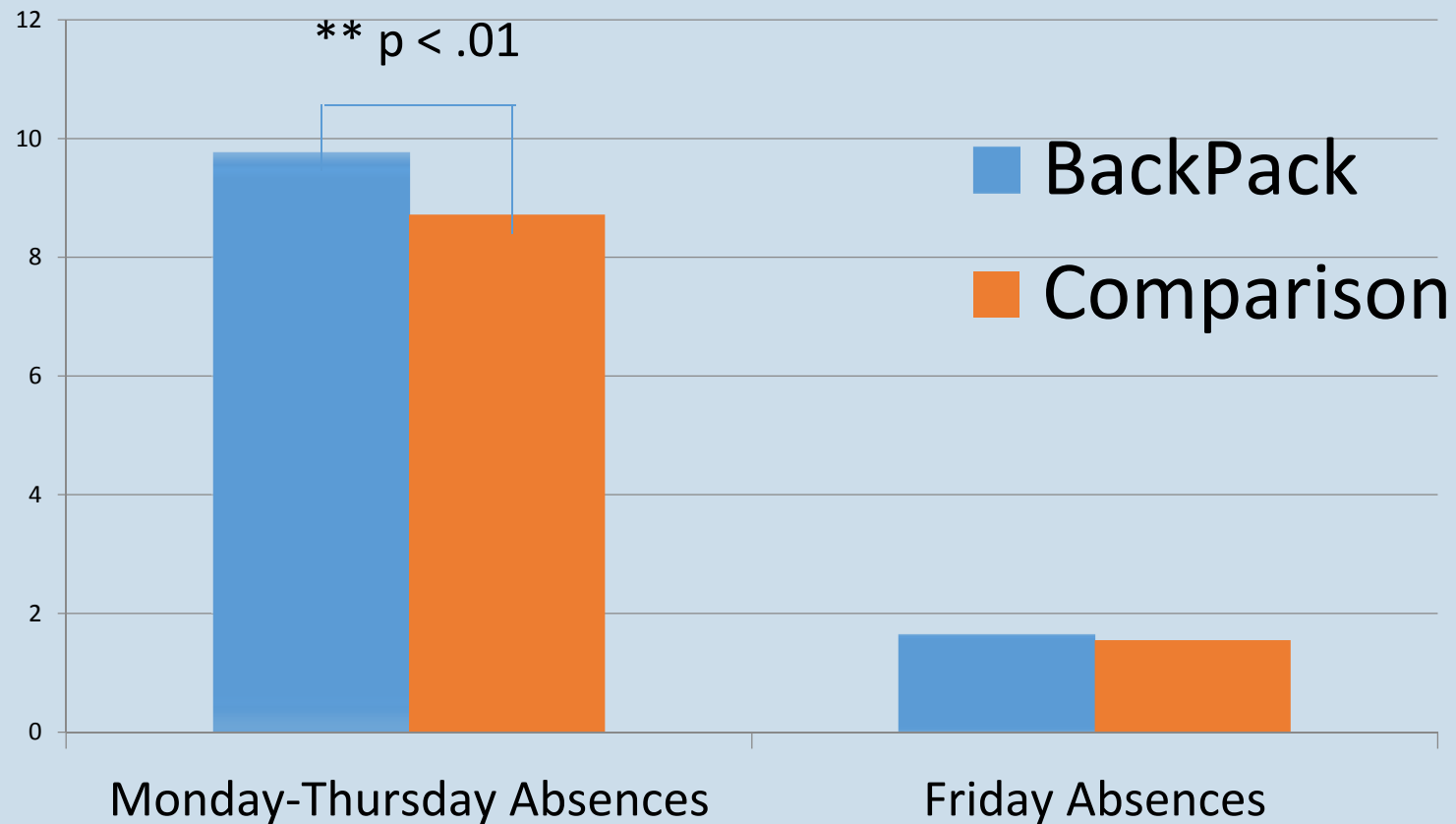
Fiese, B. H., Gundersen, C.G., Koester, B., Waxman, E. (2014) . *Weekend Feeding Program Has Appreciable Effect on School Attendance.* Manuscript submitted for publication

BACKPACK PROGRAM IS FAMILY FOOD PROGRAM
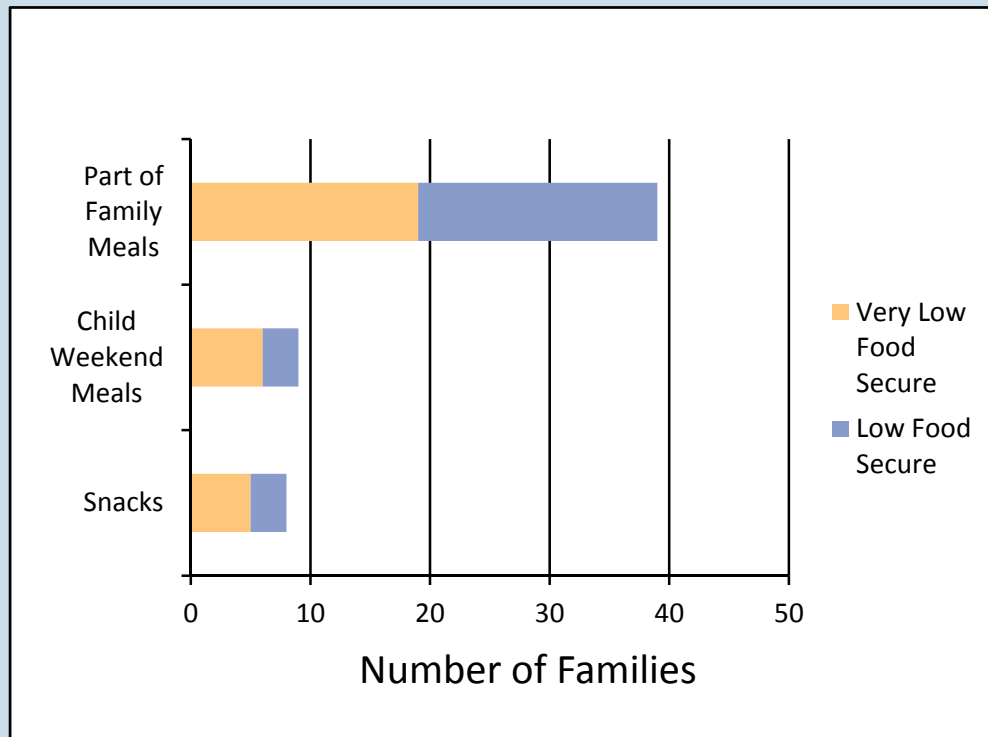
> I use it all the time [for family meals] because milk's expensive and to keep up with the milk we go through you know I wouldn't have to worry about Oh my God are we out of milk because I would um got the stash of milk you know.

> It helped out a lot; it really did. I noticed that I wasn't having to buy as much side items to go along with the meals.

UNOBSERVED FACTORS

|	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Household head is black	-0.670 (-1.439, 0.098)	-0.318 (-1.117, 0.482)	-0.933* (-1.737, -0.129)	-0.596 (-1.428, 0.237)
Household head has less than a high school degree	1.406* (0.082, 2.730)	1.117 (-0.128, 2.361)	1.062 (-0.236, 2.361)	0.947 (-0.300, 2.194)
Household head is not married	-0.031 (-0.923, 0.861)	0.282 (-0.721 1.284)	-0.047 (-1.031, 0.938)	0.245 (-0.811, 1.301)
Household head is employed	0.495 (-0.186, 1.177)	0.286 (-0.413, 0.985)	0.316 (-0.376, 1.008)	0.217 (-0.474, 0.909)
Household income ($1,000s per month)	-0.377* (-0.676, -0.079)	-0.328* (-0.637, -0.018)	-0.407* (-0.737, -0.078)	-0.346* (-0.674, -0.018)
Household size	0.082 (-0.111, 0.274)	0.039 (-0.155, 0.233)	0.101 (-0.109, 0.312)	0.058 (-0.150, 0.265)
Chaos measure		0.189** (0.098, 0.281)		0.152** (0.055, 0.248)
Mealtime planning			-0.243** (-0.375, -0.111)	-0.160* (-0.298, -0.021)
Constant	0.719 (-0.707, 2.144)	3.858** (1.655, 6.061)	4.378** (1.656, 7.100)	5.642** (2.986, 8.298)
Number of observations	508	481	484	478

Environmental chaos linked to poor outcomes in low income neighborhoods.

You can't hear yourself think in our home.

We are usually able to stay on top of things. (reverse scored

Family Resiliency Center
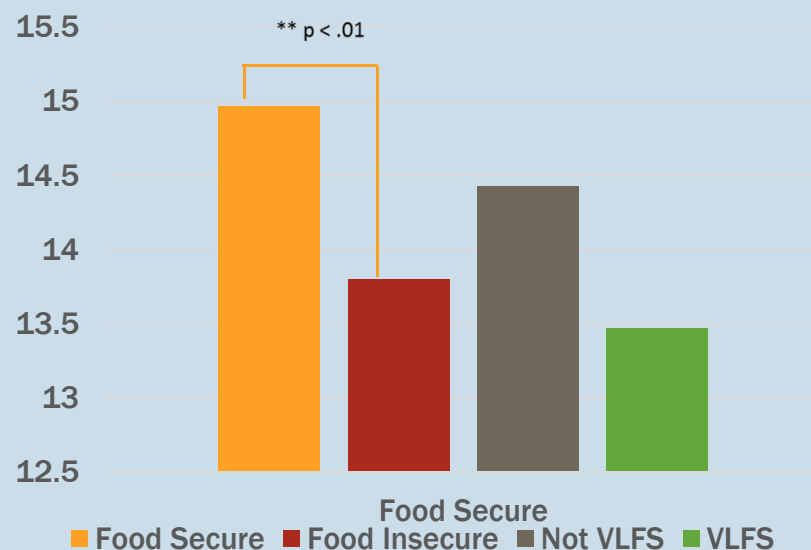
Mealtime Planning

Family Chaos
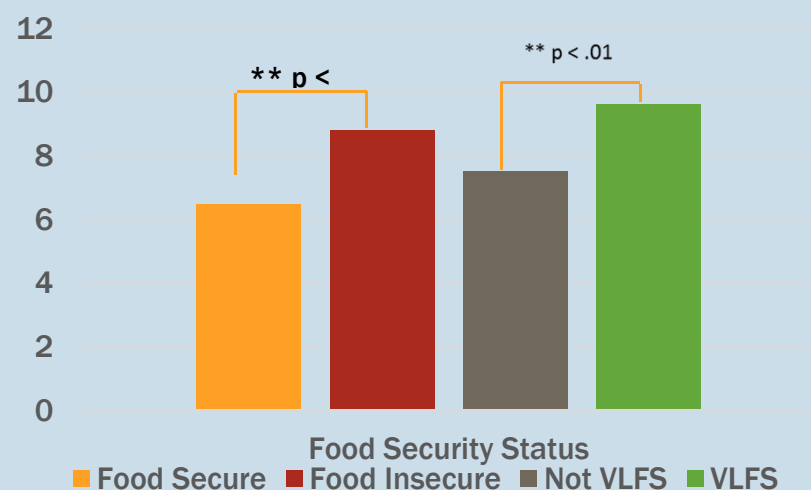
Fiese, B.H., Gundersen, C., Koester, B., Jones, B. (2015)l. Family Chaos and Mealtime Planning is Associated with Food Security in Low Income Households. *Under review.*

BALANCING HOUSEHOLD NEEDS

Food Pantry Client Interview:
Participants over age 18, head of a household, and had at least one child under age of 18

44 % large urban city

46% mid-sized "micro-urban" community

Fiese, B.H., Koester, B., Waxman, E. (2014). Balancing Household Needs: The Non-food Needs of Food Pantry Clients and Their Implications for Program Planning. *Journal of Family Economic Issues.*

Asked about economic pressures and how allocate resources

Identify household products used regularly

Rank essential household items

Strategies used when resources low

Consequences of going without

- *"I don't want to be smelling. Toothbrush, I've got to brush my teeth so I can have fresh breath"*

- *"I have a problem smelling. I don't like to do that. I'm keeping those to the end, girl"*

- *"Diapers are an absolute must"*

Toilet Paper

Personal Hygiene

Oral Healthcare

- *"We can only do laundry once a month"*

- *"And to do dishes, you'll have to sit there and use shampoo sometimes."*

- *"When I have the money to get it, I'll buy extra."*

COPING STRATEGIES

Stretching

Substitution

Stockpiling

Borrowing

- *"…overwhelmed and then I get depressed. I start crying and sometimes I have anxiety attacks because I'm so nervous and stuff."*

- *"and people knowing – people knowing that we don't have things – like having to bum them, that's degrading"*

- *"Sometimes people can turn you in for things like that"*

Stress and Worry

Shame

Engaging in Illegal Behaviors/

ASSESSING FOOD INSECURITY IN DECATUR, IL
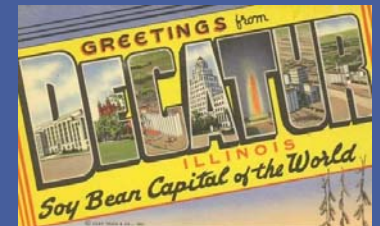
STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Agency Type	Relation to Food Insecurity
Food Pantry/Soup Kitchen	Direct client support
Non-Profit Agencies	Provide non-food support (e.g. clothing, shelter)
Education	Work directly with children or in job training
Healthcare Organizations	Major employers, administer federal support programs (e.g. WIC)
Philanthropic Organizations	Provide funding for CIB/food drives
Employers	

Topic	Core Constructs
Background Questions	Priority of Addressing Hunger for Organization
Trends in Need	Perceived Trend in Food Needs
Access to Food	Barriers to Accessing Food
Who is in Need	Trends in Who Seeks Food
Coordinating Efforts	Major Players and Coordination of Charity Food Services
Additional Services	Services in Addition to Food that Clients May Need
Forecasting Future	Challenges and Opportunities

Increasing need in the community

Need for central location for shared programming

Need to increase access to healthy food

"So I would say it's the working population that perhaps could use the assistance but just can't get to us, and I don't know"

WHO IS NOT BEING SERVED?

Elderly

Those with transportation challenges

Mentally Ill population

Hispanic

Single mothers with young children

Working poor

"and then you have now the people who have never had to do that before, who are seeking help"

"well-dressed, well-educated having to ask for the first time"

"it's maybe more drifting up into the middle class more than it ever used to"

"a lot of seniors"

CHANGES IN CLIENTELE

First time pantry users

Middle class

Seniors

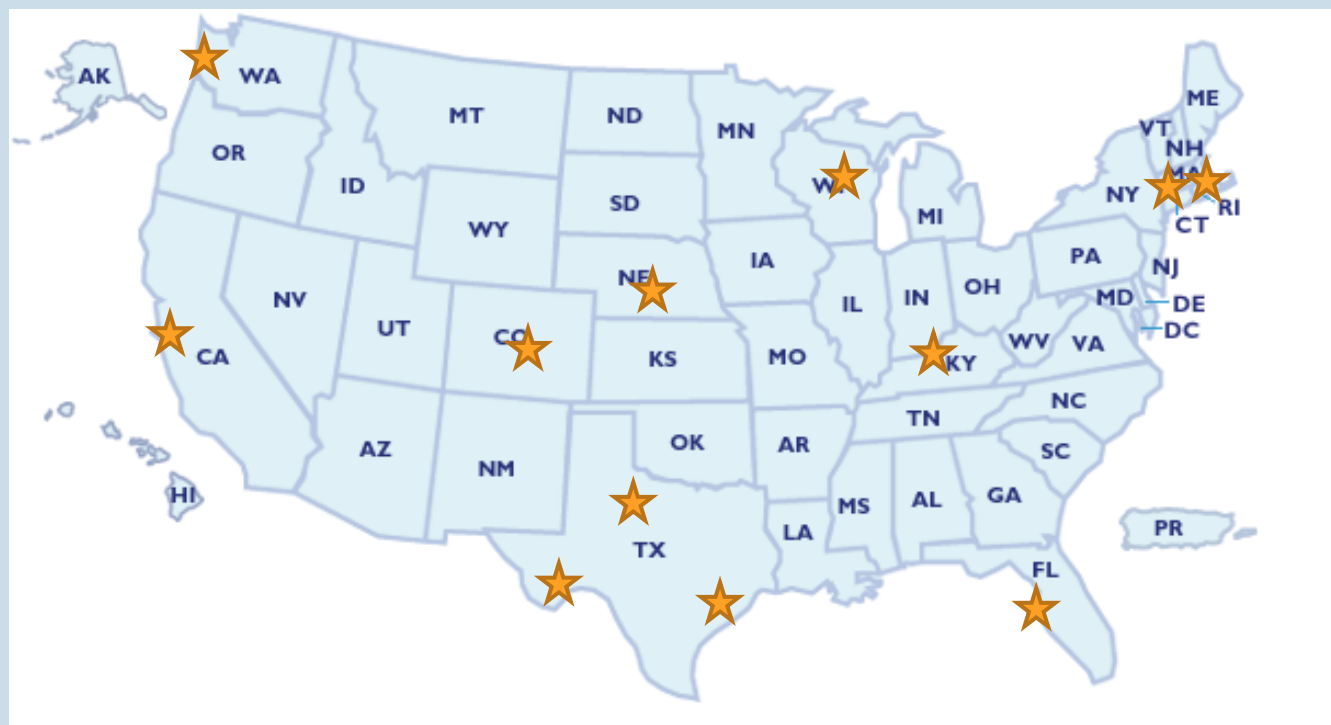**Young men**

OUT OF SCHOOL FEEDING PROGRAM EVALUATION

Summer Food Service Program

CACFP At-risk Afterschool

YMCA of the USA

National League of Cities

Texas Hunger Initiative

- **Grantee Interviews**
- **Sponsors**
  - **Administrative Data**
  - **Interview Key Sponsor Staff**
  - **SFSP Site Coordinator Survey**
  - **CACFP Site Coordinator Survey**
  - **Site Visits**
- **GIS Mapping Census Tract FI for Sponsor Service Area**

PROGRAM EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

Social Processes
- Norms
- Relationships
- Participation in Activities

Resources
- Human
- Physical
- Economic
- Temporal

Organization of Resources
- Social Organization
- Physical Organization
- Economic Organization
- Temporal Organization

Program Quality Implementation

1. Capacity Assessment and Buy-in
2. Capacity Building and Team Evaluations
3. Technical Assistance and Supervision
4. Future planning and needs assessment

Tseng & Seidman 2007

HIDDEN BARRIERS

TRANSPORTATION & LOGISTICS

- *"Just jumping through hoops to get to food pantries because I didn't have a vehicle at the time." (parent, BPP)*

- *"how do you get it home? It's a giant basket. If you don't have a car, you've got to cart that on the bus with your baby and a toddler. It's not going to be easy" (pantry client)*

- *And then you got kids even if they're in a mobile home park, if mom and dad says, "You don't leave this house while we're gone at work." Then they are stuck in the house. They can't come over and get something to eat and then go run back to their house because mom and dad say they got to stay in the house. Even across from where they're living." (SFSP site coordinator)*

HIDDEN TRANSPORTATION BARRIER

"We're not a bus route. We worked with and tried to get us to be on the bus route"

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

- *"But I work the hours that the food pantry is open, I can't get there" (pantry client)*

- *"You can literally have a sign out front, 'Open to any and everyone,' but if they know it's a camp there, they assume it's free meals for the camp. And is it still hard for people to come and—you're almost admitting that you need that." (SFSP sponsor)*

- *"There is a lot of overlap. So, you could probably get the same service at three different places, it just depends on which one you want to use rather than one place really making a huge impact." (funder)*

- *"We're currently trying to expand [for after school]. Again it's been kind of difficult because teachers aren't even back yet." (CACFP sponsor)*

OTHER BARRIERS

- Shame and Stigma
- Burden of Care (young children, disability)
  - Reduced mobility
  - Increased expenses
  - Added strain and stress
  - Need for care in order to access services
- Chaos
  - Household instability
  - Unpredictable income
  - Inability to predict need
- Perceptions
  - Who needs services
  - Where services located

HIDDEN OPPORTUNITIES

PARTNERSHIP

- Think broadly about partnerships
- Formal and informal food assistance partnerships
- Provide support for partnerships to develop and continue
- Adopt best practices for partnerships
- Who is not at the table?

AVOIDING STIGMA

"This is just a thing we're gonna send home, you know if you're interested in it send it out." So families that we kinda had an idea, we didn't put it out like oh we've chosen you. We put out, "Hey, we're sending this home. If you're interested fill it out." It made it sound like it kinda went to a lot of people. You know, so that way, they're not feeling like they're targeting us, they're watching us. You know, this is just something that's being offered, and I could sign up for it. And that way I think parents were a little more comfortable doing it." (school personnel)

ADVOCATE - AWARENESS

- **National and State Level**
  - Protect and expand food programs
  - Streamline food assistance programs
  - Remove administrative barriers
- **Community Level**
  - Who is in need
  - What resources are available
- **Agency and Organization Level**
  - Provide training to staff on food insecurity/hunger

THANK YOU

- Funders (Christopher Family Foundation, Feeding America, Howard G. Buffett Foundation, Morgan Stanley, Walmart Foundation)
- Dr. Barbara H. Fiese, PhD & Dr. Craig Gundersen, PhD
- Graduate Students
- Undergraduate Students
- Family Resiliency Center Staff
- Food Banks
- Community Organizations
- SFSP Sponsoring Organizations
- Families and Individuals