

CLIENT IMPACT SURVEY FINDINGS

2025

Prepared by Eric Caratao, MA



nourish up
Lifting our community
through food.

CONTENTS

This report is divided into two parts, providing a summary of the findings from both the Nourish Up's November 2024-March 2025 Grocery Client Survey and the June 2025-July 2025 Meals on Wheels Program Survey conducted by Nourish Up.

Part 1: 2024-2025 Grocery Client Survey



1. Executive Summary
2. Study Overview and Methodology
3. Survey Findings

Part 2: 2024-2025 Meals on Wheels Program Survey



1. Executive Summary
2. Study Overview and Methodology
3. Survey Findings

2024-2025

Part 1. Grocery Client Survey Findings



nourish up
Lifting our community
through food.

Prepared by Eric Caratao, MA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This first part of the report summarizes findings from the Nourish Up's 2024-2025 Grocery Client Survey conducted between November 2024 and March 2025. The survey was intended to collect data from a convenience sample of home delivery clients to better understand their needs and realities and provide feedback about the grocery-related services they receive from Nourish Up food pantries in Mecklenburg County. Respondents were asked to complete the survey voluntarily and were offered a grocery store gift card as incentive for their participation. A total of 910 home delivery clients responded to the survey; however, it should be noted that not all questions were answered by the entire sample.

Key Findings

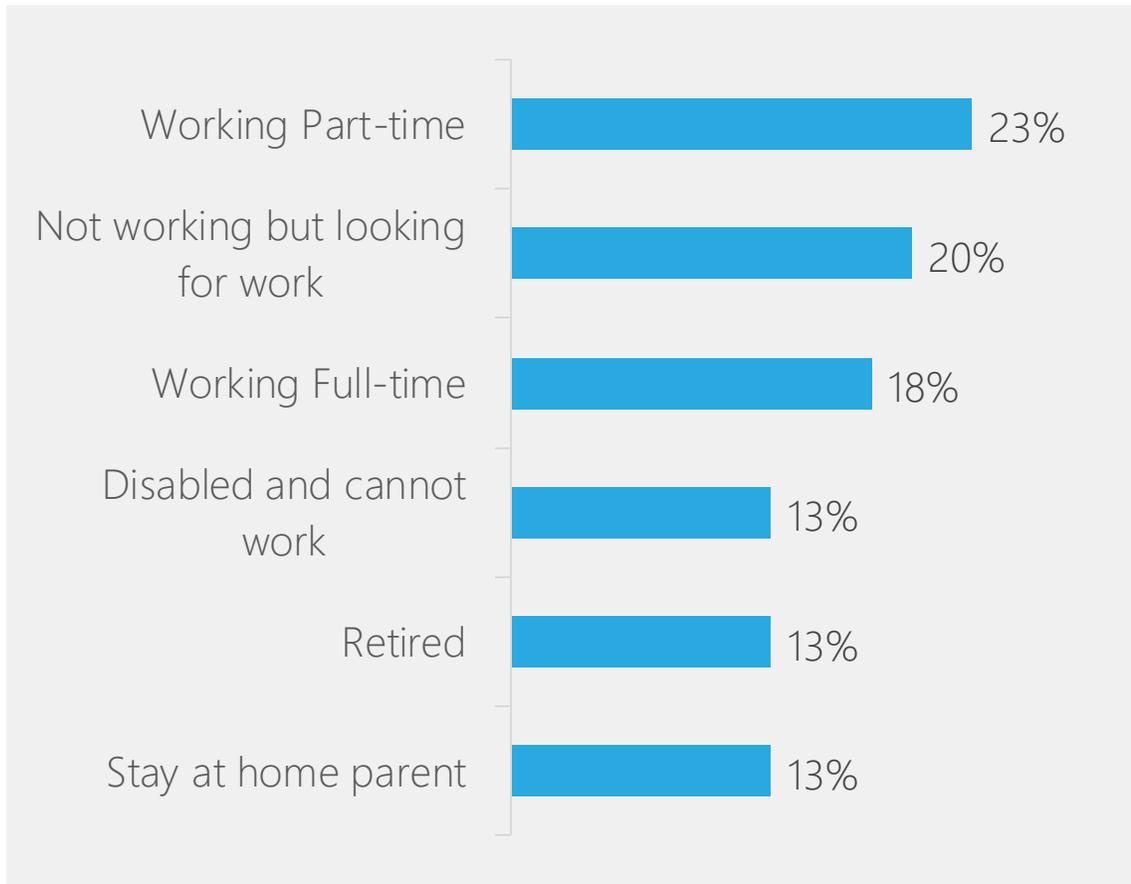
- Food insecurity remains widespread, with 91% of respondents experiencing at least some level of food shortage in the past year—and more than half reporting it happened monthly or more often.
- Nearly half of respondents (46%) rely on family or friends for additional food, and one in four (25%) turn to other organizations—highlighting the critical role of multiple support systems in meeting basic nutrition needs.
- Survey participants noted that the groceries provided by Nourish Up allow them to allocate the money they save toward essential expenses such as rent or mortgage payments (41%), electricity or gas bills (40%), and medication costs (14%).

STUDY OVERVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

This report presents the findings of the 2024-2025 Grocery Client Survey conducted by Nourish Up. The survey aimed to collect data from a convenience sample of respondents in order to gain a deeper understanding of their needs, circumstances, and perspectives regarding the services they receive. A total of 910 grocery client surveys were administered to clients while they were collecting food at Nourish Up food pantries in Mecklenburg County between November 2024 and March 2025. The data obtained through these surveys will offer valuable insights to the staff and volunteers of Nourish Up, helping them enhance their community service and better address the needs of those who are vulnerable to food insecurity.

The Grocery Client Survey was designed by Nourish Up, and respondents were invited to participate voluntarily. The survey received responses from 910 individual heads of household adults. Calculations using a sample size calculator indicated that the survey findings are subject to a margin of error of ± 4.34 , with a 95% confidence level. This margin of error would apply if the entire population served by Nourish Up participated in the survey.

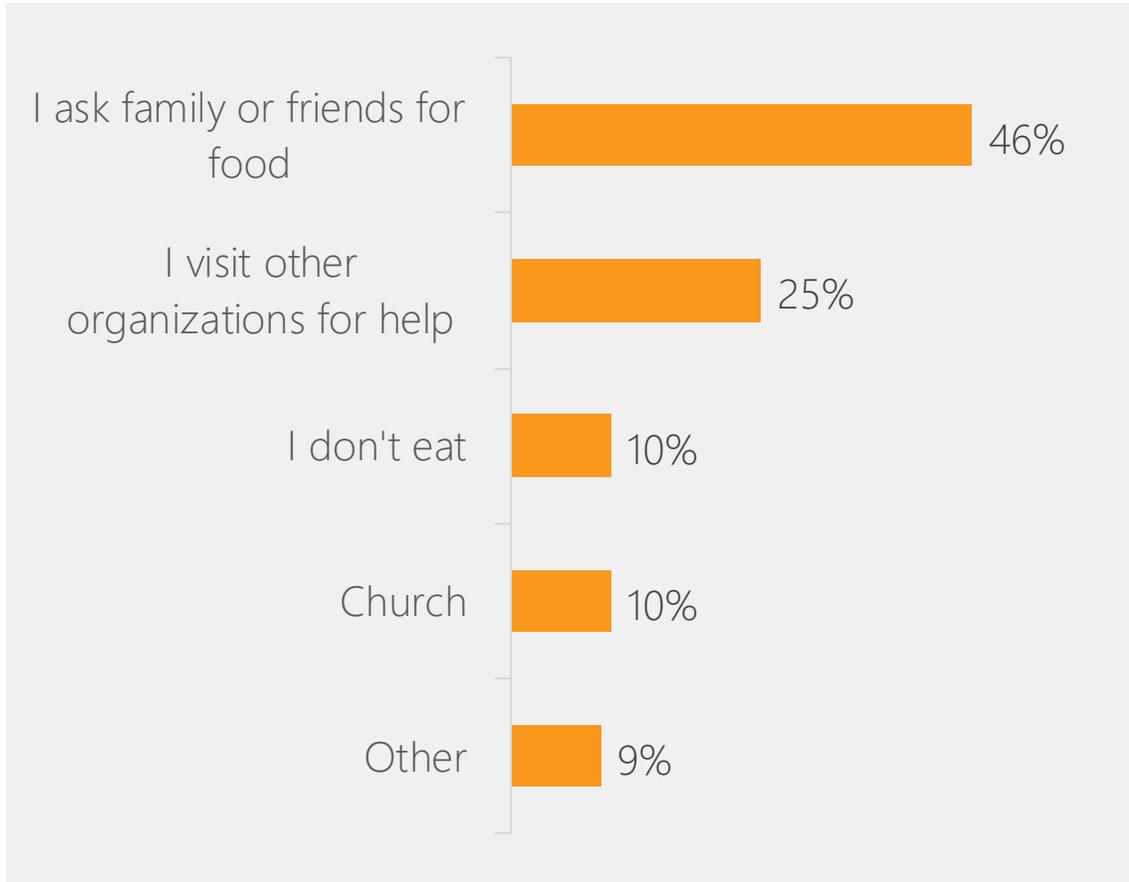
EMPLOYMENT STATUS



Question: What is the work status of the primary wage earner, head of household, or breadwinner?

Regarding their work status, 61% of clients are working or actively looking for work, with 23% (n=206) working part-time, 18% (n=167) working full-time, and 20% (n=185) are not working but actively looking for work. Smaller proportions identified as disabled and unable to work (13%, n=118), retired (13%, n=117), or stay-at-home parents (13%, n=117).

OTHER FOOD SOURCES



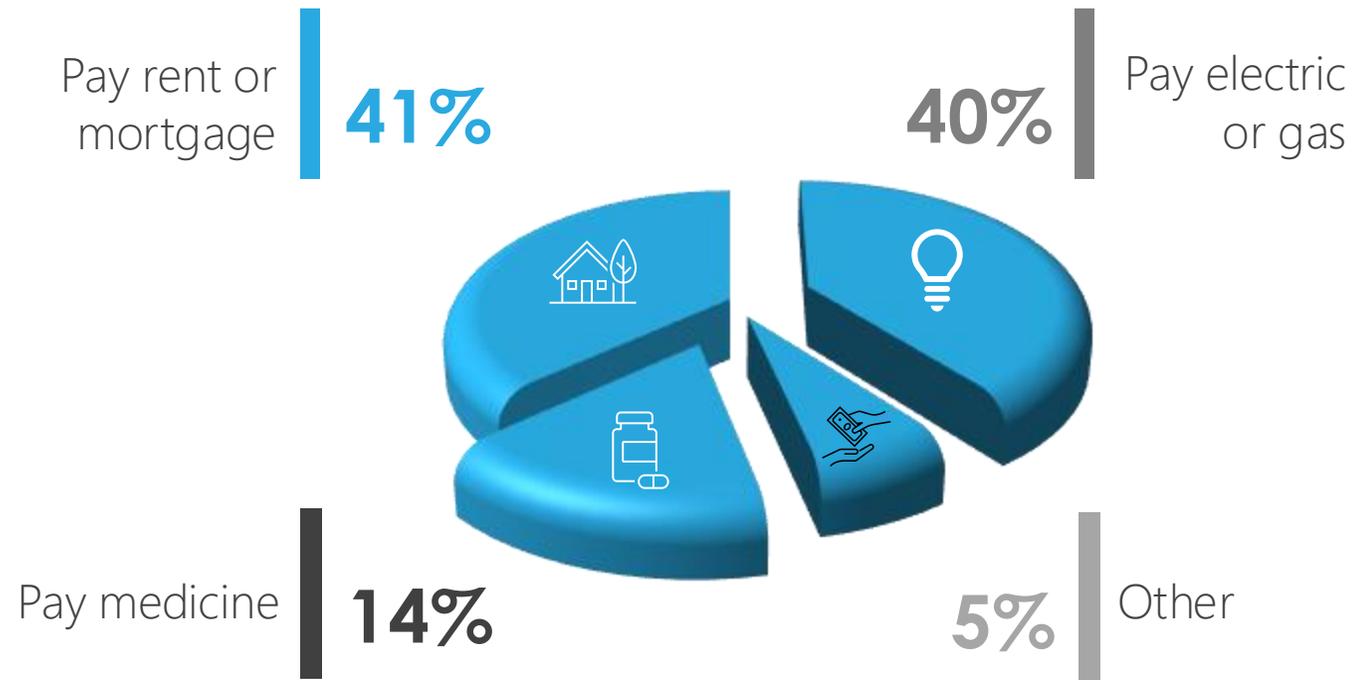
Question: What other food sources beside Nourish Up do you use when you run out of food? ?

When asked about alternative food sources in addition to Nourish Up, nearly half of respondents (46%, n=414) mentioned relying on family or friends for food. One in four (25%, n=226) said they visit other organizations for assistance. Smaller proportions mentioned going without food (10%, n=91), seeking help from a church (10%, n=91), or relying on other means such as purchasing additional groceries or using savings (9%, n=81).

In response to a follow-up question about the organizations they seek help from, the most common choice was The Bulb (12%, n=14), followed by unspecified food banks (10%, n=12), and Angels and Sparrows Soup Kitchen (6%, n=7).

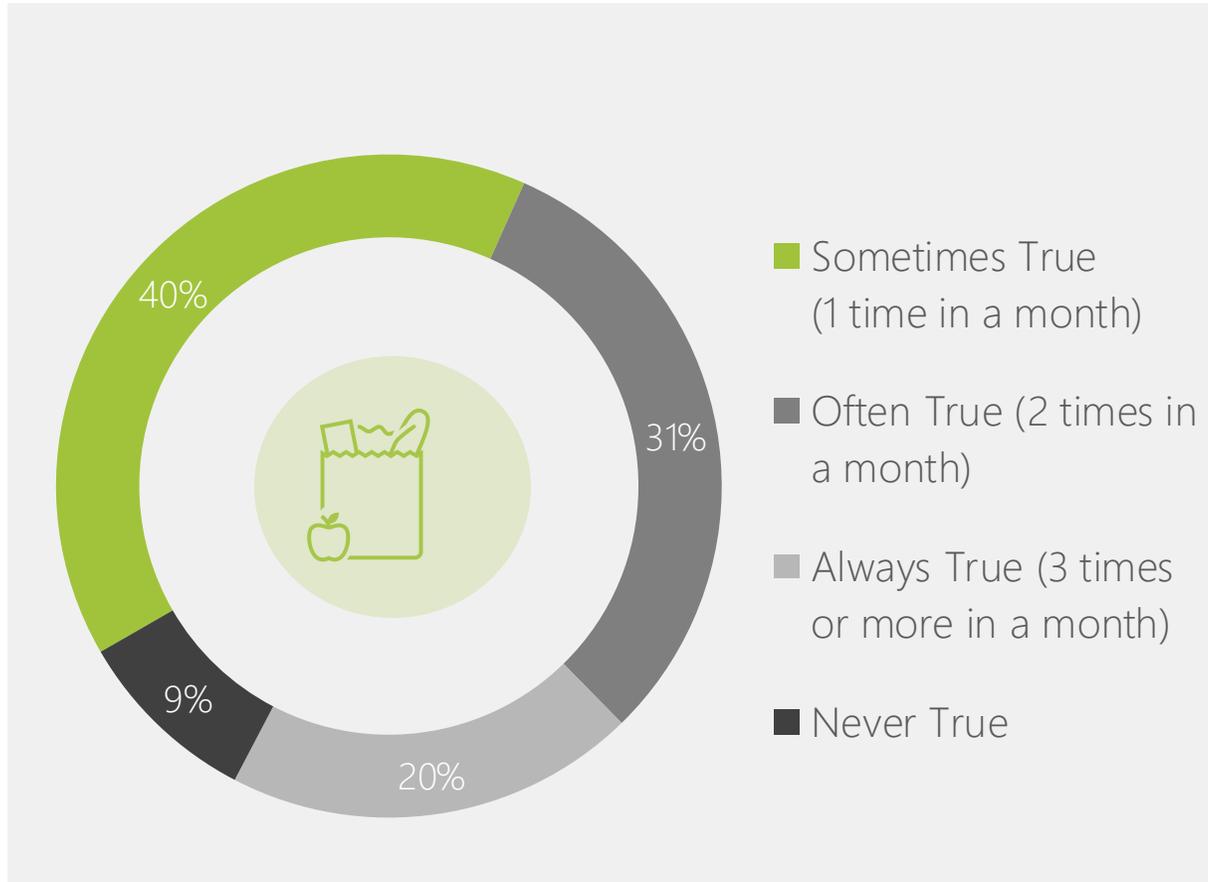
IMPACT OF RECEIVING GROCERIES

When asked to describe the ways in which they benefit from receiving groceries from Nourish Up, 41% of respondents (n=363) mentioned using the money saved to assist with paying their rent or mortgage, while 40% (n=3555) would pay electric or gas bill. Additionally, 14% (n=124) said they'd utilize the saved money for medication costs. A smaller percentage (5%, n=47) provided other responses, including options like "all of the above," purchasing more food, personal savings, and covering transportation expenses.



Question: Because you received groceries today, which of the following best describes you? (I will use the money saved to help...)

FOOD SECURITY

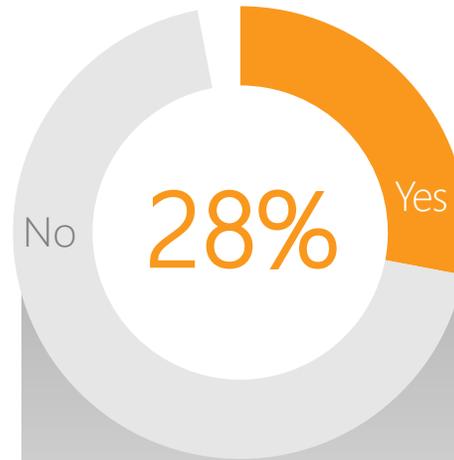


Question: Within the past 12 months, the food we bought just didn't last and we didn't have money to get more. This statement is....

Survey respondents were questioned about the accuracy of the statement: "Within the past 12 months, the food we bought just didn't last, and we didn't have the money to get more." Two in five respondents (40%, n=361) said sometimes true (about once a month), while nearly one-third (31%, n=285) reported it was often true (two times per month). One in five (20%, n=178) indicated it was always true (three or more times per month), and a small share (9%, n=83) stated that this statement was never true for them.

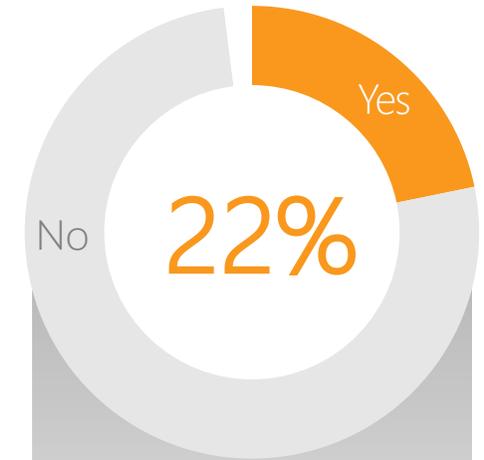
FOOD ASSISTANCE BENEFITS

Food Stamps, SNAP
or EBT Benefits Recipient



Do you currently
receive Food Stamps,
SNAP or EBT
Benefits?

Assistance to SNAP/
FST Application



Do you need
assistance being
connected to a
SNAP/FST
application?

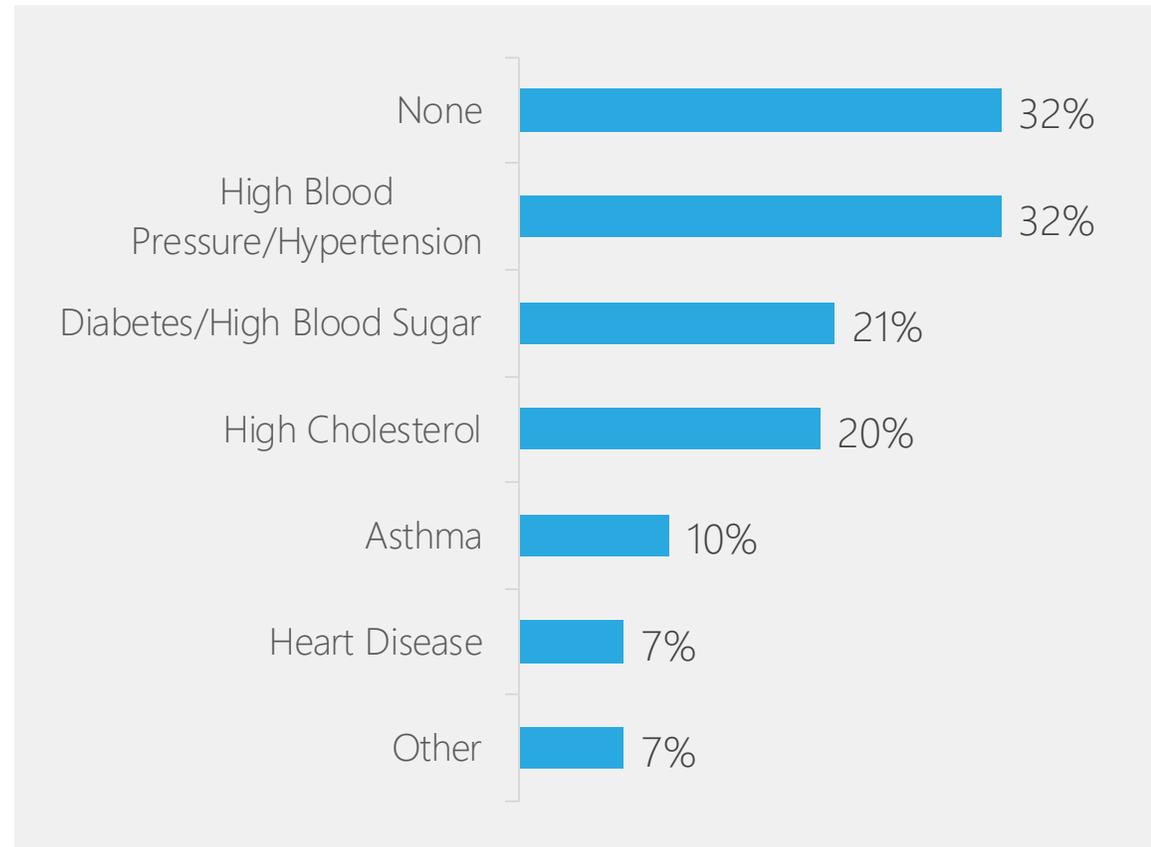
Survey participants were inquired about their current receipt of food assistance benefits. Notably, more than a quarter (28%, n=253) confirmed that they are currently receiving such benefits. A small percentage (3%, n=28) has a pending application.

A subsequent query was directed at those who were not presently receiving benefits, regarding their need for assistance with eligibility or application. It was revealed that more than one in five respondents (22%, n=142) expressed a desire for such assistance.* A small share (2%, n=12) indicated they have a pending application.

*Nourish Up has followed up with all people requesting assistance.

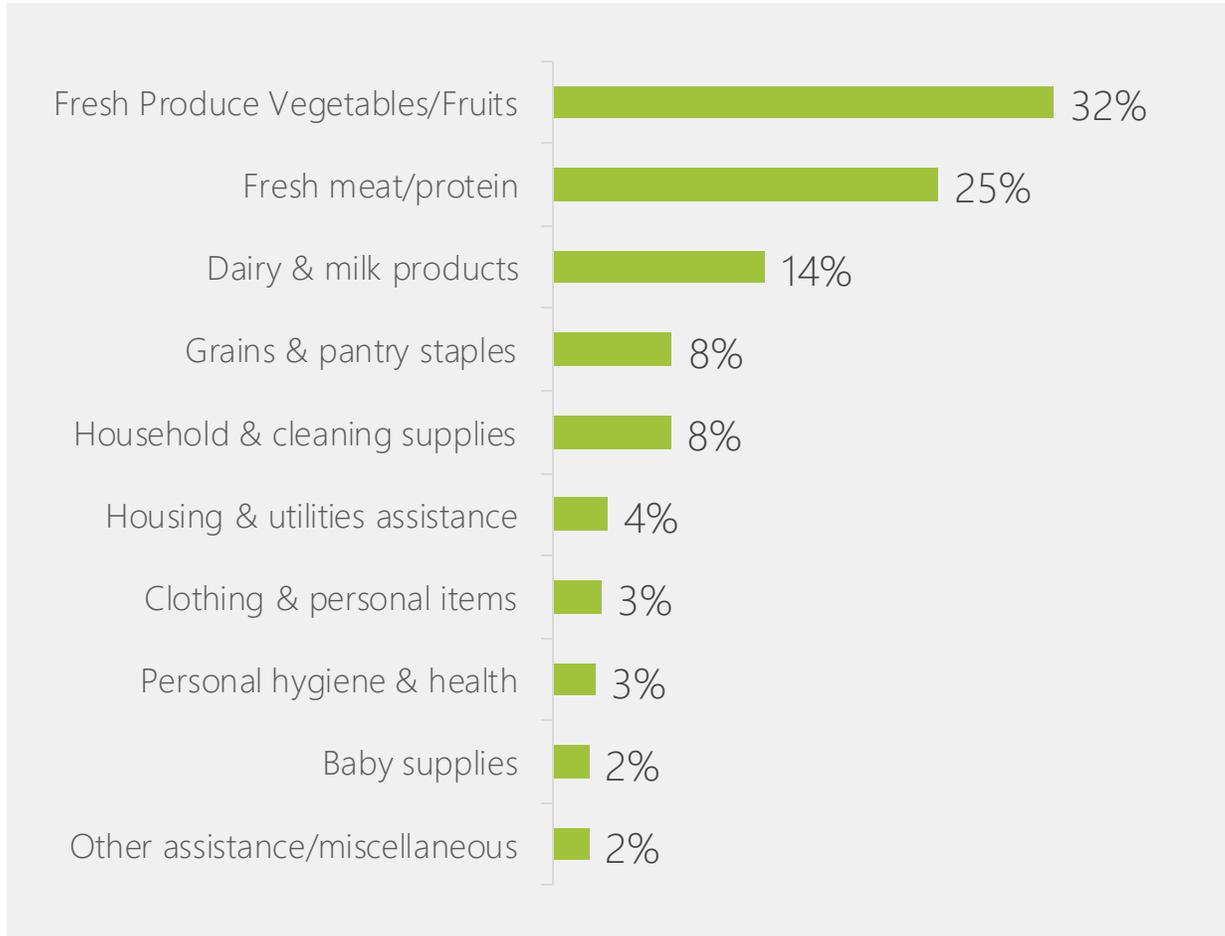
CHRONIC DISEASE CONDITIONS

Respondents were asked about their history of chronic disease diagnoses. Nearly one-third (32%, n=291) reported not having any chronic conditions. Among those with at least one condition, the most common was high blood pressure or hypertension (32%, n=287), followed by diabetes or high blood sugar (21%, n=193) and high cholesterol (20%, n=184). Smaller proportions reported having asthma (10%, n=91) or heart disease (7%, n=63). A minority (7%, n=62) cited other conditions, such as cancer, lupus, bone disease, or sleep apnea.



Question: Have you ever been told by your healthcare provider that you have one of these chronic disease conditions? (Please check all that apply.)

DESIRED FOODS OR RESOURCES

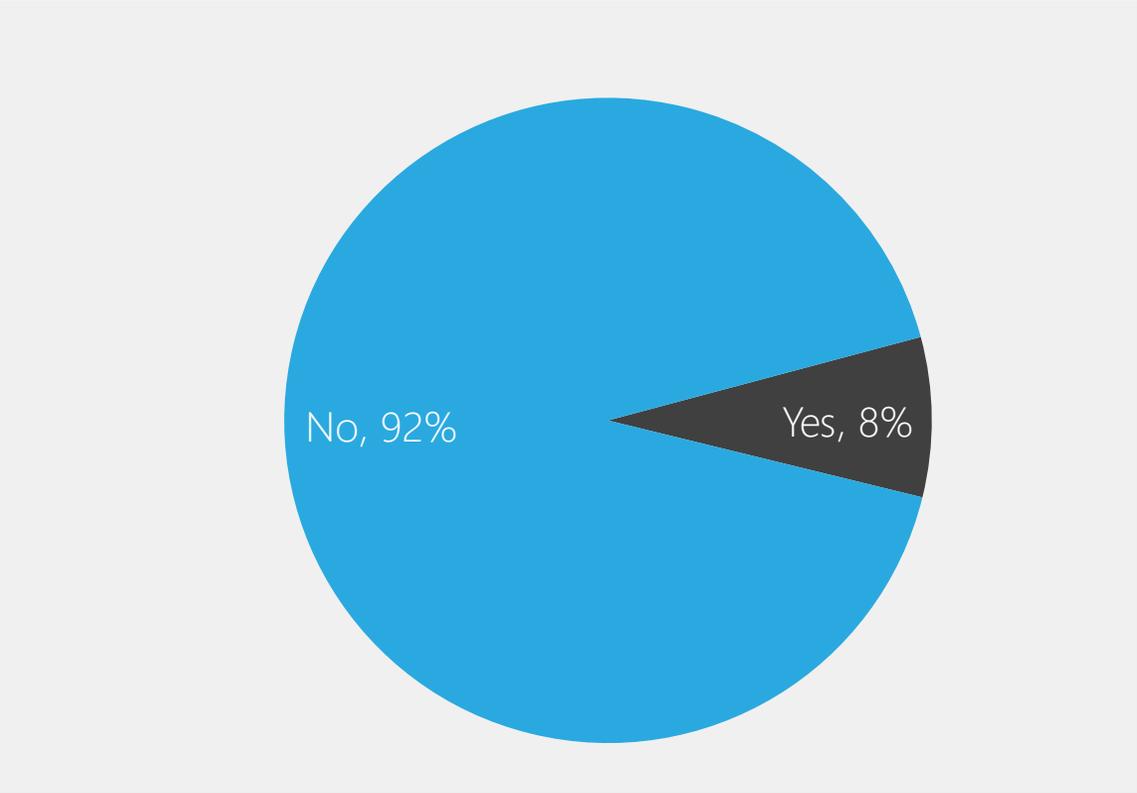


Question: What other food or resources would you like to have available at Nourish Up?

Respondents had the opportunity to share their preferences for foods and resources they'd like to see available at Nourish Up. Of those who provided feedback, the most common requests centered around fresh fruits and vegetables (32%, n=244) and fresh meat and protein sources (25%, n=187) such as chicken, fish, and eggs. Other frequently mentioned items included dairy and milk products (14%, n=103) and grains or pantry staples (8%, n=58).

Beyond food, respondents also emphasized the need for household and cleaning supplies (8%, n=57), housing and utility assistance (4%, n=26), and clothing or personal items (3%, n=23). A smaller proportion mentioned needs related to personal hygiene and health products (3%, n=20), baby supplies (2%, n=17), and other assistance (2%, n=17) such as pet food, education, or financial help.

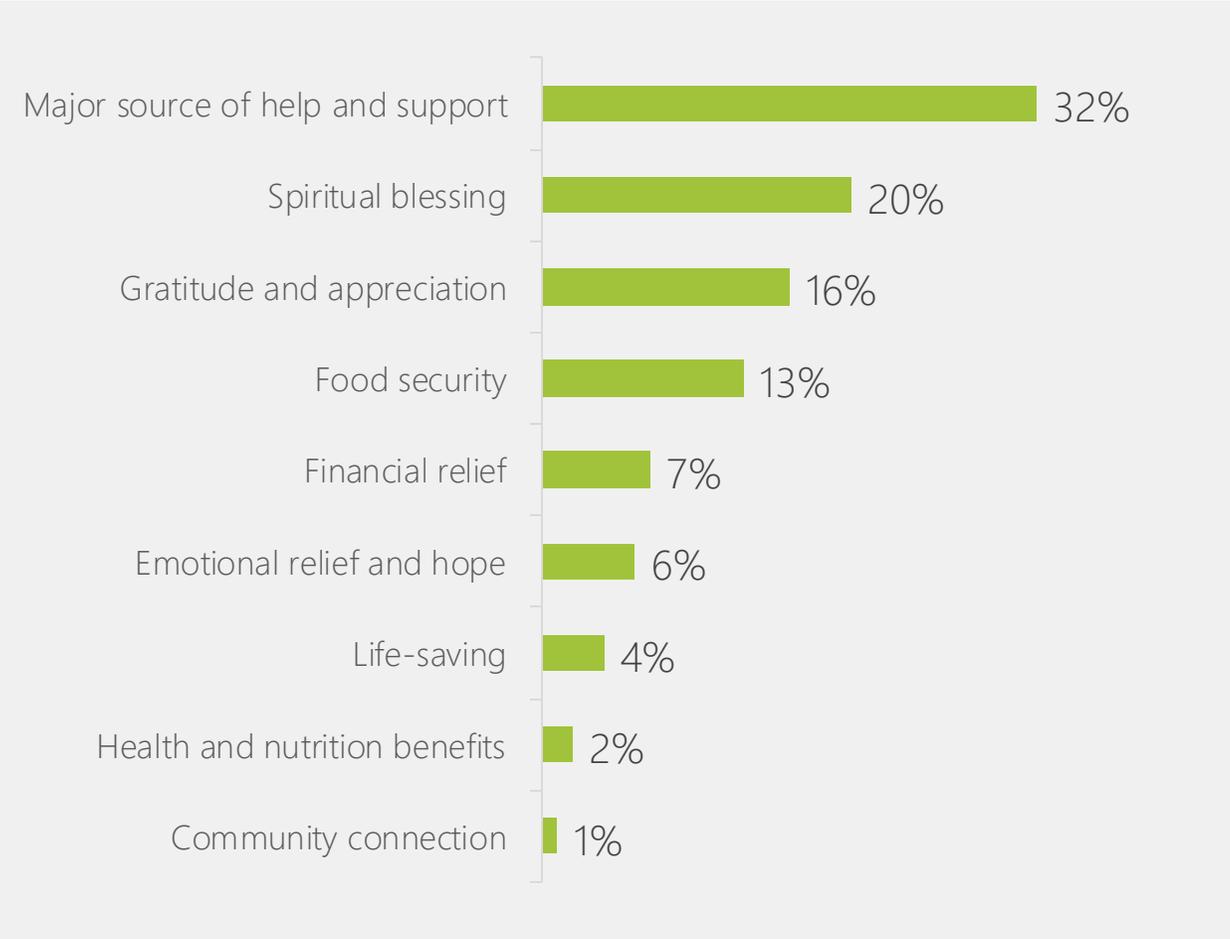
BARRIERS TO GETTING A REFERRAL



Question: *Were there barriers to getting a referral to visit today?*

When asked whether they encountered any barriers in obtaining a referral for their visit, a large majority of respondents (92%, n=835) reported that they did not experience any obstacles. A small proportion (8%, n=73) indicated that they did face challenges. The most common barriers included difficulty reaching or receiving timely responses from doctor's offices, caseworkers, or social workers responsible for submitting referrals; limited awareness or understanding of how to obtain a referral; and transportation challenges that made it hard to visit providers or referral sites. A few also noted technical or administrative issues, such as being unable to reach someone by phone or having their referral expire before use. These insights point to opportunities for improving outreach, communication, and system accessibility within the referral process.

IMPACT AND MEANING OF GROCERY ASSISTANCE



Question: What did it mean to you to receive groceries from Nourish Up?

When asked what it meant to receive groceries from Nourish Up, most respondents described the service as a major source of help and support (32%, n=152). Nearly one in five (20%, n=95) viewed it as a spiritual blessing, often expressing gratitude to God.

Expressions of gratitude and appreciation (16%, n=77) and references to food security (13%, n=63) — such as having food on the table and being able to feed their families — were also common. Smaller proportions mentioned financial relief (7%, n=34), emotional relief and hope (6%, n=27), or described the program as life-saving (4%, n=18).

A few respondents noted health and nutrition benefits (2%, n=8) and community connection through volunteer kindness (1%, n=6).

END OF
PART 1

2024-2025

Part 2. Meals on Wheels Program Survey Findings



nourish up
Lifting our community
through food.

Prepared by Eric Caratao, MA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This second part of the report summarizes findings from the Nourish Up's 2024-2025 Meals on Wheels Program Survey conducted between June and July 2025. The meals survey was intended to collect data from a convenience sample of clients to better understand their needs and realities and provide feedback about the meal-delivery services they receive from Nourish Up. Respondents were asked to complete the survey voluntarily. A total of 111 meal recipients responded to the survey; however, it should be noted that not all questions were answered by the entire sample.

Key Findings

- The Meals on Wheels program is essential for clients' daily wellbeing, with 71% relying on it as their primary food source and 54% needing home-delivered meals to remain independent; moreover, 80% feel safer due to volunteer visits and nearly all rate the program as affordable (96%).
- The vast majority of recipients (89%) do not receive food stamp assistance.
- Recipients express high satisfaction with the meals, with 78% rating their overall experience with their meal as good or very good.
- Recipients highlighted the program's essential role in their daily lives, noting its reliability for providing daily meal, the reassurance provided by volunteer visits, and its positive impact on their overall well-being and independence.

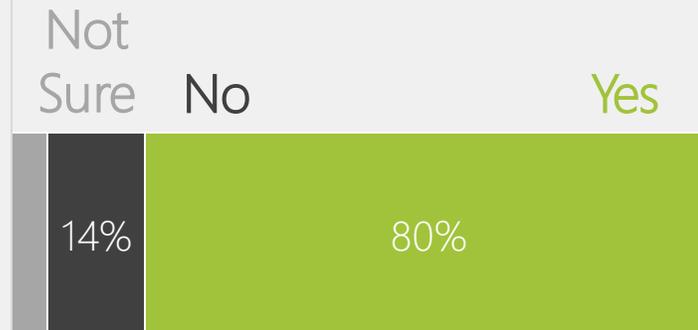
STUDY OVERVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

This report encompasses the outcomes of the 2024-2025 Meals on Wheels Program Survey, conducted by Nourish Up. The meals survey was designed to gather data from a convenience sample of clients, with the goal of obtaining a deeper understanding of their needs, circumstances, and perspectives regarding the services they receive. In total, 111 meal recipients participated in the survey while receiving meals from Nourish Up between June and July 2025. The data collected will provide valuable insights to the dedicated staff and volunteers of Nourish Up, aiding them in enhancing their community service and better addressing the needs of those who are at risk of food insecurity.

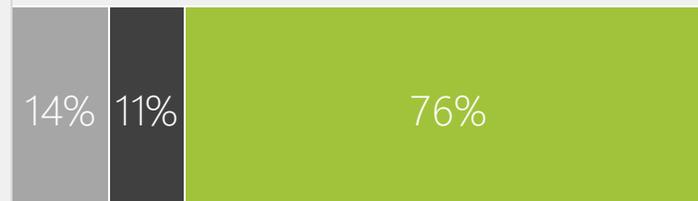
The Meals on Wheels Program Survey was designed by Nourish Up, and respondents were invited to participate voluntarily. The survey received responses from 111 recipients. Calculations using a sample size calculator indicated that the survey findings are subject to a margin of error of ± 8.05 , with a 95% confidence level. This margin of error would apply if the entire population served by Nourish Up is equal to 500 individuals and all of them participated in the survey.

NUTRITIONAL IMPACT

Do you eat more nutritious foods now as a result of receiving meals from Nourish Up?



Do you feel your overall health status has improved as a result of receiving meals from Nourish Up?



Four in five recipients (80%, n=89) reported eating more nutritious foods as a result of receiving meals from Nourish Up. In addition, about three in four recipients (76%, n=84) indicated that their overall health improved after receiving the meals.

FOOD DELIVERY SERVICE



Is the food you receive from Nourish Up your main source of food for the day?



Do you need home-delivered meals to live in your home?



Do you feel safer knowing a volunteer will be stopping by each day?



Are meals from Nourish Up affordable for you?



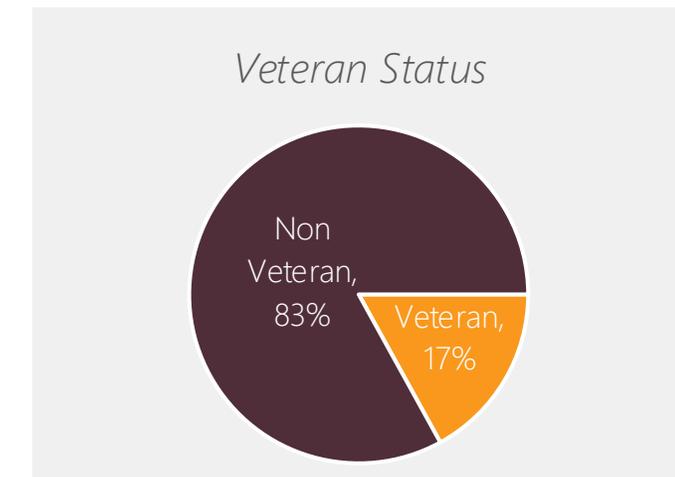
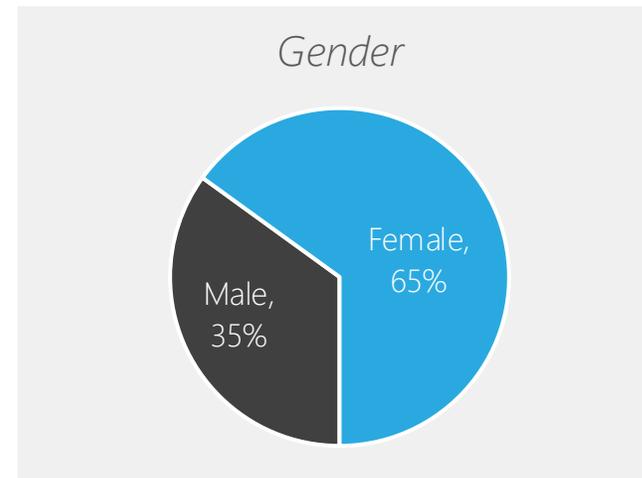
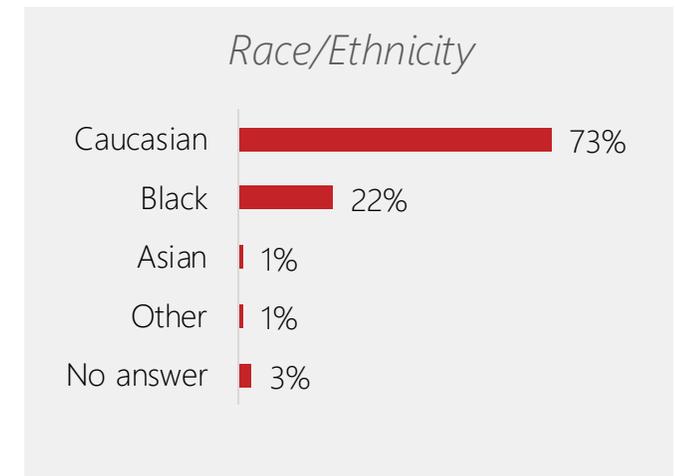
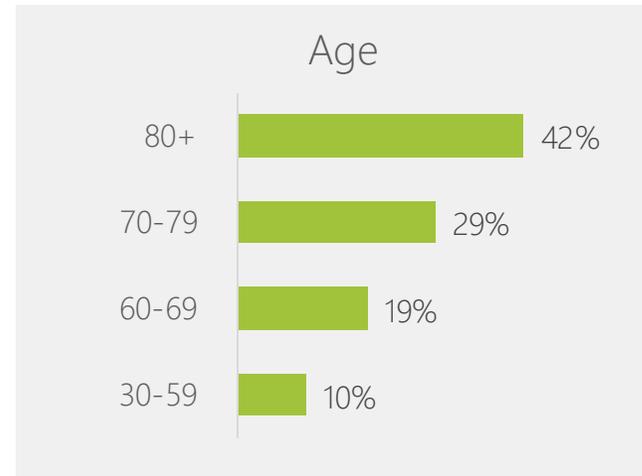
Do you receive your meal between 10 AM and 1 PM?

Over two-thirds (71%, n=78) of survey participants rely on the food from the Meals on Wheels Program as their primary daily food source, with over half (54%, n=59) needing home-delivered meals to sustain independent living. Additionally, 80% (n=89) feel a sense of security with daily program volunteer visits, and an overwhelming majority (96%, n=107) find Nourish Up to be affordable, while all respondents (100%, n=111) reported receiving their meals between 10am and 1pm.

RECIPIENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Over two in five (42%, n=47) of all recipients were 80 years or older, while nearly two in three were female (65%, n=72).

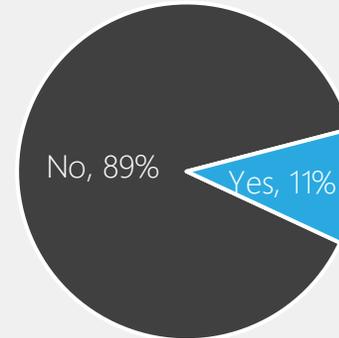
Regarding race/ethnicity, nearly three-fourths identified as Caucasian (73%, n=81), 22% (n=24) as Black, and 2% (n=2) were Asian or of another race/ethnicity. The remaining 3% (n=4) did not provide an answer. Additionally, roughly 1 in 5 (17%, n=19) were veterans.



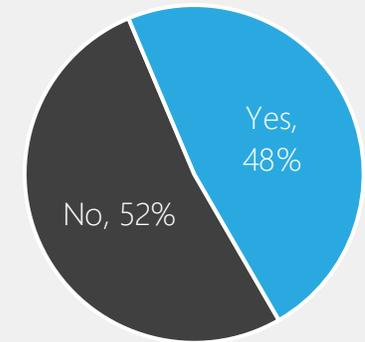
CLIENT INFORMATION

The majority of clients (89%, n=97) are not currently receiving food stamps. Of those with a caregiver (48%, n=53), 54% (n=28) mentioned a family member, 20% (n=11) cited friend, 14% (n=8) named a home health care agent, and 12% (n=6) specified a nurse aid as their caregiver.

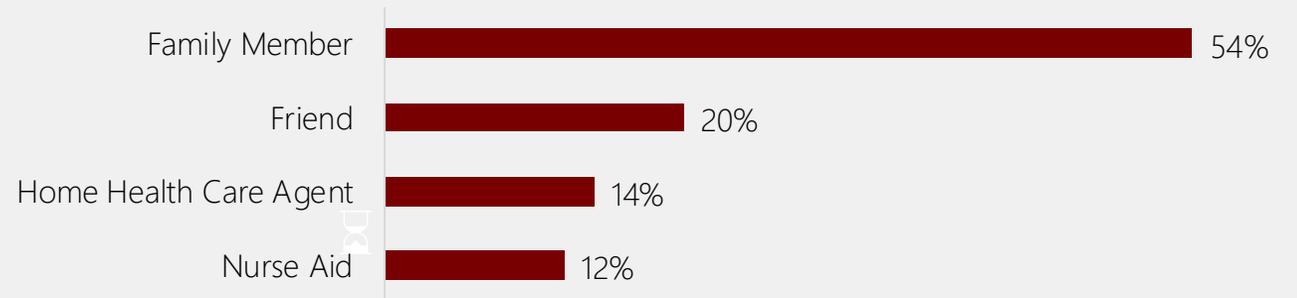
SNAP Benefits Recipient



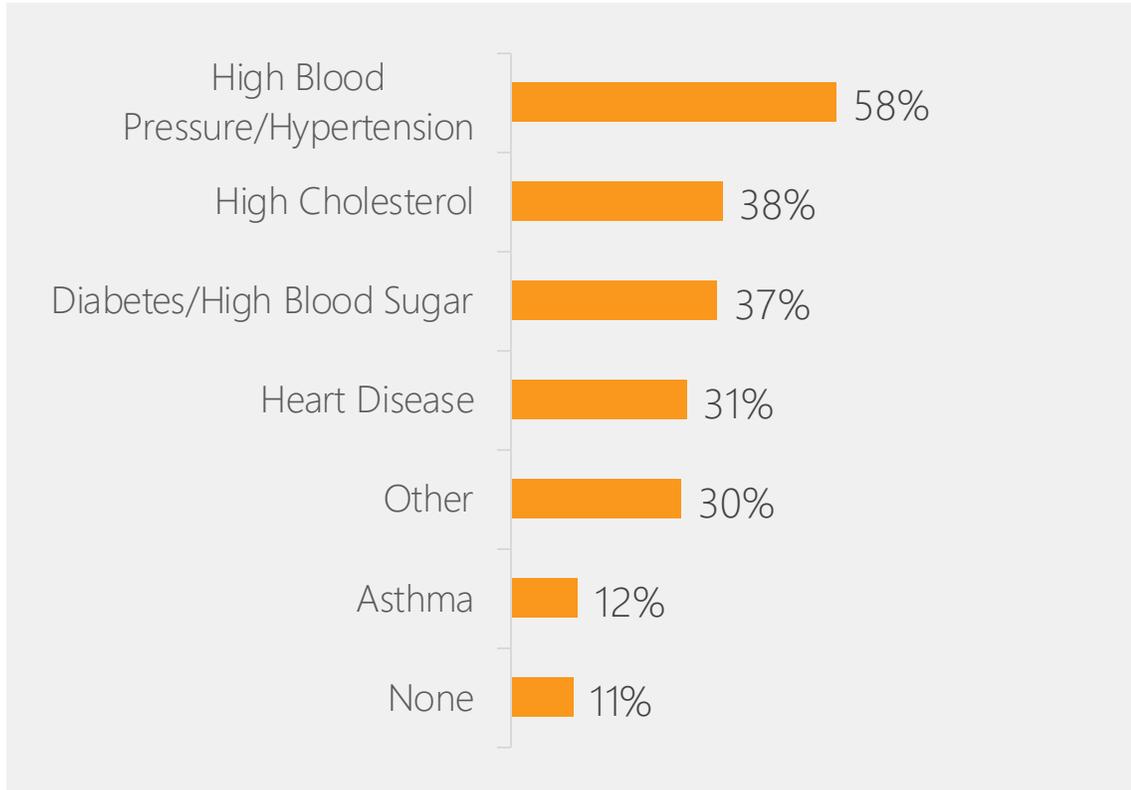
Has a Caregiver



Who is your Caregiver?



CHRONIC DISEASE CONDITIONS

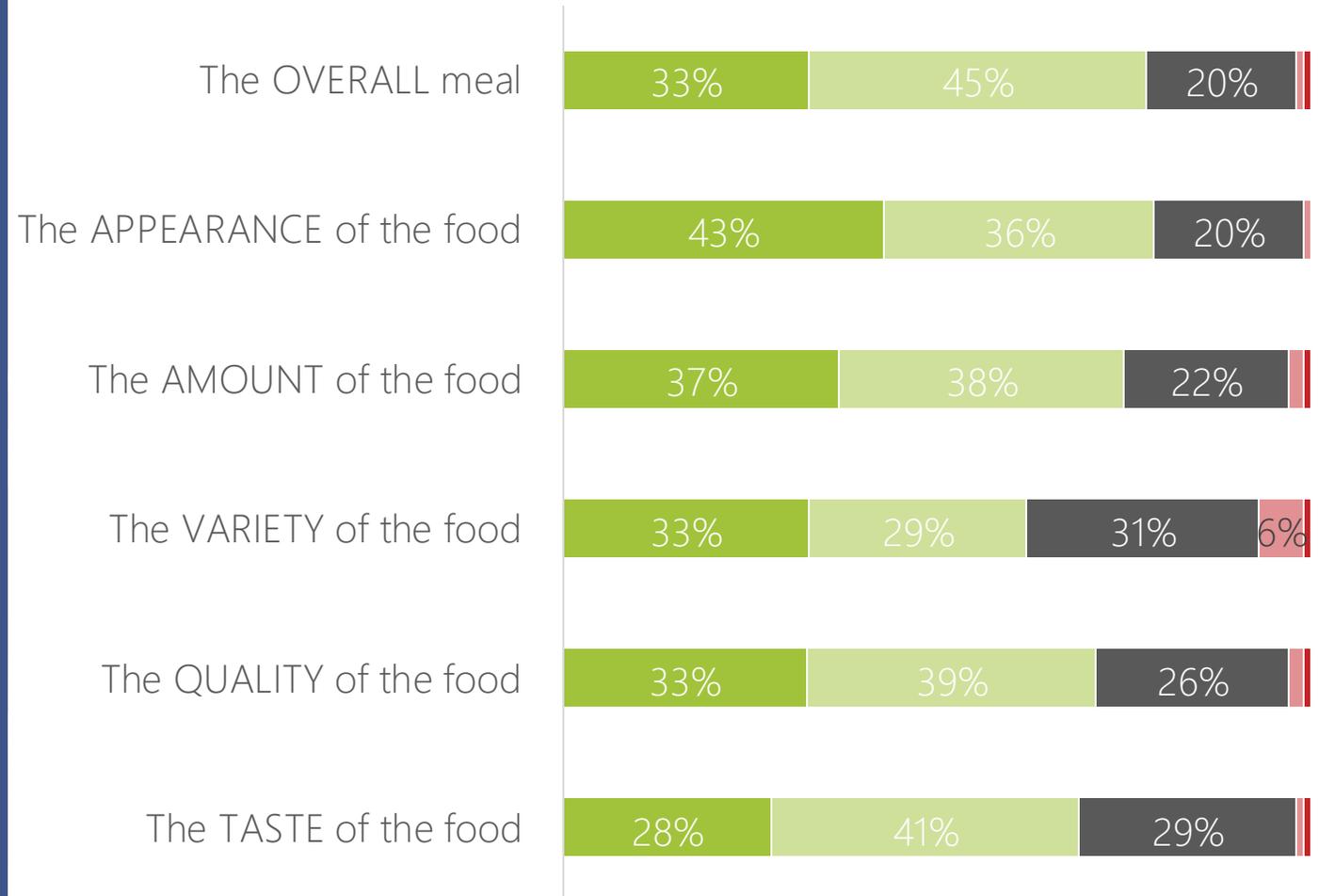


Question: Have you ever been told by your healthcare provider that you have one of these chronic disease conditions? (Please check all that apply.)

Respondents were asked about their history of chronic disease diagnoses. More than half (58%, n=63) reported high blood pressure, while over a third indicated diagnoses of high cholesterol (38%, n=41) and diabetes or high blood sugar (37%, n=40). Nearly a third (31%, n=34) reported heart disease, and about 12% (n=13) had been diagnosed with asthma. Additionally, nearly a third of respondents (30%, n=33) mentioned other chronic conditions not listed in the survey. Finally, 11% (n=12) reported that they had not been diagnosed with any chronic disease.

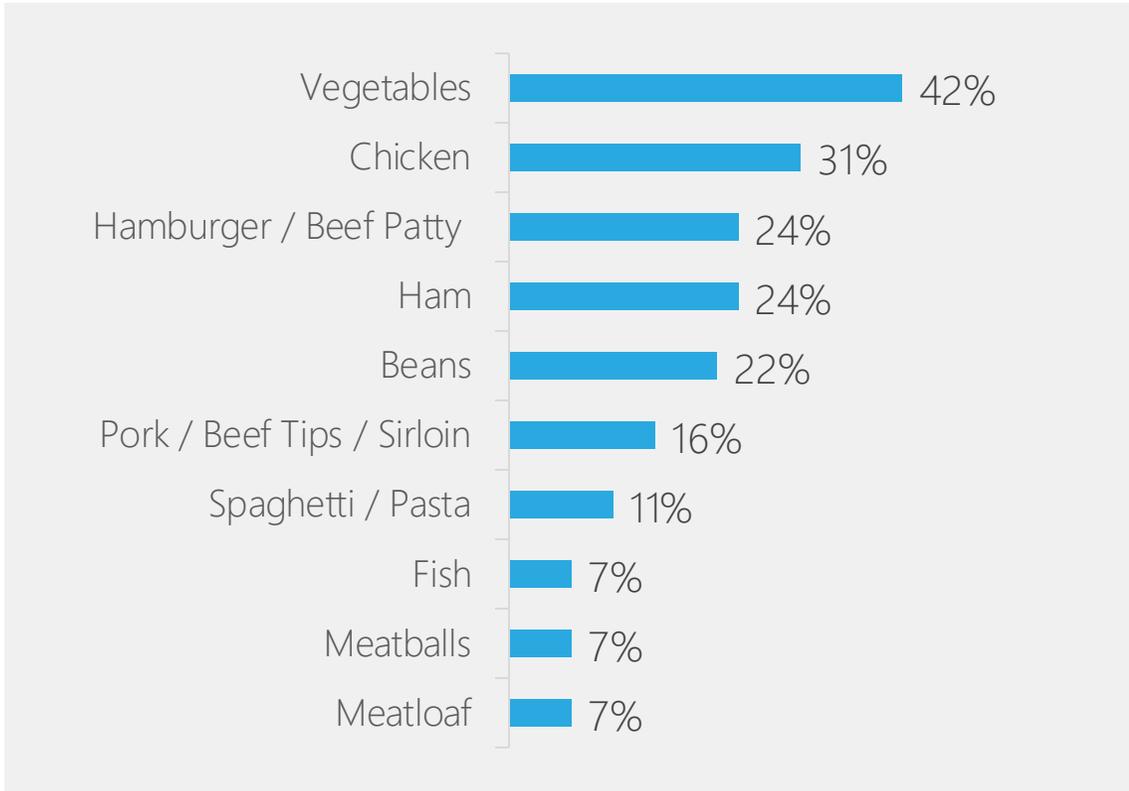
FOOD SATISFACTION

■ Very Good ■ Good ■ Average ■ Poor ■ Very Poor



Respondents were invited to evaluate their satisfaction with the food they receive across various criteria, and the majority of these criteria were predominantly rated as good or very good. Notably, over three-fourths (78%, n=85) found the overall meal to be good or very good, with the appearance and portion size of the food also garnering favorable ratings, at 79% (n=86) and 75% (n=83) respectively. While slightly lower, the majority expressed a high level of satisfaction with the quality of the food (72%, n=78), taste (69%, n=77), and variety of the food (62%, n=68).

FAVORITE MEAL

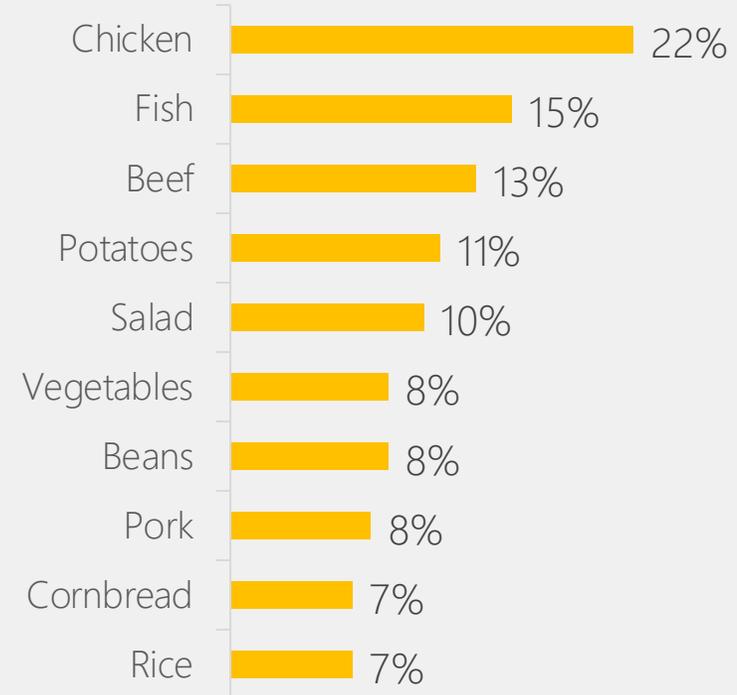


Question: What is your favorite meal you receive from Nourish Up?

Respondents were invited to share their preferred meal from Nourish Up, and 45 participants provided a response. The most frequently mentioned favorites were vegetable-based meals (42%, n=19), followed by chicken dishes (31%, n=14). Meals featuring hamburgers or cheeseburgers (24%, n=11) and ham (24%, n=11) were also commonly noted. Other frequently mentioned favorites included beans (22%, n=10), pork or beef-based meals such as sirloin tips or beef tips (16%, n=7), and spaghetti or pasta dishes (11%, n=5). Less commonly mentioned but still notable were fish, meatballs, and meatloaf (each 7%, n=3). These themes highlight a diverse range of preferred meals, with protein-rich options and vegetable sides appearing most often among participants' favorites.

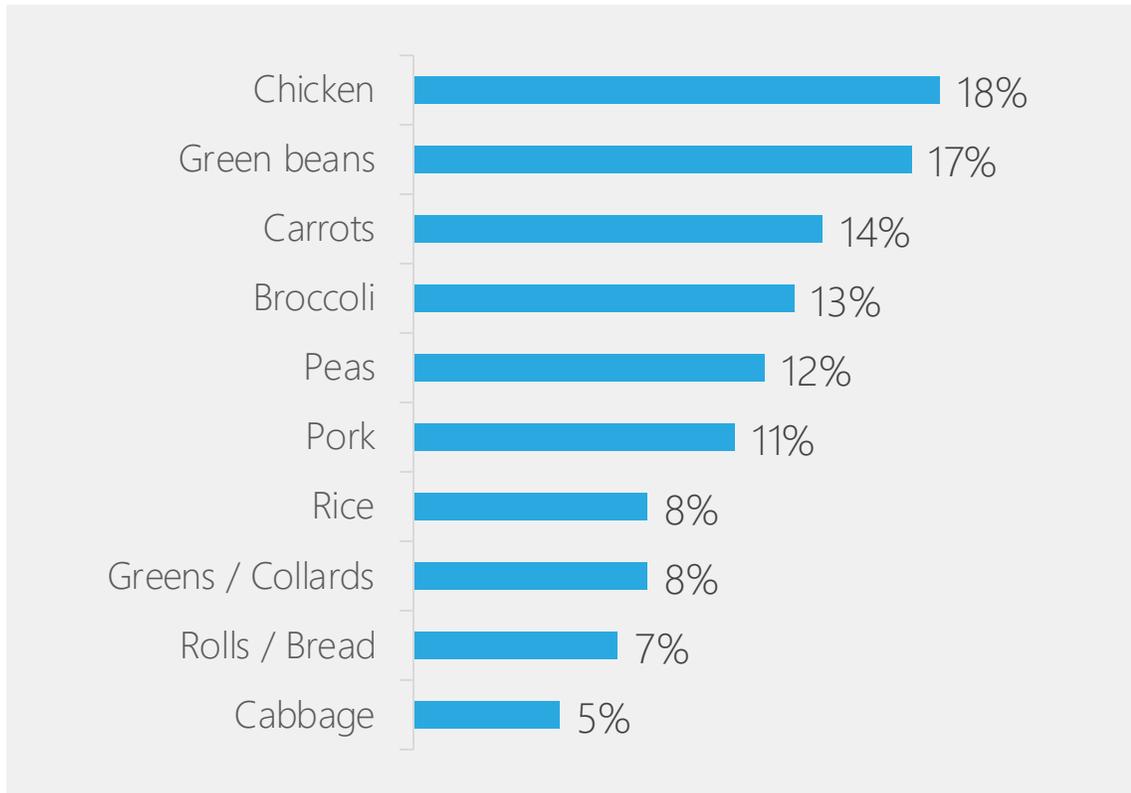
ADD MORE TO THE MENU

Respondents were asked what foods they would like to see more frequently or added to the menu, and 107 participants provided feedback. The most frequently requested item was chicken (22%, n=23), followed by fish (15%, n=16) and beef (13%, n=14). Requests for potatoes (11%, n=12) and salad (10%, n=11) were also common. Additionally, respondents expressed interest in more vegetables (8%, n=9), beans (8%, n=9), pork (8%, n=8), as well as cornbread (7%, n=7) and rice (7%, n=7). Overall, the responses highlight a strong preference for a wider variety of proteins, vegetables, and classic comfort-food sides.



Question: What foods would you like to see more frequently or added to the menu?

LESS FREQUENCY ON THE MENU



Question: What foods would you like to see less frequently or taken off the menu?

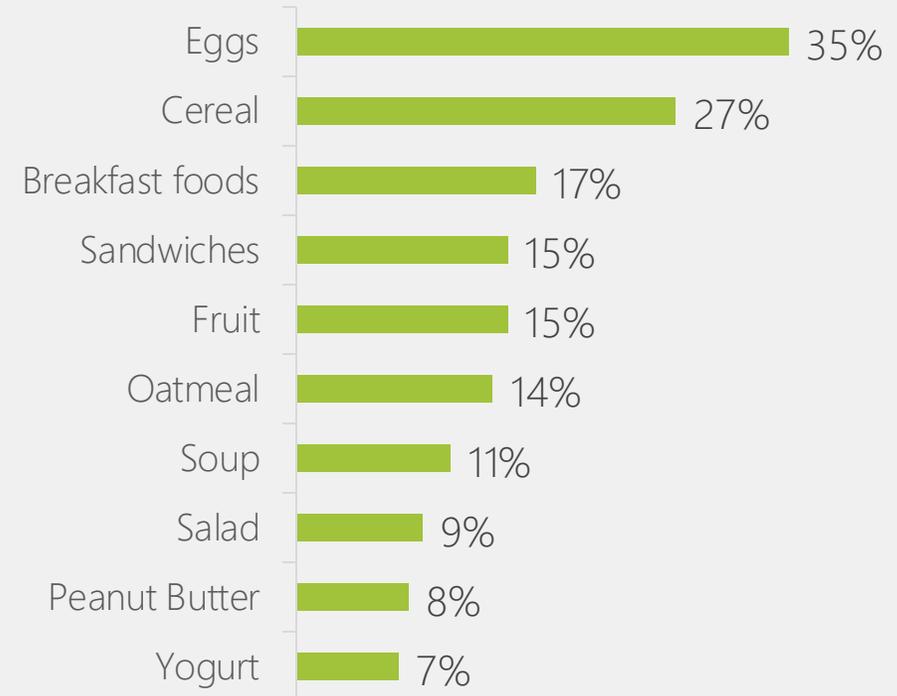
Respondents were asked which foods they would like to see less frequently or removed from the menu, and 98 participants shared their feedback. The most commonly mentioned item was chicken (18%, n=18), followed closely by green beans (17%, n=17). Other frequently cited items included carrots (14%, n=14), broccoli (13%, n=13), and peas (12%, n=12). Additional foods respondents wished to see less often were pork (11%, n=11), rice (8%, n=8), and various leafy greens such as collards and spinach (8%, n=8). Also noted were rolls and other breads (7%, n=7) and cabbage (5%, n=5). Taken together, the responses indicate that many participants would prefer fewer repeated vegetables—particularly green vegetables—and less frequent servings of chicken, especially when texture concerns were mentioned.

DAILY FOODS

Survey participants were asked about the additional foods they regularly consume alongside their Nourish Up meals. A total of 110 respondents shared their eating habits.

The most frequently mentioned items included eggs (35%, n=38) and cereal (27%, n=30), which were the dominant daily staples.

Other commonly reported foods were general breakfast items such as grits, pancakes, and toast (17%, n=19), sandwiches (15%, n=17), fruit (15%, n=17), oatmeal (14%, n=15), and soup (11%, n=12). Additional frequently eaten foods included salad (9%, n=10), peanut butter (8%, n=9), and yogurt (7%, n=8).



Question: In addition to your Nourish Up meal, what other foods do you eat daily?

IMPACT TO DAILY ROUTINE

1. **Reduced Stress from Meal Preparation:** Many respondents noted that receiving meals eased the burden of planning, shopping, cooking, and washing dishes. This includes comments about difficulty standing, mobility challenges, and nerve damage.
2. **Improved Nutrition and Eating Habits:** Respondents reported eating healthier, having balanced meals, managing dietary restrictions (e.g., kidney issues), and in some cases losing weight.
3. **Increased Emotional Well-Being and Reduced Anxiety:** Many expressed looking forward to meal delivery, feeling less anxious about food security, and experiencing an uplift in mood.
4. **Social Connection and Safety Checks From Volunteers:** Several respondents noted the value of volunteer interactions, including safety checks and friendly contact that brightens their day.
5. **Enhanced Daily Routine Structure and Time Savings:** Meals helped respondents maintain routine, eat on time, reduce grocery trips, and free up time for other priorities.

Question: In what ways has your daily routine been impacted since you began receiving meals from Nourish Up?

In response to an inquiry about how receiving meals from Nourish Up has influenced their daily routines, fifty respondents provided detailed feedback, revealing five prominent themes illustrated on the left. These themes highlight the meaningful impact of Nourish Up, showing how the meals significantly reduce the stress of meal preparation, improve nutritional habits, and contribute to greater emotional well-being. Additionally, respondents emphasized the importance of daily safety checks and social connection provided by volunteers, along with the added structure and time savings that support their independence. Collectively, these insights demonstrate the vital role the organization plays in enhancing convenience, health, and overall quality of life for those it serves.

ADDITIONAL HELPFUL ITEMS

Survey participants were asked whether there were any additional items they would find helpful for volunteers to deliver along with their meal. Forty respondents shared their feedback, resulting in nine key categories summarized on the right.

Most respondents said they needed no additional items beyond their current deliveries. Others most frequently requested more food—especially larger portions and fresh fruit—followed by hygiene items like soap, shampoo, and wipes. Common mentions also included household essentials (detergent, napkins, toilet paper), snacks, beverages, and a few personal care or medical supplies such as adult diapers and gloves.

1. Food (more food in general, larger portions)
2. Fresh fruit (apples, grapes, etc.)
3. Hygiene items (soap, shampoo, toothpaste, etc.)
4. Household items (detergent, toilet paper, paper towels)
5. Snacks (pudding, snack foods, etc.)
6. Beverages (milk, bottled water, etc.)
7. Personal care / medical supplies (adult diapers, gloves)
8. Miscellaneous / open-ended (“surprise me,” “everything”)
9. Shoes

Question: Are there any other items you would find helpful for a Nourish Up volunteer to deliver along with your meal?

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF NOURISH UP

Survey participants were inquired about the meaning of Nourish Up to them, and 49 individuals shared their perspectives. From their responses, five overarching themes emerged, reflecting the program's value in providing reliable nutrition, easing daily burdens, offering social connection, fostering gratitude, and supporting overall well-being. Collectively, these themes highlight that the program's impact extends far beyond meals—providing comfort, stability, and meaningful support to those it serves.

1. **Reliable Access to Nutritious Meals:** Many respondents value having a dependable, healthy meal each day—often their main or only balanced meal. This consistency helps reduce food insecurity and supports dietary needs.
2. **Convenience and Reduced Meal Preparation Burden:** Respondents appreciated the convenience of having meals delivered, which reduces the stress of cooking, shopping, and planning meals, especially for those with health or mobility challenges. For many, it makes daily life simpler and more manageable.
3. **Social Connection, Safety, and Emotional Reassurance:** Regular visits from volunteers provide companionship and lessen feelings of isolation. Many feel safer knowing someone checks in on them each day.
4. **Gratitude and Appreciation:** Respondents expressed deep appreciation for the food, service, and kindness of volunteers. The program makes them feel cared for and supported.
5. **Improved Well-Being, Stability, and Independence:** The service promotes emotional well-being by reducing stress, anxiety, and daily strain. It helps recipients maintain stability and remain independent in their homes.

Question: What does Nourish Up mean to you?

END OF
PART 2