# Assessing Food Accessibility Needs Through a Community-Centered Approach

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## BACKGROUND

- Food insecurity is defined as a household-level economic and social condition of limited continuous access to nutritious and healthy food due to limited financial resources or other barriers such as transportation, disability, or access to healthy food (Martin et al., 2025).
- Over 60,000 Pittsburgh residents have limited access to nutritious and adequate food (The City of Pittsburgh, 2020).
- Food insecurity is associated with social and health outcomes, making it a critical public health issue.

### The Corner

- Founded in 2010, The Corner's mission is to serve as a safe neighborhood space and provide diverse, affordable programming centered on the arts, social justice, advocacy, education, and community engagement.
- The Corner's Food Distribution Program was first launched during the COVID-19 pandemic and continues to be staffed by The Corner staff and community volunteers to bridge gaps in access to food and household items.

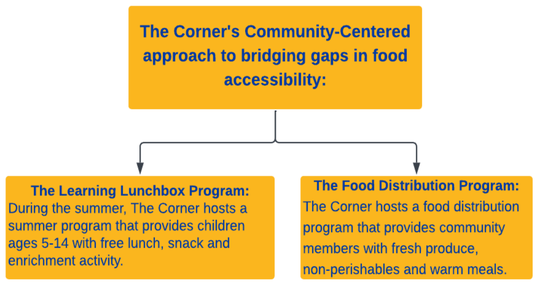


**Figure 1:** Programs offered by The Corner

## OBJECTIVES

- **Assess** how community members feel about The Corner's Food Distribution Program.
- **Identify** food accessibility barriers faced by the community.
- **Incorporate** community feedback to promote program longevity.

## METHODS

- Develop a community survey with multiple-choice and open-ended items to assess the quality of resources, community usage, and overall community satisfaction with program resources.
- Conduct a community survey during The Corner's July Food Distribution.

## RESULTS

**Table 1:** Sociodemographic characteristics of attendees of The Corner's Food Distribution

| Characteristic | Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gender | Female | 12 | 57.12 |
| | Male | 6 | 28.57 |
| Age | 18 - 24 | 1 | 4.76 |
| | 34 - 44 | 2 | 9.52 |
| | 45 - 54 | 1 | 4.76 |
| | 55 - 64 | 6 | 28.37 |
| | >65 | 7 | 33.33 |
| Annual Income | $0- $30,000 | 10 | 49.62 |
| | $31,000 - $60,000 | 3 | 14.29 |
| | $61,000 - $90,000 | 0 | 0.00 |
| | $91,000 - $120,000 | 0 | 0.00 |
| | $120,000+ | 0 | 0.00 |
| Household Size | 1 | 9 | 42.86 |
| | 2 | 4 | 19.05 |
| | 3 | 3 | 14.29 |
| | 4 | 2 | 9.52 |
| Years Lived in the Community | Less than 1 year | 0 | 0.00 |
| | 1 – 3 years | 2 | 9.52 |
| | 4 – 6 years | 2 | 9.52 |
| | 7+ years | 14 | 66.67 |

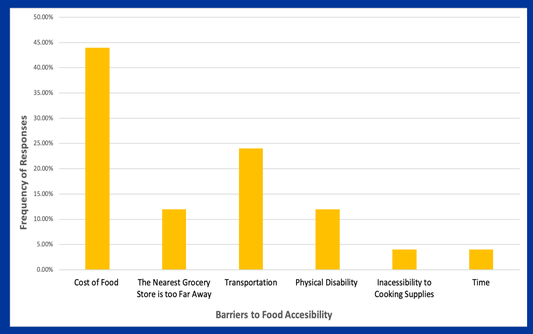


**Figure 2:** Barriers to food accessibility identified by community members

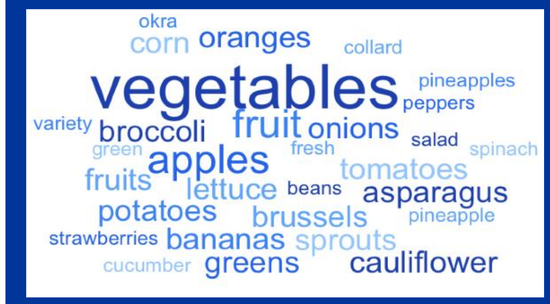


**Figure 3:** Fresh produce survey participants would like to see at the Food Distribution Program

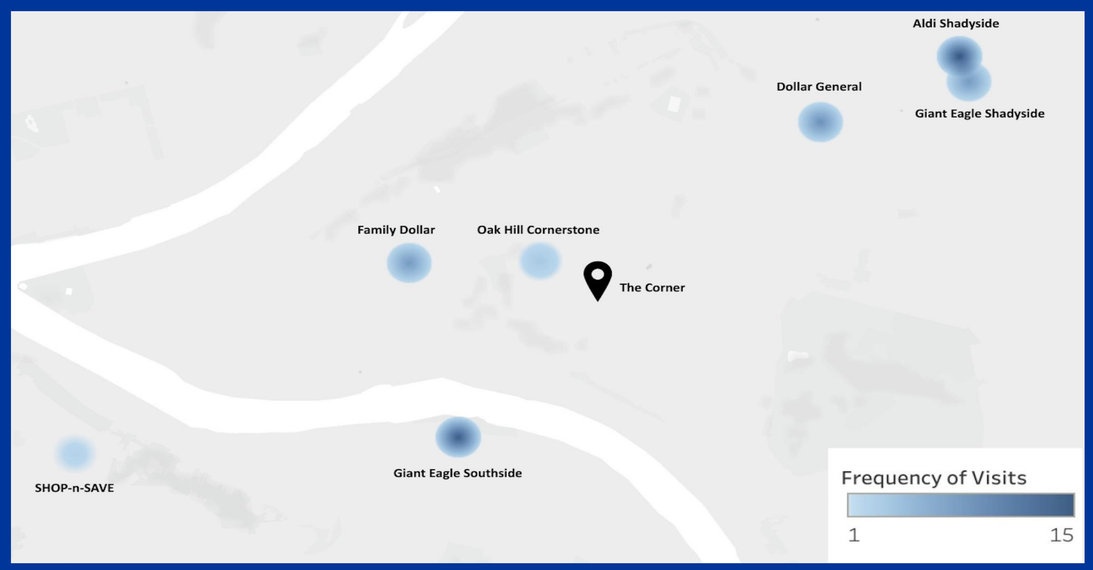


**Figure 4:** Representative map of grocery stores frequented by Community Members

## DISCUSSION

- **Food cost and transportation** were the most commonly reported barriers to accessing food (Figure 2).
- **61.9% of Food Distribution Program participants were age 55 or older**, indicating the program is frequently used by older adults (Table 1).
- Participants expressed interest in receiving **a greater variety of fresh fruits and vegetables** at future food distributions, highlighting demand for nutritious food options (Figure 3).

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- Incorporate recommendations and feedback provided by community members into future Food Distribution Program days.
- Continue assessing and investing in food accessibility programming at The Corner.
- Administer bi-annual surveys to receive community feedback about the Food Distribution Program.
- Partner with local organizations to address specific food accessibility needs and barriers reported by community members, e.g., transportation and lack of access to cooking supplies.

## LIMITATIONS

- **Small Sample Size:** With only 21 responses, the results are not representative of all Food Distribution attendees.
- **Time Constraint:** Limited time to survey attendees during July's Food Distribution Program hours.

## REFERENCES

To learn more about The Corner and view current projects:

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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