

Increasing Access to Fresh Fruits and Vegetables in a South Los Angeles Food Desert

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Kansas State University

Increasing Access to Fresh Fruits and Vegetables in a South LA Food Desert

Objectives

At the conclusion of the presentation, conference attendees will be able to:

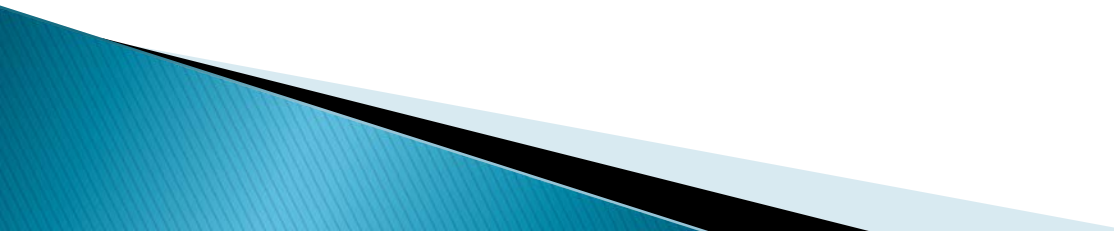
1. Define what a Food Desert is
 2. Describe three benefits of increasing access to Farmers' Markets in urban underserved areas
 3. Discuss some of the structural barriers to accessing fresh fruits and vegetables in low income neighborhoods
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Increasing Access to Fresh Fruits and Vegetables in A South Los Angeles Food Desert

- ▶ Background

On a national and local level, studies have shown that social and environmental determinants of obesity and other chronic diseases include lack of access to grocery stores and Farmers' Markets, high numbers of fast food restaurants and liquor stores and low social economic status (Azuma, et. al, 2010)

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- ▶ Racial/ethnic minority populations residing in urban communities in the U.S. experience a disproportionate burden of chronic disease including obesity and diabetes, which has been linked to poor access to fresh fruits and vegetables and higher per capita rates of fast food outlets in areas where they live.
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- ▶ The prevalence of obesity has increased alarmingly in the U.S. over the past fifty years and obesity has been linked to multiple chronic conditions including high cholesterol and triglycerides, type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, and some cancers.
- ▶ On a local level, in Los Angeles County, data indicate that living in an area without access to healthy food increases the risk of chronic diseases, including high blood pressure, diabetes and heart disease.(Morales, L., 2012; Community Health Council,2016)

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- ▶ Food Desert Definition: “A food desert is a geographic area where affordable and nutritious food is difficult to obtain, particularly for those without access to an automobile”.

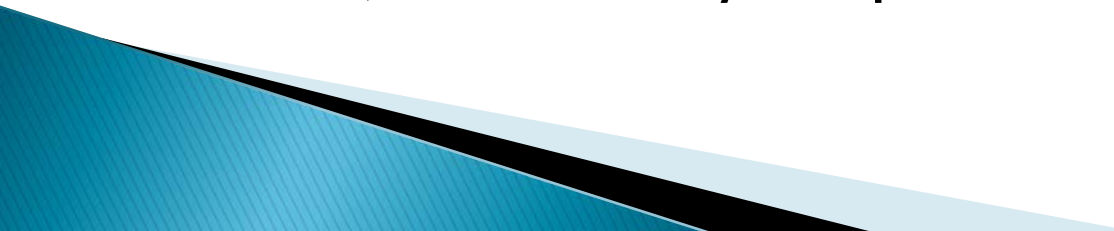
Food deserts usually exist in rural areas and in low income communities. Food deserts are also associated with supermarket shortages and food security.

The term “food desert” was first documented in a 1995 United Kingdom report from a working group on the Nutrition Task Force Low Income Project Team of the Department of Health and was originally defined as “populated areas with little or no food retail provision”, or more specifically “areas of relative exclusion where people experience physical and economic barriers to accessing healthy foods” (Wikipedia.org, 2014).

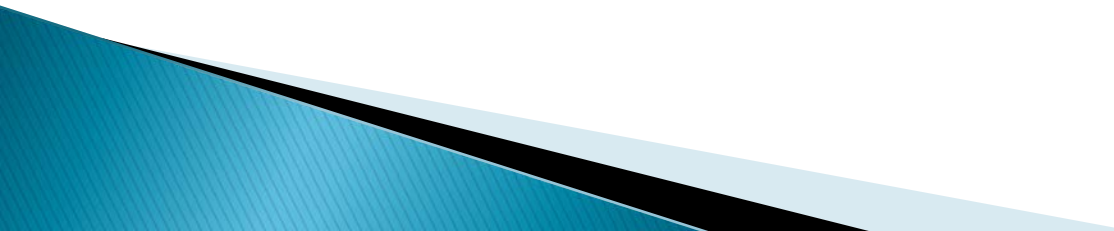
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- ▶ Food Security definition: Food security is a condition related to the ongoing availability of food.
- ▶
- ▶ According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), food security “exists when all people, at all times, have the physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious foods to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life”.
- ▶ The U.S. Department of Agriculture defines food insecurity as “limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or limited or uncertain ability to acquire acceptable food in socially acceptable ways”(Wikipedia.org,2014)

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- ▶ In 2012, Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science partnered with the Vermont Village Community Development Corporation of Crenshaw Christian Center and Heritage Education Group to respond to a USDA RFP called the “Farmers Market Promotion Program”(FMPP) to establish a Farmers’ Market in a food desert in South Los Angeles’ SPA 6.
 - ▶ Funding of \$81, 240 was awarded in September, 2012, for a two year period.
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- ▶ Goals of FMPP:
 - ▶ Establish a Farmers' Market in a Food Desert in SPA 6
 - ▶ Create a consumer base for farmers, ranchers and non-food vendors to sell their products to a new consumer base
 - ▶ Develop a social media training program targeting the farmers and non-food vendors with the intent to use social media to increase the marketing of their products, especially among low income community residents.
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Service Planning Areas (SPAs), Los Angeles County



- | | | |
|-----------------------|---------|--|
| 1 Antelope Valley | 4 Metro | 7 East |
| 2 San Fernando Valley | 5 West | 8 South Bay
<i>Includes Catalina Island</i> |
| 3 San Gabriel Valley | 6 South | |

Health Facts For SPA 6

Obesity

- ▶ 28.9% of children in grades 5,7, and 9 are obese.
- ▶ 35.4% of adult are obese.

Diabetes


- ▶ 4,6% of adults have been diagnosed with diabetes

CVD

- ▶ 29% of adults have been diagnosed with hypertension
- ▶ 25.5% of adults have been diagnosed with high cholesterol
- ▶ 7.6% of adults have been diagnosed with heart problems

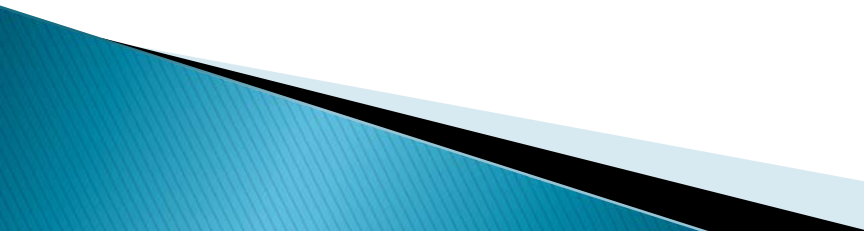
LACDPH June, 2009, Key Indicators of Health by SPA

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- ▶ The Vermont Village/CDU Farmers' Market was operational for 2 years at 79th Street and Vermont in Los Angeles, Ca
 - ▶ Several hundred consumers came to the market on a weekly basis; every Sunday from 10 AM to 2 PM
 - ▶ Additional activities targeting consumers included food demonstrations, Thanksgiving food giveaways, and community gardening demonstrations.
 - ▶ Targeting local pre-schools, elementary and middle schools for food demonstrations and community gardening demonstrations onsite at the Farmers' Market.
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Short-term Benefits included:

- ▶ Increased access to fresh fruits and vegetables
 - ▶ Changing of personal eating habits
 - ▶ New skill sets developed regarding healthy eating and community gardening
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Structural Barriers

Poverty

Lack of knowledge of importance of eating fresh fruits and vegetables

Lack of transportation to local super markets

Unsafe physical environments

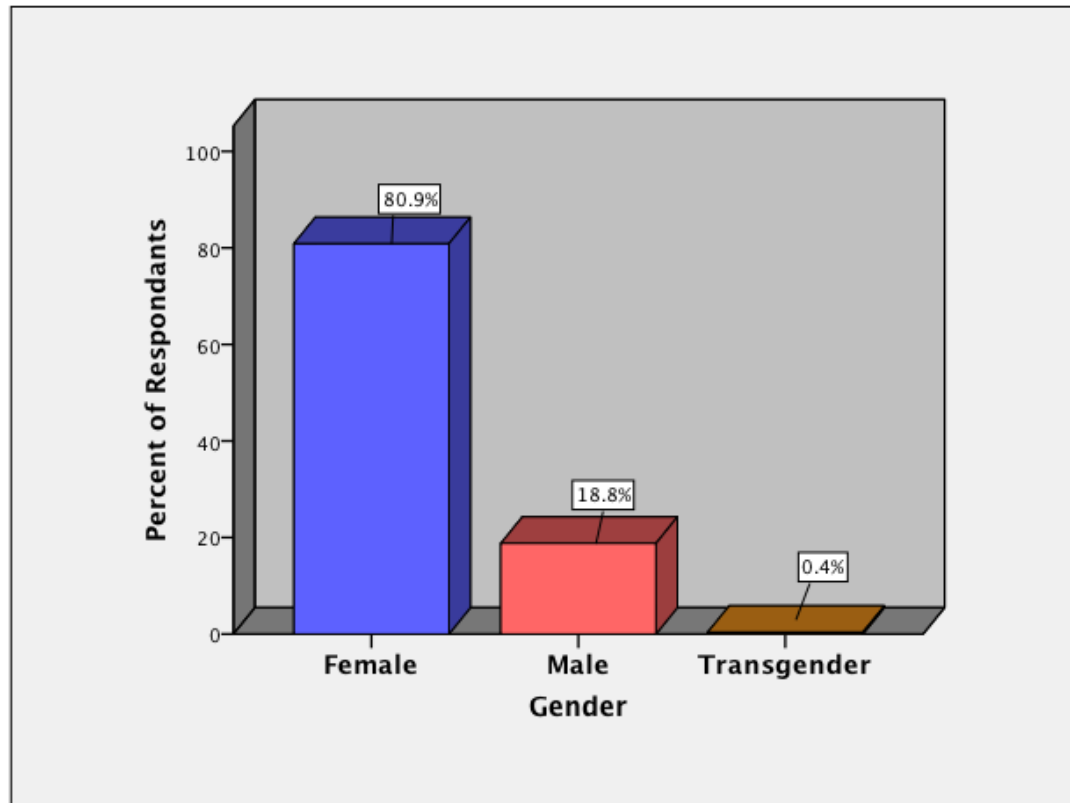
No Super Markets in community

Easy access to fast food restaurants



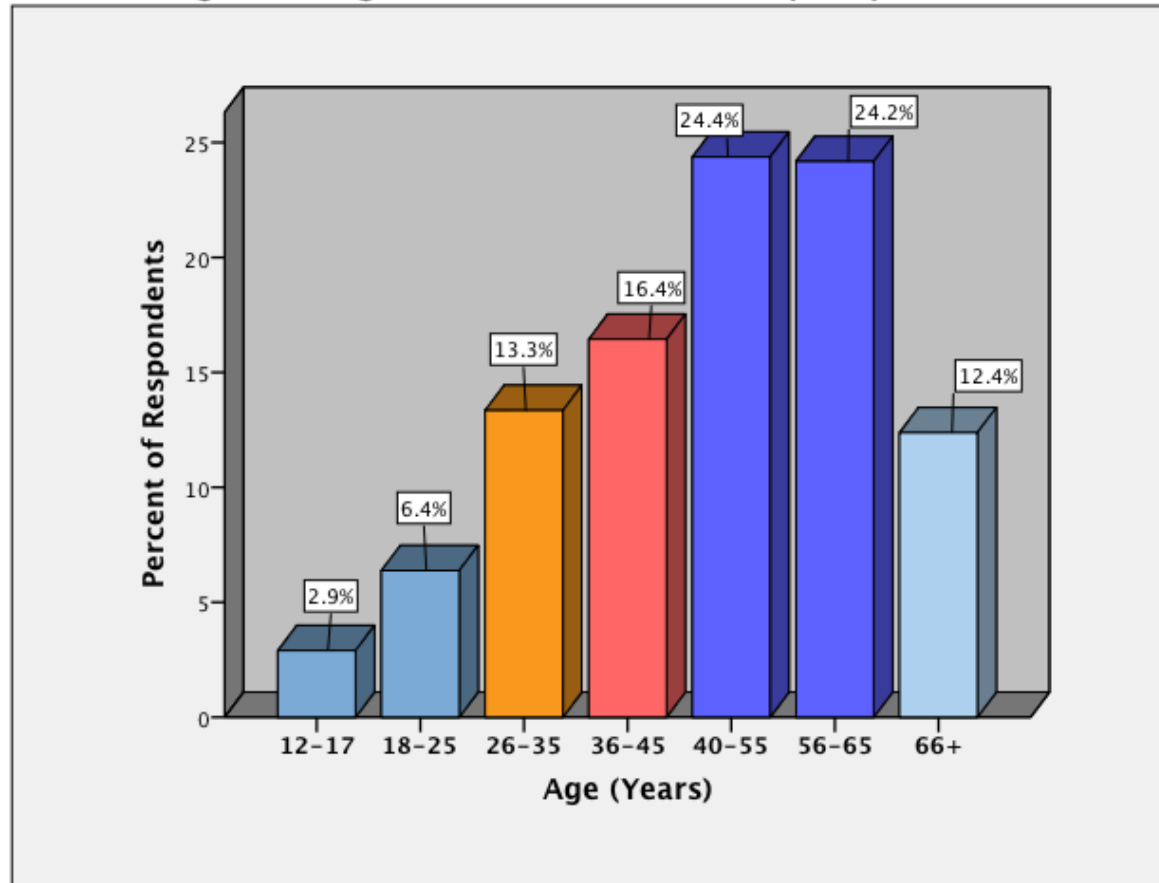
Needs Assessment Survey of Farmers' Market Consumers, N=815

Figure 1. Gender Distribution of Survey Respondents



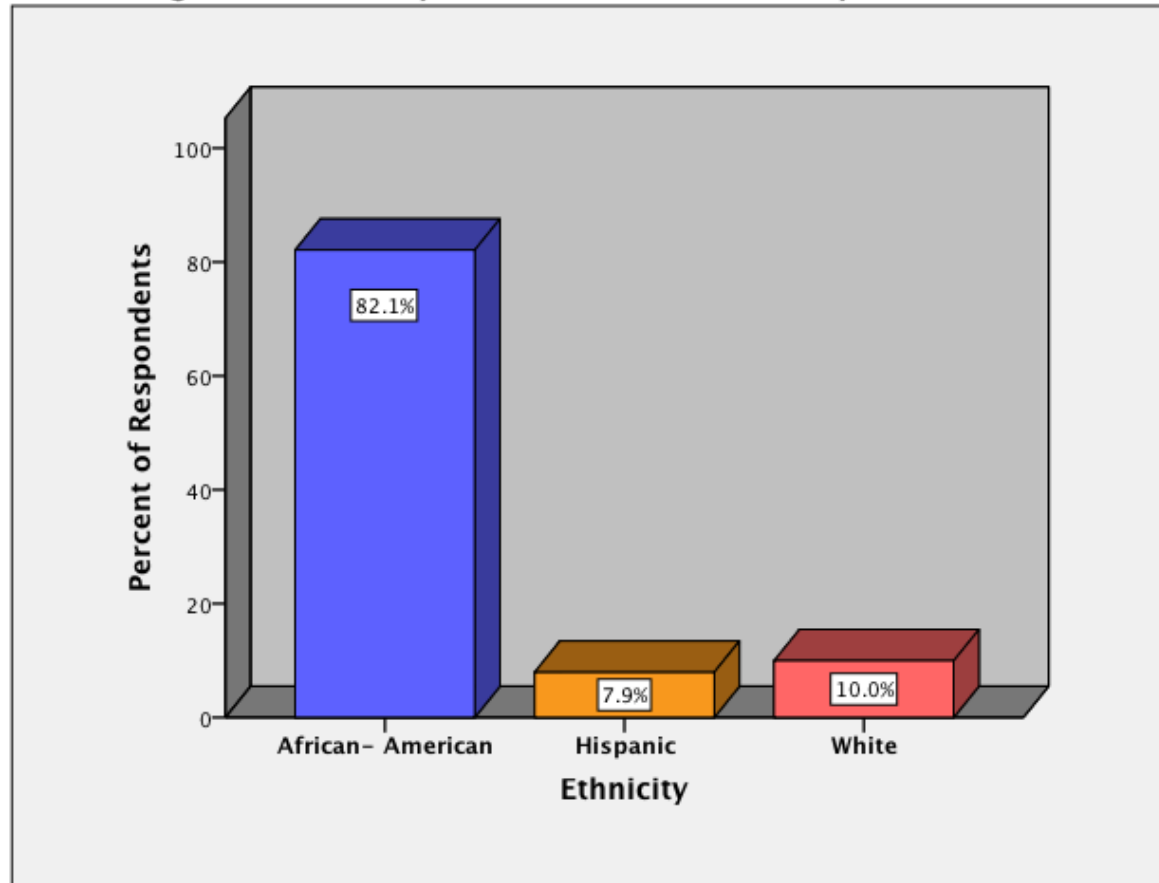
Needs Assessment Survey of Farmers' Market Consumers, N=815

Figuer 2. Age Distribution of the Survey Respondents



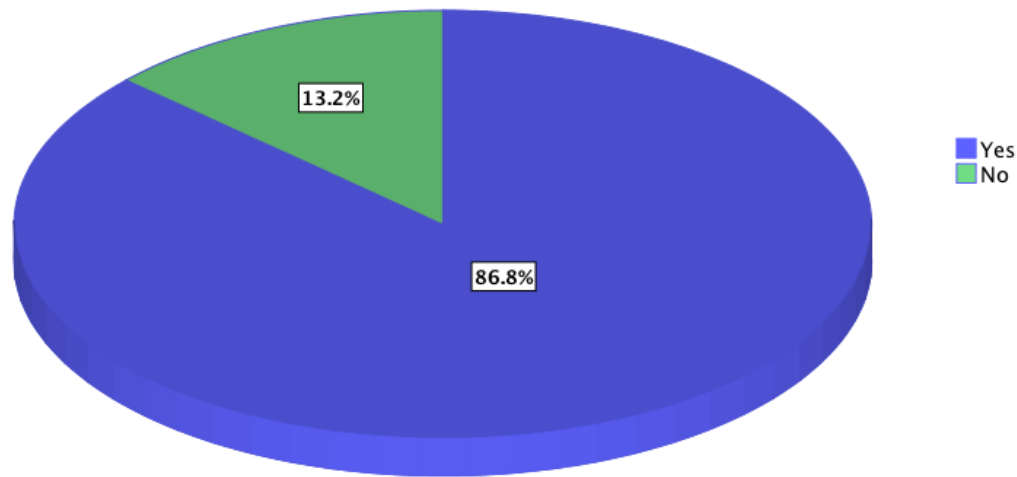
Needs Assessment Survey of Farmers' Market Consumers, N=815

Figurer 3. Ethnrcity Distribution of the Survey Resondents



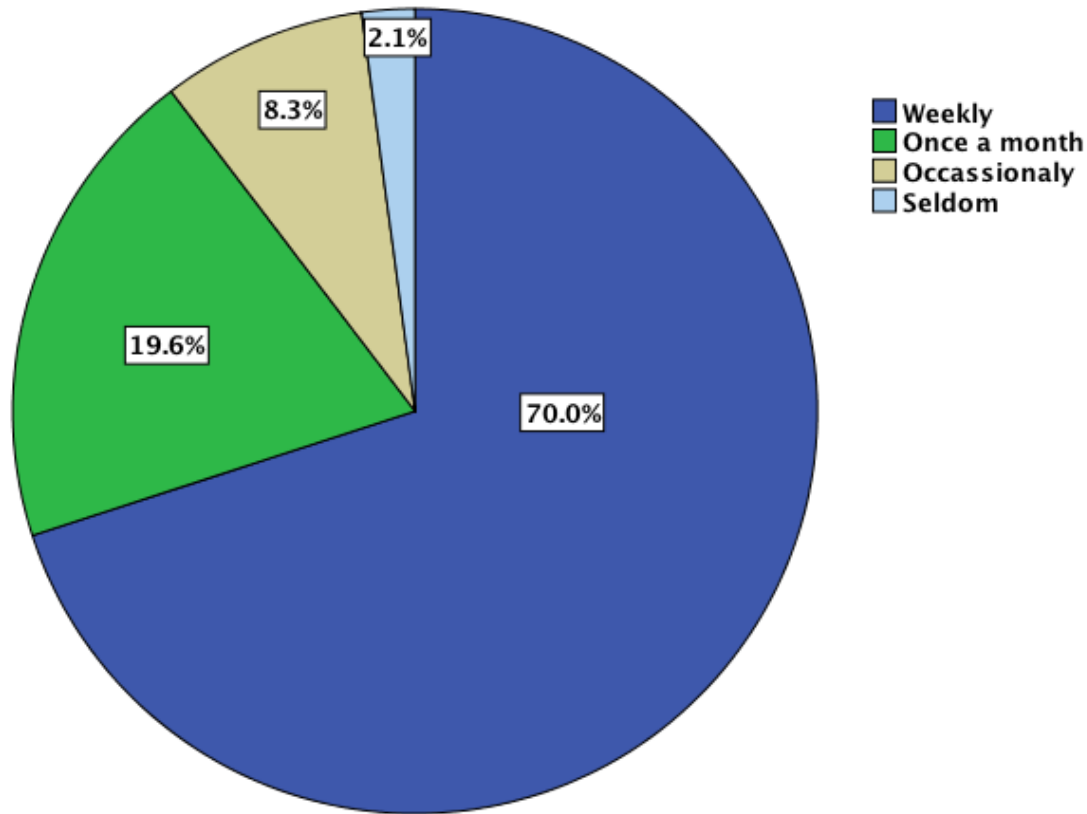
Needs Assessment Survey of Farmers' Market Consumers, N=815

Figure 4. Percents of Customers that Ever Shopped at a Farmers' Market



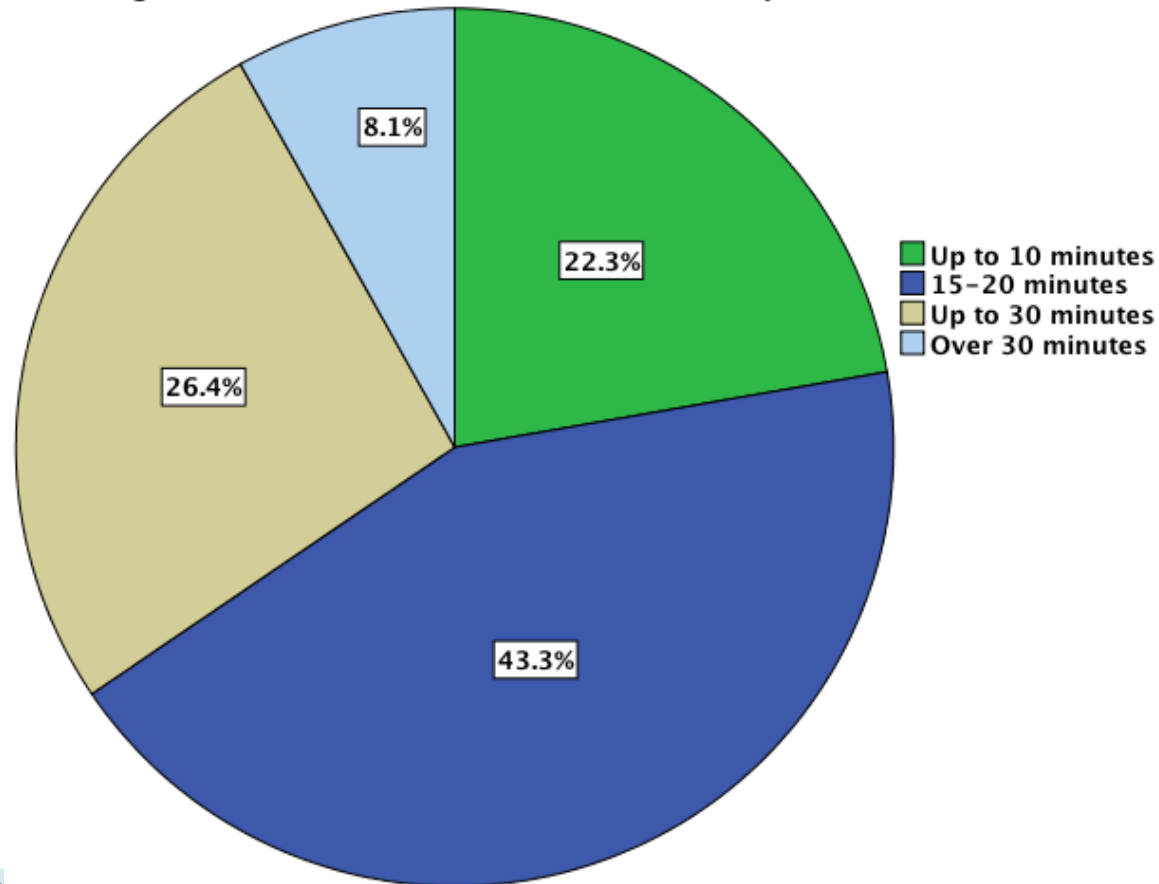
Needs Assessment Survey of Farmers' Market Consumers, N=815

Figure 5: If Local Farmers Offer their Agricultural Products at Neighborhood Farmer's Market, How Often Customers will Shop Their?



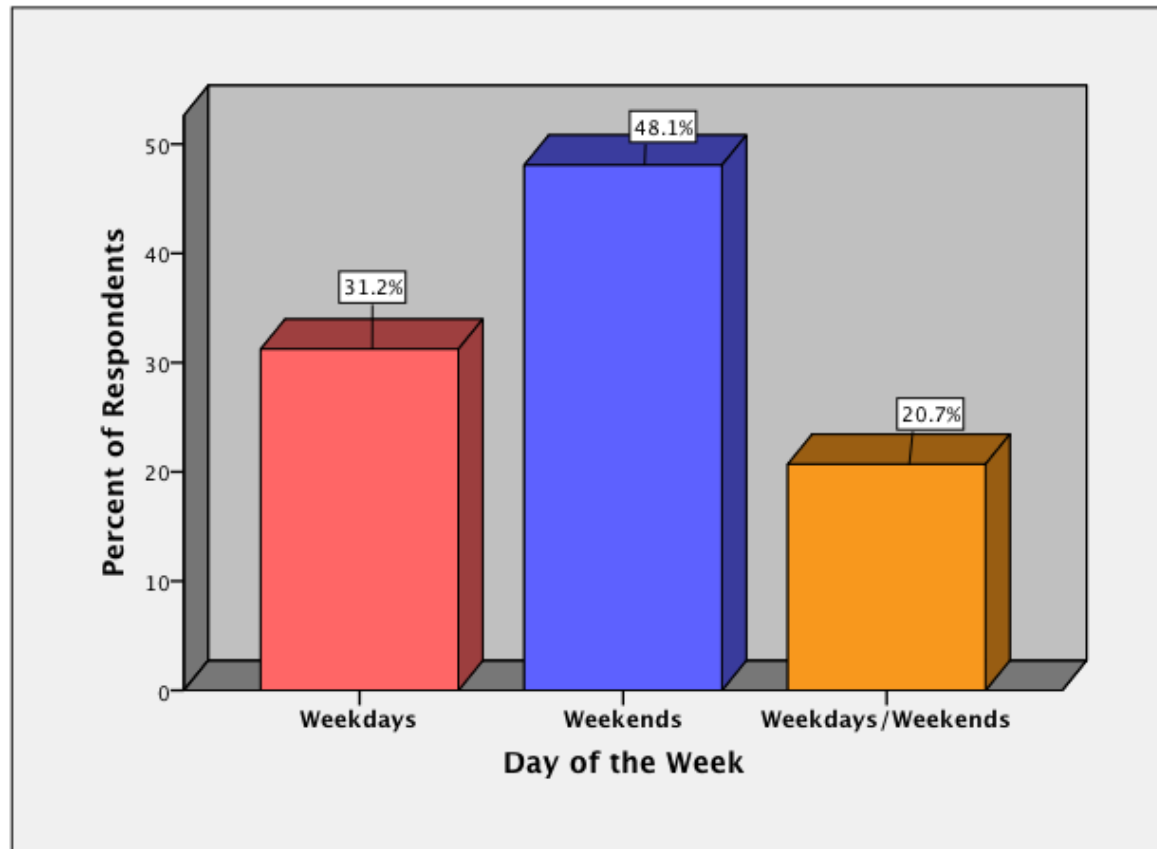
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Figure 6: How Far Customers Travel to Shop at a Farmers Market



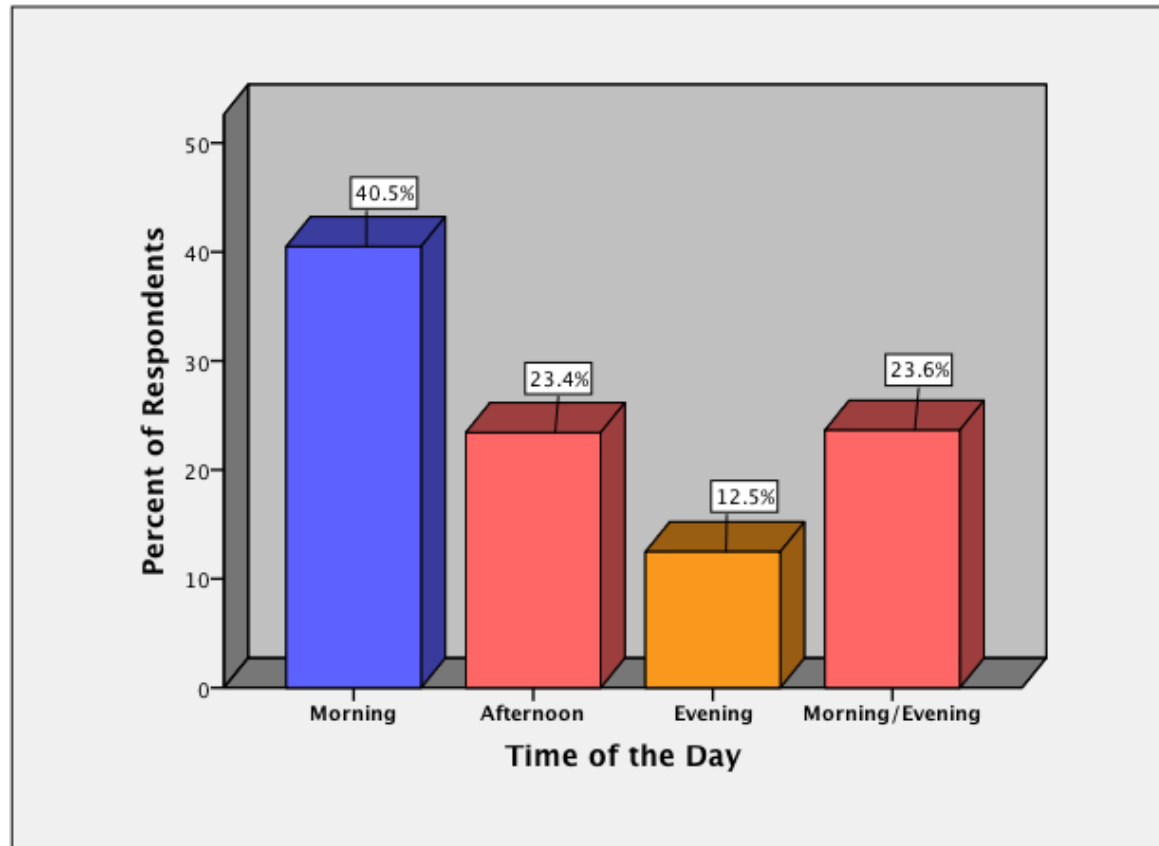
Needs Assessment Survey of Farmers' Market Consumers, N=815

Figure 7: Day of the Week Most Convenient for Customers to Shop at Farmers Market



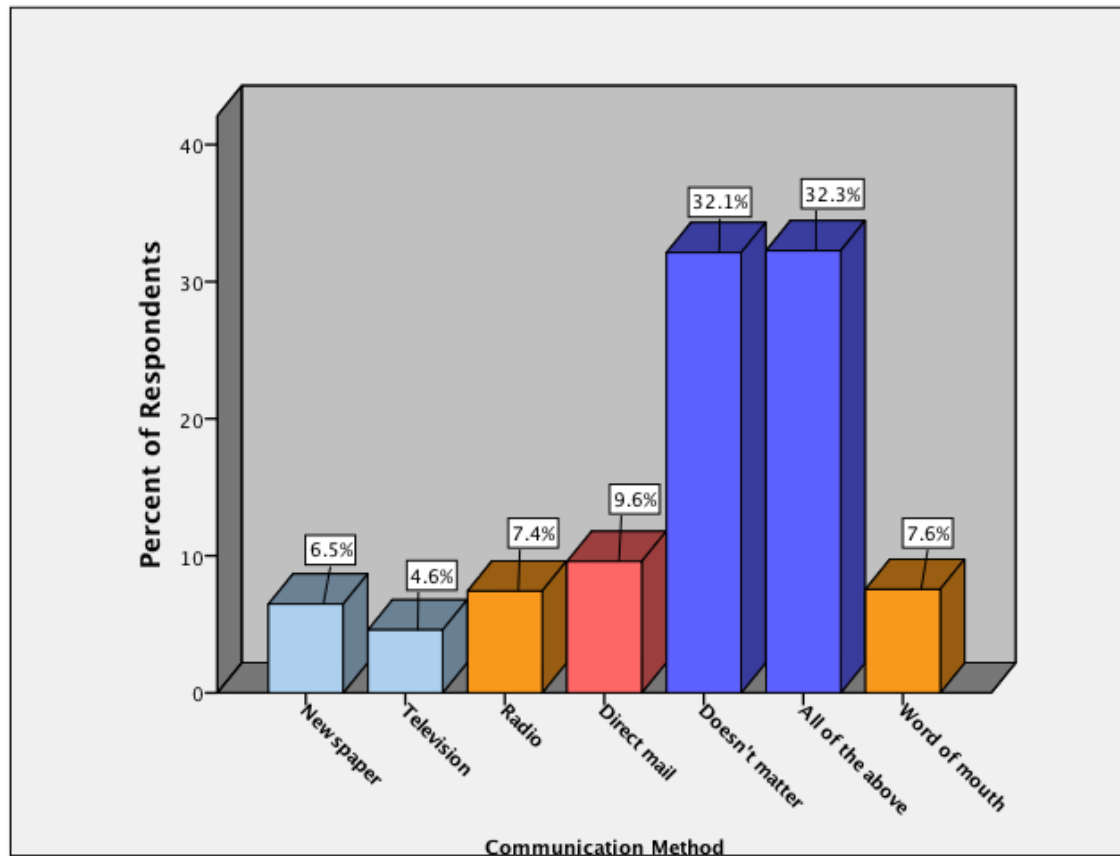
Needs Assessment Survey of Farmers' Market Consumers, N=815

Figure 8: The Most Convenient Time of the Day for Customers to Shop at Farmers Market



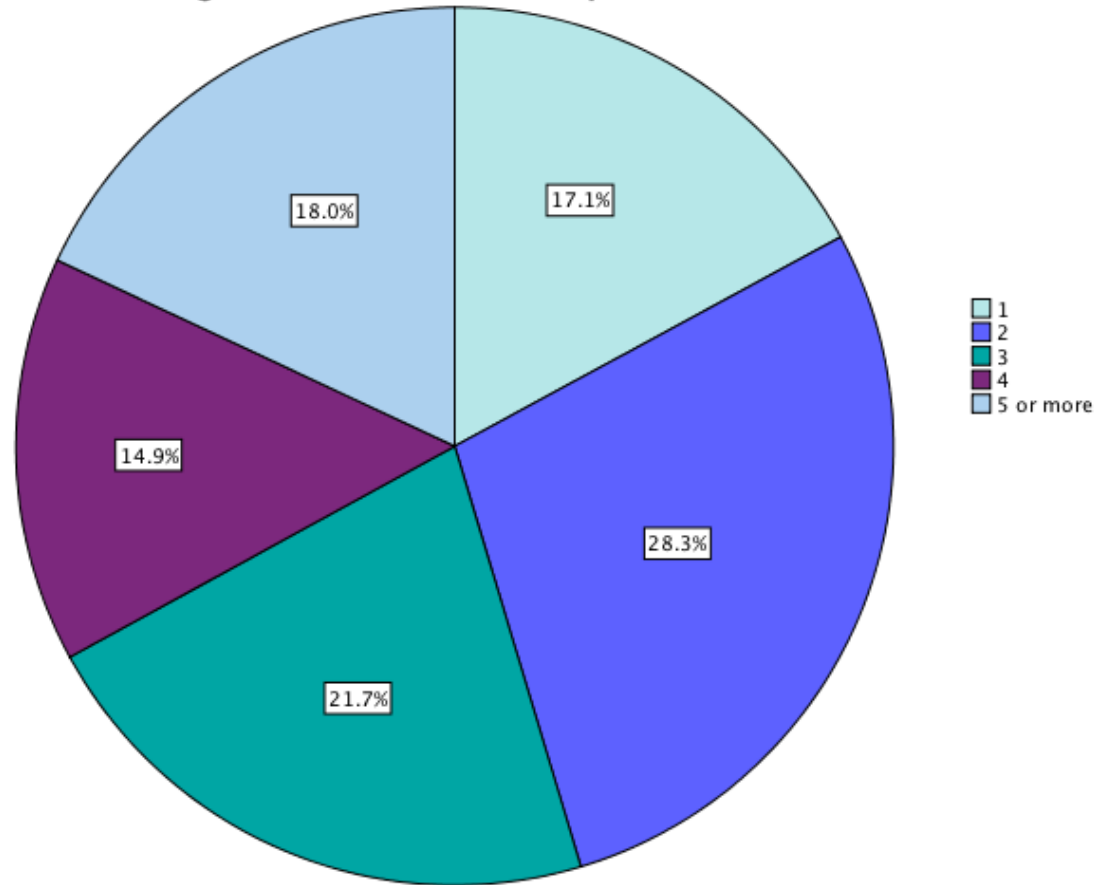
Needs Assessment Survey of Farmers' Market Consumers, N=815

Figuer 9: Ways Customers would you like to be Notified about the Farmers Market Once it is Established



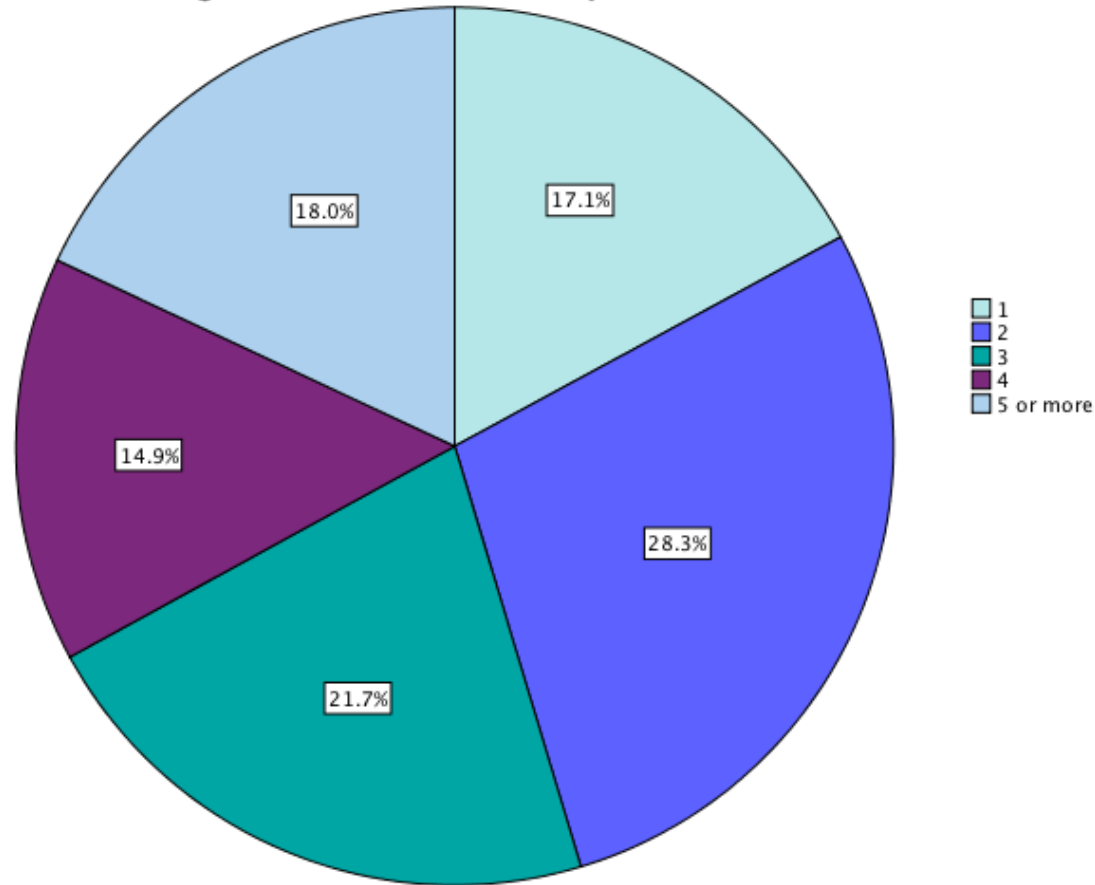
Needs Assessment Survey of Farmers' Market Consumers, N=815

Figuer 10: Number of People in Customers Household



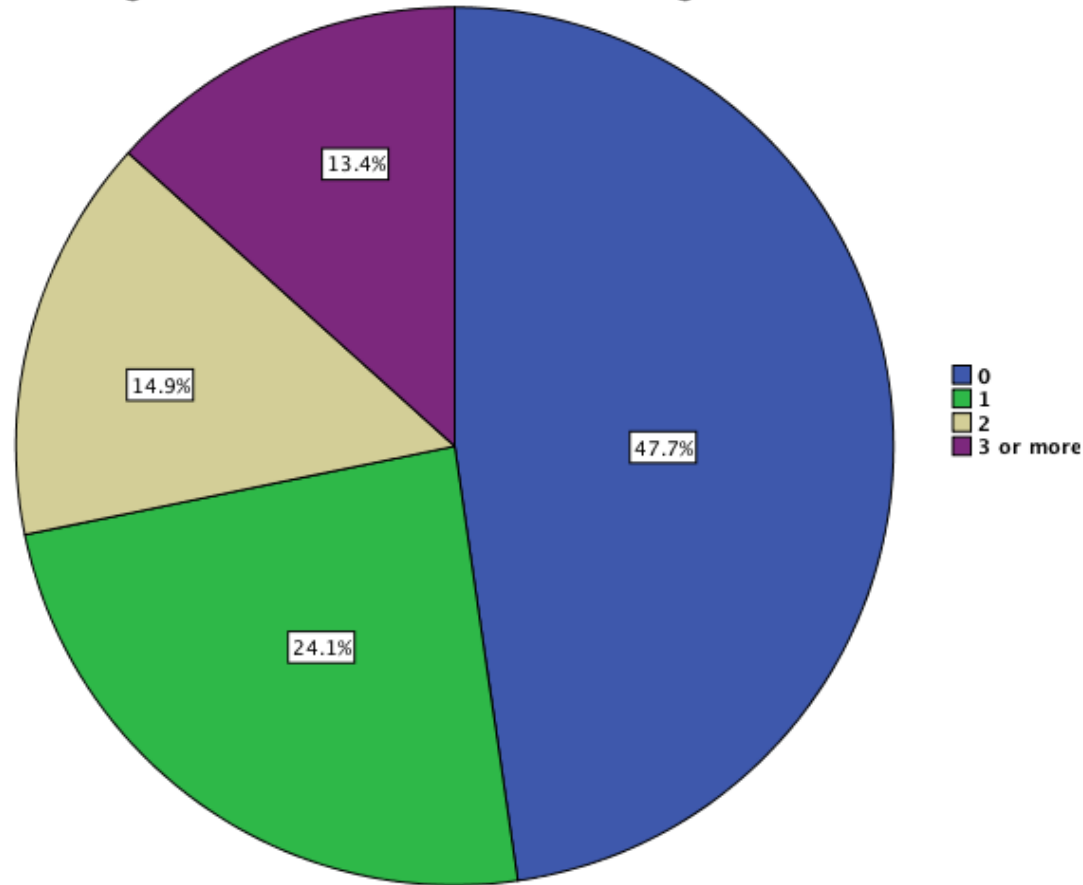
Needs Assessment Survey of Farmers' Market Consumers, N=815

Figuer 10: Number of People in Customers Household




Needs Assessment Survey of Farmers' Market Consumers, N=815

Figuer 11: Number of Children Living in Customer Households



Social Marketing Training Results

- ▶ The Social Media training was conducted on site at the end of March 2015 at two sites: Vermont Village and the Wellington Square Farmers' Markets.
 - ▶ A total of 3 males and 4 females participated in the two hour training; one person did not indicate their gender.
 - ▶ The participants ranged in age from 18 to 81.
 - ▶ A total of 3 African Americans, 2 Latinos, 1 Caucasian, and 1 Middle Eastern participated and one person did not indicate their ethnicity.
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Social Marketing Training Results

- ▶ 1. Social Marketing can be used to improve business opportunities.
 - ▶ True 6
 - ▶ False 0
 - ▶ Don't Know 1
 - ▶ No Response 1
- ▶ 2. There are numerous Social Marketing platforms on the Internet.
 - ▶ True 6
 - ▶ False 0
 - ▶ Don't Know 1
 - ▶ No Response 0

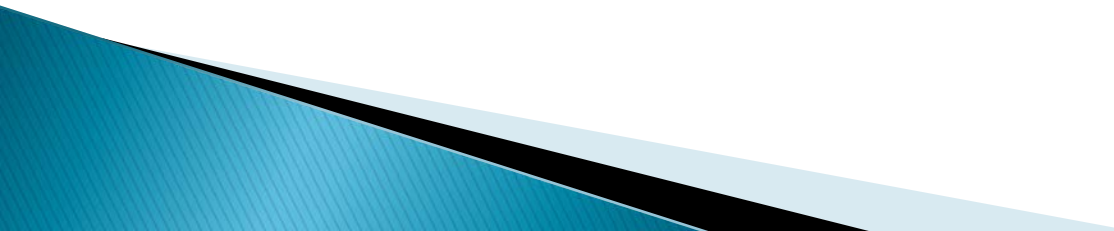
Social Marketing Training Results

- ▶ 3. You can use Twitter to promote your business.
 - ▶ True 3
 - ▶ False 1
 - ▶ Don't Know 3
 - ▶ No Response 1
- ▶ 4. You can use Facebook to promote your business
 - ▶ True 5
 - ▶ False 0
 - ▶ Don't Know 2
 - ▶ No Response 1

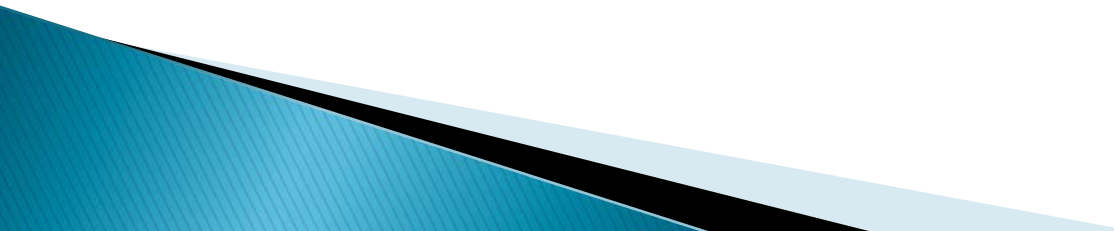
Social Media Training results

- ▶ 5. Do you currently use Social Media to promote your business?
 - ▶ Yes 4
 - ▶ No 3
 - ▶ No Response 1
- ▶ 6. Do you have access to a computer?
 - ▶ Yes 5
 - ▶ No 3

Social Media Training Results

- ▶ 7. Would you like technical assistance to develop a Facebook or Twitter account?
 - ▶ Yes 2
 - ▶ No 5
 - ▶ No Response 1
- 

Community Gardening Results

- ▶ The project established two community gardens at local elementary schools during the project period: Crenshaw Christian Center's Frederick K. Price II Elementary School and at the Lincoln/Drew Elementary School; both schools are located in SPA 6.
 - ▶ Metro Community Development Corporation was contracted to install four (4) raised garden beds at these schools in the fall of 2014 and two Master Gardeners assisted with the planting and maintenance of the gardens as well as working on an ongoing basis with the school-age youth to promote organic gardening.
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Preliminary Results: Students, ages 5 to 11, who have participated in the community gardening project since October, 2014

Since participating in the community gardening program:

1. Eat more fruits and vegetables than before?

T= 76.6% F= 15.6% DK= 6.5% NA= 1.3%

2. Know the importance of eating fruits and vegetables to stay healthy & prevent disease?

T= 92.2% F= 2.6% DK= 3.9% NA= 1.3%

3. Would rather eat fruits and vegetables instead of chips or candy for a snack?

T= 71.4% F= 10.4% DK= 15.6% NA= 2.6%

4. Helped cook some of the fresh fruits and vegetables they took home?

T= 71.4% F= 22.1% DK= 5.2% NA= 1.3%

5. Will definitely participate in the community gardening project next year?


T= 75% F= 2.6% DK= 20.8% NA= 1.3%

(N=77) Female: 55.8% Male: 42.9% NA: 1.3%

African Am.: 72.2% Latino: 5.1% White: 1.3% Asian: 1.3% Other: 2.5% NA: 12.6%

DK= don't know NA= no answer

Where Do We Go From Here?

- ▶ Sustaining the Wellington Square Certified Farmer Market
 - ▶ Partnering with Metro Community Development Corporation to develop an urban farm in SPA 6.
 - ▶ Identifying additional K–12 schools in SPA 6 to participate in the community gardening project.
 - ▶ Four additional schools have had raised beds installed since January, 2016 with a small grant from a local LA County foundation.
 - ▶ Increasing the number of farmers and non–farm producers who see the value/need to offer their services in South Los Angeles.
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References

- ▶ 1. Azuma, et al, 2010
 - ▶ 2. Morales, L. “Healthy Eating, Living Peacefully”, 2012
 - ▶ 3. Park, Watson, Galloway–Gilliam, Community Health Council Report, 2008.
 - ▶ 4. Wikipedia.org, 2014
 - ▶ 5. Wikipedia.org, 2014
 - ▶ 6. LACDPH June 2009, Key Indicators Of Health Report
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Contact Information

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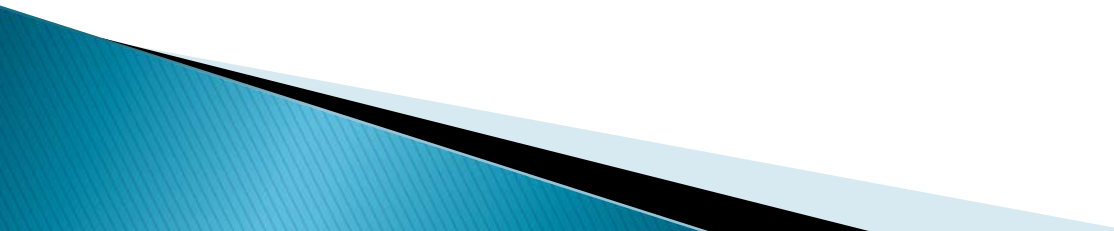
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Community Gardening Project



Community Gardening Project

