



A FRESH APPROACH TO ENDING LOCAL HUNGER

formerly the Eagan & Lakeville Resource Centers

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Findings from the 2014 Healthy Food Policy Survey at The Open Door, Eagan

New policy reinforces our commitment to health food access

The Open Door's mission is "A fresh approach to ending local hunger through access to healthy food." In September 2013, The Open Door implemented a Healthy Food Policy that formalizes our commitment to serving fresh, healthy foods at our food shelves. The policy also commits our organization to removing food with low to no-nutritional value; offering healthy food choices at staff meetings, events, and volunteer engagement activities; engaging the public in an equitable and sustainable food system; and addressing food justice and hunger relief in our community and beyond.

Our clients' response

In 2014, The Open Door surveyed food shelf clients about their satisfaction with the fresh foods offered at the Eagan Pantry, as well as their overall support for the Healthy Food Policy. Here is what we learned.

- Clients depend on us for access to healthy food. Just over half of the surveyed clients (54%) reported that it is "very difficult" or "difficult" to provide their family with healthy foods, such as fresh fruits and vegetables. Among these clients, most (88%) identified cost as a barrier to providing healthy foods to their families. The Open Door plays an important role in addressing this barrier; 48% of the clients surveyed indicated that at least half of their monthly food comes from The Open Door.
- Clients have noticed changes in the foods we offer since the Healthy Food Policy was passed. Over half (55%) of our clients shared that they noticed a difference in the food available in the past few months. Many of our clients noticed that there were more fruits and vegetables (67%) and dairy products, such as milk, butter, and yogurt (49%). Some clients also noticed less candy/pop (30%) and less donuts/cakes (29%).

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- Most clients are pleased with the selection of foods currently available. Most of our clients (86%) shared that they were “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with the selection of foods available at The Open Door. However, even with our commitment to providing fresh, healthy foods to our clients, there is still an unmet demand for increased healthy foods. When asked what they would change about the selection of foods available at The Open Door, the most common feedback provided by clients was requests for more fruits and vegetables (56%), dairy (54%), and eggs (38%).
- Most clients are supportive of the Healthy Food Policy. Over three-quarters of our clients (78%) reported that they were aware of the Healthy Food Policy and 88% indicated that they “strongly agree” or “agree” with it.



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Where we go next

The results from this survey show us that our clients desire an increased variety of fruits and vegetables, dairy items (such as milk and butter), and eggs. These results also identify our clients’ support of The Open Door’s commitment to fresh, healthy foods through the Healthy Food Policy.

In 2014, The Open Door increased the financial resources dedicated to sourcing healthy food. In addition to partnerships with local food banks and retail rescue programs, The Open Door seeks alternative sourcing methods through local farms and CSA’s, small retailers, and local growers of all sizes.

About the survey

In total, the survey was completed by 166 clients, which represents about 25% of community members who used the Eagan Pantry during the same time period. Data was analyzed by Wilder Research.

Of the 166 clients who completed the survey, 126 indicated that they were aware of the Healthy Food Policy. Over 88% of clients who reported that they were aware of the Healthy Food Policy indicated they “strongly agree” or “agree” with the Policy. When we include those who were not aware of the Healthy Food Policy, 83% of clients “strongly agree” or “agree” with the Policy. This difference may be caused by a stigma associated with the word “policy,” or a lack of clarity on the survey question.

Data analyzed by Wilder Research.

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