

Inequality Symposium

Food Insecurity in Immigrants and Underserved Communities

Seattle-SEA4

Students: Aaditya Agnihotri, Suruchi Dokka, Krish Parashar, Akanksha Ayyadevara, Atharv Shukla

Background to Need Statements

Significance of the Issue:

- Food insecurity has a profound impact on immigrants and underserved communities. Access to nutritious food is a basic human need that is required for a healthy and fulfilling a quality life Many individuals and groups struggle to meet their daily food demands, which has profound consequences on their quality of life.

Why this issue was chosen:

- This group is based in the Seattle area, and we have seen this issue persist here for a very long time, and after COVID-19, food insecurity became an even bigger problem. Not only was this issue present in homeless and immigrant communities, but also within our own schools, where the student population facing food insecurity has increased since 2021.

Tools and Techniques Used:

- We primarily used the internet to find areas in Washington with higher numbers of kids who qualify for the Free and Reduced Lunch Program
- After locating the target districts, we chose stakeholders within those districts to email, along with more high-level authorities.

Key insights from research

- Because there is already a government program in place whose primary responsibility is tackling food insecurity for children, our main insights focused on holes or spaces that those programs failed to take into account.
- **Our main insights were:**
 - Students not being aware/not signing up for the programs even when they might qualify for it (especially for non-English-speaking people/immigrants)
 - Food not being given out during days where school wasn't in session (summer vacation, quarantine, weekends, etc.)
 - Students couldn't access food in the time slots that were assigned for free food distribution.
 - Ethnic groups lacked accessibility to ethnically appropriate foods. This idea is called food sovereignty.
 - Food insecurity is tied to other socioeconomic factors including race, family status, annual income and geographic location.
 - Food insecurity is higher post-pandemic, due to less funding and grants given to food service places vs. more food service funding in the pandemic
 - Food is overproduced, and people don't have the infrastructure to store all the food, so much of it goes bad.

Final Need Statements (3-5)

1. A way to provide non-English speaking families information regarding school food programs in order to increase the proportion of non-English speaking families who have access to food service programs.
2. A way to address inefficient distribution of food for non-English speaking families in order to ensure consistent access to food which is ethnically appropriate.
1. A way to diversify meals for a multitude of racial groups in order to increase the amount of people who take advantage of free and reduced lunch programs.
1. A way to address a lack of access to food during non-school days for families that depend on the non-school program in order to reduce the number of hungry days.
1. A way to expand the amount of time that students have to be able to collect food from food service programs in order to increase accessibility of those resources.

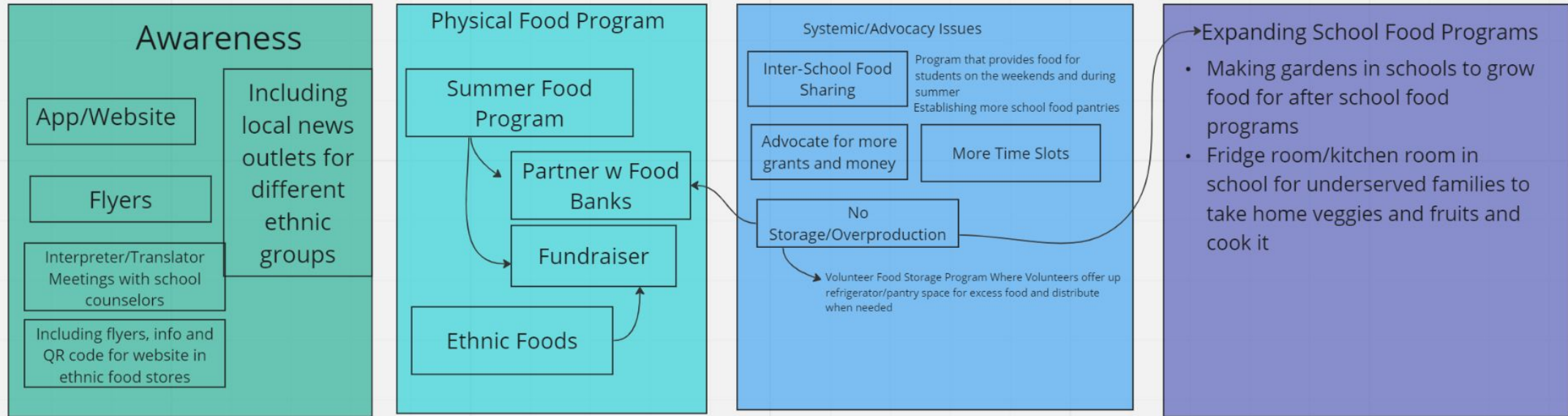
Top Need Statement

Our team decided to focus on food inequalities, specifically within communities whose access to culturally appropriate foods are limited.

1. A way to address inefficient distribution of food for non-English speaking families in order to ensure equitable access to ethnically appropriate foods (**Connects to solution partnering with food bank**)

Brainstorming Preview

Brainstorming #1 and #2



	Awareness	Physical Food Program	Systemic/Advocacy Issues
Impact (1 is lowest, 5 is highest)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • App/Website - 3.5 • Including flyers and QR Codes in ethnic food stores - 2.5 • Interpreters/Translators - 1.5 • Including local news outlets - 4.5 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summer food program - 5 • Partnering with a food bank - 4.5 • Fundraiser - 4 • Ethnic food distribution - 3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inter-School Food Sharing - 3.5 • Advocate for more grants and money - 2.5 • More time slots - 4 • School food pantries - 3.5 • Volunteer food storage program - 3
How realistic it is (1 is lowest, 5 is highest)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • App/Website - 2 • Including flyers and QR Codes in ethnic food stores - 4 • Interpreters/Translators - 1.5 • Including local news outlets - 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summer food program - 3 • Partnering with a food bank - 4 • Fundraiser - 3.5 • Ethnic food distribution - 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inter-School Food Sharing - 1.5 • Advocate for more grants and money - 2 • More time slots - 3.5 • School food pantries - 1.5 • Volunteer food storage program - 2.5
Cost (1 is most expensive, 5 is cheapest)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • App/Website - 1.5 • Including flyers and QR Codes in ethnic food stores - 3.5 • Interpreters/Translators - 2 • Including local news outlets - 1.5 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summer food program - 1 • Partnering with a food bank - 5 • Fundraiser - 2 • Ethnic food distribution - 4 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inter-School Food Sharing - 2 • Advocate for more grants and money - 1.5 • More time slots - 1.5 • School food pantries - 1.5 • Volunteer food storage program - 1

Calculations

Categories	Idea Totals
Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Including flyers and QR codes in ethnic food stores - 10 • Including local news outlets - 8 • App/Website - 7 • Interpreters/Translators - 5
Physical Food Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnering with a food bank - 13.5 • Fundraiser - 9.5 • Ethnic food distribution - 9 • Summer food program - 9
Systemic/Advocacy Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More time slots - 9 • Inter-School food sharing - 7 • School food pantries - 6.5 • Volunteer food storage program - 6.5 • Advocate for more grants and money - 6

Top ideas:

1. Partnering with a food bank - **13.5**
2. Including flyers and QR codes in ethnic food stores - **10**
3. Fundraiser - **9.5**
4. More time slots/Ethnic food distribution/Summer food program - **9**
5. Including local news outlets - **8**

Appendix

- Dornfeld, Ann. “12 Seattle Schools Have Critical Food Safety Violations. It's Worse for Low-Income Kids.” *KUOW*, KUOW Public Radio, 11 Dec. 2018, <https://www.kuow.org/stories/critical-food-safety-violations-at-cafeterias-at-12-seattle-public-schools>.
- “Food Insecurity Remains High and Need for Assistance Dramatically up in Washington.” *UW News*, <https://www.washington.edu/news/2021/07/30/food-insecurity-remains-high-and-need-for-assistance-dramatically-up-in-washington/>.
- Holly Menino, KOMO News. “Survey Shows Food Insecurity Remains High in Washington State.” *KOMO*, KOMO, 9 Mar. 2023, <https://komonews.com/news/local/food-insecurity-high-washington-state-food-banks-low-income-households-grocery-costs-increase-fuel-puget-sound-university-washington-study>.
- Lauren Paterson College of Agricultural, Human. “Study Measures Food Insecurity in Washington Families.” *WSU Insider*, 19 Nov. 2020, <https://news.wsu.edu/press-release/2020/11/19/wsu-helping-washington-families-facing-food-insecurity/>.
- “Race and Social Justice Initiative (RSJI) | Food Insecurity.” *Food Insecurity - RSJI*, <https://www.seattle.gov/rsji/racial-equity-research/food-insecurity>.
- “Thousands of University of Washington Students Rely on Campus Food Pantry to Stave Off Hunger.” *World Socialist Web Site*, <https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2023/02/15/eulg-f15.html>.
- “Wafood 1 and 2 - University of Washington.” *UW*, https://nutr.uw.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/WAFOOD2_disparities_brief_11_20210811.pdf.
- Stakeholder 1: Dr. Vasudha Sharma, Community Leader and Representative, Voice Of Planet Founder
- Stakeholder 2: Alan Ismach, research coordinator for University of Washington food system’s team