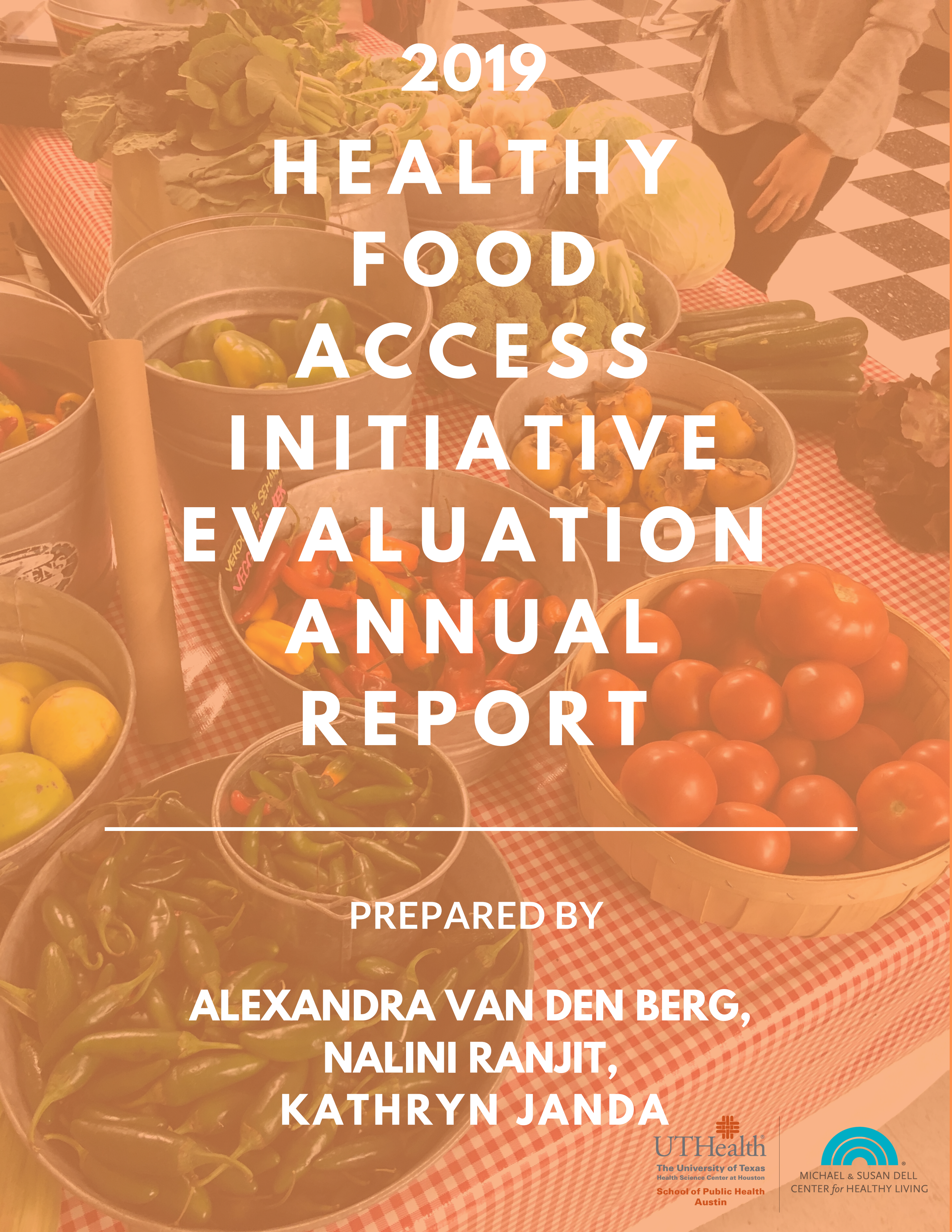

2019 HEALTHY FOOD ACCESS INITIATIVE EVALUATION ANNUAL REPORT

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INTRODUCTION

Access to affordable and quality fruits and vegetables (F&V) is a critical factor in the ability to consume a healthy diet. Individuals living in lower-income neighborhoods are less likely to have access to F&V compared to individuals living in higher income neighborhoods. Consequently, increasing access to healthy food in low-income neighborhoods has become a priority for researchers, advocates, and city planners. Although efforts to increase access have been evaluated, evidence from these studies has been limited for several reasons including weak study designs, lack of dietary intake as main outcome, and assessment of one strategy only (as opposed to comprehensive set of strategies).

In 2016, the City of Austin started the implementation of a city-wide healthy food access initiative that allocated nearly $500,000 for a comprehensive, multi-sector Healthy Food Retail Initiative (Access Initiative) in Austin's low-income communities with high rates of chronic disease risk factors. For 2017, the goals of the Access Initiative were to increase food access points where residents can purchase affordable healthy foods, with a strong emphasis on fresh F&V. The following strategies were implemented during the initial phase: 1) strategic placement of farm stands at schools and public housing, 2) stocking of fresh F&V and healthy foods in corner stores, 3) placement of mobile markets at strategic locations, and 4) use of a financial incentive program to purchase locally grown F&V. Implementation of these strategies was entrusted to three local implementing organizations: GAVA, Farmshare Austin, and the Sustainable Food Center (SFC).

In 2019, the strategies were adapted and Fresh for Less mobile markets were implemented, with Farmshare Austin handling the operations of the markets and SFC handling community outreach. This report describes the findings of an evaluation study of the Healthy Food Access Initiative in Austin for 2019, funded by the City of Austin, which was conducted by The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHealth) School of Public Health in Austin. Strategies implemented at the Fresh for Less markets are included here.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to assess the impact of the Access Initiative on F&V purchasing and consumption behaviors of community residents living in low-income areas of Austin. For the 2019 contract, the UTHealth School of Public Health in Austin team worked closely with the two implementation organizations (i.e. SFC and Farmshare Austin) and collected data from both customers and through market audits. This study also included a price comparison component which compared the prices of products sold at the markets to those sold at a larger grocery store.

METHODS

Description of the Evaluation of the Fresh for Less Markets

The market strategy was implemented by Farmshare Austin and involved 10 mobile markets at various locations in low-income communities throughout Austin and Del Valle. Markets were located at the following types of locations: two at recreation centers, two at clinics, two at elementary schools, one at a middle school, one at a low-income housing complex, one at a library, and one at a church. SFC implemented the community outreach and promotora component of the program and provided recipes and recipe sampling across all sites in the fall of 2019. The UTSPH evaluation team conducted evaluations at all 10 locations where the mobile markets were operational. The evaluation tool was administered to individuals who purchased produce and staple foods at the mobile markets. The goal was to recruit 10 individuals per location. Sales data collected by Farmshare Austin were used for the economic evaluation. Audits were also conducted at each mobile market. When possible, data from 2019 were compared to data from 2018 and 2017.

METHODS

Customer Surveys

Customer surveys were developed by the UTSPH evaluation team in collaboration with the City of Austin, Farmshare Austin, and SFC. These self-administered surveys took about five minutes to complete and included questions about socio-demographic information, food insecurity, food assistance, awareness and utilization of SNAP/SFC Double Dollar, shopping behaviors and motivation for shopping at the markets, awareness of them markets, cooking skills and self-efficacy, marketing at each of the markets, fruit and vegetable consumption, satisfaction with produce and other health food items sold at each of the markets, satisfaction with recipe sampling, how they would like to receive more information, and other topics. All instruments used for this evaluation were reviewed by the UTHealth IRB Committee (HSC-SPH-16-0388) and no data were collected until approved. All study participants received a $10 gift card as a thank you for their participation.

Participant Recruitment and Data Collection for Customer Surveys

Potential participants for the customer evaluations were approached by the UTSPH evaluation team after completing their purchase at the market. Screening criteria included the ability to read or understand English or Spanish, having purchased at least one item during the current visit, and not having taken the survey before during the 2019 data collection. This last criterion was especially important, as a number of the customers at specific markets were repeat customers. Eligible customers were told what the survey was about, informed of the $10 HEB gift card incentive, and then asked if they would be willing to participate in the study by taking the survey. Customers who provided assent were given the survey. Surveys were offered in Spanish and English. The majority of participants completed the surveys orally where survey administrators orally administered the survey in Spanish or English. Participants were also offered the option to complete the survey on their own.

Audits

Audits of each of the markets were conducted utilizing an instrument adapted from the Nutritional Environment Measurement Survey in Farmers' Markets (NEMS-FM). The NEMS-FM tool was adapted in order to have it be an appropriate assessment of markets. Two trained members of the UTSPH evaluation team independently filled out the tool for all markets. Each audit took approximately 30 minutes to complete. All audits took place during November 2019.

METHODS

Comparison Pricing Across the Food Access Points

In order to compare the prices of the most popular items sold at the three different food access points, the UTSPH evaluation team collected cost data of the items sold at farm stands and mobile markets during the late fall, as well as the commonly sold produce items that corner store managers. The UTSPH evaluation team collected prices from the corner stores, mobile markets, and farm stands and compared them to the prices of similar food items available at HEB for conventional and organic products. The grocery store, the HEB at the corner of S. 1st and William Cannon in 78745, was selected because it was the closest HEB to many of the audited food access points. The selected HEB had very limited availability of organic products, thus additional prices for organic produce were collected from the HEB on Brodie Lane and William Cannon. For some items, only conventional items were available at both stores, and this is noted in the results.

Analysis

For the analysis, frequencies were calculated for all variables obtained through the surveys. For the variables for which there were baseline data (from the 2017 evaluation) frequencies from previous years are shown. For the purposes of this report, data from the market audits are reported in terms of amount of the produce available and the varieties of produce available on the day of the audit. Price comparison data were averaged by item and unit.

RESULTS

Customer Intercept Survey Findings

A total of 101 customers were surveyed for this study. 10 customers were surveyed at each of the following locations: St. John's Church, North Austin YMCA, East Communities YMCA, Barbara Jordan Elementary School, St Elmo/Sierra Vista, and People's Community Clinic. Nine customers were surveyed at Southeast Branch Library and eight customers were surveyed at Del Valle Middle School. While 11 customers were surveyed at Popham Elementary School and 13 were surveyed at Central Health Southeast Health and Wellness. These markets were located in eight different zip codes throughout Austin and Del Valle: 78741 (Central Health Southeast Health and Wellness), 78744 (Southeast Branch Library), 78745 (St Elmo/Sierra Vista Foundation Community), 78617 (Popham Elementary and Del Valle Middle School), 78723 (East Communities YMCA), 78724 (Barbara Jordan Elementary), 78752 (People's Community Clinic), and 78758 (St John's Episcopal Church and North Austin YMCA).

Socio-demographic Information

On the following page is a summary table of demographic characteristics among the 101 customers surveyed at the markets in fall 2019 and fall 2018 as a comparison.

Almost 80% of individuals surveyed the markets identified as female which is a slight decline from 2018. Nearly 60% of participants surveyed at the markets identified as Hispanic or Latino, reflecting the ethnic composition of the larger geographical area. Approximately 30% of the customers surveyed identified as Caucasian or white and just over 9% identified as African American or black. English was the primarily language spoken at home by almost 50% of customers surveyed, and over a third of survey respondents spoke only or mostly Spanish at home. These are slight declines from 2018; however, the percentage of customers speaking both languages equally has increased, and 2% of respondents spoke another language other than English or Spanish at home n 2019.

Nearly 30% of customers surveyed at reported having a gross annual household income under $25,000, which is a slight increase from 2018. Also, approximately one third of respondents reported an income over $55,000, which is a slight increase from 2018. Much like in 2018, we had a very low rate of people refusing to disclose their income.

RESULTS

Customer Intercept Survey Findings

Socio-demographic Information Continued

	Mobile Markets 2018		Mobile Markets 2019	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Gender				
Female	38	84.44	80	79.21
Male	7	15.56	20	19.8
Non-binary	0	0	1	0.99
Other	0	0	0	0
Race/Ethnicity				
African American or Black	0	0	9	9.09
Hispanic or Latino	29	65.91	57	57.58
Caucasian or White	14	31.82	29	29.29
Asian	0	0	2	2.02
American Indian or Alaska Native	0	0	0	0
Middle Eastern or North African	0	0	0	0
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0	0	0	0
Multiple Race	0	0	2	2.02
Other	1	2.27	0	0
Language Normally Spoken at Home				
Only/mostly English	24	54.55	49	48.51
Equally English and Spanish	3	6.82	15	14.85
Only/mostly Spanish	17	38.64	35	34.65
Other Language	0	0	2	1.98
Gross Annual Income for 2018				
Under $25,000	12	26.67	29	29.29
$25,001-$35,000	6	13.33	14	14.14
$35,001-$45,000	8	17.78	11	11.11
$45,001-$55,000	4	8.89	9	9.09
$55,001 or greater	13	28.89	33	33.34
Do not wish to disclose	2	4.44	3	3.03

RESULTS

Customer Intercept Survey Findings

Food Insecurity

Nearly a quarter of respondents stated they were sometimes or always food insecure in 2019, this is very similar to findings from 2017, and a slight increase from 2018. This prevalence is higher than the national, state, and Austin average prevalence, thus showing that the markets are reaching those in need.

How often do you run out of food at the end of the month because you can't afford to buy more?	Mobile Markets		
	Percent 2017	Percent 2018	Percent 2019
Almost Always or Always Food Insecure	5.68	6.67	4.95
Sometimes Food Insecure	19.32	15.56	19.8
Almost Never or Never Food Insecure	75	77.78	75.25

Food Assistance

Although the majority of people surveyed at the markets were not on any type of food assistance, there were substantial differences in customers reporting food assistance from 2017 thru 2019.

Are you or anyone else on any type of food assistance?	Mobile Markets		
	Percent 2017	Percent 2018	Percent 2019
SNAP	9.09	15.56	22.77
WIC	5.68	8.89	10.89
Food Pantry	3.41	2.22	4.95
None	72.73	66.67	65.35

*Individuals could report more than one type of food assistance

There was a slight increase in 2019 for those reporting using food assistance, with 34.7% of respondents reporting using some type of food assistance in the past year. SNAP was the most utilized food assistance program, with 22.77% of customers surveyed utilizing SNAP in 2019. This is an over 7% increase from 2018.

RESULTS

Customer Intercept Survey Findings

Socio-demographic Information Continued

Food Assistance Continued

Have used the following at the market...	Mobile Markets		
	Percent 2017	Percent 2018	Percent 2019
SNAP Card	6	11.11	12.87
SFC Double Dollars	6	11.11	12.87
Loyalty Card	12	57.78	43.56
Coupon	0	0	2.97
I did not know I could use SNAP or Double Dollar at this FS/MM	n/a	2.72	0.99
I have not used any of these at this market	n/a	33.33	41.58

Few participants surveyed at markets used their SNAP Cards, but it was a slight increase from 2018. There was greater SNAP Card utilization at farm stands, but levels were still low; however, given other reported sales data, we understand that this could be due to having conducted the same number of surveys at each market, and that there are specific markets that drive greater SNAP utilization (Sierra Vista/St Elmo, Central Health, etc.).

However, reported SFC Double Dollar usage has continued to slightly increase from 2018 to 2019. Also, the usage of loyalty cards from 2018 to 2019 had a slight decline, however (as will be discussed later) approximately a third of customers surveyed in 2019 were first time shoppers, thus this number could indicate that there are many new shoppers in 2019. Also, there were very low rates of customers not knowing that they could use SNAP or SFC Double Dollars at the markets (less than 1%).

If the market did not accept SNAP, how likely would you be to shop here?	Mobile Markets		
	Percent 2017	Percent 2018	Percent 2019
Not at all	3	6.98	21.05
A little	1	2.33	10.53
Somewhat	4	9.3	23.16
A lot	35	81.4	45.26

RESULTS

Customer Intercept Survey Findings

Socio-demographic Information Continued

Food Assistance Continued

However, there was a dramatic almost 15% increase from 2018 to 2019 in the percentage of customers who reported that they would no longer shop at the market if they no longer accepted SNAP. Anecdotally, while there were some customers that were not eligible for SNAP, they stated when asked this question that they shop at these locations partially to help it to thrive in their community so their friends and neighbors on SNAP can find affordable and high-quality produce nearby.

SFC Double Dollars (Double Up Food Bucks)

While there have been questions on the survey about SFC Double Dollars (Double Up Food Bucks) since the start of the UTHealth evaluation, there were several new questions regarding SFC Double Dollars (Double Up Food Bucks) in 2019.

I know what SFC Double Dollars (Double Up Food Bucks) are	Mobile Markets		
	Percent 2017	Percent 2018	Percent 2019
Yes	29.55	31.11	43.56
No	70.45	68.89	56.44

Despite low utilization rates of SNAP and SFC Double Dollars (Double Up Food Bucks, there was a high level of awareness about SFC Double Dollars (Double Up Food Bucks). This was a greater than 12% increase in SFC Double Dollars (Double Up Food Bucks) awareness from 2018 to 2019.

Do you shop at any other locations that accept SFC Double Dollars (Double Up Food Bucks)	Mobile Markets	
	Frequency	Percent
Yes	5	5.21
No, only at this market	19	19.79
No, I do not use SFC Double Dollars (Double Up Food Bucks)	72	75.00

RESULTS

Customer Intercept Survey Findings

Socio-demographic Information Continued

SFC Double Dollars (Double Up Food Bucks) Continued

One new question for 2019 was regarding if the customers surveyed shop at any other locations that accept SFC Double Dollars (Double Up Food Bucks). While the majority of participants surveyed did not use SFC Double Dollars (Double Up Food Bucks), the majority of participants that do use SFC Double Dollars (Double Up Food Bucks) use them at the market surveyed. Of those that used them at other markets, they reported using them at large farmers' market, specifically: SFC Republic Square Market, SFC Sunset Valley Market, and the Mueller Farmers' Market.

Do you think that SFC Double Dollars (Double Up Food Bucks) are...	Mobile Markets	
	Frequency	Percent
Confusing	5	4.95
Easy to use	20	19.8
Challenging	0	0
Not applicable, I do not use SFC Double Dollars (Double Up Food Bucks)	73	72.28
Other	2	1.98

Another additional SFC Double Dollars (Double Up Food Bucks) related question was regarding perceptions about their ease (or lack thereof) of utilization. While the question was not applicable for the majority of participants, the majority of respondents reported that they were easy to use.

RESULTS

Customer Intercept Survey Findings

Shopping Behaviors and Motivations

According to individuals surveyed the main reasons for shopping at the markets included the following: 1) supporting local farmers/businesses, 2) convenient location when they are already at the partner site for other services/reasons, and 3) convenient location near home. It is notable that supporting local farmers/businesses and convenient locations were the two most popular reasons for shopping at mobile markets since 2017 and perhaps these factors should be specifically emphasized in promotional materials. While not explicitly asked about, many respondents also noted that the availability of locally grown, organic produce, and friendly/bilingual staff were key motivating factors, and why the "other" response option was so substantial. These factors have been noted and will be included in the 2020 evaluation plan.

Why did you decide to shop at the market today?	Mobile Markets	
	Frequency	Percent
I like to support local farmers/businesses	57	56.44
Conveniently located to shop here when I am here already for services/appointments/picking up my child from school, etc.	56	55.45
Conveniently located to my house	48	47.52
There is a good selection	46	45.54
The hours are convenient	33	32.67
Items here are reasonably priced	33	32.67
It is a safe place	28	27.72
Because the market accepts SNAP	12	11.88
My kids like to come here	10	9.9
My friend(s) recommended that I shop here	9	8.91
Because the market accepts SFC Double Dollars (Double Up Food Bucks)	6	5.94
Other	18	17.82

*Respondents could select more than one option

RESULTS

Customer Intercept Survey Findings

Shopping Behaviors and Motivations Continued

How satisfied are you with the service and interaction with market staff and educators	Mobile Markets	
	Frequency	Percent
Very Unsatisfied	0	0
Unsatisfied	0	0
Neither Unsatisfied or Satisfied	0	0
Satisfied	11	10.89
Very Satisfied	90	89.11

In fact, when specifically asked about satisfaction with staff working at the markets, all customers surveyed reported being satisfied or very satisfied with market staff and educators. Many respondents added on to this statement by stating that having bilingual staff really enhances their experience. Additionally, many stated that they tell their friends and family about how friendly, nice, and accommodating the staff are.

Eating healthy is important to me	Mobile Markets	
	Frequency	Percent
Not at all	0	0
A little	0	0
Somewhat	9	8.91
A lot	92	91.09

Another potential marketing point is to state that the foods provided at the market are healthy. This could be particularly effective at promoting the markets, since 100% of customers surveyed reported that eating healthy is somewhat or very important to them.

RESULTS

Customer Intercept Survey Findings

Shopping Behaviors and Motivations Continued

During the last two months, how many times have you visited this market?	Mobile Markets	
	Frequency	Percent
This is my first time	33	32.67
This is my second time	14	13.86
This is my third time	7	6.93
I have been here four or more times	46	45.54

There was also substantial evidence of repeat shopping at the markets. Over 50% of the individuals surveyed at the markets had either been there three or more times in the last two months. However, nearly a third of all participants surveyed were first time customers, meaning that there is still growth in the customer base for the markets.

How do you usually get here?	Mobile Markets	
	Frequency	Percent
Car (driving)	81	80.2
Bus	5	4.95
Walking	10	9.9
Biking	0	0
With a friend/got a ride	4	3.96
Other	0	0

Lived more than a mile from the market	Mobile Markets	
	Frequency	Percent
Yes	66	65.35
No	35	34.65

The majority of those surveyed drive to the market locations, this is to be expected since most participants surveyed live over one mile away. However, nearly 10% of those surveyed walk to the market.

RESULTS

Customer Intercept Survey Findings

Shopping Behaviors and Motivations Continued

Usual Shopping Behaviors for Fruits and Vegetables

Nearly all of the customers surveyed usually obtain their fruits and vegetables for their families at supermarkets, followed by Fresh for Less Markets, small grocery stores or bodegas, and farmers' markets. While it may seem strange that not all respondents said they usually get their fruits and vegetables from the Fresh for Less Markets, but a third of those surveyed were first time customers, and they affected that response rate.

Where do you usually obtain fruits and vegetables for your family	Mobile Markets	
	Frequency	Percent
Supermarket	96	95.05
Small Grocery Store or Bodega	21	20.79
Convenience Store/Corner Store	3	2.97
Farmers' Market	19	18.81
Own Garden or Community Garden	4	3.96
Fresh for Less Market	68	67.33
I don't buy fruits and vegetables for my family	0	0

RESULTS

Customer Intercept Survey Findings

Marketing

Most people learned about the markets by driving or walking by and deciding to stop, promotional materials (flyers, signs, etc.) near the market, or on their usual visit to the participating sites (for work or other reasons). Thus, physical promotional materials such as flyers, and seeing the markets were relatively effective at making customers aware and motivating them to shop, while it appears that social media channels, door hangers, knocking on doors and other strategies had limited impact. The popularity of a location should be considered when thinking about where to place future markets.

How did you find out about the market?	Mobile Markets	
	Frequency	Percent
Driving/walking by and decided to stop	28	27.72
Poster/flyer/sign at the market or on the street near the market	19	18.81
I work here (but not at the market)	17	16.83
On my normal visits to this location (clinic, school, rec center, etc.)	14	13.86
Family/Friend	11	10.89
From my child's school/school newsletter	8	7.92
Farmers' Market	5	4.95
At another Fresh For Less Market	5	4.95
Door Hanger	5	4.95
Church Newsletter	5	4.95
Community Event	4	3.96
NextDoor	4	3.96
WIC Clinic	3	2.97
Website	3	2.97
Social Media	3	2.97
Someone knocked on my door and told me about this market	2	1.98
Food Bank	0	0
Newspaper	0	0
Texting Service	0	0
Radio	0	0
Other	3	2.97

RESULTS

Customer Intercept Survey Findings

Marketing Continued

Future Marketing Strategies

The majority of customers at markets preferred to receive information over text or email. Several customers anecdotally stated that they used to receive the texting service, and they really appreciated those reminders. Thus, Farmshare Austin should perhaps consider providing the texting service for customers to opt-in to again.

How would you like to receive information about the markets?	Mobile Markets	
	Frequency	Percent
Phone Call	8	7.92
Texting	42	41.58
Email	43	42.57
Facebook	16	15.84
Other	14	13.86

What kind of information would you like to receive about the markets?	Mobile Markets	
	Frequency	Percent
Weekly Products	50	49.5
Hours	30	29.7
Weather Closures	48	47.52
Special Events	58	57.43
Other	16	15.84

Most respondents wanted information about special events at the markets, and nearly half of those surveyed wanted information about weekly products and weather closures. Additionally, nearly all of those responding "other" wanted information about other market locations and hours that were available.

How likely are you to tell your friends/neighbors about this market	Mobile Markets	
	Frequency	Percent
Very unlikely	2	1.98
Somewhat unlikely	0	0
Neither likely nor unlikely	0	0
Somewhat likely	10	9.9
Very likely	89	88.12

Additionally, nearly all of the customers surveyed reported that they would be somewhat or very likely to talk to their friends and neighbors about the market. Perhaps harnessing the potential for word of mouth marketing should be capitalized on.

RESULTS

Customer Intercept Survey Findings

Fruit and Vegetable Consumption and Satisfaction

Fruit and Vegetable Consumption

Fresh vegetables, followed by fresh fruits and then staple goods were the most commonly purchased items on the days of the survey. Over 86% of customers surveyed reported buying fresh vegetables at the market on the day of the survey. This could be due to the fact that eating healthy is incredibly important to the customers surveyed (as mentioned previously), or because the markets carried more vegetables in terms of quantity and variety offered (as will be discussed in the audit section). This finding is unique from the Mobile Market Interviews conducted with national organizations, who stated that fresh fruit were the most commonly purchased items when sold.

What did you buy today at this farm stand/mobile market (check all that apply)?	Mobile Markets	
	Frequency	Percent
Fresh Fruit	60	59.41
Fresh Vegetables	87	86.14
Staple Goods	46	45.54

Amount Consumed: The majority of customers surveyed believed that their families consume more fruits and vegetables because of the farm stand/mobile market. Specifically, nearly 80% of mobile market customers surveyed somewhat or strongly agree that the amount of fruits and vegetables their family eats has increased as a result of the mobile market. These findings are consistent with what was found in 2018. Additionally, with many first time shoppers at the market, this is a very impressive finding.

As a result of shopping at the market the amount of fruits and vegetables my family eats has increased	Mobile Markets	
	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	3	3.09
Somewhat Disagree	1	1.03
Neither Agree or Disagree	17	17.53
Somewhat Agree	18	18.56
Strongly Agree	58	59.79

RESULTS

Customer Intercept Survey Findings

Fruit and Vegetable Consumption and Satisfaction Continued

Fruit and Vegetable Consumption Continued

Variety Consumed: The majority of customers surveyed believed that the variety of fruits and vegetables their family eats has increased as a result of shopping at that food access point. Specifically, over 82% of customers somewhat agree or strongly agree that the variety of fruits and vegetables their family eats has increased as a result of the mobile market. This is a notable increase from the 68.89% of mobile market customers surveyed in 2018 that reported greater variety of fruit and vegetable consumption due to shopping at the market.

As a result of shopping at the market the variety of fruits and vegetables my family eats has increased	Mobile Markets	
	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	3	3.09
Somewhat Disagree	0	0
Neither Agree or Disagree	14	14.43
Somewhat Agree	23	23.71
Strongly Agree	57	58.76

Fruit and Vegetable Satisfaction

Overall, it appears that the majority of customers surveyed were satisfied or very satisfied with the variety of fruits and vegetables sold at the survey location. For instance, 95.05% of market customers surveyed were satisfied or very satisfied with the variety of fruits and vegetables sold at the markets. This is a consistent finding from 2017 and 2018, and is a slight increase in overall satisfaction with the variety of fruits and vegetables sold at the markets.

RESULTS

Customer Intercept Survey Findings

Fruit and Vegetable Consumption and Satisfaction

Fruit and Vegetable Satisfaction Continued

	Mobile Markets 2018		Mobile Markets 2019	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
How satisfied are you with the variety of fruits and vegetables sold at the...				
Very Unsatisfied	0	0.00	0	0
Unsatisfied	1	2.22	2	1.98
Neither Unsatisfied or Satisfied	2	4.44	3	2.97
Satisfied	11	24.44	29	28.71
Very Satisfied	31	68.89	67	66.34
How satisfied are you with the quality of fruits and vegetables sold at the...				
Very Unsatisfied	0	0.00	0	0
Unsatisfied	0	0.00	0	0
Neither Unsatisfied or Satisfied	1	2.22	2	1.98
Satisfied	10	22.22	15	14.85
Very Satisfied	34	75.56	84	83.17
How satisfied are you with the prices of fruits and vegetables sold at the...				
Very Unsatisfied	0	0.00	2	1.98
Unsatisfied	0	0.00	0	0
Neither Unsatisfied or Satisfied	3	6.67	4	3.96
Satisfied	10	22.22	18	17.82
Very Satisfied	32	71.11	77	76.24

The majority of customers surveyed were satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of fruits and vegetables sold at the survey location. For instance, 98.02% of market customers surveyed were satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of fruits and vegetables sold at the markets. This is a consistent finding from 2017 and 2018, and is a slight increase in overall satisfaction with the quality of fruits and vegetables sold at the markets.

Customers surveyed also were satisfied with the prices of the fruits and vegetables. For instance, 94.06% of market customers surveyed were satisfied or very satisfied with the prices of fruits and vegetables sold at the mobile markets. This is a consistent finding from 2017 and 2018, and is a slight increase in overall satisfaction with the pricing of fruits and vegetables sold at the markets.

RESULTS

Customer Intercept Survey Findings

Staple Goods and Healthy Food Items Consumption and Satisfaction

Staple Goods and Healthy Food Items Consumption

Staple Goods and Healthy Items Consumption: Over 60% of customers surveyed reported that their family has increased the amount of staple goods that they eat due to shopping at the market. Additionally, only about 1% of those reported not buying any staple goods at the market, which nearly a 15% differential from 2018, where 22% reported not buying staple goods at the market.

As a result of shopping at market the amount of staple goods my family eats has increased	Mobile Markets	
	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	3	3.06
Somewhat Disagree	4	4.08
Neither Agree or Disagree	31	31.6
Somewhat Agree	26	26.53
Strongly Agree	33	33.67
I don't buy staple goods here	9	8.91

How satisfied are you with the variety of staple goods sold at the...	Mobile Markets	
	Frequency	Percent
Very Unsatisfied	1	0.99
Unsatisfied	0	0
Neither Unsatisfied or Satisfied	5	4.95
Satisfied	34	33.66
Very Satisfied	52	51.49
I don't buy staple goods here	9	8.91

Satisfaction with Staple Goods and Healthy Food Items: Over 85% of mobile market customers surveyed were satisfied or very satisfied with the variety of staple goods sold at the mobile markets. This is an increase by over 10% from 2018.

RESULTS

Customer Intercept Survey Findings

Recipes and Recipe Sampling

New to the 2019 intervention was the presence of community outreach and recipe sampling at all markets in the fall 2019 season. Therefore, questions about the recipe cards, samples, etc. were included in the 2019 evaluation. All data collection occurred on the same day or the following week that promotoras and SFC staff were offering food samples and recipes at the markets.

Which of the following have you used at the market?	Mobile Markets	
	Frequency	Percent
Recipe cards	41	40.59
Food samples	34	33.66
Community event	14	13.86
Tip sheets	17	16.83
In person/verbal tips	36	35.64
None of these	33	32.67

Over 40% of the customers surveyed stated that they had received recipe cards, and over one third of customers reporting receiving in person/verbal tips from market staff and/or promotoras, and food samples. Almost a third of customers reported receiving none of these services.

How satisfied are you with the recipes and/or samples that you have received at the market	Mobile Markets	
	Frequency	Percent
Very Unsatisfied	0	0
Unsatisfied	0	0
Neither Unsatisfied or Satisfied	8	8.33
Satisfied	20	20.83
Very Satisfied	32	33.33
I have never received a sample or recipe at this market	36	37.5

Of those that received recipes and samples, the vast majority were satisfied or very satisfied with the recipes and samples. All respondents that had received a recipe or sample reported that they were healthy, tasty, and a nice motivation to cook healthier meals at home.

RESULTS

Customer Intercept Survey Findings

Recipes and Recipe Sampling Continued

Did receiving the recipe cards, food samples, tip sheets, and/or other resources at the market lead you to do any of the following?	Mobile Markets	
	Frequency	Percent
Buy an item you have never purchased before	32	31.68
Buy an item that you have never tasted before	19	18.81
Buy an item that you normally would have been hesitant to buy	15	14.85
Try a new recipe at home	29	28.71
Get someone in your family to try something new	21	20.79
Share a recipe with a family member or friend that you got from the market	11	10.89
It did not change my shopping or cooking behaviors	19	18.81
Other	6	5.94

Of those that had received a recipe, sample, or other resources, almost one third reported buying an item they never purchased before because of the additional insight. Also, nearly 30% reported trying a new recipe at home. Again, since many of the respondents had just received the sample and/or recipe, it would be interesting to ask these questions again after several iterations of recipe sampling at the markets.

RESULTS

Customer Intercept Survey Findings

Cooking Skills and Self-Efficacy

Starting in the 2018 analysis, questions about cooking skills and efficacy were also included. Specifically, respondents were asked how many times in the last week they ate a home cooked dinner at home, and how confident they felt making a meal from scratch that uses raw vegetables as ingredients.

During the PAST WEEK, how many times did you eat a home cooked dinner at home?	Mobile Markets	
	Frequency	Percent
Never	1	1.00
A few times (1-2)	6	6.00
Sometimes (3-4)	17	17.00
Many times (5 or more)	76	76.00

How confident are you in preparing a home cooked meal that uses raw vegetables as ingredients	Mobile Markets	
	Frequency	Percent
Not at all confident	1	0.99
A little confident	1	0.99
Somewhat confident	12	11.88
Pretty confident	19	18.81
Very Confident	68	67.33

Approximately 93% of respondents having a home-cooked meal at home 3 or more times in the While these rates are very high, this is a slight decrease from 2018.

Over two thirds of respondents reported being very confident about being able to prepare a home cooked meal that uses raw vegetables as ingredients. These findings are consistent to what was found in the 2018 analysis.

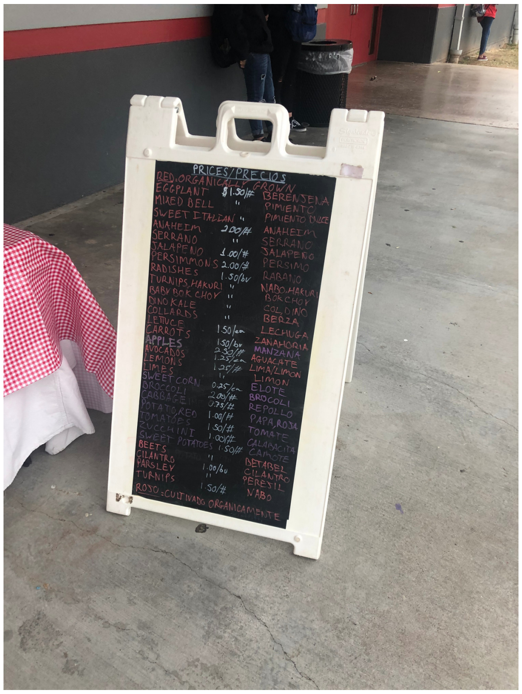
RESULTS

Audits

Market Audits

Audits were conducted at all 10 markets. All audits were completed in November 2019, therefore the understanding of seasonality and that limitation for the availability of different types of fruits and vegetables must be considered. On audited days markets had on average over 4 types of fruit, 25 types of vegetables, and 16 types of staple goods (various sizes of honey and types of pasta were considered as one staple good for the purpose of this analysis) on audited days in 2019. This is an increase across all categories from 2018, with the number of vegetables being carried nearly doubled from 2018 to 2019. Also, of note is the quantity of produce provided. While this was not measured in 2018, it was anecdotally notable to all data collectors that the quantity of produce available at all markets was "abundant" and that is a minimum of 1.5 times the amount of produce carried in 2018. All markets had Fresh for Less Signage present in the immediate and/or surrounding area of all markets on the days of the audit.

	Mobile Markets 2018	Mobile Markets 2019
Average Number of Fruit Varieties Sold	2.5	4
Average Number of Vegetable Varieties Sold	14	25
Number of Staple Good Varieties Sold	14	16
Presence of FFL Signage	Present at All	Present at All



RESULTS

Price Comparison

The prices of conventional and organic produce were collected from an HEB in South Austin located near many of the farm stands and corner stores. The prices were averaged based upon the price and unit sold at the store. All HEB prices were collected on the same day. Produce sold at markets were organic, and the price data was collected by data collectors from the UTSPH evaluation team on the day of the audit. All prices were to be compared across the same units

Item	Price HEB Conventional	Price HEB Organic	FFL Market Price
Fruit			
Apple	$1.24/lb	$1.97/lb	$2.50/lb
Lemon	$2.10/lb	$2.23/lb	**$1.25/lb***
Lime	$0.94/lb	$2.72/lb	**$1.25/lb***
Persimmon	$6.50/lb	NS	**$2.00/lb****
Vegetable			
Lettuce	$1.78/head	$1.98/head	**$1.50/head****
Kale	$0.98/bunch	$1.98/bunch	**$1.50/bunch***
Collards	$0.98/bunch	$1.98/bunch	**$1.50/bunch***
Baby Bok Choy	$2.48/bunch	NS	**$1.50/bunch***
Broccoli	$1.25/lb	$2.96/lb	**$2.00/lb***
Carrots	$1.28/lb	$2.48/lb	**$1.50/lb***
Tomatoes	$1.25/lb	$2.48/lb	**$1.50/lb***
Avocado	$0.58/each	$1.33/each	**$1.25/each***
Sweet Potato	$0.88/lb	$1.59/lb	**$1.50/lb***
Potato (red)	$0.98/lb	$1.09/lb	**$1.00/lb***
Cabbage	$0.58/lb	$0.98/lb	**$0.75/lb***
Serrano Peppers	$1.48/lb	NS	$2.00/lb
Jalapeno Peppers	$0.65/lb	NS	$1.00/lb
Sweet Italian Peppers	$2.95/lb	$6.64/lb	**$1.50/lb****
Bell Peppers	$0.99/lb	$5.76/lb	**$1.50/lb***
Anaheim Peppers	$1.78/lb	NS	$2.00/lb
Corn	$0.79/ear	NS	**$0.25/ear****
Zucchini/Yellow Squash	$1.18/lb	$2.28/lb	**$1.00/lb****
Red Radish	$0.88/bunch	$1.98/bunch	**$1.50/bunch***
Purple Daikon	NS	NS	$1.50/lb
White Daikon	$1.88/bunch	NS	**$1.50/bunch****
Turnip	$1.58/lb	NS	**$1.50/lb****
Beets	$1.98/lb	$2.98/lb	**$1.50/bunch****
Parsley	$0.65/bunch	$1.48/bunch	**$1.00/bunch***
Cilantro	$0.35/bunch	$1.28/bunch	**$1.00/bunch***

Key – NS = Not Sold on Day of Audit, * = Priced less than HEB organic,
** = Priced less than HEB organic and conventional

RESULTS

Price Comparison

Item	Price HEB Conventional	Price HEB Organic	FFL Market Price
Staple Goods			
Spaghetti	$1.18	$1.48	**$1.25***
Penne	$1.38	$1.68	**$1.25***
Pasta Sauce	$1.72	$7.65	**$2.00***
Honey	1 lb. = $4.98; 12oz = $3.98; 8oz = NS	1lb = $6.98; 12oz = $5.48; 8oz = $4.25	1lb = $7.75; 12 oz = $5.75; 8oz = $4.25
Olive Oil	$3.74	$4.99	**$4.50***
Black Beans	$1.12	$1.75	**$1.00****
Pinto Beans	$0.96	$1.75	**$1.00***
Garbanzo Beans	$0.96	$1.75	**$1.00***
Chicken Broth	$1.50	$1.98	**$1.50***
Vegetable Broth	$1.18	$1.69	**$1.50***
Balsamic Vinegar	$2.00	$6.00	**$3.50***
ACV	$1.57	$5.98	**$3.25***
Canola Oil	$1.85	NS	**$2.75**
Peanut Butter	$2.37	$3.39	**$3.25***
Eggs	$1.20	$5.98	**$3.75***
Sparkling Water	$2.66 for 12	NS	$2.00 for 6

Key – NS = Not Sold on Day of Audit, * = Priced lower than HEB organic,
** = Priced lower than HEB organic and conventional

When taking into account the unit sold, markets also sold their organic produce at lower prices than large grocers for the nearly all fresh produce items when organic options were sold at HEB. Additionally, there were several produce items that the markets sold at lower prices than even HEB conventional prices. Additionally, markets sold all staple goods at lower prices than HEB organic with the exception of honey and sparkling water. This is notable since in 2018, the market often sold their staple goods at higher prices than HEB organic prices, with the exception of peanut butter, eggs, canola oil, and pasta sauce.

CONCLUSIONS

The Fresh for Less Market initiative was very successful given that that was very high overall satisfaction with prices, quality, and variety of fruits and vegetables sold among customers surveyed. The intervention served low-income communities as intended. Also, the majority of people surveyed at markets were frequent shoppers. There have been sustained increases from 2017 through 2019 in SNAP, SFC Double Dollar, and substantial increases in loyalty card usage. Therefore, there is a strong base of repeat customers and there has been growth in reaching communities in need. Also, the majority of customers surveyed reported increases in the amount and variety of fruit and vegetables and the amount of staple goods consumed as a result of shopping at the mobile market. There were notable increases in quantity and variety of produce and staple goods carried by the markets from 2018 to 2019. Markets also had incredibly competitive pricing for their products when compared to organic produce and staple good offerings at larger grocery stores.

Most customers surveyed learned about the markets by driving by/their normal visits to the store, school flyers, or from frequenting the site (library, recreational center, etc.). A media campaign to raise awareness of the new food access points in the community among residents could increase sales substantially, given the high satisfaction rates noted. This additional marketing should emphasize that the produce is supplied by local farmers and the convenient locations of the markets, since those were the number one reasons for shopping at the mobile markets according to customers surveyed. We would also like to note that we found good communication between the evaluation team, Austin Public Health, Farmshare Austin, SFC, market coordinators, and promotoras to be instrumental for the success of our evaluation. The UTSPH Evaluation Team is incredibly thankful for all of our collaborators work to encourage and foster that communication.

In conclusion, the Fresh For Less program designed to increase access to healthy food among low-income communities in Austin and the greater Austin area has been well received in 2019. High satisfaction rates and the strong presence of frequent shoppers signify that the markets are well utilized and supported among those that shop at them. Greater marketing could increase the number of customers and communities served in the future. Strong communication between all collaborating partners of Fresh For Less resulted in a successful evaluation and hope to foster this communication on future Fresh For Less evaluations.

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR QUESTIONS PLEASE CONTACT THE UTSPH EVALUATION TEAM -

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