



The Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) in Vermont: A 2023 Study

About CSFP: The Commodity Supplemental Food Program is a federal program that provides monthly boxes of food to roughly 1,800 older adults in Vermont who have household incomes at or below 130% of the federal poverty guidelines. The program is a resource for older people in Vermont experiencing food insecurity. More than half (56%) of recent CSFP participants experienced food insecurity in the past year.

About the study: Vermont Foodbank staff conducted mixed-methods research including 18 semi-structured interviews and a mail- and internet-based survey of 1,000 current and former CSFP participants. The Foodbank is using the study to identify potential program improvements and to inform a pilot program providing home-delivered food for older adults.

Summary of Findings

Many CSFP recipients report positive experiences with the program.

Almost all participants (94%) report that the staff and volunteers they interact with in the program treat them very respectfully.

“I like some of the food you get, not a lot of it. It helps, it does help.”

~ Study Participant

Many participants say that some of the food they receive does not fit their diet or is not food they prefer.

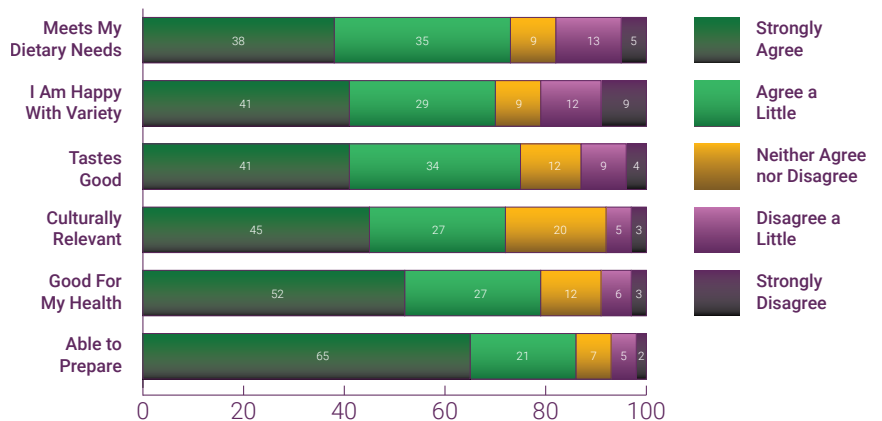


Three in four recipients say they would choose to receive at least somewhat different foods from what they currently receive in their CSFP box.

“Anything with carbohydrates, as a diabetic, I’m not supposed to eat.”

~ Study Participant

Percent Agreement with Statements About CSFP Food



Transportation access and disability make picking up the food boxes a challenge for some participants.



One in four participants who recently dropped out of the program did so because they could no longer retrieve their own boxes.

“I just didn’t have the transportation to go and get it and bring it back.”

~ Study Participant

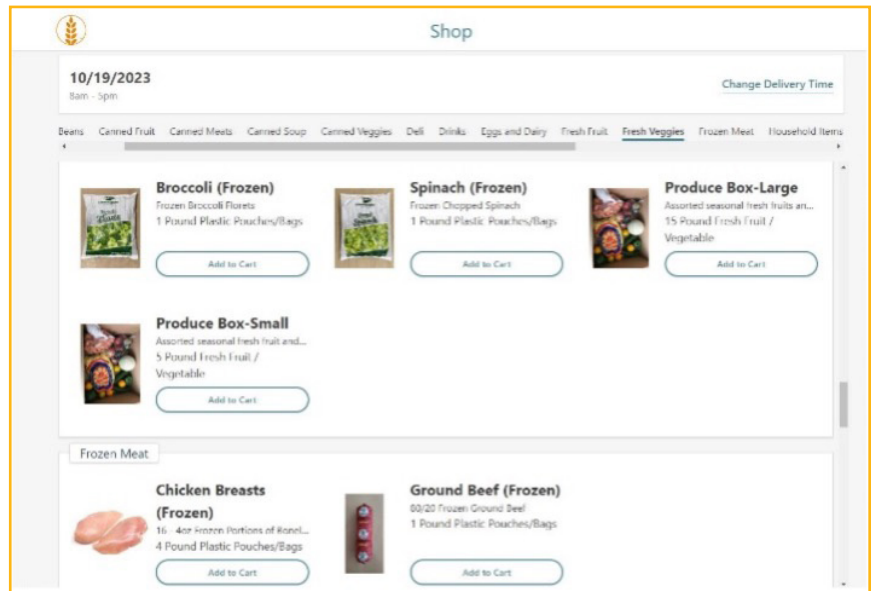
In general, respondents value the support they receive from CSFP, and their experiences also suggest opportunities to improve food choice and access.

Next Steps

The findings from this study confirm previous feedback that CSFP recipients have given to the Vermont Foodbank. In response, The Vermont Foodbank is currently piloting a program that delivers fresh, frozen, and shelf-stable food to CSFP recipients' homes monthly. Participants in the pilot are able to choose the items they receive each month. The program will be evaluated after its 9-month implementation period concludes in March, 2024.

Pilot participants select their monthly order using OrderAhead Online Grocery Ordering System from Feeding America (screenshot right).

The pilot program, *Reinventing Food Access for Older Adults*, takes place in Rutland, Vermont with 20 participants, 10 in town and 10 out of town. The pilot details were developed through a collaborative model with older adults who qualify for CSFP and Vermont Foodbank Staff, as well as representatives from the Southwestern Vermont Council on Aging and Vermont Agency of Human Services.



Example Items in a CSFP Box	Example Items in a Pilot Box
Shelf-stable milk	Coffee
American cheese	Whole wheat bread
Apple juice	Cheddar cheese
Canned beans	Butter
Boxed cereal	Yogurt
Dry beans	Eggs
Long grain rice	Fresh apples
Canned mixed vegetables	Fresh potatoes
Peanut butter	Frozen broccoli
Canned beef	Frozen mixed berries
Canned salmon	Frozen ground beef

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