



# CLIENT IMPACT SURVEY FINDINGS

2023

Prepared by Eric Caratao, MA



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This report is divided into two parts, providing a summary of the findings from both the Nourish Up's, formerly Loaves & Fishes/Friendship Trays, 2023 Grocery Client Survey and the 2023 Meals on Wheels Program Survey conducted by Nourish Up.

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3. Survey Findings

2023

# Part 1. Grocery Client Survey Findings



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This first part of the report summarizes findings from the Nourish Up's 2023 Grocery Client Survey conducted in March 2023. The survey was intended to collect data from a convenience sample of home delivery clients to better understand their needs and realities and provide feedback about the grocery-related services they receive from Nourish Up food pantries in Mecklenburg County. Respondents were asked to complete the survey voluntarily and were offered a grocery store gift card as incentive for their participation. A total of 598 home delivery clients responded to the survey, however it should be noted that not all questions were answered by the entire sample.

## Key Findings

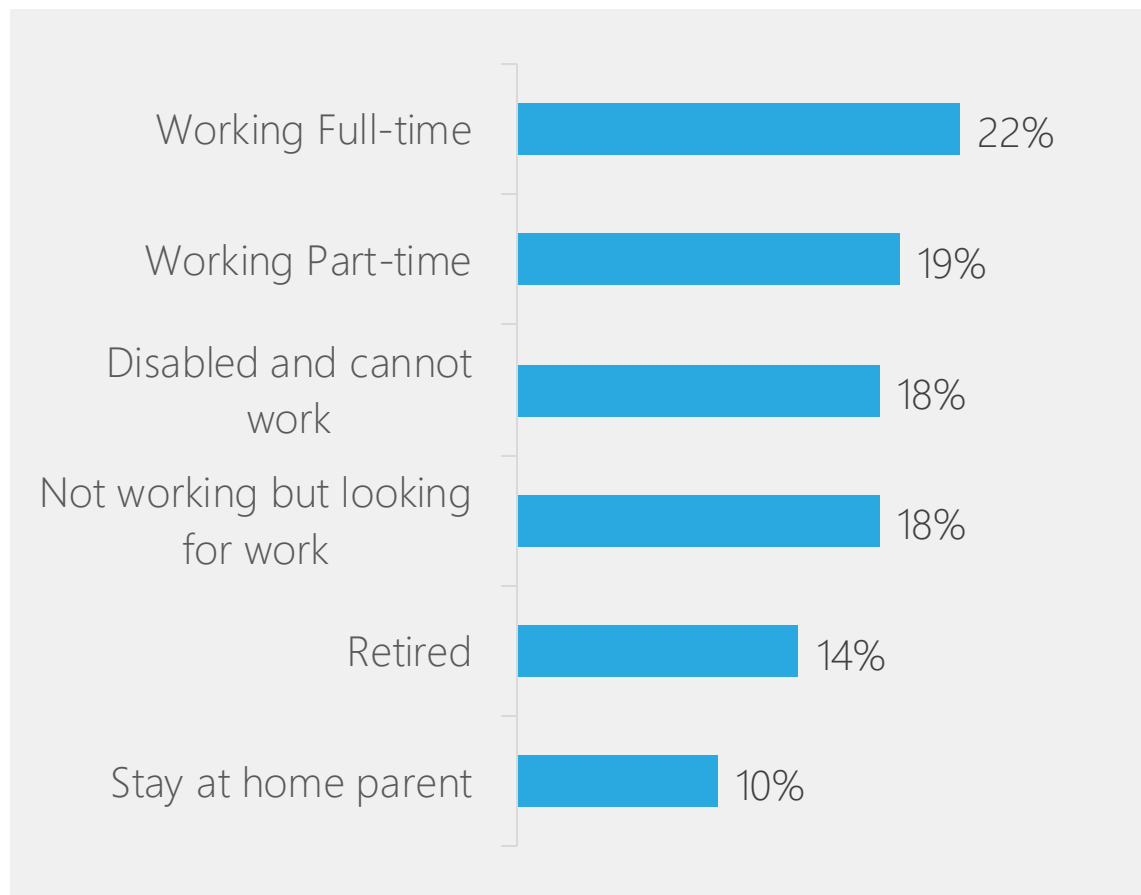
- Two-thirds of those surveyed reported occasional or frequent experiences of food shortages due to financial constraints.
- When respondents face food shortages, their primary means of obtaining food include seeking assistance from family or friends (49%), turning to other charitable organizations (30%), or, in some cases, going without food (9%).
- Survey participants noted that the groceries provided by Nourish Up allow them to allocate the money they save toward essential expenses such as electricity or gas bills (40%), rent or mortgage payments (37%), and medication costs (17%).

# STUDY OVERVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

This report presents the findings of the 2023 Grocery Client Survey conducted by Nourish Up. The survey aimed to collect data from a convenience sample of respondents in order to gain a deeper understanding of their needs, circumstances, and perspectives regarding the services they receive. A total of 598 grocery client surveys were administered to clients while they were collecting food at Nourish Up food pantries in Mecklenburg County in March 2023. The data obtained through these surveys will offer valuable insights to the staff and volunteers of Nourish Up, helping them enhance their community service and better address the needs of those who are vulnerable to food insecurity.

The Grocery Client Survey was designed by Nourish Up, and respondents were invited to participate voluntarily. To encourage their engagement, a grocery store gift card was provided as an incentive. The survey received responses from 598 individual heads of household adults. Calculations using a sample size calculator indicated that the survey findings are subject to a margin of error of  $\pm 4.34$ , with a 95% confidence level. This margin of error would apply if the entire population served by Nourish Up participated in the survey.

# EMPLOYMENT STATUS



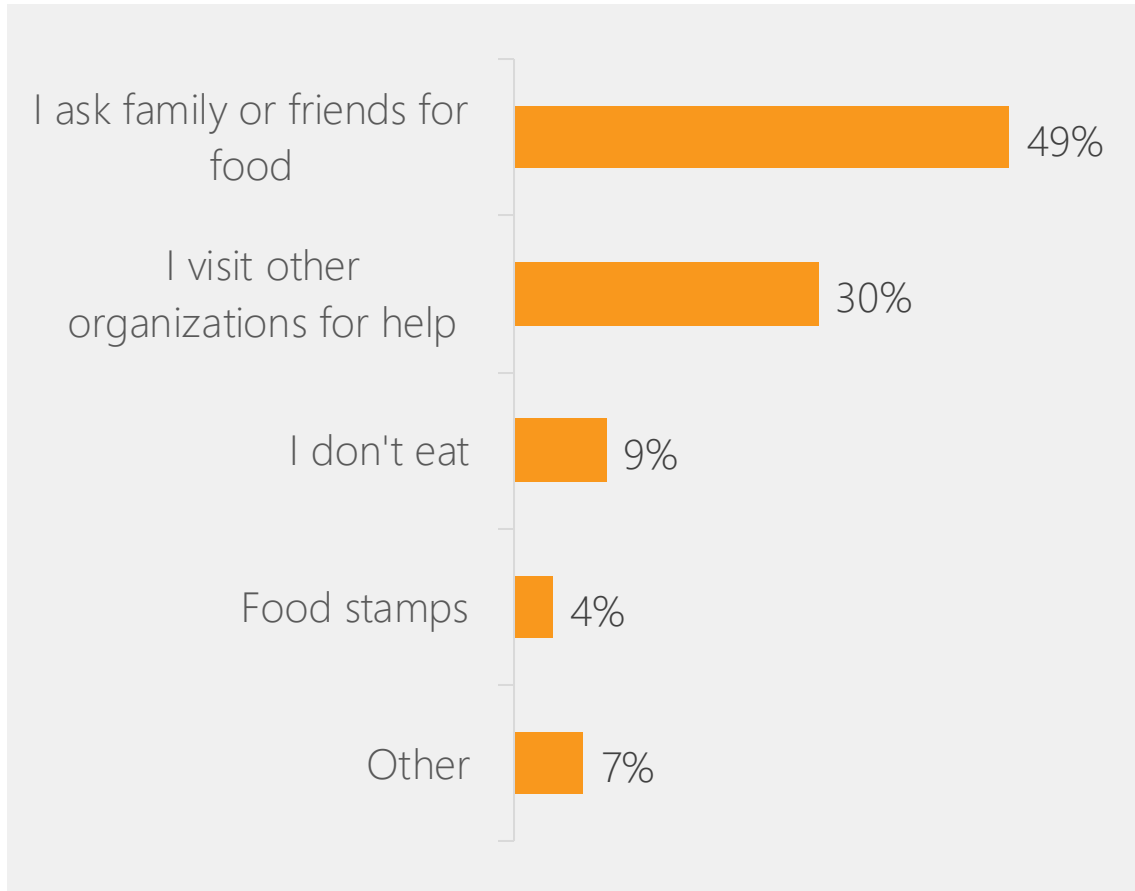
*Question: What is the work status of the primary wage earner, head of household, or breadwinner?*

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Regarding their work status, 2 out of 5 respondents (40%, n=241) are actively engaged in employment, with 22% (n=129) working full-time and 19% (n=112) working part-time. A smaller proportion, less than 1 in 5 (18%, n=106), reported disability, and a similar fraction (18%, n=109) is not currently employed but actively seeking work. Approximately 1 in 7 (14%, n=81) have retired from work, while 1 in 10 (10%, n=61) identified themselves as stay-at-home parents.

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# OTHER FOOD SOURCES



*Question: What other food sources beside Nourish Up do you use when you run out of food??*

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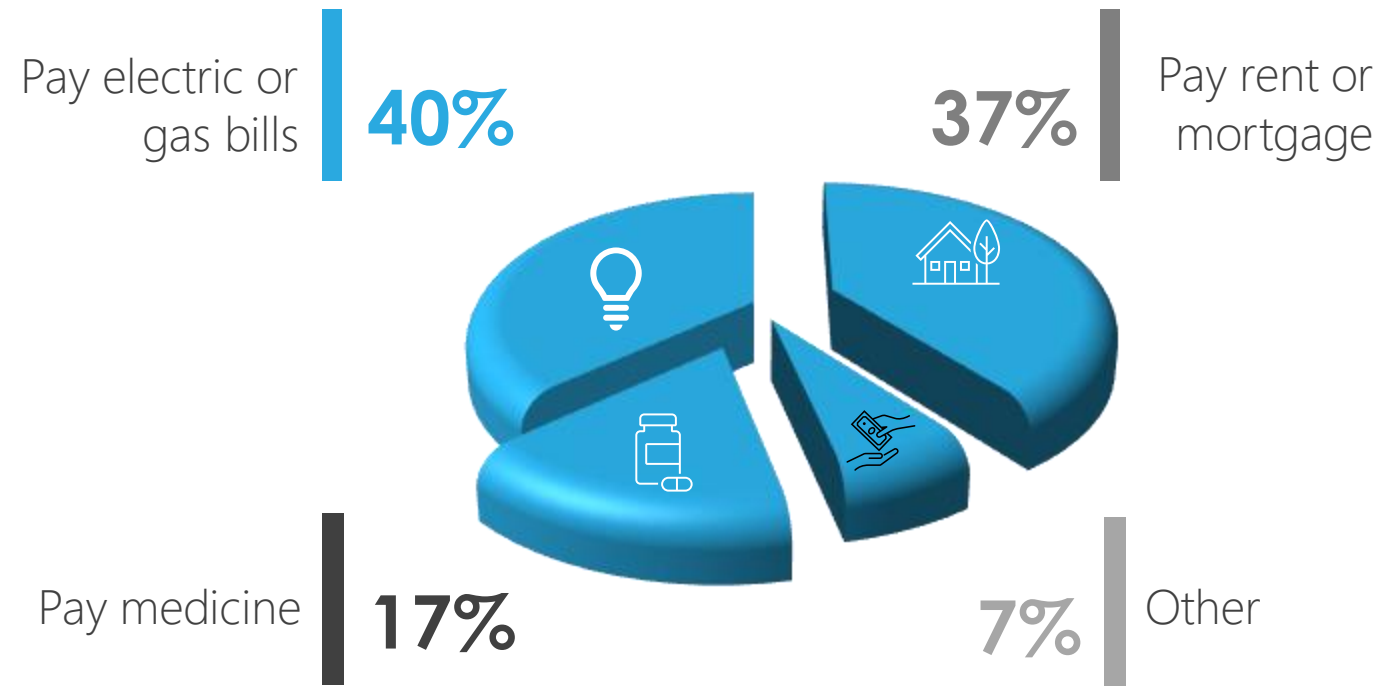
When asked about alternative food sources in addition to Nourish Up, nearly half of respondents (49%, n=293) mentioned relying on family or friends for assistance. A smaller portion (30%, n=177) reported turning to other organizations for support, while a small percentage (9%, n=55) revealed they sometimes go without food. Other responses (7%, n=41) included purchasing more groceries, avoiding food shortages, and dipping into their savings.

In response to a follow-up question about the organizations they seek help from, the most common choice was their church (50%, n=64), followed by other food banks (15%, n=19), such as Hope Pantry and Second Harvest Food Bank.

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# IMPACT OF RECEIVING GROCERIES

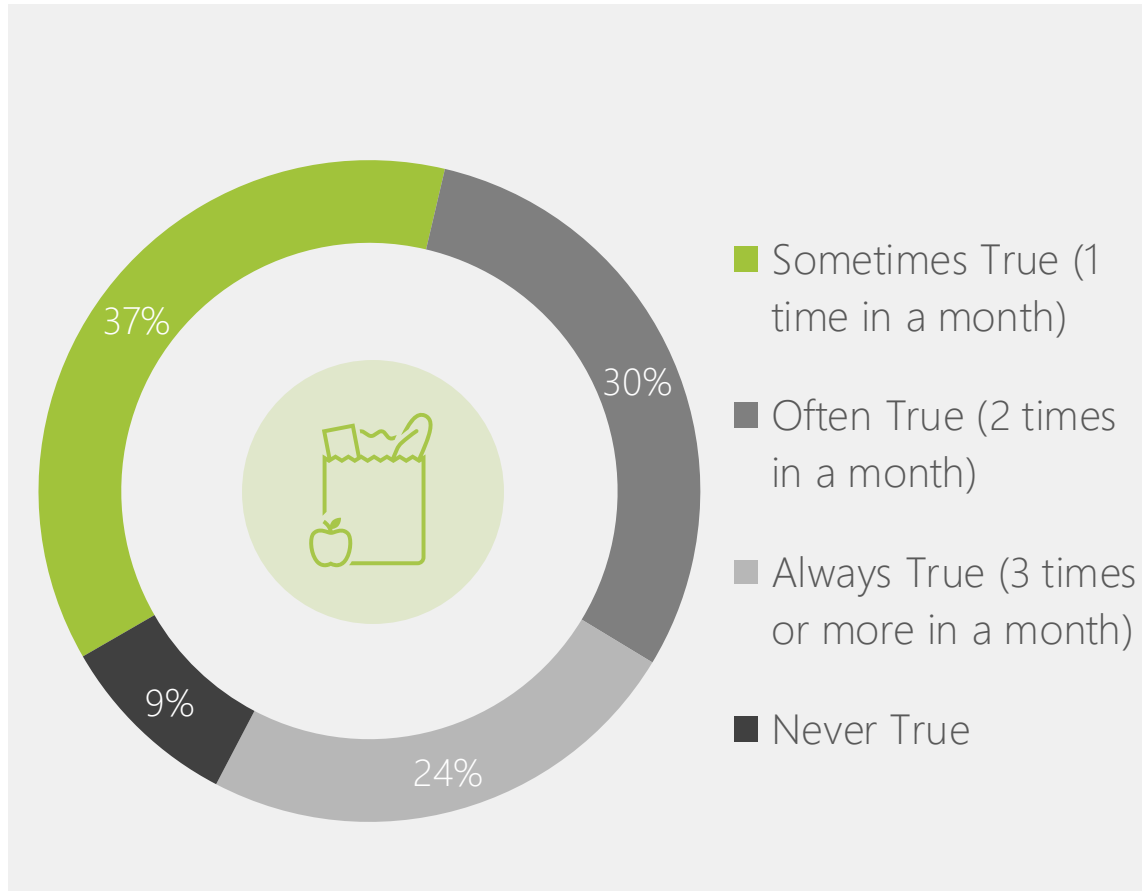
When asked to describe the ways in which they benefit from receiving groceries from Nourish Up, 40% of respondents (n=231) mentioned using the money saved to assist with paying their electric or gas bills, while 37% (n=215) indicated they would allocate the funds towards rent or mortgage payments. Additionally, 17% (n=96) said they'd utilize the saved money for medication costs. A smaller percentage (7%, n=38) provided other responses, including options like "all of the above," purchasing more groceries, personal savings, and covering transportation expenses.



*Question: Because you received groceries today, which of the following best describes you? (I will use the money saved to help...)*



# FOOD SECURITY



*Question: Within the past 12 months, the food we bought just didn't last and we didn't have money to get more. This statement is...*

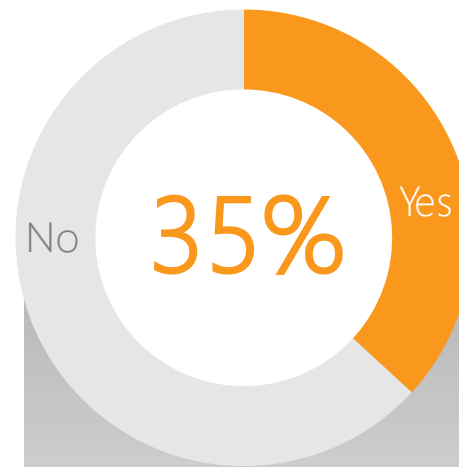
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Survey respondents were questioned about the accuracy of the statement: "Within the past 12 months, the food we bought just didn't last, and we didn't have the money to get more." More than a third (37%, n=222) found this to be occasionally true, while 30% (n=177) reported it was frequently the case. Nearly a quarter (24%, n=144) stated that this statement was consistently true for them. Meanwhile, one in 10 (9%, n=55) indicated that this statement never applied to their situation.

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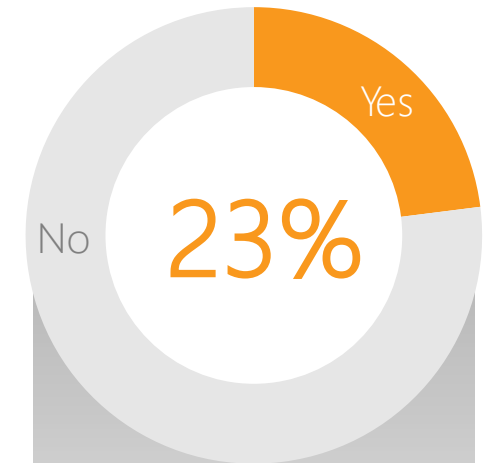
# FOOD ASSISTANCE BENEFITS

Food Stamps, SNAP  
or EBT Benefits Recipient



Do you currently  
receive Food Stamps,  
SNAP or EBT  
Benefits?

Assistance to SNAP/  
FST Application



Do you need  
assistance being  
connected to a  
SNAP/FST  
application?

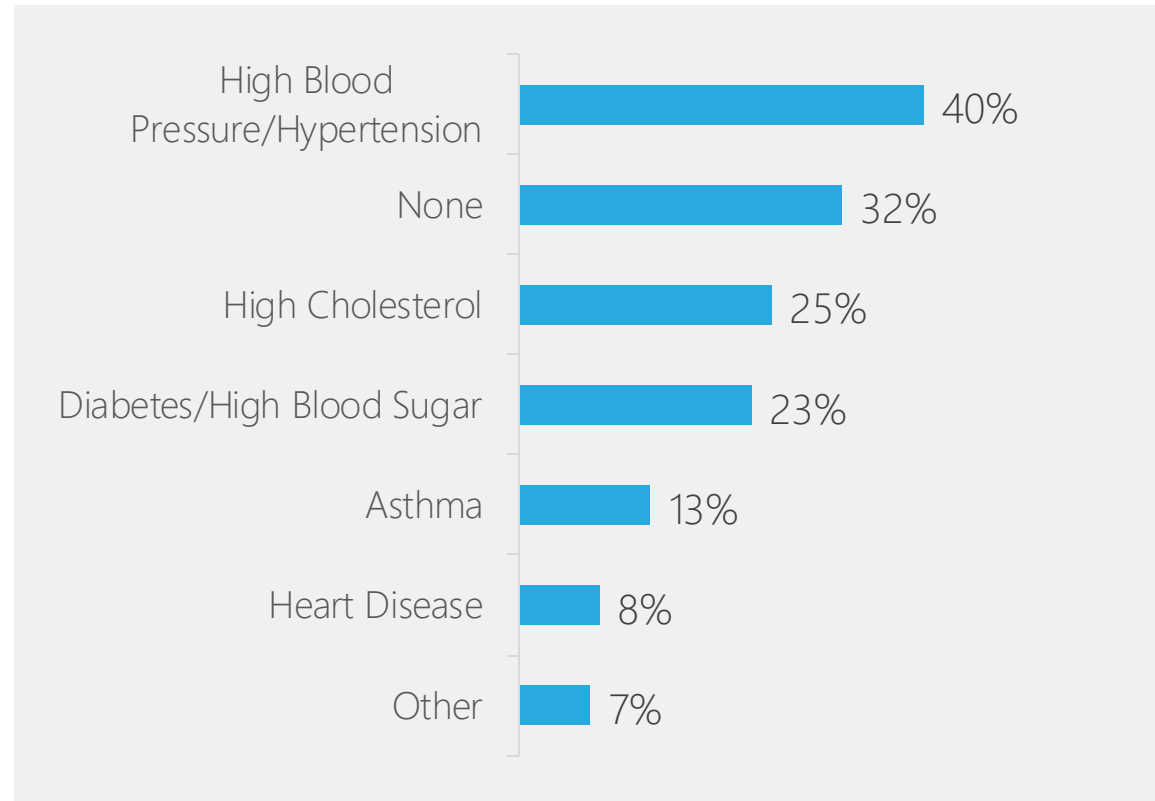
Survey participants were inquired about their current receipt of food assistance benefits. Notably, more than a third (35%, n=209) confirmed that they are currently receiving such benefits.

A subsequent query was directed at those who were not presently receiving benefits, regarding their need for assistance with eligibility or application. It was revealed that nearly one in four respondents (23%, n=88) expressed a desire for such assistance.\*

\*Nourish Up has followed up with all people requesting assistance.

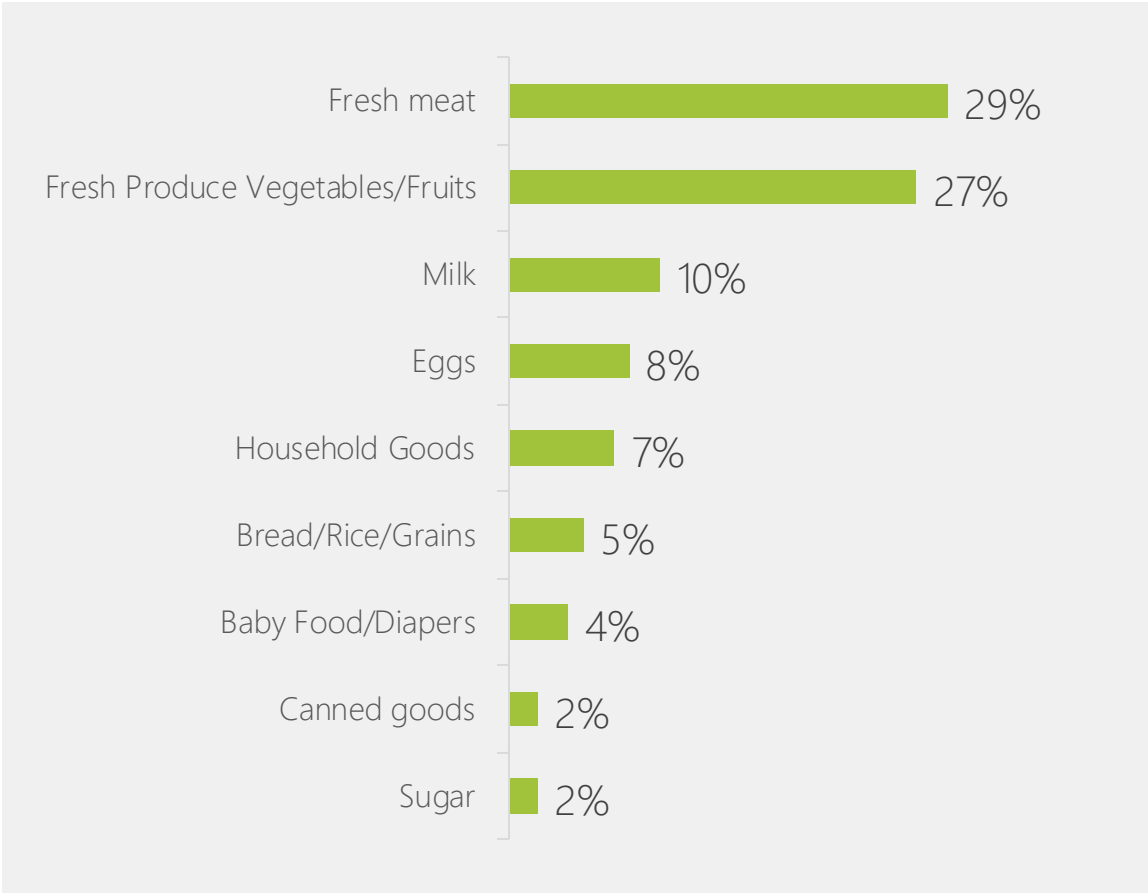
# CHRONIC DISEASE CONDITIONS

Respondents were questioned about their history of chronic disease diagnoses. Almost a third (32%, n=191) reported not having any chronic conditions, while among those who acknowledged having at least one condition, the most common were high blood pressure (40%, n=237), followed by high cholesterol (25%, n=149), and diabetes or high blood sugar (23%, n=140). Additionally, 13% (n=80) had asthma, and 8% (n=46) had heart disease. A minority (7%, n=44) mentioned other conditions like COPD, cancer, kidney disease, HIV, depression, and anxiety. Some respondents also cited uncertainty due to a lack of health insurance, preventing them from visiting a healthcare provider.



*Question: Have you ever been told by your healthcare provider that you have one of these chronic disease conditions? (Please check all that apply.)*

# DESIRED FOODS OR RESOURCES



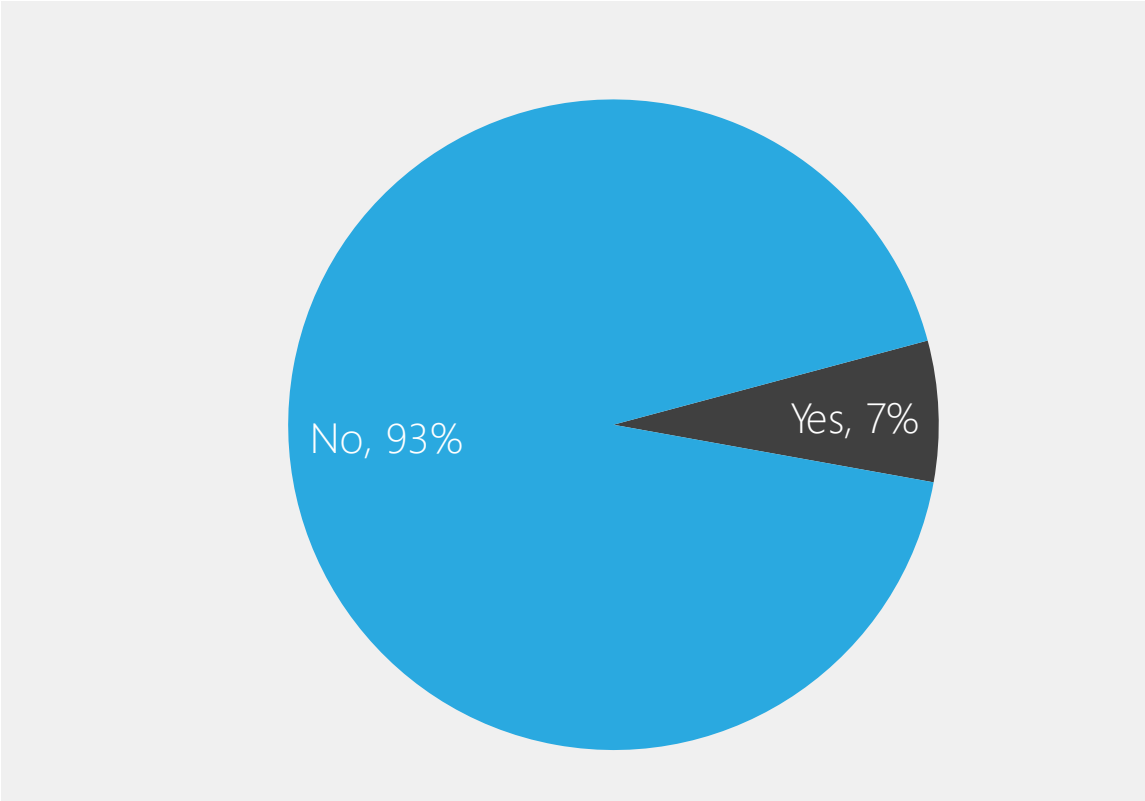
*Question: What other food or resources would you like to have available at Nourish Up?*

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Respondents had the opportunity to share their preferences for foods and resources they'd like to see available at Nourish Up. Of those who provided feedback, more than a quarter (29%, n=125) expressed interest in meat products, including fish, chicken, and beef. The next most common requests were for fresh fruits and vegetables (27%, n=116), followed by milk (10%, n=44), eggs (8%, n=35), and household essentials (7%, n=32), encompassing items like toilet paper, cleaning products, clothing, and personal hygiene products. A small portion of respondents (1%, n=7) mentioned the need for services, including referrals to cleaning services, housing support, and access to healthcare and dental care.

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# BARRIERS TO GETTING A REFERRAL



Question: *Were there barriers to getting a referral to visit today?*

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When questioned about encountering barriers in obtaining a referral for their visit, an overwhelming majority of respondents (93%, n=551) indicated that they did not face any obstacles. The minority of respondents (7%, n=42) who did encounter barriers shared the specific challenges they experienced, such as a lack of information on how to apply for or obtain a referral, delays in the referral process, transportation issues, and difficulty obtaining a referral from their doctor's office. Their comments shed light on the potential for raising awareness about the referral process for prospective clients.

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# END OF PART 1

2023

# Part 2. Meals on Wheels Program Survey Findings



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This second part of the report summarizes findings from the Nourish Up's 2023 Meals on Wheels Program Survey conducted between June and July 2023. The meals survey was intended to collect data from a convenience sample of clients to better understand their needs and realities and provide feedback about the meal-delivery services they receive from Nourish Up. Respondents were asked to complete the survey voluntarily. A total of 119 meal recipients responded to the survey, however it should be noted that not all questions were answered by the entire sample.

## Key Findings

- The vast majority of recipients (88%) do not receive food stamp assistance.
- Approximately two-thirds of recipients (64%) rely on the meal-delivery program as their primary source of food for the day.
- Recipients express high satisfaction with the meals, with 73% rating the overall quality as good or very good.
- The program's significance is evident through recipients' sentiments, including expressions of gratitude and appreciation, recognition of the nutritional and health value of the meals, and acknowledgment of the independence and improved quality of life it provides them.



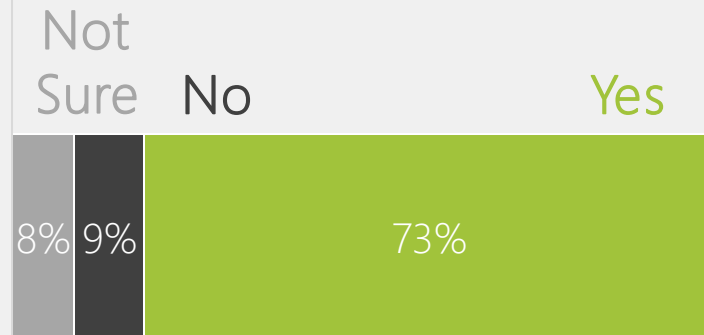
# STUDY OVERVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

This report encompasses the outcomes of the 2023 Meals on Wheels Program Survey, conducted by Nourish Up. The meals survey was designed to gather data from a convenience sample of clients, with the goal of obtaining a deeper understanding of their needs, circumstances, and perspectives regarding the services they receive. In total, 119 meal recipients participated in the survey while receiving meals from Nourish Up between June and July 2023. The data collected will provide valuable insights to the dedicated staff and volunteers of Nourish Up, aiding them in enhancing their community service and better addressing the needs of those who are at risk of food insecurity.

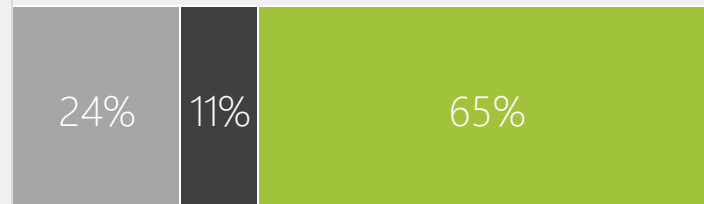
The Meals on Wheels Program Survey was designed by Nourish Up, and respondents were invited to participate voluntarily. The survey received responses from 119 recipients. Calculations using a sample size calculator indicated that the survey findings are subject to a margin of error of  $\pm 7.85$ , with a 95% confidence level. This margin of error would apply if the entire population served by Nourish Up is equal to 500 individuals and all of them participated in the survey.

# NUTRITIONAL IMPACT

Do you eat more nutritious foods now as a result of receiving meals from Nourish Up?



Do you feel your overall health status has improved as a result of receiving meals from Nourish Up?

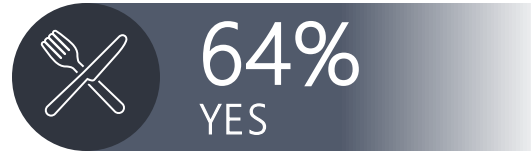


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Nearly two in three recipients (65%, n=76) reported improved overall health status after receiving meals from Nourish Up. Additionally, nearly three in four (73%, n=86) now consume more nutritious foods through this program.

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# FOOD DELIVERY SERVICE



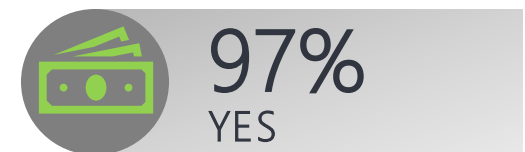
Are the meals you receive from Nourish Up your main source of food for the day?



Do you need home-delivered meals to live in your home?



Do you feel safer knowing a volunteer will be stopping by each day?



Are Nourish Up meals affordable for you?



Do you receive your meal at the time you need it between 10 AM and 1 PM?

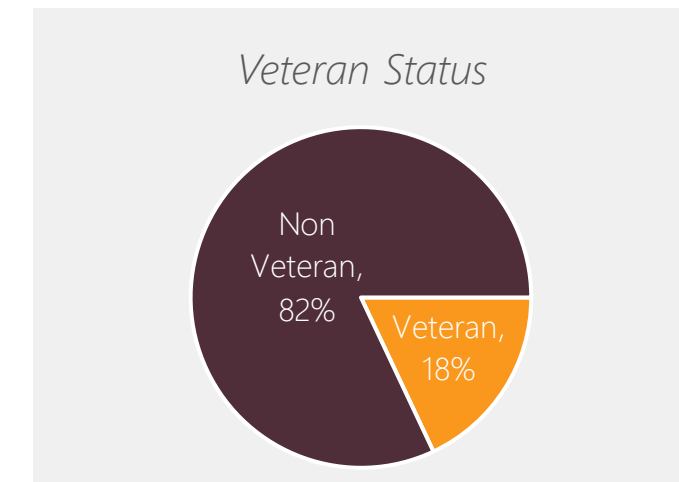
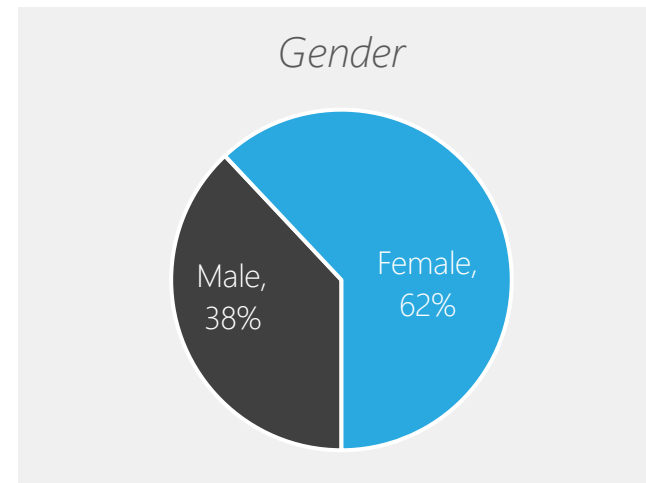
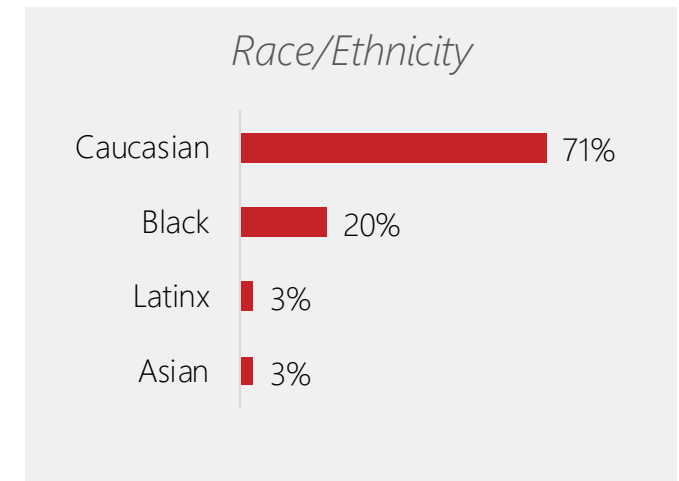
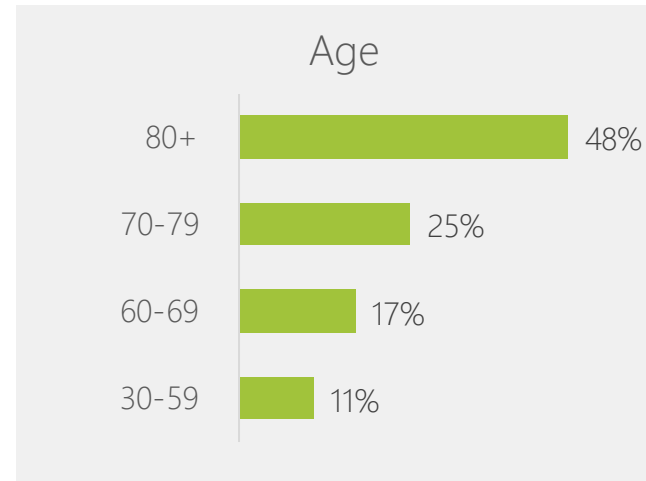
Roughly two-thirds (64%, n=73) of survey participants rely on the food from the Meals on Wheels Program as their primary daily food source, with nearly half (48%, n=56) needing home-delivered meals to sustain independent living. Additionally, 80% (n=92) feel a sense of security with daily program volunteer visits, and an overwhelming majority (97%, n=115) find Nourish Up to be affordable, while the majority (86%, n=102) receive their meals between 10am and 1pm.

It's important to mention that six survey participants responded to the follow-up question, "How much can you afford per meal?" However, only two of them provided specific amounts, ranging from 25 cents to 75 cents per meal.

# RECIPIENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Almost half (48%, n=56) of all recipients were 80 years or older, with a significant majority being female (62%, n=71).

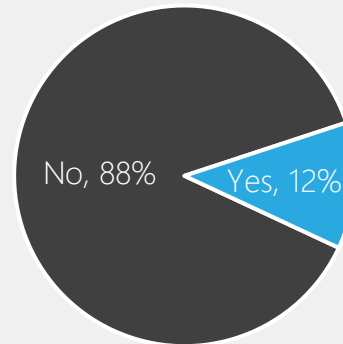
Regarding race/ethnicity, more than two-thirds identified as Caucasian (71%, n=82), 20% (n=23) as Black, 3% (n=4) as Latinx, and the remaining 3% (n=4) as Asian. Additionally, roughly 1 in 5 (18%, n=21) were veterans.



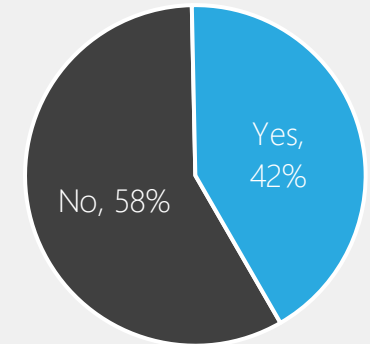
# CLIENT INFORMATION

The majority of clients (88%, n=100) are not currently receiving food stamps. Of those with a caregiver (42%, n=49), 58% (n=30) mentioned a family member, 25% (n=13) named a home health care agent, 13% (n=7) specified a nurse aide, and 12% (n=6) said they had a friend as their caregiver.

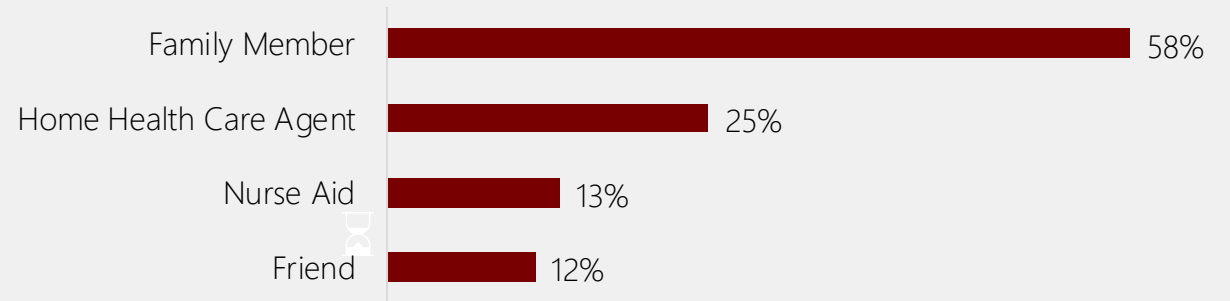
*SNAP Benefits Recipient*



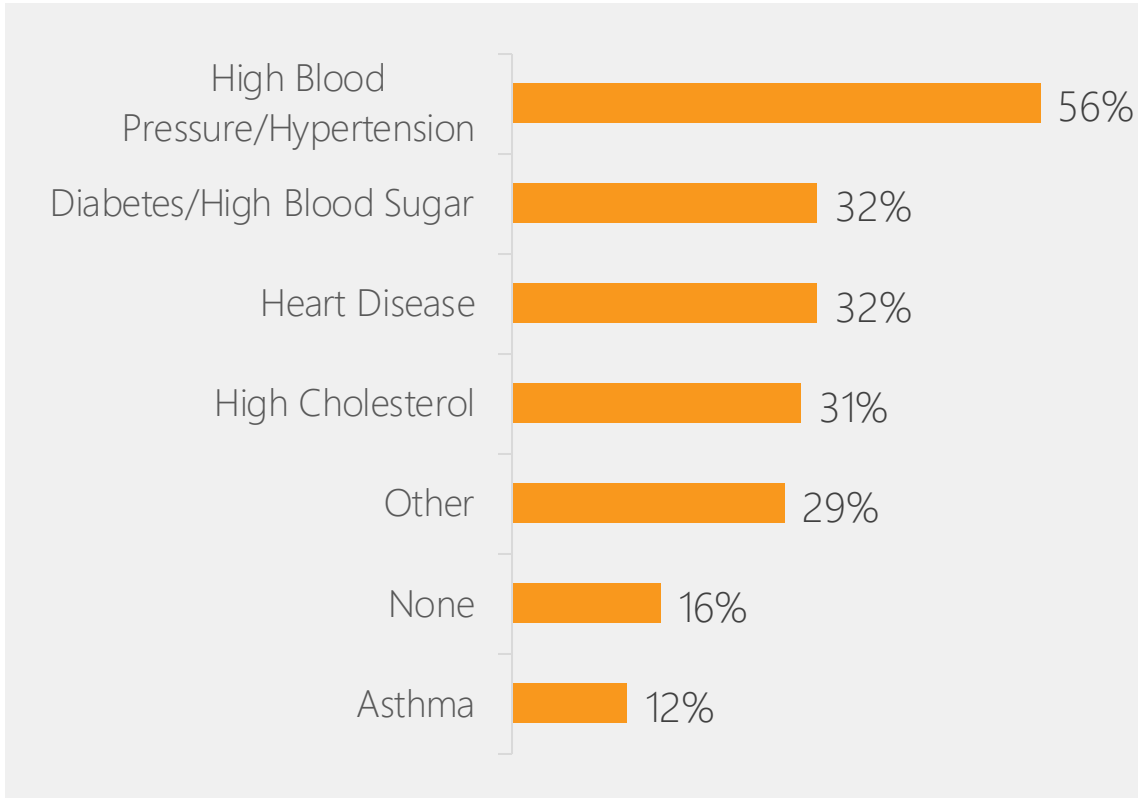
*Has a Caregiver*



*Who is your Caregiver?*



# CHRONIC DISEASE CONDITIONS



*Question: Have you ever been told by your healthcare provider that you have one of these chronic disease conditions? (Please check all that apply.)*

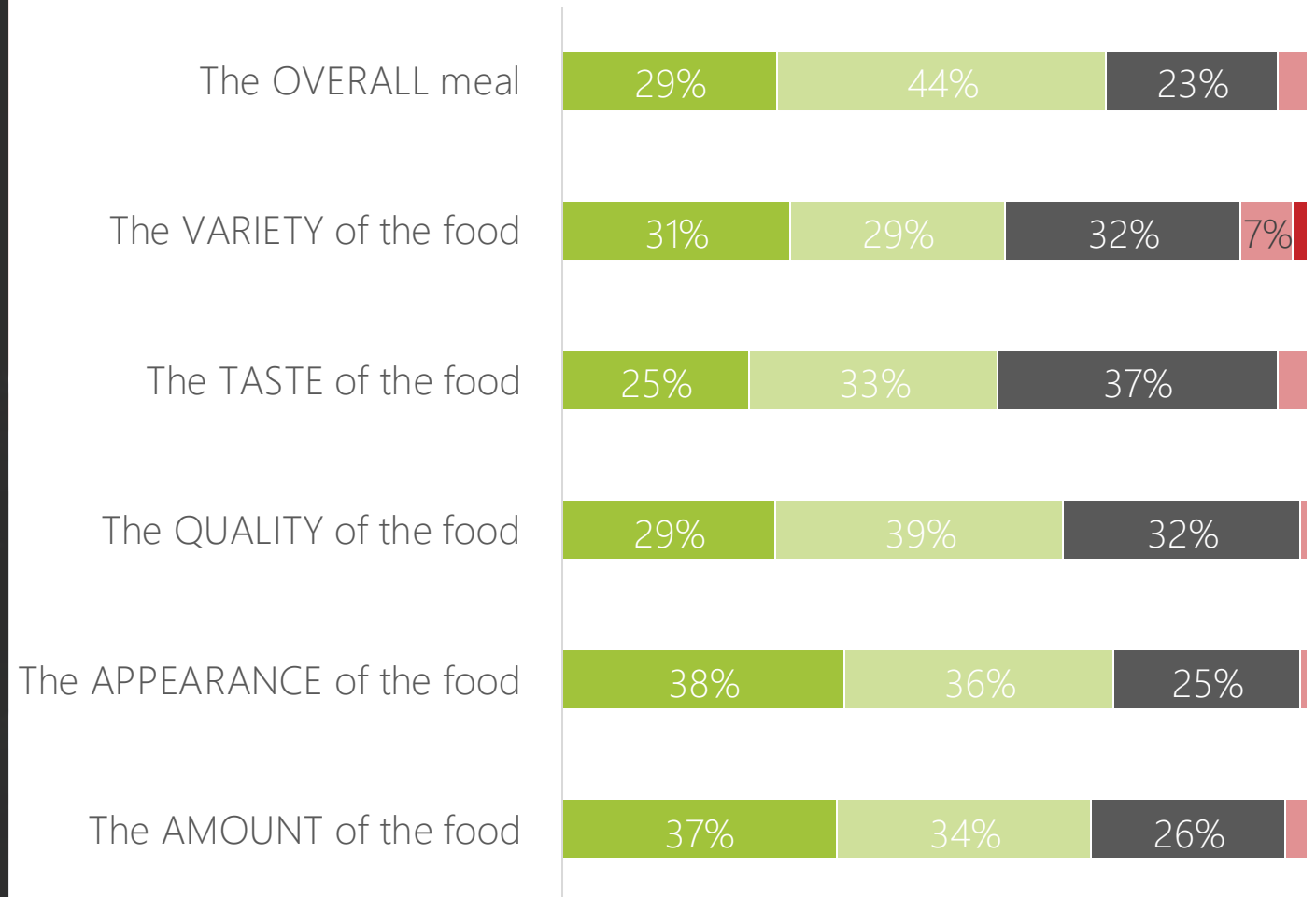
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Respondents were queried about their history of chronic disease diagnoses, revealing that more than half (56%, n=64) reported high blood pressure, almost a third (32%, n=37) had diabetes, the same proportion (32%, n=37) had heart disease, while fewer than a third (31%, n=35) had high cholesterol, and 12% (n=14) had asthma. Furthermore, over a quarter (29%, n=33) mentioned other unlisted chronic conditions, while 16% (n=18) stated that they had not received a diagnosis for any chronic disease.

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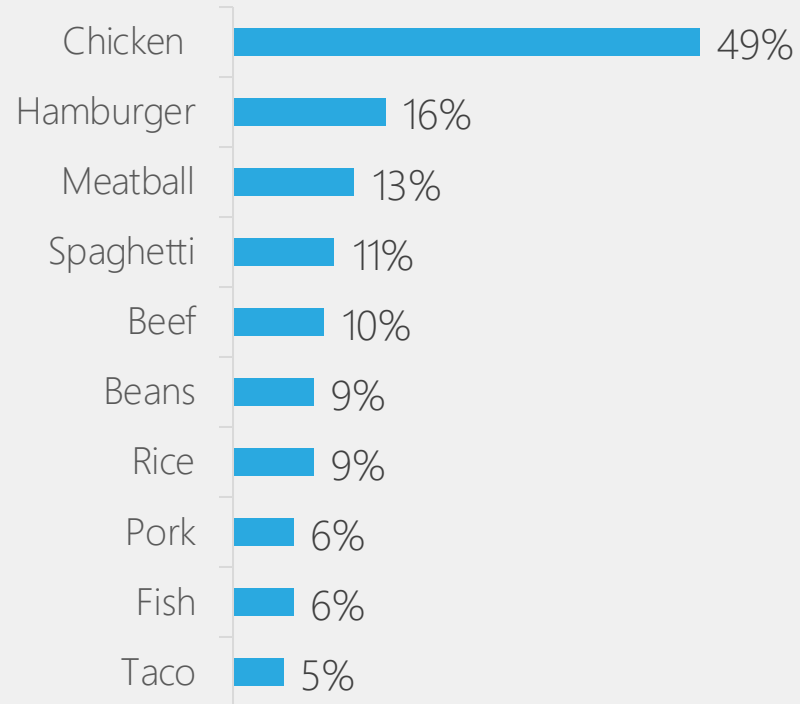
# FOOD SATISFACTION

■ Very Good ■ Good ■ Average ■ Poor ■ Very Poor



Respondents were invited to evaluate their satisfaction with the food they receive across various criteria, and the majority of these criteria were predominantly rated as good or very good. Notably, nearly three-fourths (73%, n=80) found the overall meal to be good or very good, with the appearance and portion size of the food also garnering favorable ratings, at 74% (n=84) and 71% (n=81) respectively. While slightly lower, the majority expressed a high level of satisfaction with the quality of the food (68%, n=75), variety of the food (60%, n=68), and taste (59%, n=67).

# FAVORITE MEAL



*Question: What is your favorite meal you receive from Nourish Up?*

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Respondents were invited to share their preferred meal from Nourish Up, and 93 participants provided their feedback. Among the responses, the top 10 mentioned favorites were chicken (49%, n=46), followed by hamburger (16%, n=15), meatball (13%, n=12), spaghetti (11%, n=10), beef (10%, n=9), rice (9%, n=8), beans (9%, n=8), fish (6%, n=6), pork (6%, n=6), and taco (5%, n=5).

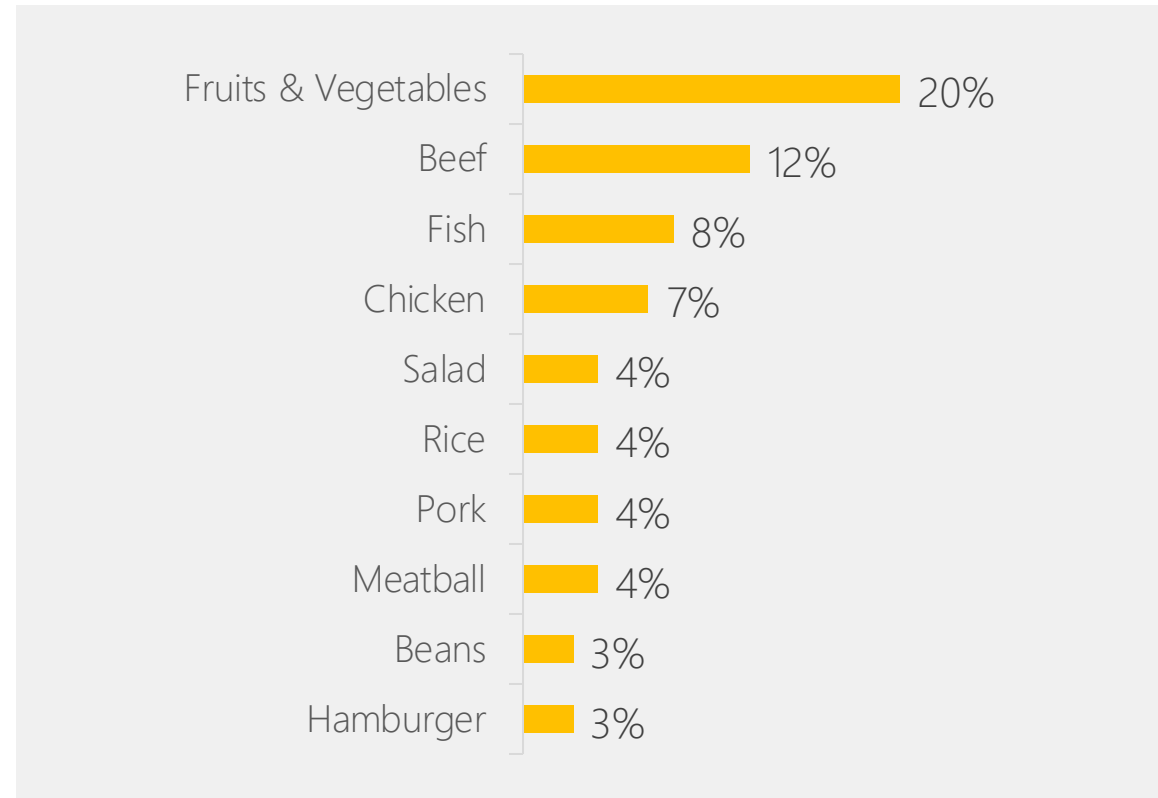
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# ADD MORE TO THE MENU

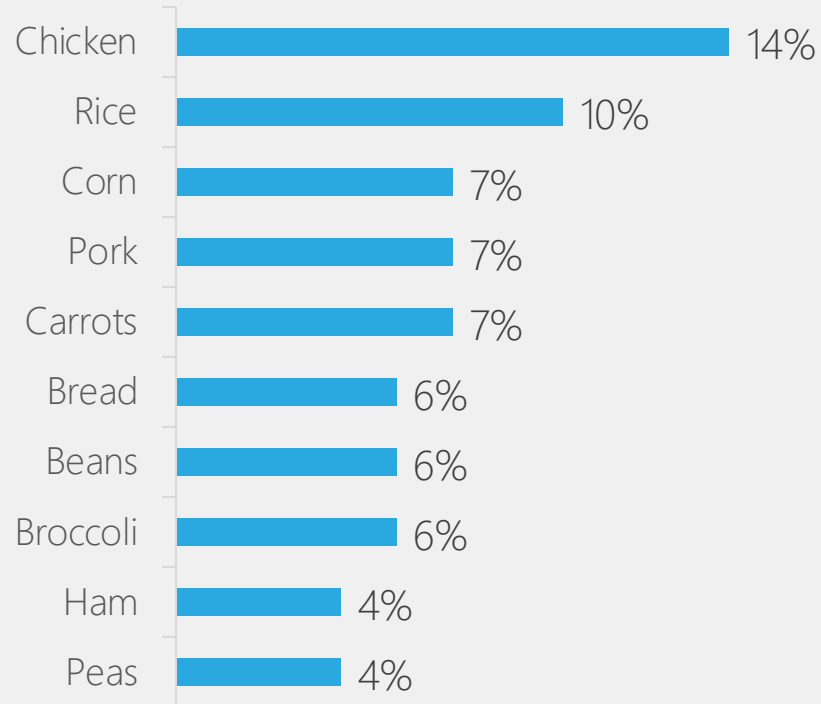
Respondents were queried about their preferences for foods they would like to see more frequently or added to the menu.

Seventy-five participants shared their thoughts, with the top requests being for fruits and vegetables (20%, n=15), followed by beef (12%, n=9), fish (8%, n=6), chicken (7%, n=5), salad (4%, n=3), rice (4%, n=3), pork (4%, n=3), meatball (4%, n=3), beans (3%, n=2), and hamburger (3%, n=2).



*Question: What foods would you like to see more frequently or added to the menu?*

# LESS FREQUENCY ON THE MENU



*Question: What foods would you like to see less frequently or taken off the menu?*

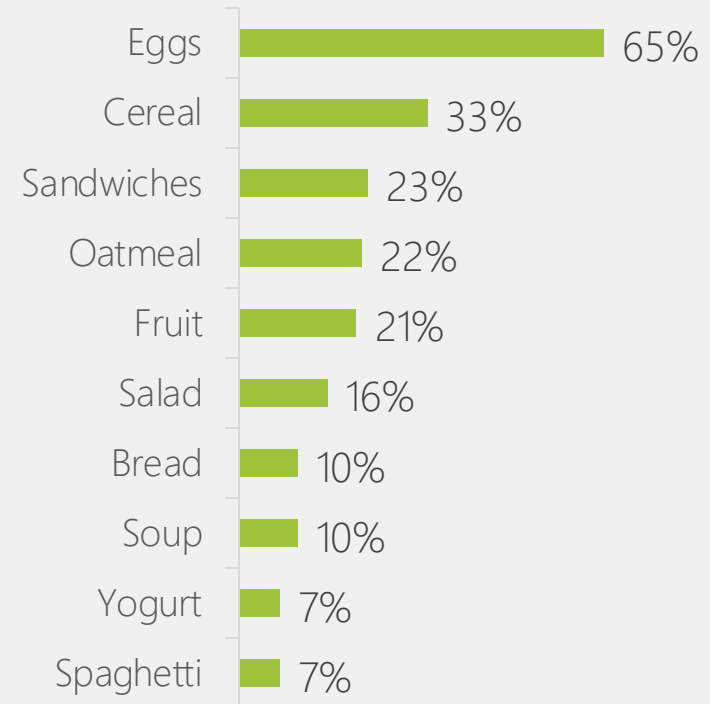
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Respondents were also inquired about their preferences for foods they would prefer to see less frequently or removed from the menu. Seventy-one participants shared their opinions, and the predominant requests included reducing the frequency of chicken (14%, n=10), rice (10%, n=7), carrots (7%, n=5), pork (7%, n=5), corn (7%, n=5), broccoli (6%, n=4), beans (6%, n=4), bread (6%, n=4), peas (4%, n=3), and ham (4%, n=3).

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# DAILY FOODS

Survey participants were asked about the additional foods they regularly consume alongside their Nourish Up meal. A total of ninety-six respondents shared their eating habits, and the most frequently mentioned items included eggs (65%, n=62), cereal (33%, n=32), sandwiches (23%, n=22), oatmeal (22%, n=21), fruit (21%, n=20), salad (21%, n=20), soup (10%, n=10), bread (10%, n=10), spaghetti (7%, n=7), and yogurt (7%, n=7).



*Question: In addition to your Nourish Up meal, what other foods do you eat daily?*

# IMPACT TO DAILY ROUTINE

1. **Convenience and Ease of Meal Preparation:** Many respondents mentioned that Nourish Up provided them with the convenience of not having to cook or plan their meals, which made their lives easier and reduced the stress of meal preparation.
2. **Nutritious and Balanced Meals:** A significant number of respondents appreciated the nutritious and balanced meals provided by Nourish Up. They mentioned that the meals helped them follow recommended diets, improve their health, and maintain a regular eating schedule.
3. **Social Interaction and Human Connection:** Several respondents mentioned the positive social interaction and human connection they experienced when volunteers delivered their meals. This interaction was highlighted as an important aspect of their meal delivery.
4. **Relief from Shopping and Planning:** Many respondents mentioned that Nourish Up relieved them from the need to shop for groceries and plan their meals, which was especially helpful for those with limited mobility or cooking challenges.
5. **Consistency and Structure:** Respondents appreciated the consistency and structure that Nourish Up provided in their daily lives. Knowing that they would receive a meal at a specific time contributed to a more structured day.

*Question: In what ways has your daily routine been impacted since you began receiving meals from Nourish Up?*

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In response to an inquiry about the effects of receiving meals from Nourish Up on their daily routines, 84 respondents shared their insights, which gave rise to the top five recurring themes depicted on the left. These themes collectively underscore the profound influence of Nourish Up, illuminating the enhanced convenience, well-being, and health benefits experienced by the respondents. Moreover, the themes emphasize the significant role the organization plays in fostering social connections and providing vital support to those it serves.

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# ADDITIONAL HELPFUL ITEMS

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Survey participants were asked if there are any other items they would find helpful for a Nourish Up volunteer to volunteer to deliver along with their meal. Forty respondents provided their comments and the top 10 categories of items or needs mentioned are listed on the right.

These categories represent the most common items or needs mentioned by respondents in their feedback. "Food" and "Hygiene items" appear to be the most frequently mentioned categories, suggesting that access to more food and personal hygiene products is of significant importance to the respondents. Other categories include various household items, drinks, diaper, shoes and hand wash.

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1. Food (more food, fresh fruit)
2. Hygiene items (toothpaste, bath soap, shampoo)
3. Paper products/toiletry items
4. Household items (laundry detergent)
5. Drinks (milk, bottled water, juice)
6. Diaper
7. Safety items
8. Tossed salad
9. Shoes
10. Hand wash

*Question: Are there any other items you would find helpful for a Nourish Up volunteer to deliver along with your meal?*

# THE SIGNIFICANCE OF NOURISH UP

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Survey participants were inquired about the meaning of Nourish Up to them, and 102 individuals took the opportunity to express their sentiments. From their responses, five overarching themes emerged, as outlined to the right. Together, these themes underscore the profound significance of Nourish Up, which extends beyond the provision of meals to encompass emotional and social support for the recipients.

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1. **Gratitude and Appreciation:** Many respondents expressed their gratitude for the meals and the service provided by Nourish Up. They highlighted the importance of having access to nutritious food and how it has positively impacted their lives.
2. **Nutrition and Health:** Several respondents emphasized the nutritional value of the meals. They mentioned that the meals contribute to their overall health and well-being, especially when they have specific dietary needs or restrictions.
3. **Convenience and Ease:** Respondents appreciated the convenience of having meals delivered, which reduces the burden of meal preparation. They mentioned that it makes their daily routines easier and provides peace of mind.
4. **Social Connection:** Many respondents valued the social interaction with the volunteers who deliver the meals. They found comfort and happiness in seeing friendly faces and knowing that someone cares about them.
5. **Independence and Quality of Life:** Some respondents mentioned that Nourish Up allowed them to maintain their independence and stay in their homes. They highlighted the positive impact on their overall quality of life.

*Question: What does Nourish Up mean to you?*



END OF  
PART 2