

1-24-2012

3 Squares VT Food Assistance Usage by Patrons at the Chittenden Emergency Food Shelf

Ashley Atiyeh

Elizabeth Blasberg

Katelyn Cushmanick

Daniel Edberg

Mairin Jerome

See next page for additional authors

Follow this and additional works at: http://scholarworks.uvm.edu/comphp_gallery

 Part of the [Community Health and Preventive Medicine Commons](#), and the [Health Services Research Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Atiyeh, Ashley; Blasberg, Elizabeth; Cushmanick, Katelyn; Edberg, Daniel; Jerome, Mairin; Ng, Patrick; Meehan, Rob; and Carney, Jan, "3 Squares VT Food Assistance Usage by Patrons at the Chittenden Emergency Food Shelf" (2012). *Public Health Projects, 2008-present*. Book 72.

http://scholarworks.uvm.edu/comphp_gallery/72

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Public Health Projects, University of Vermont College of Medicine at ScholarWorks @ UVM. It has been accepted for inclusion in Public Health Projects, 2008-present by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks @ UVM. For more information, please contact donna.omalley@uvm.edu.

Authors

Ashley Atiyeh, Elizabeth Blasberg, Katelyn Cushmanick, Daniel Edberg, Mairin Jerome, Patrick Ng, Rob Meehan, and Jan Carney

3 Squares VT Food Assistance Usage by Patrons at the Chittenden Emergency Food Shelf

Atiyeh, A., Blasberg, L., Cushmanick, K., Edberg, D., Jerome, M., Ng, P., Meehan, R., Carney, J., University of Vermont College of Medicine

Introduction

- The federally funded 3SquaresVT program (formerly Food Stamps) increases access to healthy food and helps to stimulate local economies¹.
- 10.9% of Vermont households are food insecure and 15.8% of children live in food insecure households².
- Many families are eligible for 3SquaresVT but choose not to enroll, hurting Vermont's economy and stressing charitable organizations like the Chittenden Emergency Food Shelf (CEFS).

Objective

This study aimed to examine the percentage of eligible food shelf patrons who are not using federal food assistance and the barriers involved.

Methods

- Eight question survey administered to patrons at CEFS
- Designed to assess usage of 3SquaresVT and collect demographic data
- 206 willing patrons interviewed
- Responses recorded on paper, transferred to online survey database, and analyzed via MS Excel
- Four surveys were excluded due to incompleteness
- 202 responses broken into categories of gender, age, household size, and time of the month patron visited CEFS
- Chi-squared analysis of each category according to usage and awareness performed using OpenEpi version 2.3.1
- Graphs exported from data on MS Excel

Results

Awareness of 3SquaresVT

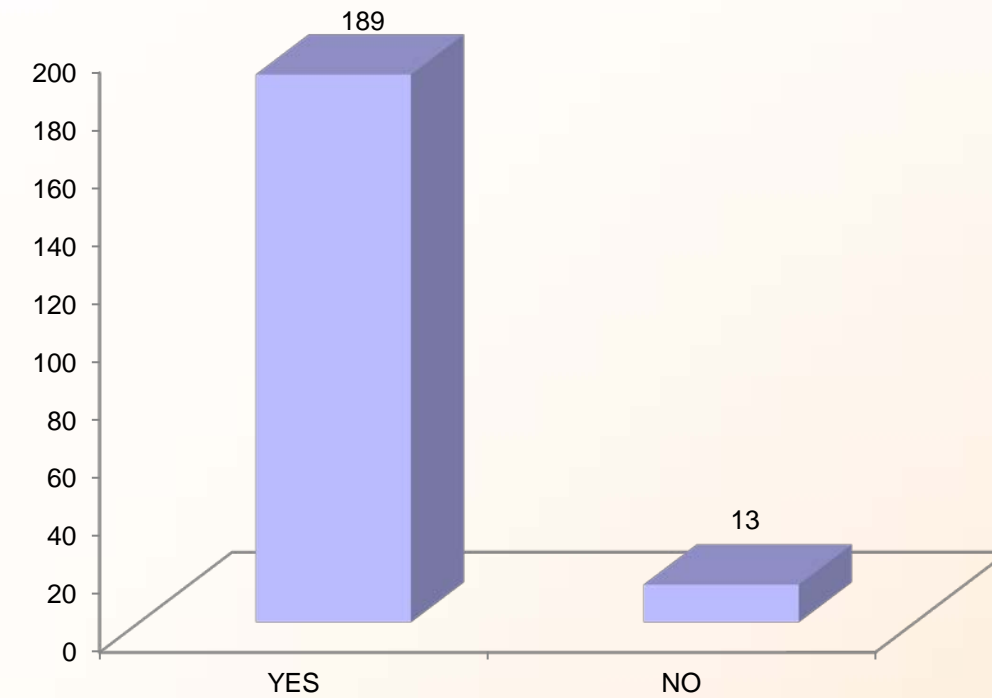


Figure 1- 94% of the 202 individuals surveyed were aware of the program.

3SquaresVT Participation

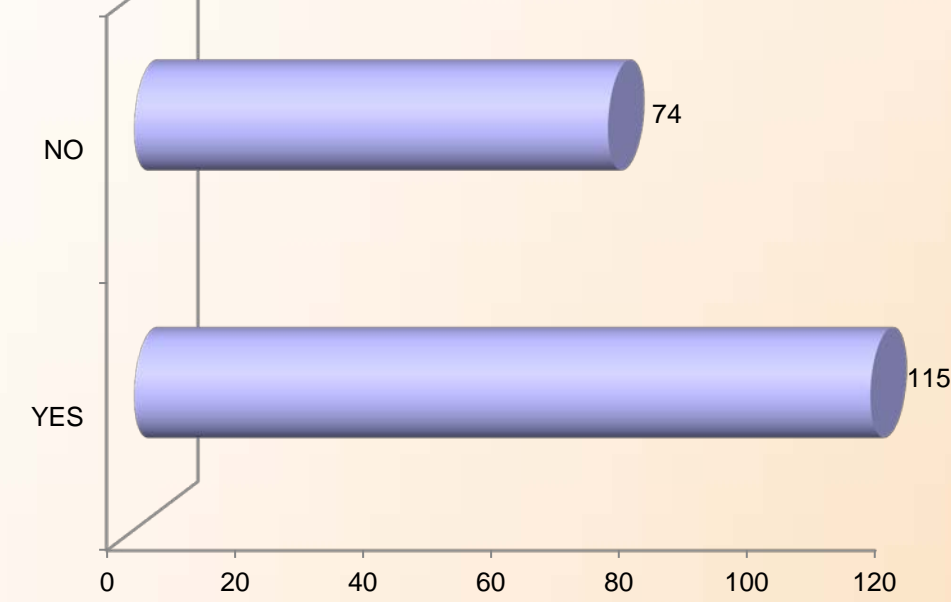


Figure 2- Of those aware, 61% were participating in 3SquaresVT.

Participation in 3SquaresVT by Month

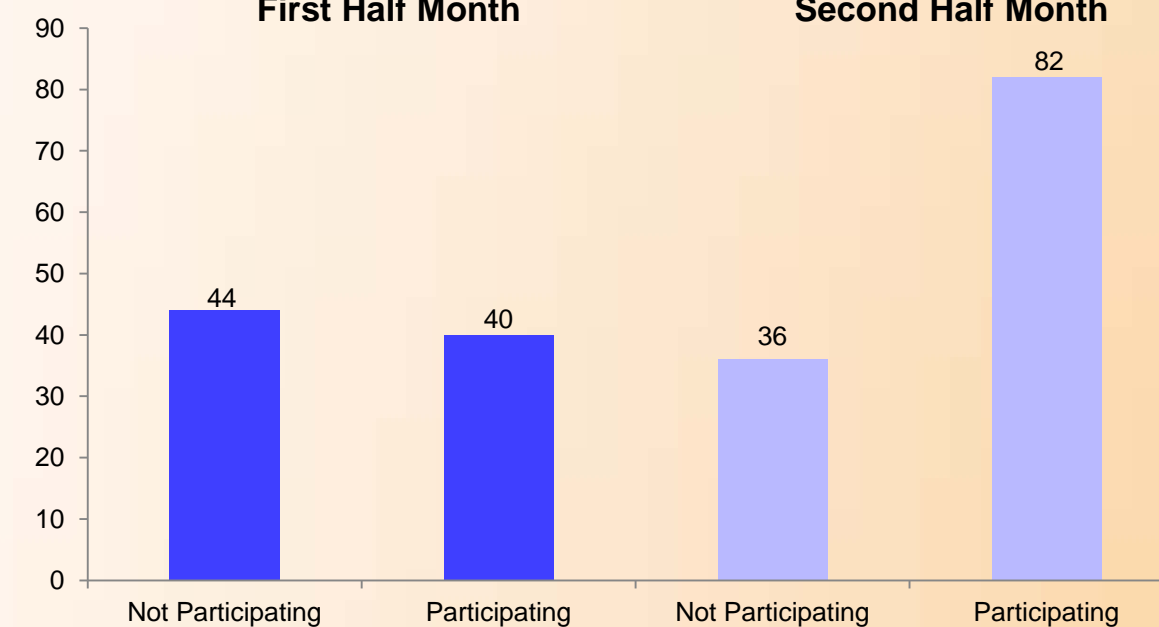


Figure 3- Patrons who frequent the CEFS during the second half of the calendar month are 1.7 times more likely to utilize 3SquaresVT.

Reasons for User Dissatisfaction

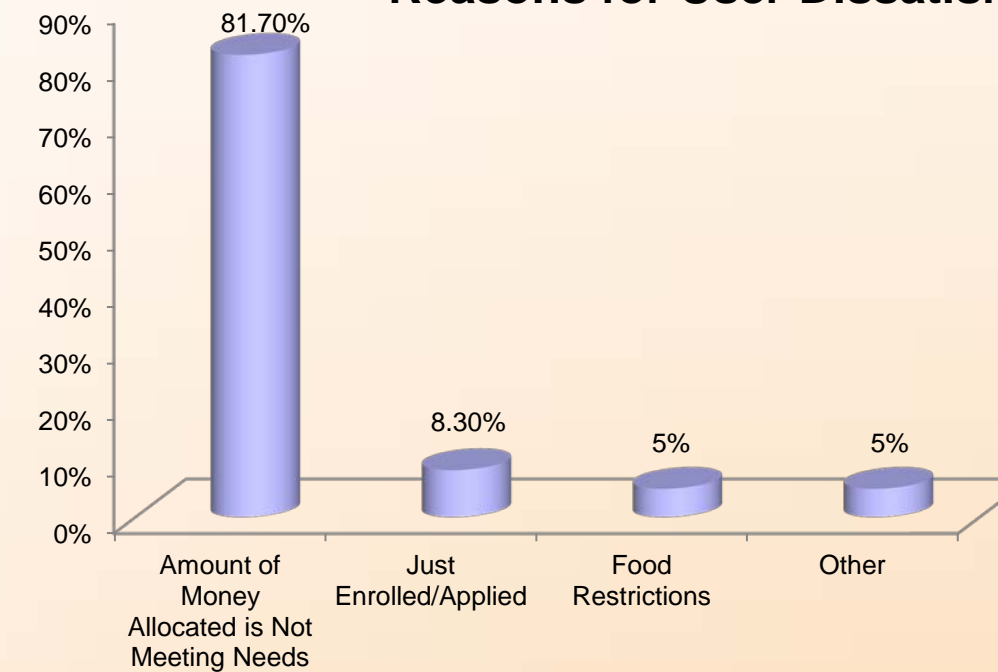


Figure 4- Of those using 3Squares, the main reason for the lack of satisfaction was the program did not offer enough money.

Barriers Preventing Participation

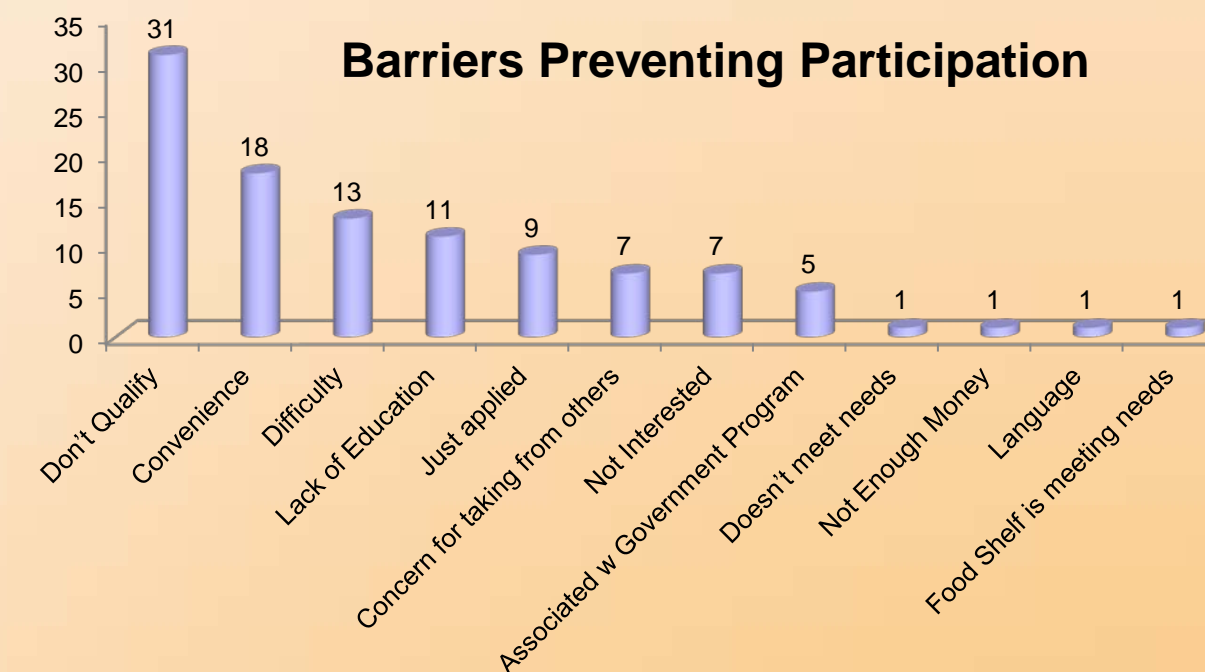


Figure 5- Not qualifying, convenience, and difficulty of applying are the main factors preventing participation in 3SquaresVT.

Participation in 3SquaresVT by Gender

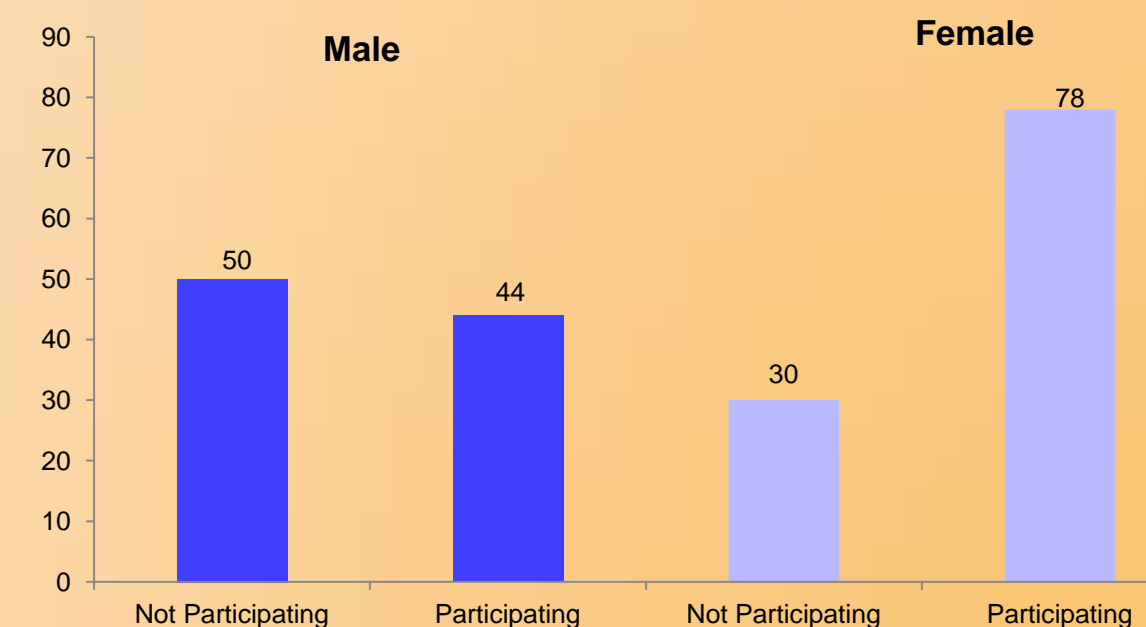


Figure 6- Women are 1.9 times more likely than men to participate in 3SquaresVT.

Conclusion

Reasons For Not Participating in 3SquaresVT Eligibility

- Forty-two percent of respondents not participating reported not qualifying for the program.
- Most reported ineligibility due to receiving other benefits (disability/SSI) or an income level that is too high to qualify.

Awareness of Available Resources

- Twelve percent of respondents reported being unaware of the program or not knowing how to enroll.

Application Process and Convenience

- Women are 1.9 times more likely to participate in 3SquaresVT than men.
- Patrons who use CEFS during the second half of the month are 1.7 times more likely to use 3SquaresVT.

Recommendations:

- Screen patrons to determine eligibility for 3SquaresVT.
- Incorporate education about 3SquaresVT into CEFS applicant's initial intake interview and subsequent visits.
- Cohorts such as men and patrons in the first half of the month should be targeted since they are least likely to be participating in 3SquaresVT.
- Fifty-two percent of 3SquaresVT participants are not satisfied with the amount of resources they receive. Efforts should be made to determine how supplemental resources can be improved to meet the needs of Chittenden County's underserved population.

References

- Hunger Free Vermont (2011). 3SquaresVT. Retrieved from <http://www.hungerfreevt.org/what/3squaresvt>
- Governor's Hunger Task Force (2008). *Hunger in Vermont: An Action Plan for Change*. Retrieved from <http://healthvermont.gov/pubs/documents/HungerTaskForceReport2008.pdf>