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# Who's accessing emergency food services?

## An analysis of the demographics and food needs of Chittenden County Residents Accessing the Charitable Food System



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### INTRODUCTION



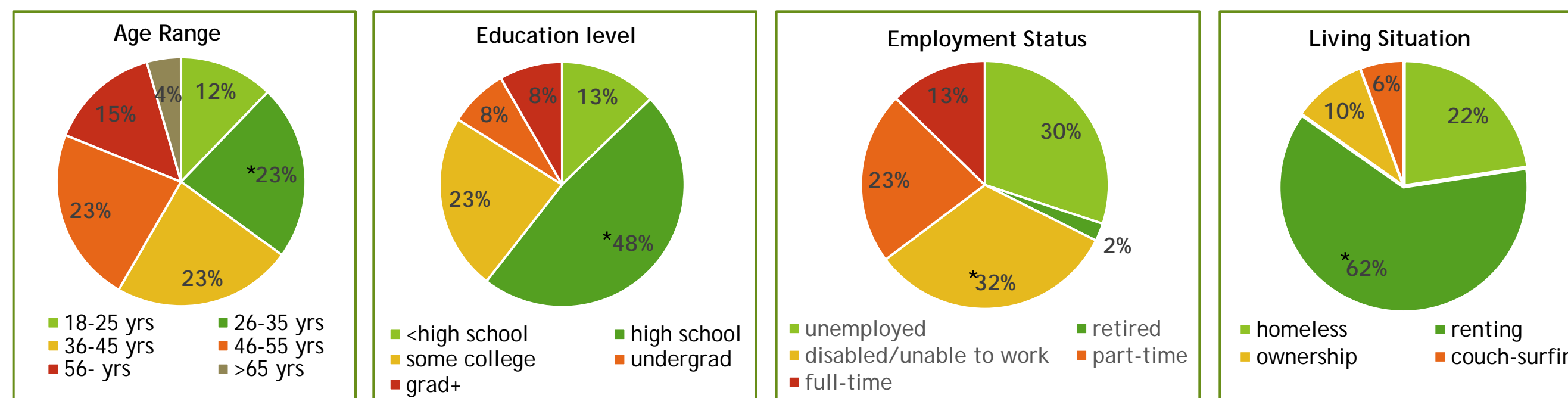
- Last year, Chittenden Emergency Food Shelf provided 1,260,517 pounds of food to over 11,000 people each month via groceries, hot meals and home delivery, supplying an average of almost 40% of food for families.
- CEFS seeks to improve their services and offerings by better understanding the demographics, food preference, and needs of the clients they serve.
- Our goal was to collect demographic and utilization data to identify areas where CEFS could enhance services and improve client access to healthful food.

### METHODS

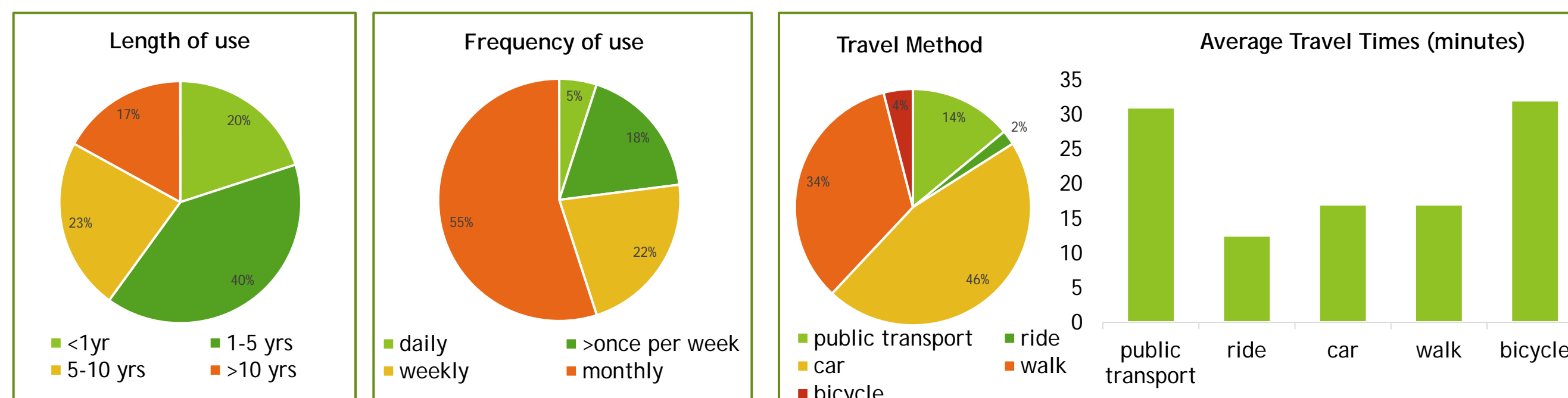
- A literature search was performed to identify surveys and techniques for food shelves looking to increase healthy offerings and improve healthful food utilization.
- The search results were used to create a two page survey to assess current food shelf utilization and healthful eating knowledge.
- The survey was administered to 180 users of the food shelf over a three week period in October, collected both by CEFS volunteer staff and authors of this project.
- Responses were entered into a SQL database, analyzed using Microsoft Excel, and figures were also created with Microsoft Excel.

### RESULTS

#### Demographics



\* These individuals indicated that > 75% of the food consumed in their household were from the CEFS



- Families with children were more likely to consume 3 meals/day (p=0.005), while less men consumed 3 meals/day (p=0.015) and fewer fruits/day (p=0.03)
- Part-time workers ate less meals and fruits/day & while homeless were at biggest risk for not eating >3 meals/day
- The homeless, males between 18-25 yrs, and those with a high school education relied on the CEFS for > 75% of their food needs
- Most clients have been accessing CEFS for > 1 yr
- 46% of clients travel to CEFS by car with an average travel time of 20 minutes

### DISCUSSION/CONCLUSION

#### Impact

- Identified the demographics that are most reliant on CEFS for their food needs
- Discovered the clients of CEFS are from a broad geographic range
- Assessed the food education level of the clients to help CEFS develop future education program
- Elucidated a discrepancy between the food desired/eaten by clients and the food received from CEFS

#### Limitations

- Survey responses were limited to individuals who can read or write in English
- Data collection took place only from 12PM-1PM and Monday-Friday for 3 weeks of October

#### Future Directions for CEFS

- CEFS should work to meet the unmet meat, dairy, and produce requests of their clients
- The health of the residents accessing charitable food system can be improved by expanding services and food education program (especially targeting males between 18-25 years old) to encourage consumption of ≥3 meals and fruits/vegetables per day.

### REFERENCE

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