

BEHAVIORAL ECONOMICS & FOOD INSECURITY

Strategies for Transforming the Food Environment in Local Food Pantries

Vermont Foodbank

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Vermont Foodbank
VT Fresh



1 Goals

VT Fresh aims to increase access to fruits and vegetables amongst food insecure households. Inspired by behavioral economics research, the program goals are to:

1. Change the **FOOD ENVIRONMENT** in community food shelves by increasing the prominence, convenience and availability of fruits and vegetables.
2. Facilitate **PREFERENCE CHANGE** and increase knowledge, awareness and skills for selecting and preparing these foods through cooking demos and taste tests.
3. Affect fruit and vegetable **CONSUMPTION DECISIONS** by improving displays, signage and promotion of these foods.



2 Strategies

1. Implement produce **TASTINGS** and **COOKING DEMOS**.
2. Improve layout and prominence of produce **DISPLAYS**.
3. Expand **PROCUREMENT** to increase quantity and variety.
4. Develop **STORAGE** capacity to increase availability of produce.
5. Emphasize **CONVENIENCE** to increase accessibility.
6. Utilize **SIGNAGE** and **POINT-OF-DECISION PROMPTS** to make fruits and vegetables the easy choice.



3 Evaluation & Impacts

1. Program impacts and outcomes are evaluated using **Results-Based Accountability (RBA)**, a framework that asks three questions: 1) how much 2) how well and 3) is anyone better off?
2. A **pre/post retrospective survey** is used to measure the change in taste perception about one specific vegetable and the intention to eat the vegetable again.
3. All participating sites adopt and document **policy, systems and environmental changes** intended to increase consumption of fruits and vegetables in the target population.

Annually serving...
50+ food shelves
300 cooking demos
5000 participants



60%
LIKE IT MORE



75%
Said they were more
LIKELY TO EAT IT AGAIN

200%
average
INCREASE
in PRODUCE
DISTRIBUTED

4 Acknowledgements

Primary research source: Price, Joe and Riis, Jason. Behavioral Economics and the Psychology of Fruit and Vegetable Consumption: A Scientific Overview, Produce for Better Health Foundation, 2012.

Additional sources: Baltimore Healthy Stores Program, Feeding America Nudges Project, and behavioral economics research by David Just at Cornell University.

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