

# Communicating Smarter

## Communicating about Food Insecurity Using Client Surveys and other Data



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POWER UP YOUR PANTRY



Interdisciplinary Center  
for Food Security

# Power Up Your Pantry

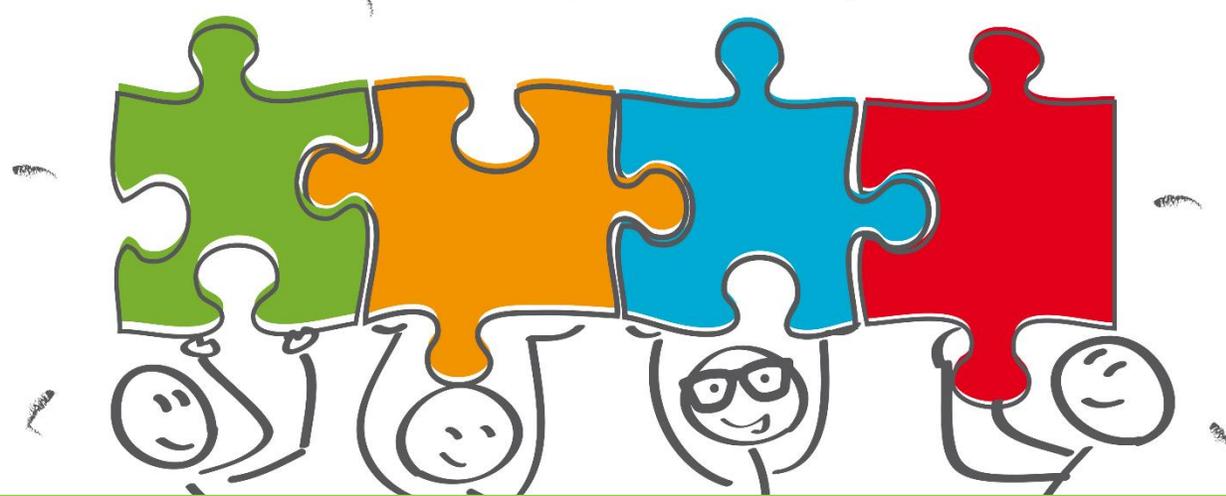


**Power Up Your Pantry is a University of Missouri program intended for food pantries and other hunger relief groups looking for ways to enhance their current operations and better meet the needs of the people they serve.**

# Power Up Your Pantry

*There are many ways to connect with us!*

- Power Up Your Pantry *Lunchbox Learning* (live and recorded sessions):  
<http://foodsecurity.missouri.edu/power-up/power-up-lunchbox-learning/>
- Join the conversation on Facebook at [facebook.com/powerupyourpantry/](https://www.facebook.com/powerupyourpantry/)
- Tentative: Launch of a Grant Writing Community of Practice and Planning for regional or statewide conference



## Power Up Your Pantry

# Communicating about Food Insecurity Using Client Surveys and Other Data

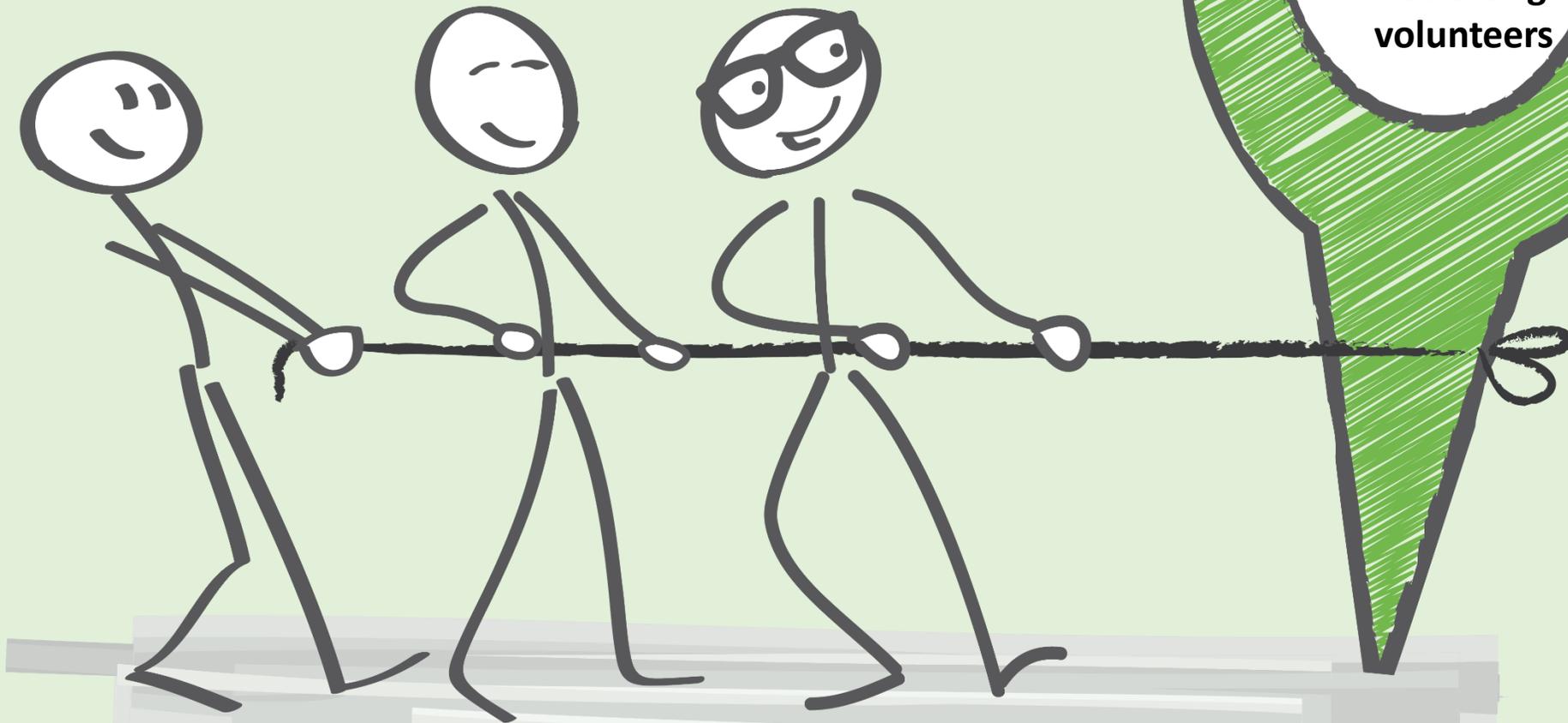
Presented by:



Health  
Communication  
Research Center

Common goals behind communicating about your pantry include...

- ✓ Raising funds
- ✓ Raising awareness
- ✓ Recruiting volunteers



It's especially key to getting what you need for your pantry and the people you serve.



# Scope of this webinar

We want to focus this webinar on communicating on behalf of your food pantry *and* the people you serve

Previous webinars covered communicating with donors and stakeholders

**Fundraising 101:** What Is It? Where Does the Money Come From and Where Does it Go?

**There Is a Method to the Madness:** The Donor Cycle

**Fighting the Fear:** How to Ask and Make a Donor Visit

**The Power of Words:** Fund Raising and Thank You Letters

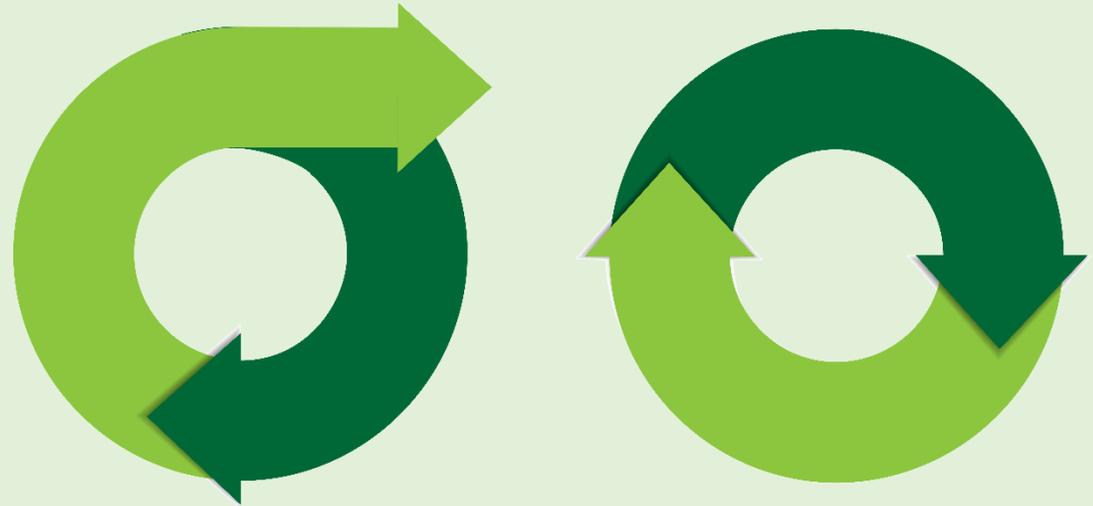
**It Takes More than One Person:** How to Engage Board and Other Volunteers in Fund Raising and How to Effectively Track Donors

Access those online on the Lunchbox Learning page. A link to the page will be in any email you've received from Bill.

# Communication hurdles: changing the narrative

Food insecurity simply means a of lack access, at times, to enough food for an active, healthy life for all household members and limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate foods (USDA).

- It's not always a lasting or reoccurring condition among households
- For others food insecurity is a chronic condition



# Public perception

- Almost half of adults view hunger as a problem in the US, however that number drops to 24% when it comes to their own communities ([Food Research and Action Center, 2014](#)).
- Attitudes like “They eat better than I do” or “They drive brand new cars” still persist towards people who use food pantries.
- For people who use food pantries there is also a fear of being tagged as “taking handouts”.

You are in the unique position to educate and address misconceptions about people who use your services through your communication activities

## Myths

### **Most families who use food pantries...**

Are unemployed

Have too many kids

Are homeless

Live mostly in cities

Are lazy

It's always the same people who use food pantries

## Reality

### **Most families who use food pantries...**

Have at least one working adult

Consist of 2-3 people

Have a home

Commonly live in rural areas

40% garden as another source for food

Food pantry use is NOT a chronic condition for many people

*Sources: Feeding America and Startasoupkitchen.org, Policy Brief, Mizzou Institute of Public Policy*

# What you can do...



Get information



Share information

# First, understand the people you serve



How can we improve communication?

How do you make food last?

How can we improve our services to better meet your needs?

# Talk to your guests!

Involve them in the discussion of what you want to do (i.e. client surveys), why, and ask for their input.

For example:  
Host 2-3 discussion groups, at different times, where you provide coffee and snacks. Let guests know what you're trying to do and invite them to come and give their input.



# Client surveys



To get a picture of who you serve  
– what questions do you want  
answered?

# Tips for doing client surveys

## Surveys

- Before, during and after check-in, but depends on pantry
- Have a person dedicated to handing out surveys
- **Choose a time that doesn't take up clients' time**
- Have a quiet area where the client will feel comfortable
- Can do online (need internet and computer); paper probably more efficient



# Tips for doing client surveys

## Surveys

- Useful data will include **20%-30% of monthly households** to better reflect your entire population
- Keep length **at 5-7 minutes to complete**;
- Printed copies can go on clipboard for people to complete themselves or you can assign a volunteer or volunteers to conduct interviews

**We'll provide a template to get started, but you can tailor to your pantry needs and goals**



# Survey: adapted from the Food Bank for Central and Northeast Missouri

## Survey introduction

Thank them for their time

Approximate time to complete

Answers are anonymous and confidential

Contact information if they have questions

## Types of questions (Central Food Bank for Central and Northeast Missouri)

18 multiple choice questions (multiple choice, open-ended, Likert scale, check all that apply)

**Multiple choice:** How often do you visit this or another food pantry?

**Likert scale:** How satisfied are you with the following qualities of food offered by the food pantry (Very satisfied → Very satisfied; don't know)

**Select all that apply:** Which of the following challenges do you/your household have related to the food you get from this food pantry? (Select all that apply)

**Open ended:** What could this food pantry do better?

# Analyzing data

- Tally system, use excel
- Volunteer that understands excel and functions

A	B	C	D	E
	Overall, how well has this food pantry met your needs?			
	Code	Value	Frequency	Percent
	1	Not well at all	3	0.06
	2	A little bit	8	=d5/d9
	3	Fairly well	13	
	4	Very well	17	
	5	Extremely well	9	
			50	

A	B	C	D	E
	Overall, how well has this food pantry met your needs?			
	Code	Value	Frequency	Percent
	1	Not well at all	3	0.06
	2	A little bit	8	0.16
	3	Fairly well	13	0.26
	4	Very well	17	0.34
	5	Extremely well	9	0.18
			50	1

# Morgan County Putting survey results into action

## WE HEARD YOU...

We recently surveyed more than 150 households who use Food for Morgan County asking for feedback. We asked questions such as, "How well has this pantry met your needs?" and "What could this food pantry do better?" Now, we want to share what we found:

Overall, participants were happy with our services.

- 98% of participants answered that they are "always" or "mostly" treated with respect at Food For Morgan.
- 69% of participants said the pantry was meeting their needs "very well" or "extremely well."

But we are always trying to improve.

### **What we heard:**

When asked what the pantry could do better, the most common suggestion was to improve way pantry goes sign in. People wanted shorter wait times and didn't want to stand in line in the hallway for a number anymore.

### **What we're doing about it:**

First, the food pantry now has a sign-in sheet for those who arrive early. Pantry workers will call your name in the order of that list to come get a number. So, if you must come early, you can sign that list and sit comfortably in the waiting room, knowing your spot in line is safe.

# How to use survey results to inform public-facing stories

## Confidentiality of collected data and identities of people who use your pantry

Generalized information can help inform how you tell your pantry's story and the people you serve

- Build or recruit support for possible services your pantry could offer
- Word of mouth, just talking about it to friends, family, and potential donors

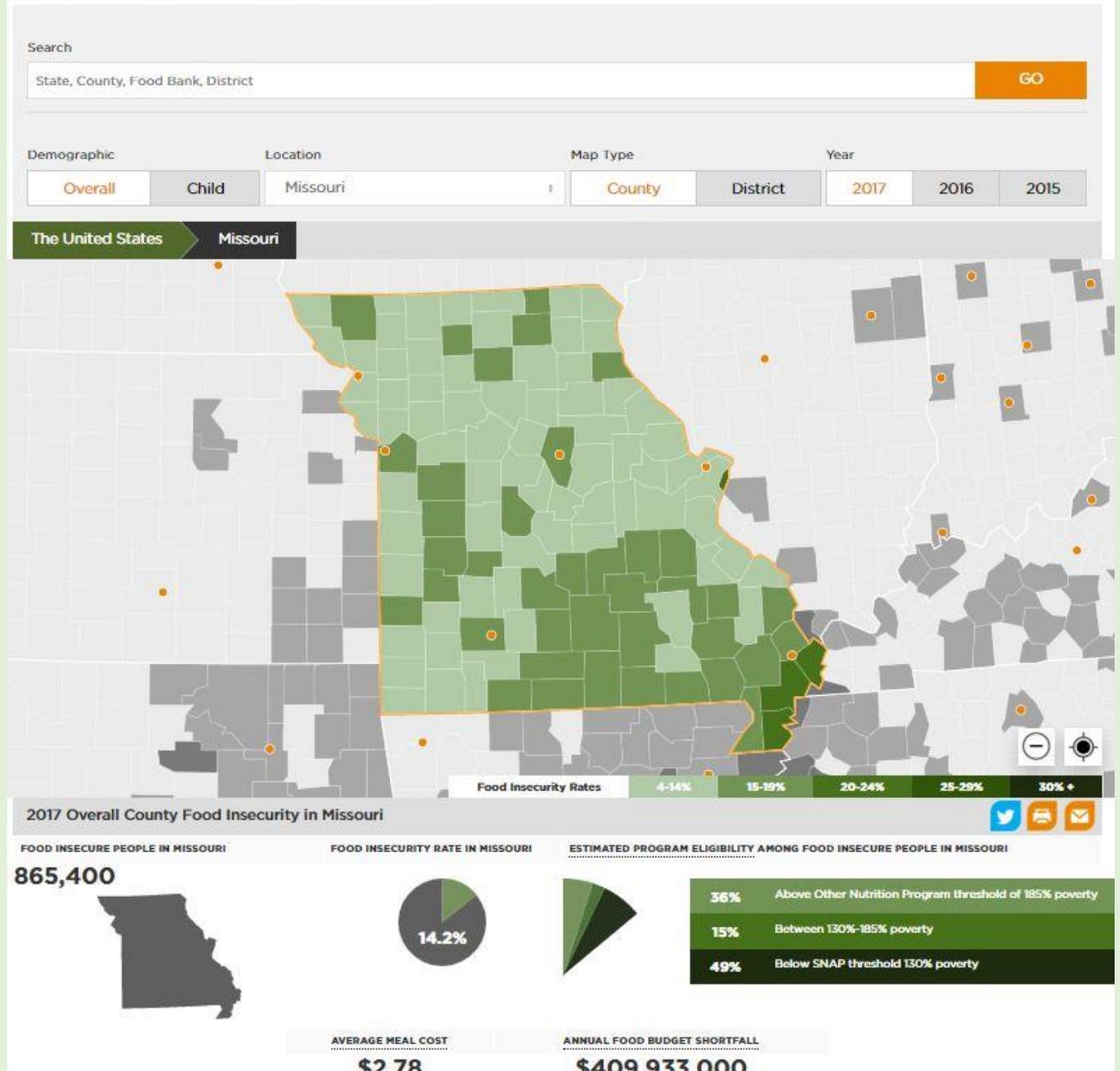
If a client survey is not feasible, consider other freely available data sources that are localized

# Feeding America's Map the Meal Gap

Website: [map.feedingamerica.org](http://map.feedingamerica.org)

## Food Insecurity in Missouri

Click on the map or use the search bar to start exploring.



# County Profile

Google search:  
Missouri Hunger Atlas

NEED INDICATORS	COUNTY	STATE	RANK	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	COUNTY	STATE	RANK*
<b>Food Uncertainty</b>				<b>Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP/Food Stamps) Participation</b>			
% Individuals Food Uncertain	23.1	16.4	Very High	Number of Monthly Participants	5,858	815,575	-
% Individuals <18 Food Uncertain	28.3	20.9	Very High	% Total Population	32.3	14.3	Very High
% Individuals Food Uncertain w/ Hunger	10.9	7.7	Very High	% Income Eligible	59.2	46.8	Very High
<b>Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP/Food Stamps)</b>				<b>National School Lunch Program Participation</b>			
% Total Population Income Eligible	54.5	29.0	Very High	Number of Monthly Participants < 18 Years	2,553	353,540	-
% < 18 Years Income Eligible	52.8	28.0	Very High	% Population < 18 Years	51.5	25.0	Very High
<b>National School Lunch Program</b>				<b>Women, Infants, and Children Program (WIC) Participation</b>			
% Students Eligible	85.2	50.3	Very High	% Eligible and Participating	75.3	78.4	Low
<b>Women, Infants, and Children Program (WIC)</b>				<b>Food Bank Distributions</b>			
% < 5 Years Income Eligible	68.9	46.4	Very High	Number of Monthly Participants	808	139,147	-
				Number of Monthly Infants/Children	604	103,380	-
				% <5 Eligible and Participating WIC	65.4	59.7	Average
				Total Pounds in County	263,536	116,851,067	-
				Lbs Per Capita Below 100% Poverty Level	47	120	Very Low

## PEMISCOT COUNTY

OVERALL RANK	
NEED	PERFORMANCE
Very High	Average



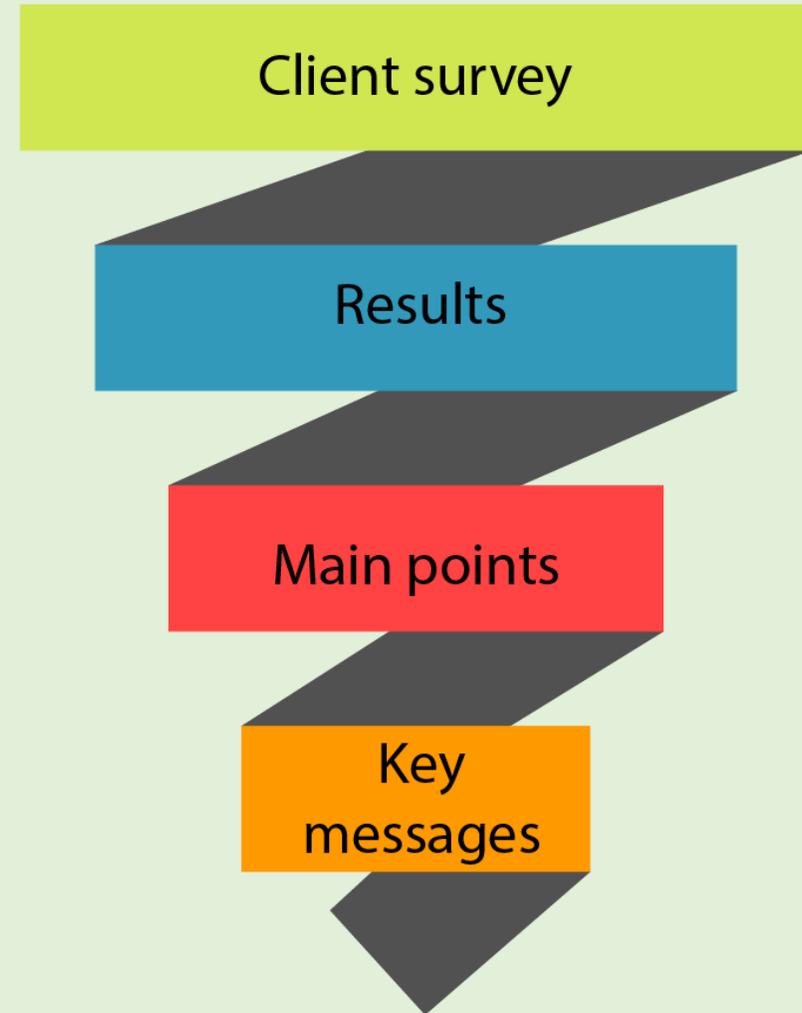
COUNTY PROFILE	COUNTY	STATE	COUNTY	STATE
<b>Demographics Indicators</b>		<b>Economic Indicators</b>		
Total Population	18,160	6,021,988	Population Below Poverty Level	5,575
Population < 18 Years	4,962	1,412,110	% <18 Below Poverty	43.8
Population > 65 Years	2,587	854,701	% >65 Below Poverty	17.6
<b>Health Indicators</b>		Median Household Income (\$)		
Obesity Prevalence (%)	37.6	30.2	Unemployment Rate (%)	9.0
Diabetes Prevalence (%)	18.3	10.7	Single-Parent Households (%)	14.6
Hypertension Prevalence (%)	54.8	34.3	Food Affordability (% of median income)	24.4
				14.8

\*Rankings only computed for scale measures.

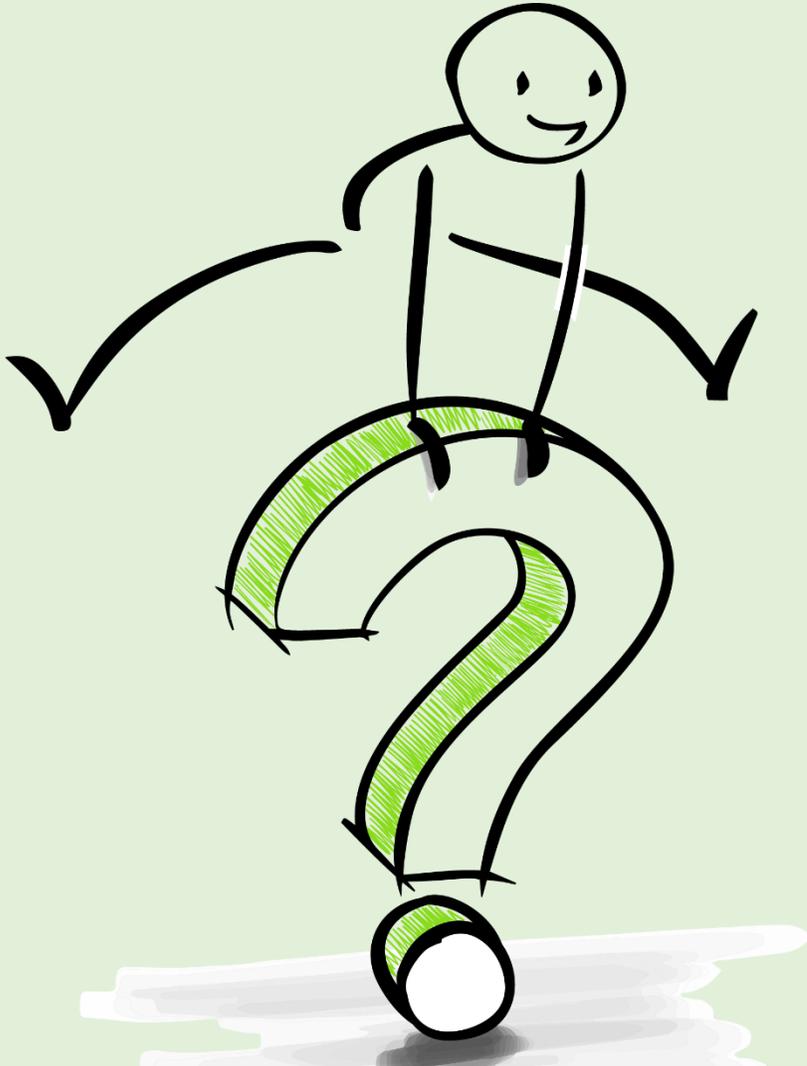
# Distilling information into key messages

Key messages are the main points you want your audience to know

Involve stakeholders and volunteers!



# Distilling information into key messages



## Start brainstorming answers to questions like

- What is the main message we want to share with our audience (guests, donors, stakeholders)? What's the goal or outcome?
- Why is this message important to the audience
- Why should audience be motivated? (i.e. the value proposition)

## Key messages should be...

**Concise** readable in under 30 seconds

**Relevant** to your audience

**Compelling information** meant to stimulate action

**Simple**, easy to understand language

**Memorable** easy to recall and repeat

\*The pillar messages include specific asks, evidence of the need, and value proposition for the potential donors

# What are your goals?

Client surveys can help justify your goals

Let the community know what your goals for the food pantry are

**For example:** According to a survey of people who visit our food pantry, the number one challenge is that children and the elderly have to wait in a line in the heat. This is one of the reasons the Stoddard County Food Pantry is announcing a fund drive to build an annex.



# Reaching people

Identify **target audience** (who you want to hear your message)

What is the **main point** you want them to know?

What **action** do you want them to take?

Develop **key messages**/message pillars and use data from your research to share

\*The messages include **evidence** of the need and value proposition for the potential donors



# Reaching people

Identify **target audience** (who you want to hear your message)

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# Reaching people

It gives me food to make me want to come to school.

Food. I really need food.

"Me and all my cousins live with grandma, so it helps her have food for all of us."

It helps when I don't have no food.

**Having food at home is great!**

IT FEEDS ME.

*i wish we didn't need this.*

We have enough food at home cause buddy packs help.

**We need this food.**

You get to eat and it is yummy.



The Food Bank for Central & Northeast Missouri

May 15, 2018

"How has your Buddy Pack helped," we asked children as the school year comes to an end. Here are just a few of the answers. This program is so important... thank you to everyone who makes it possible.

22

21 Shares



Like



Comment



Share



Write a comment...



# Reaching people

**2018** **A YEAR IN REVIEW**

**OUR DISTRIBUTION**  
with **14,000+** Volunteers whose work equals over **\$2.6 million**

**30,160,563 Pounds Shared**  
with partner agencies and schools

**24,138,068 Meals Provided**

**\$50,669,746 Wholesale Value**

**The Food Bank for Central & Northeast Missouri**  
- May 14 -

We provided more than 24 million meals to people who needed them in last year, sharing 30 million pounds of food. Over 14,000 volunteers helped us do that.

Want to learn more about our work last year and how we impacted your community? Check out our 2018 Accomplishments Report, where we show the numbers behind our mission to share food and bring hope. Visit [bit.ly/ACRT18](http://bit.ly/ACRT18).

6 2 Shares

Like Comment Share

Write a comment...





**GI**  **NGTUESDAY™ #GivingFoodDay**



**The Food Bank for Central & Northeast Missouri**



· November 29, 2016 · 

It's Giving Tuesday and this year we are asking you to give the gift of food! <http://bit.ly/2gf1IAA>  
Pickleman's Gourmet Cafe has agreed to match your donation. If we can raise \$5,000 today, we will have a total of \$10,000. With our purchasing power through Feeding America, that is the equivalent of \$210,000 worth of groceries!



6

13 Shares



Like



Comment



Share



Write a comment...





**GIVING TUESDAY™ #GivingFoodDay**



**The Food Bank for Central & Northeast Missouri**

Like This Page · November 29, 2016 · Edited ·

Wow! We are filling our cart, thanks to your generous support. John and Elaine Thompson have agreed to match gifts above our previous match limit. Help us turn \$6,000 into \$12,000 into \$252,000 worth of groceries! (That would fill a lot of carts!) <http://bit.ly/2gf1IAA>

6

3 Shares

Like Comment Share



Write a comment...

😊 GIF 🗨️



# THANK YOU

GI  ING TUESDAY™ #GivingFoodDay



**The Food Bank for Central & Northeast Missouri**

· November 29, 2016 ·

We did it! We have surpassed our goal of \$5,000, which will be matched by Pickleman's Gourmet Cafe! Additionally, thanks to a Columbia couple, an additional \$1,000 will be matched. There is still time to be part of this movement. For every \$20 gift, we are able to acquire and distribute \$420 worth of groceries! <http://bit.ly/2gf1IAA>

12

2 Shares



Like



Comment



Share



Write a comment...

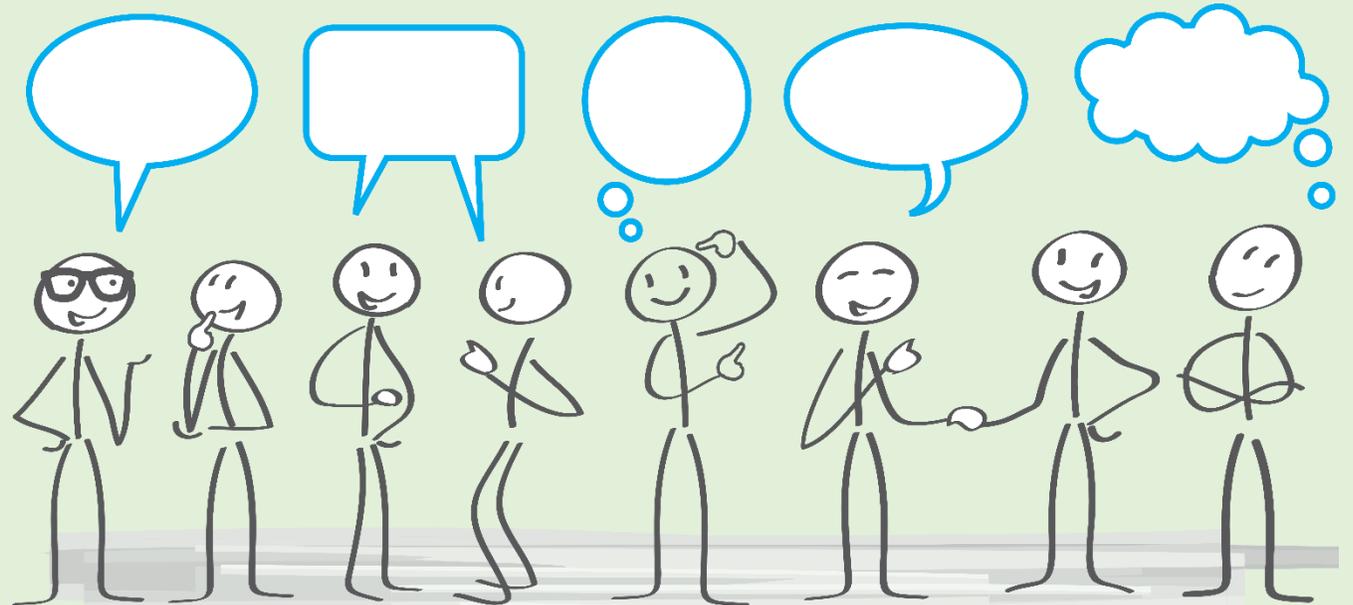


# Keep talking

## Remember...

- Before sharing messages, get feedback from a few people in your targeted audience
- Let people know what you need; be specific in what you ask
- Take advantage of partnerships to share your messages
- Always include your contact information on any materials you put out

**We've gone over best practices, but whatever works for your pantry is a best practice for you!**



In part 2 we will cover...

Easy to use tools to create shareable content

How to analyze and respond to media coverage related to your food pantry or food insecurity

September 25 at Noon

# Upcoming webinars

Three-part series on Burnout, Boards, and Creating a Fundraising Committee starting October 9.

Keep posted or feel free to contact Bill at [McKelveyWA@Missouri.edu](mailto:McKelveyWA@Missouri.edu) or 573-882-4973



Interdisciplinary Center  
for Food Security

# Thanks for joining us!



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