

Food Insecurity Among  
Children: A Look at  
Prevalence, Programming,  
and Initiatives  
in Baltimore City

PaHua Cha

Baltimore City Health Department  
Emerson National Hunger Fellow, CHC

# Introduction

- Emerson Nation Hunger Fellowship,  
Congressional Hunger Center



- A few facts about me:
  - Graduated from Stanford University with a degree in Human biology, focus in Global Development & Health
  - Daughter of refugees



# Why is it important?

- Vulnerability of children
- Economic Impact
  - Academic performance
  - Job readiness
- Health impact on children and parents
  - Development risks
  - Obesity
  - Depression



Alaimo, et al. 2002

Casey, et. al. 2001

Frongillo, et. al. 2005

# Methodology

- Interviews with different service-providers, academic institutions, and community stakeholders
- Data collection on programs
- Academic literature review
- Food insecurity surveys in schools

# Purpose

- Try to capture prevalence of food insecurity among children in Baltimore
- Create a complete “picture” of services for children and their families
- Complete a literature review of food insecurity among children

# Prevalence: U.S.

- The food insecurity rate for all U.S. households is 14.7%

vs.

- The food insecurity rate for all U.S. households with children is 21%.
- 10.7% of food insecure households with children report reduced quantity and quality of food for their children

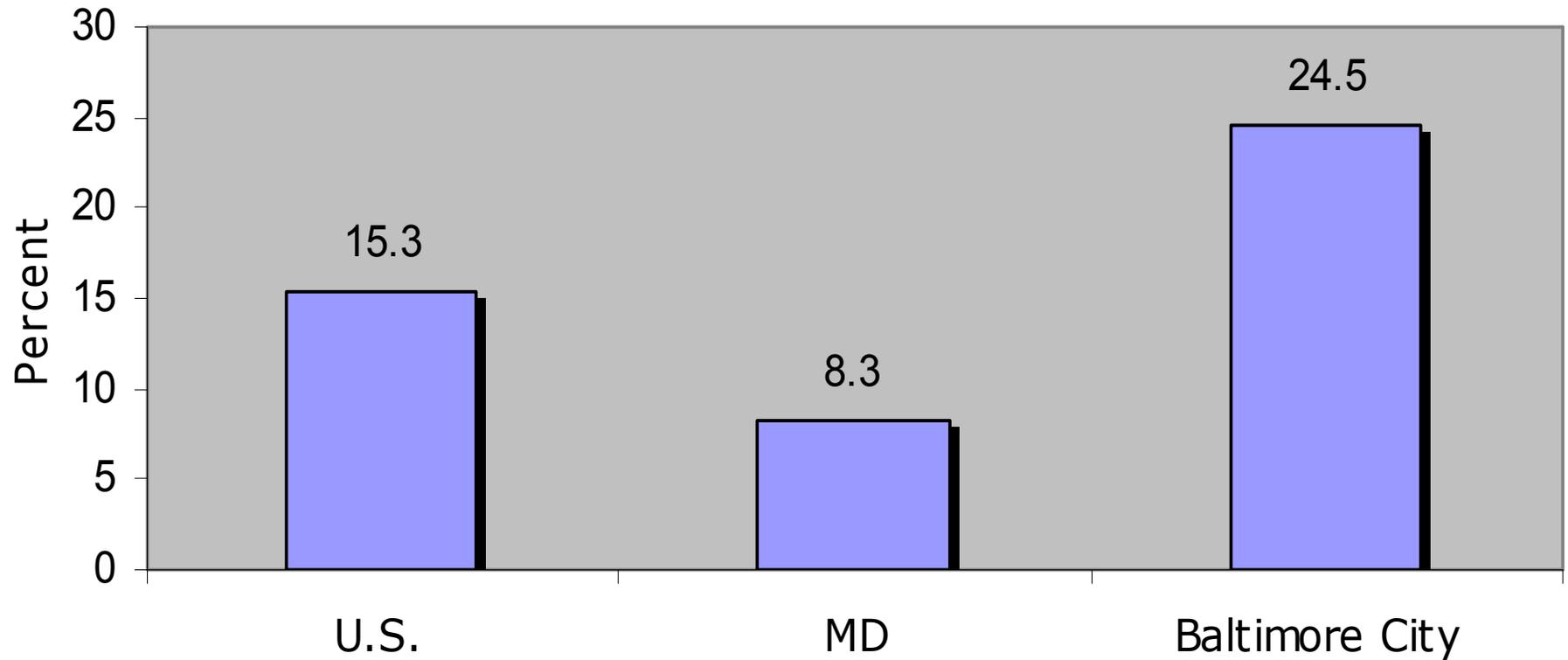
# Prevalence: Maryland

- 11.1% of households in Maryland are food insecure
- 4.3% of households in Maryland are categorized with very low food insecurity

# Prevalence: Baltimore City

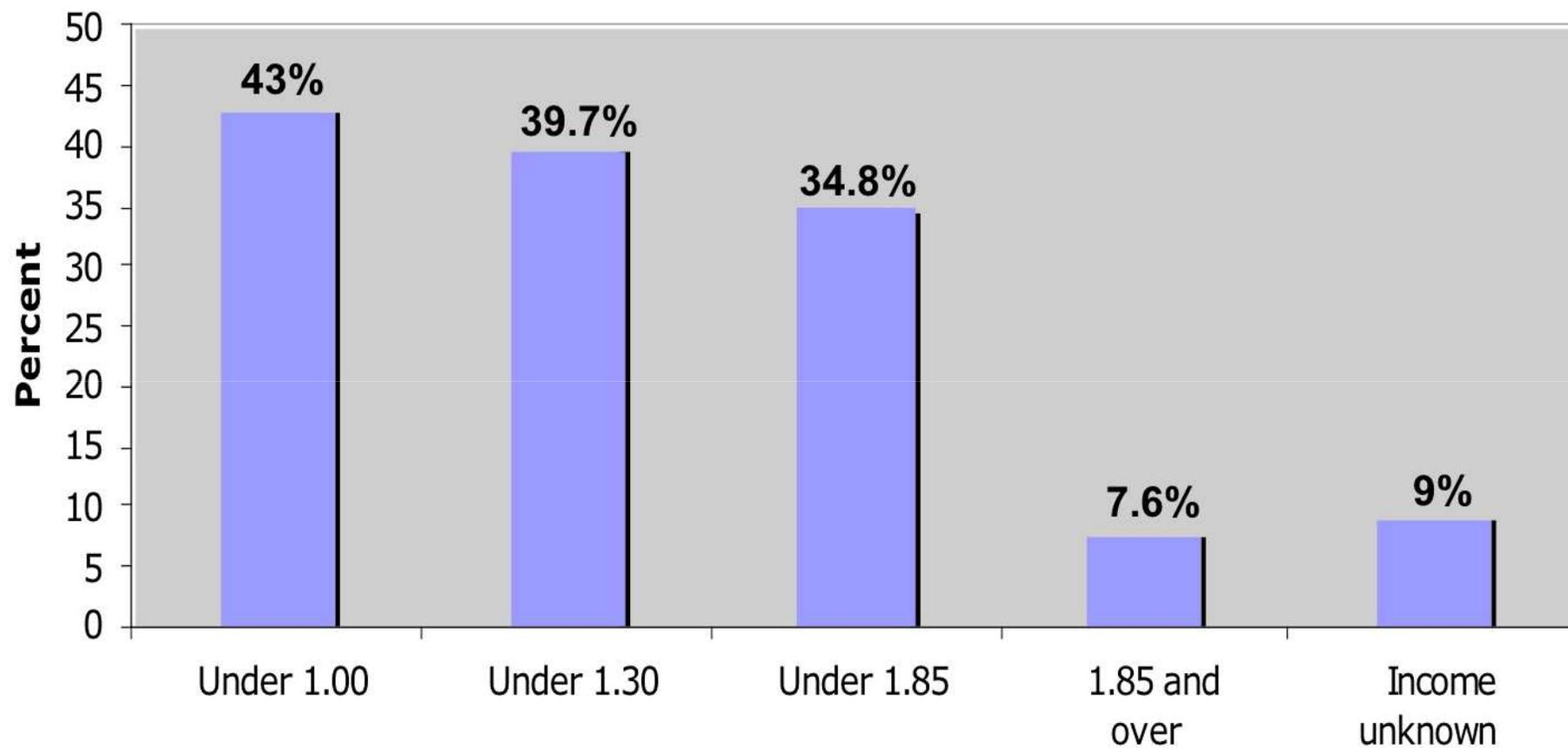
- University of Maryland:  
**13.5%** of low-income families with children in Baltimore were food insecure.
- The Baltimore City Health Department's Community Healthy Survey (2009):  
**23%** of respondents reported being concerned about not having enough food in past 30 days

## Percent of households with children living below the poverty level



\*Data for graph from the American Community Survey

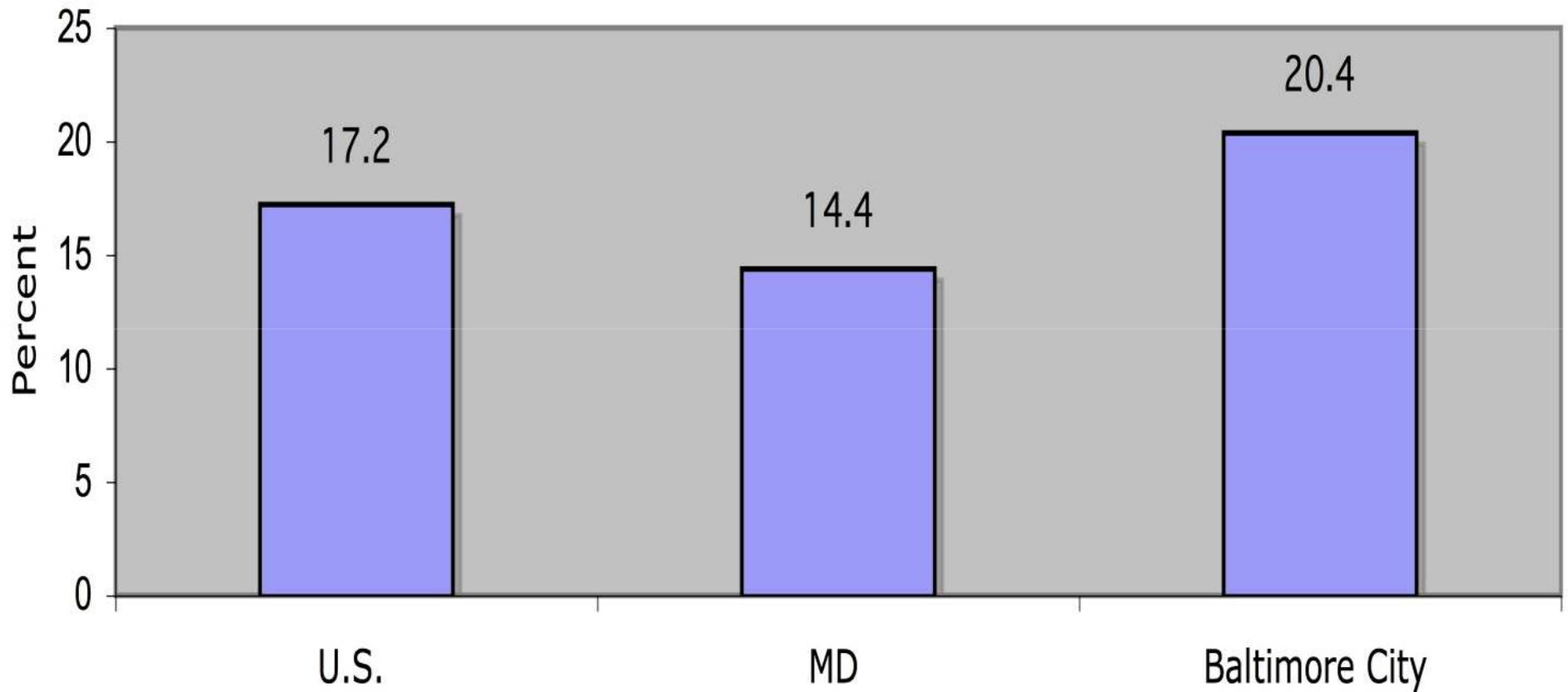
## Percent of Food Insecure Households by Income Level



\*Data from USDA (2009)

**Household Income-to-Poverty Ratio**

## Percent of 18 to 24 year olds with less than a high school diploma



\*Data for graph from the American Community Survey

# Services & Programs for Children

## School-based Program

- Food and Nutrition Education
- School Breakfast Program
- National School Lunch Program
- Child & Adult Care Food Program
- Summer Food Service Program
- School back-pack program

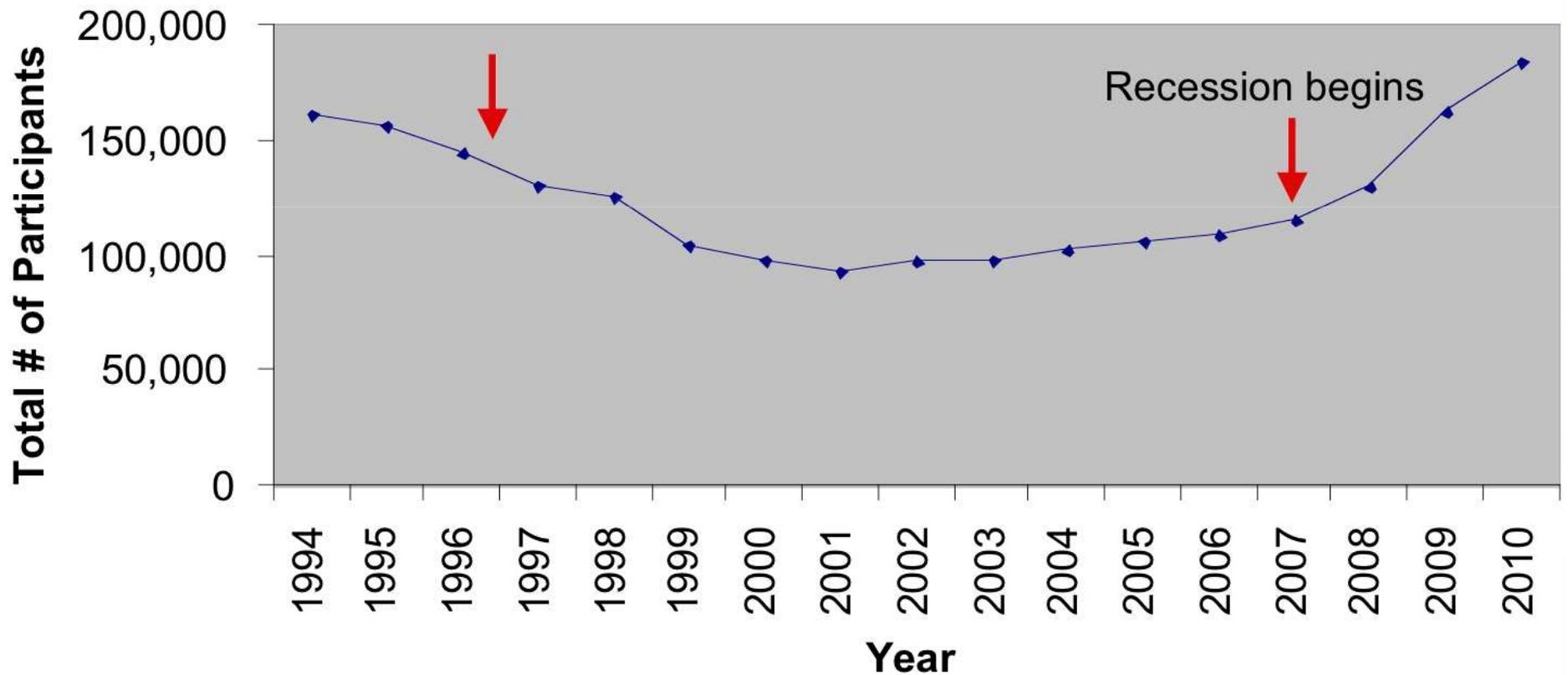
## Family-based Programs

- SNAP/FSP
- TANF/TCA
- LIHEAP/MEAP
- EITC/FINANCIAL EDUCATION
- WIC



# SNAP/FSP

**SNAP/FSP Total Number of Baltimore City Participants  
(for September)**



# SNAP/FSP

## Spotlight issue: Low monthly benefits

Thrifty Food Plan: price of purchasing a low-cost (economy) market basket of goods that meet nutritional guidelines.

~~TFP~~ × maximum SNAP benefit

Calculating Individual Benefits:

0.3 × net income = expected contribution (EC)

MONTHLY BENEFIT = maximum SNAP benefit – EC

# Boston Bounty Bucks

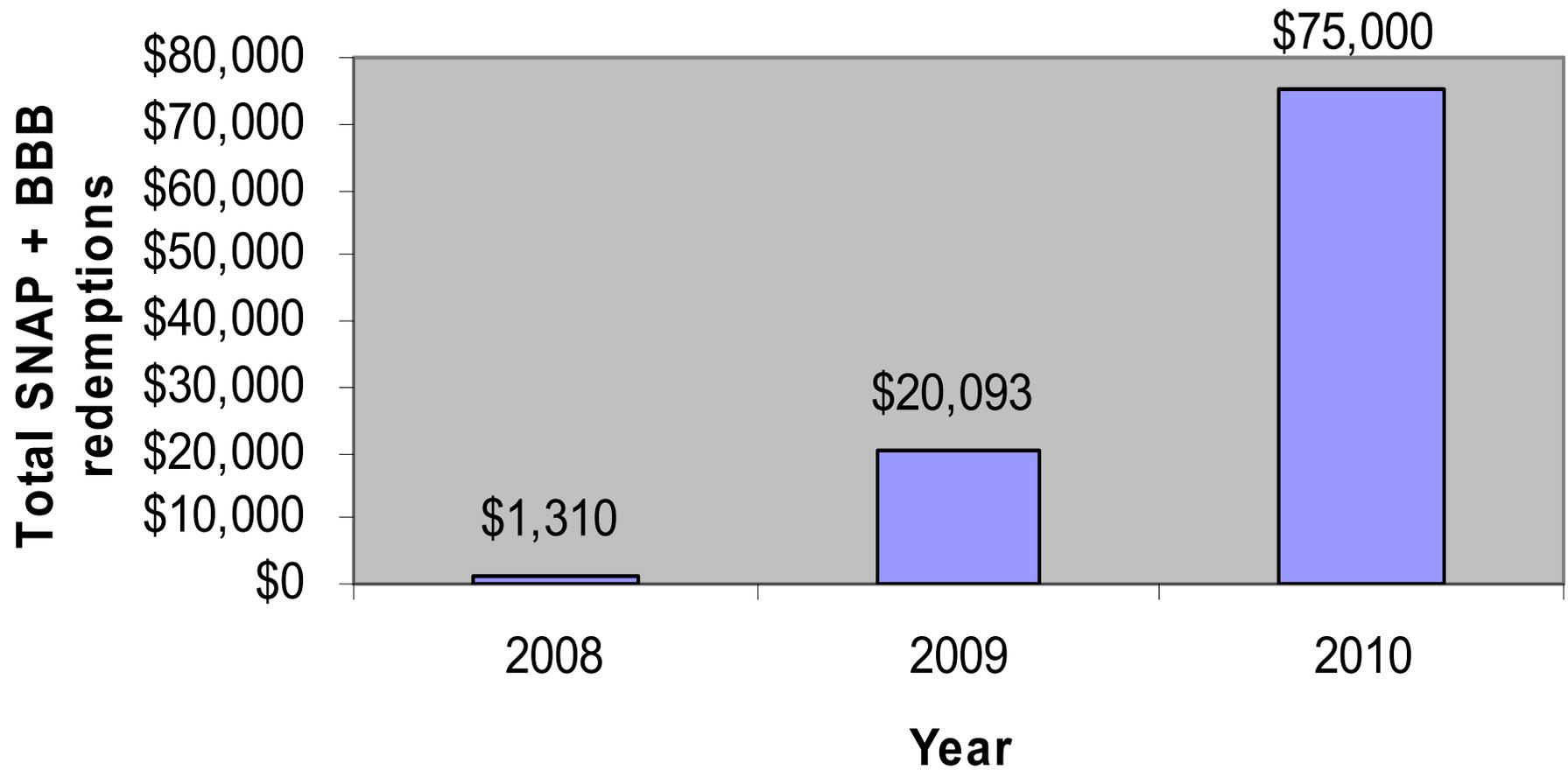
- BBB matches EBT spending at farmers markets dollar to dollar up to \$10, which means it doubles spending at markets up to \$20 per recipient.
- **Benefits:**
  - Incentivizes healthier eating
  - Increases spending power of SNAP benefits
  - Helps local farmers and farmers markets

# Boston Bounty Bucks: Facts

- Boston Food Project and the City of Boston.
- Funding: \$30,000 from the Mayor's Fresh Food Fund and \$10,000 grants from Project Bread, Wholesome Wave Foundation, and Farm Aid.
- In a survey at Boston's farmers markets, 72% people using EBT said the BBB was a major deciding factor in why they decided to spend money at the markets versus a conventional store.

# BBB cont.

## BBB End of the Season Total Sales



# Summer Food Service Program

- Overview: provides up to breakfast, lunch, and snacks for children during the summer months.
- Eligibility: sites have to be in area where 50% or more of the children qualify for free/reduced meals or 50% or more of the children enrolled in programs qualify for free/reduced meals

**Federal Level**

**USDA, Food and Nutrition Services (FNS)**

**State Level**

**Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE):**

**Baltimore Housing Office of Community Services:** Runs SFSP for Baltimore City County

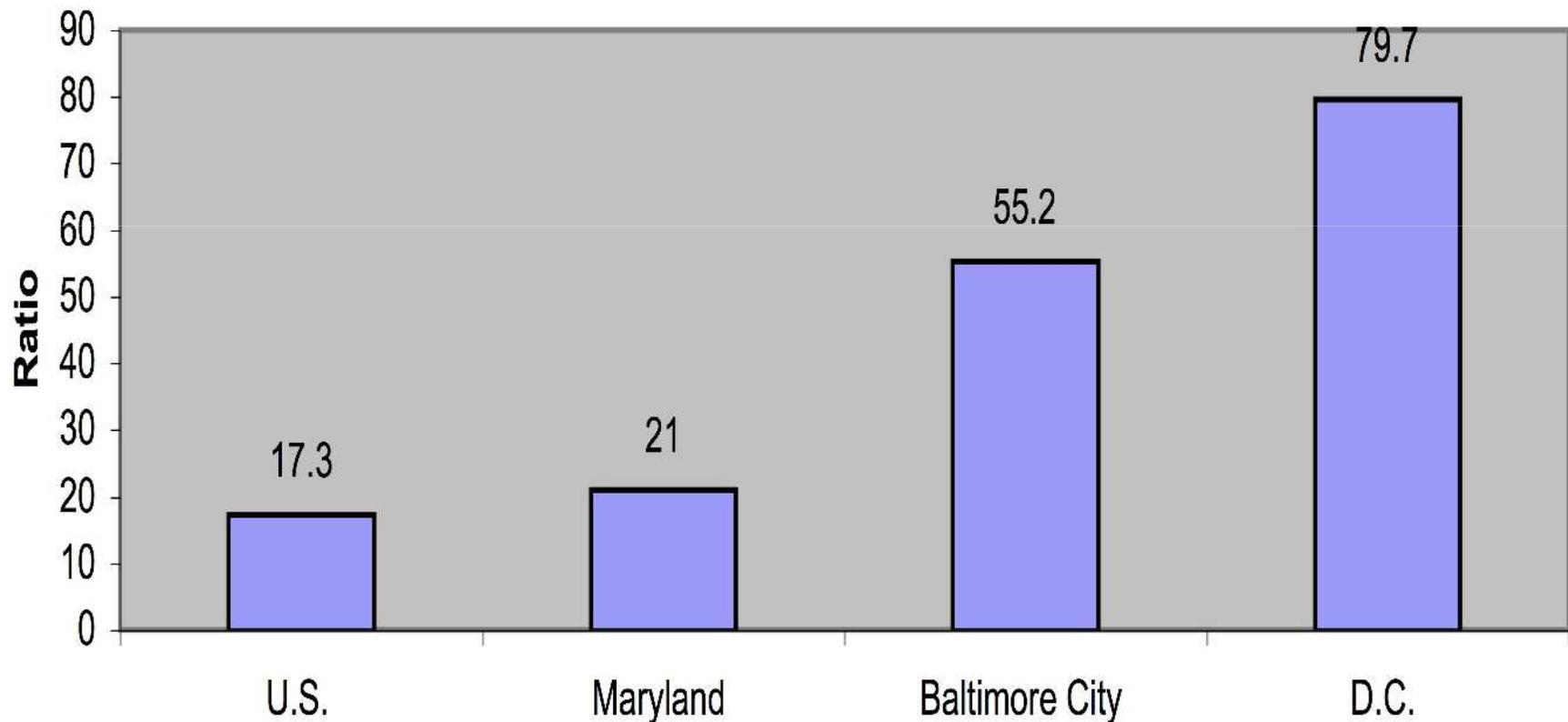
**Maryland Food Bank:**  
Runs SFSP for Baltimore County

Community organizations & Baltimore City Public Schools

Community organizations & Baltimore City Public Schools

# Spot Light Issue: Low Participation

SFSP participation compared to NSLP participation



\*Data from MD Hunger Solutions

# Additional Recommendations

- Link services through certification
- Institutionalize way to collect food insecurity data
- Promote programs that help with service gaps: i.e. Bounty Bucks
- Food insecurity summit or roundtables with cities like Philadelphia and Boston



# Work for the Future



- Continue to institutionalize ways of collecting food insecurity data
- Research on cross-utilization of programs
- Collect qualitative data from clients

Hands in Partnership  
Civic Works & Clifton Farm  
Moveable Feast  
Baltimore City Head Start  
Bureau of Maternal and Infant Care  
Food and Nutrition Services, Baltimore City Public Schools  
Center for a Livable Future  
Baltimore Montessori School  
Department of Human Resources  
University of Maryland School of Nursing  
Office of Sustainability  
Amazing Grace Lutheran Church  
Charm City Clinic

Stadium School

# Thank You!

Johns Hopkins WIC Clinic

Hampstead Hill Elementary

Baltimore Green Space

Maryland Hunger Solutions

Kodem Kol: Kennedy Krieger

Waverly Farmer's Market

Southeast Baltimore Early Head Start

Park Heights Family Support Center

The Baltimarkets

Maryland Food Bank

Wolfe Street Academy

Baltimore GASH Commission