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

- U.S.: 15.3%
- MD: 8.3%
- Baltimore City: 24.5%

*Data for graph from the American Community Survey*
Percent of Food Insecure Households by Income Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household Income-to-Poverty Ratio</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 1.00</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 1.30</td>
<td>39.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 1.85</td>
<td>34.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.85 and over</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income unknown</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Data from USDA (2009)*
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 Total Number of Baltimore City Participants (for September)

- Year 1994: Approximately 150,000 participants
- Year 1996: Approximately 120,000 participants
- Year 2000: Approximately 100,000 participants
- Year 2007: Recession begins
- Year 2010: Approximately 200,000 participants

Note: The chart shows a decrease in participants from 1994 to 2000, followed by an increase during the recession.
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.

Calculation of Individual Benefits:

\[ \text{TFP} = \text{maximum SNAP benefit} \]

\[ 0.3 \times \text{net income} = \text{expected contribution (EC)} \]

\[ \text{MONTHLY BENEFIT} = \text{maximum SNAP benefit} - \text{EC} \]
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 End of the Season Total Sales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total SNAP + BBB redemptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>$1,310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>$20,093</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>$75,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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% of 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

Community organizations & Baltimore City Public Schools

Maryland Food Bank: Runs SFSP for Baltimore County

Community organizations & Baltimore City Public Schools
Spot Light Issue: Low Participation

SFSP participation compared to NSLP participation

- U.S.: 17.3
- Maryland: 21
- Baltimore City: 55.2
- D.C.: 79.7

*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
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 CASH Campaign

Thank You!