

Improving Food Access for Older Adults: The Lahey/New Entry Farmer's Market Program

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About the Program

- Fruit & vegetable consumption critical for health status and disease prevention
- Hospital and farm partnership: The Lahey/New Entry Farmer's Market Program (FMP)
- Increases access to fresh fruits and vegetables as well as decrease social isolation among older adults
- Three locations at Council's on Aging (COAs) in Billerica, Burlington, and Arlington in Middlesex County, MA
- Participants take home a variety of fresh, local produce for free



Figure 1: Participants attending FMP, photos from Lahey Hospital News

Objectives

- 1) Evaluate the 2020 FMP
- 2) Describe FMP COVID19-related changes

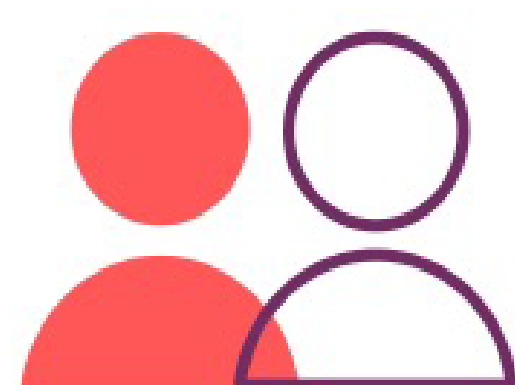
Methods

- 1) Collected 2020 post-season survey data
- 2) Conducted key informant interviews
- 3) Wrote report and case study based on findings

FMP Serves the Most Vulnerable

Women (81%) Live alone (50%) Ages 70-79 (42%)

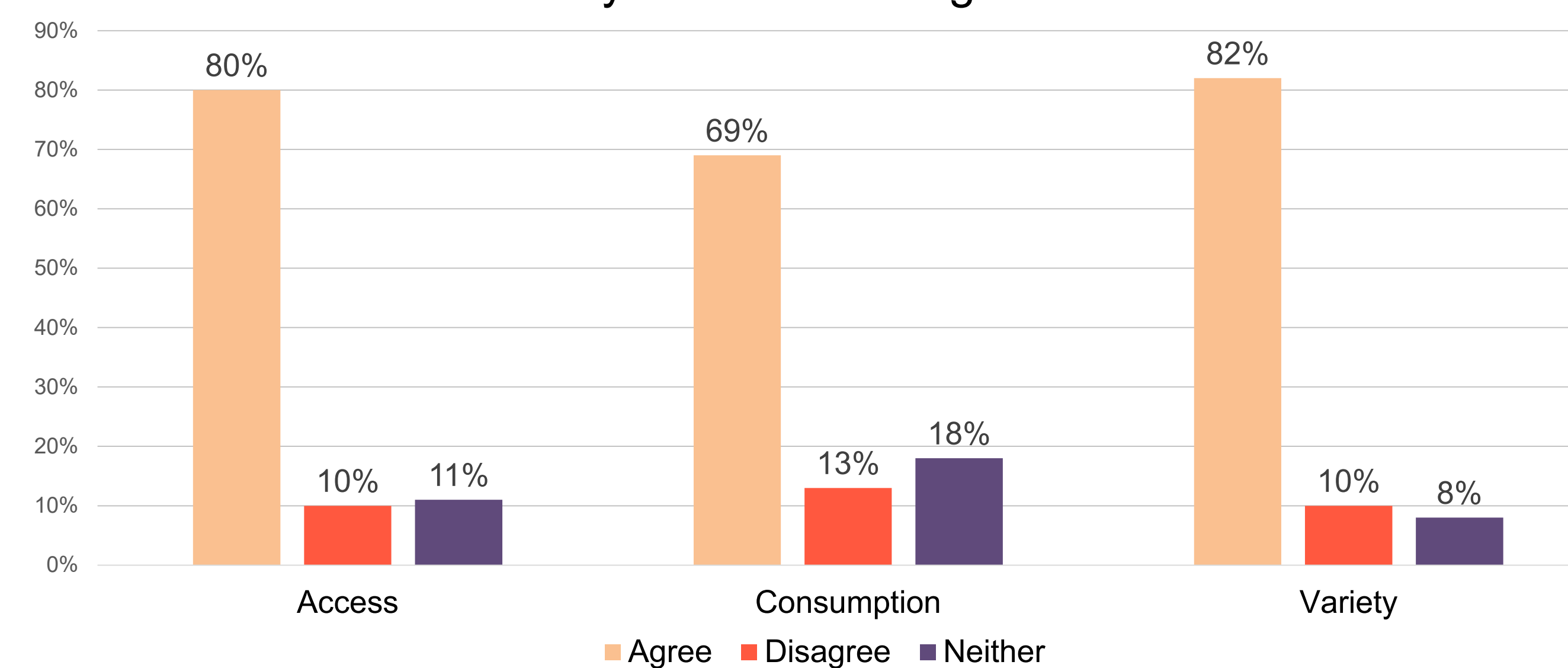
Make less than \$30k a year (30%) Non-hispanic White (90%)



Have at least one chronic condition (85%) Utilize food banks, SNAP, and Meals on Wheels

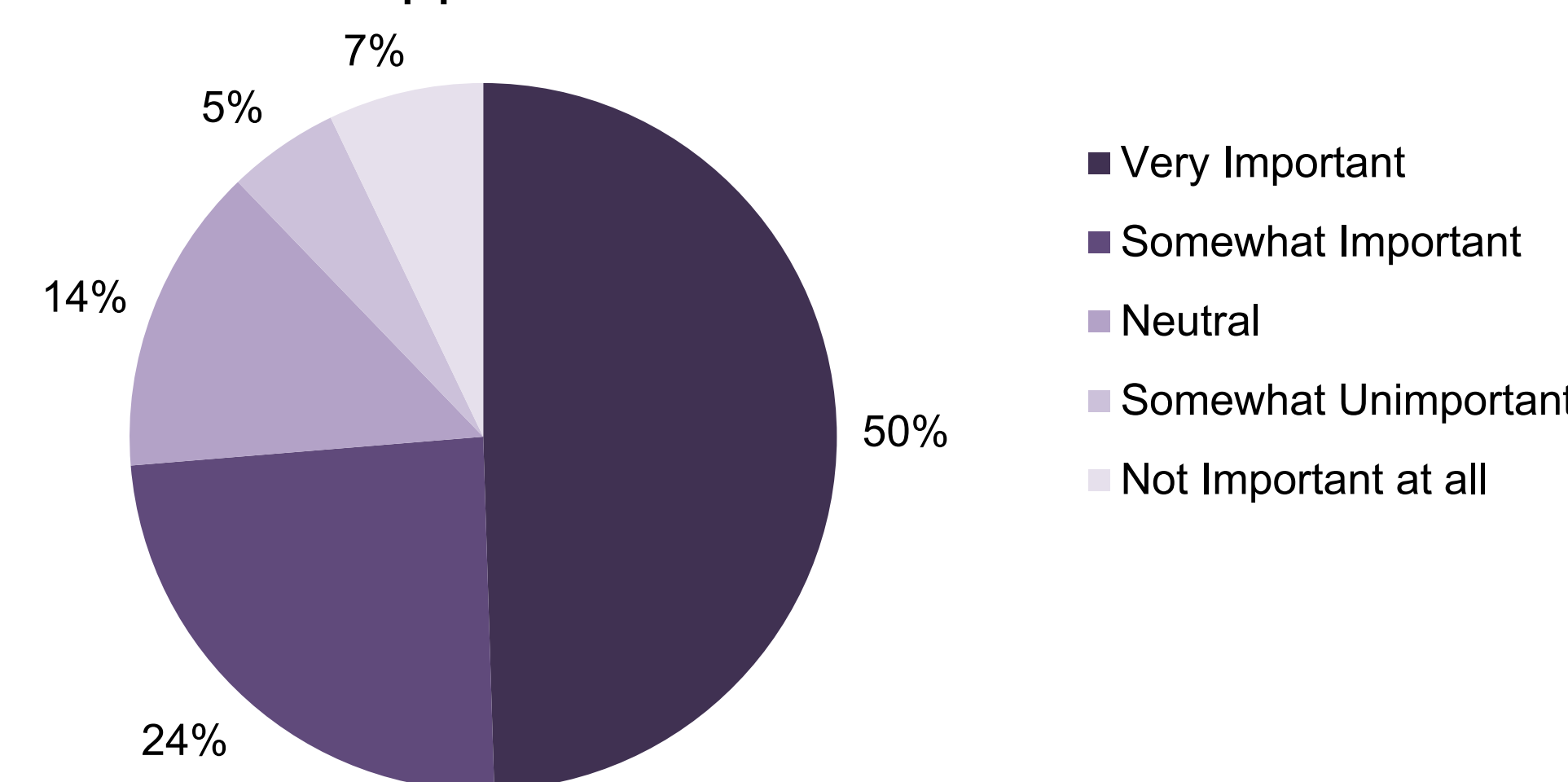
FMP increased Food Access

Has the FMP improved your access, consumption, and variety of fruits and vegetables?

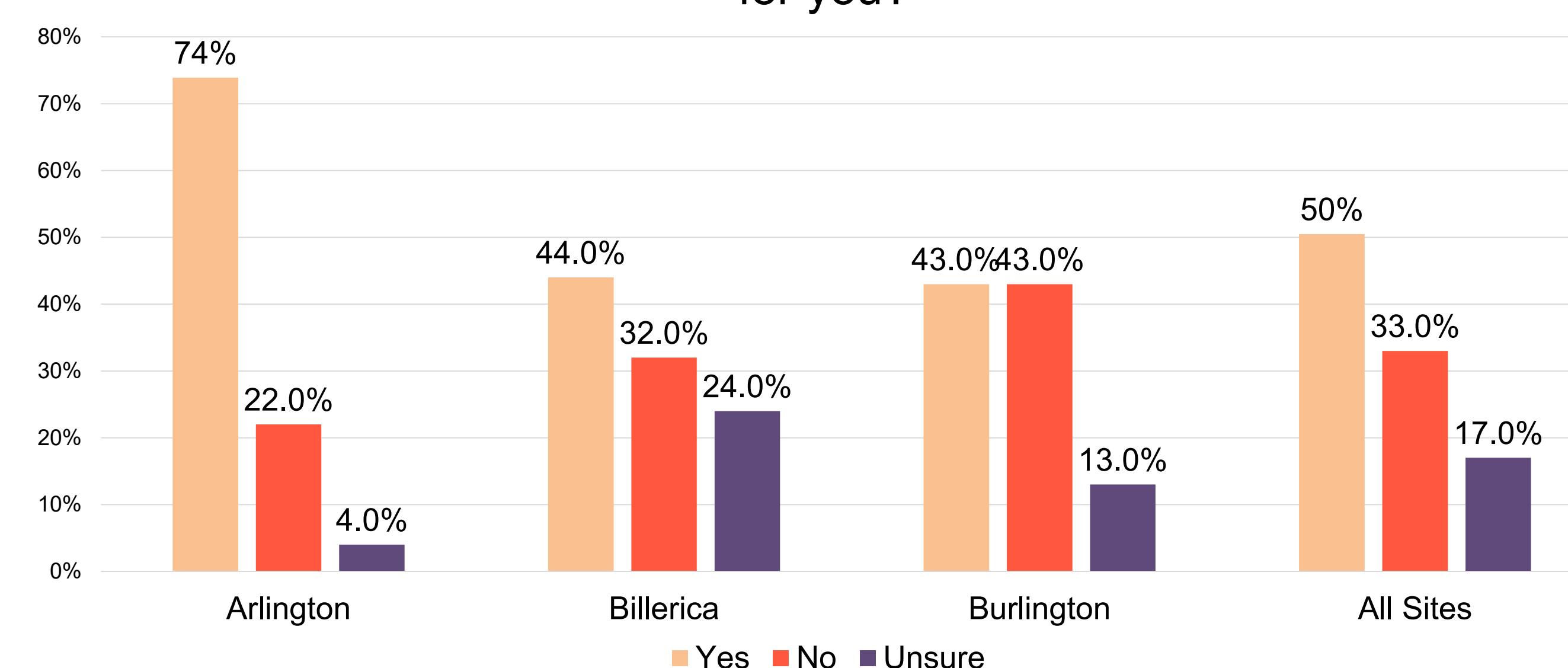


FMP Decreased Social Isolation

How important is it to you that the program provides social opportunities?



Has this program decreased feelings of loneliness/isolation for you?



Acknowledgements

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Covid-19 Program Revisions

Normal operations	During Covid-19
Pre-market socialization: coffee, snacks, guest speakers	Remote social opportunities and engaging activities
In-person market at the COAs	Drive-by pickup or home delivery
Participants choose from of a selection of produce at the market	Produce prebagged by New Entry

Conclusion

- Increased access and consumption of produce
- Program has decreased participants' feelings of social isolation
- Nearly 90% of older adults will participate next year

Implications & Future Research

Long-term goals of the program

- Increase number of participants
- Enhance social engagement
- Responsive to participant feedback
- Expand season timeframe

FMP operations will benefit from considering the community's social, cultural, geographical, and economic circumstances

- Explore the impact of culture considerations within food systems
- Serve those vulnerable: evaluate equity & increase diversity
- Expand opportunities for federal funding/grants (e.g., Farm Bill)

Research questions:

- Does the FMP sustain long-term improvements in diet quality after participation in the program ends?
- How to incorporate biomarkers (e.g., HbA1c) to assess long-term improvements in the health status of FMP participants?

References

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