



Executive Summary

of the 2025 Service Area Assessment

With funding support from Feeding America and the Orange County Hunger Alliance, Second Harvest Food Bank of Orange County (SHFBOC) conducted its initial Service Area Assessment (SAA). The purpose of the SAA was to assess the needs of those impacted by food insecurity in Orange County and describe how the Food Bank meets those needs.

As part of the assessment, we reviewed literature and data sources and conducted empirical research to gather perspectives and experiences about the charitable food system among community members and partner representatives. This research employed community engagement strategies and was driven by the support and input of a Community Advisory Board (CAB) consisting of Food Bank staff, research interns, a community advocate, partner representatives, and academic partners.

In this assessment, we identified micro-level geographic areas and populations experiencing high food insecurity in Orange County and developed a tool to assess the proportionality and accessibility of our food distribution, fulfilling the first part of the new service requirements set by Feeding America as part of their Partner Food Bank Agreement. To expand our understanding of the needs of our community, we collected survey and focus group data that centers the voices of key stakeholders, such as community members who receive food at our partner food distribution sites.

Primary and secondary data reviewed, collected, and analyzed from the SAA advances SHFBOC's mission and determines actionable ways to strategically serve Orange County community members who may have inconsistent access to nutritious food.

The full report describes our research plan, results, key learnings, and next steps.

Survey Insights

FROM OUR COMMUNITY MEMBERS



Among those who reported an annual household income, **81% reported receiving less than \$30,000 in 2024.**



Over half of respondents indicated they received food from the pantry site **over 5 times in the past year.**



A little over a third may have **limited capacity to respond to household-level financial shocks.**



Top items typically looked for at food pantries are **fresh produce, eggs, dairy, and red meat.**



Many expressed concern affording and accessing food at the **end of the month** and at certain seasons (specifically **summer and winter**).



Almost **60%** reported they often or always **get the variety and types of food they need or want** from the site.



35% reported **finding a site for free meals/groceries** that is open when they need it as **somewhat or very challenging.**



51% indicated that they **knew others who could benefit from receiving food from the food pantry site but currently do not.**

Four themes were identified from focus groups

- 1** To meet needs and preferences, the Food Bank can continue providing quality and variety of food and promoting choice and a sense of community and connection at food pantry sites.
- 2** To reach others in need, the Food Bank may address barriers such as inconvenient pantry hours and identifying solutions with partners to reach other community members
- 3** Changes in financial circumstances and household compositions, the political climate, and limited purchasing power may **affect the need for charitable food.**
- 4** To better serve community members most impacted by food insecurity, the Food Bank can consider the need for programs and wrap-around services, continued support for partner capacity and infrastructure, and setting up spaces for partner collaboration.

Conclusion

This assessment describes the community members we serve, the need for food in Orange County, and gaps and strengths in our service. The Food Bank will continue to share results with key stakeholders, conduct additional research, and use findings from both primary and secondary data sources to inform operational and strategic decisions that tackle root causes of food insecurity and prioritize the needs of populations and communities most impacted.

For more details, please visit feedoc.org/SAA-detailed-report or scan the QR code. Please direct questions and comments to info@feedoc.org or 949-653-2900.

