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## Highlights of the 2014 VEAP Food Program Survey

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### **Aim of the Survey:**

To determine the healthy eating behaviors, barriers, perceptions and capacity of VEAP Food Shelf clients (low-income households from Bloomington, Richfield, Edina, and a portion of south Minneapolis).

### **Process:**

Survey was conducted at the VEAP Food Program over six days in August 2014, in English and Spanish. 729 were asked to participate; **388 valid surveys were returned.**

### **Health Status/Food Security**

1. **Running out of food:** 89% of surveyed clients reported worrying “sometimes” or “often” that food would run out before they had money to buy more in the past year. In Bloomington, Edina, Richfield and Eden Prairie, this figure is only 9% for the general population (*2010 Survey for the Health of All the Population and the Environment SHAPE, Hennepin County Human Services and Public Health*).
2. **Health:** 28% of surveyed clients reported their health as “very good” or “excellent,” compared to 64% of the general population of this area or 42% of the low income population of Hennepin County (SHAPE 2010).

### **Importance of Healthy Eating**

3. **Importance of health:** A vast majority (72%) of those surveyed considered “Healthy” to be “Very Important” to them when they eat.
4. **Interest in classes:** 54% expressed interest in taking a class on nutrition and cooking; the most popular specific topic of interest was learning how to make healthy meals (48% of surveyed clients). The groups with the highest interest included Spanish speakers (76%), those who did not complete high school (72%), and younger adults (62% of 35-44 year olds, 58% of 18-34 year olds).

### **Eating Behavior**

5. **Vegetables Consumed:** 28% of surveyed clients reported consuming three or more vegetables yesterday, compared to 21.2% of low-income residents in Hennepin County and 31.3% of all residents in Bloomington, Edina, Richfield and Eden Prairie (Hennepin County SHAPE 2010).
6. **Fruits Consumed:** 22% of surveyed clients reported consuming three or more fruits yesterday, compared to 25.6% of low-income residents and in Hennepin County and 33.2% of all residents in Bloomington, Edina, Richfield and Eden Prairie (Hennepin County SHAPE 2010).

Information about survey methods and broader results can be found in the VEAP Food Program Survey Data Book Report 2014

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- 7. More likely to report eating 3-5 servings of vegetables:** Hispanic households (30%, compared to 26% of African American HHs and 17% of White HHs); Females (27%, compared to 16% males); and HHs with children (30%, compared to 22% of HHs without children). Similar results were reported for consumption of fruits.

### **Cooking Behavior:**

#### **8. Eating at Home:**

- 92.4% report eating food made at home most or every day;
- 56% reported making meals from scratch (using ingredients such as flour, oil and raw vegetables) most or every day, a habit typically associated with healthier eating habits.
- 57% reported that they “never” or “rarely” eat food from a restaurant (such as McDonald’s, Pizza Hut, or Applebee’s)
- 40% said they never or rarely heat packaged, pre-made foods such as frozen dinners.

#### **9. More likely to report cooking from scratch:**

- 68% of Hispanic or Latino respondents reported cooking from scratch most or everyday (compared to 49% of Black and 39% of White respondents).
- 67% of those who speak Spanish at home reported cooking from scratch most or everyday (compared 50% of those who speak English).
- 69% of respondents with less than a high school education reported cooking from scratch most or everyday (compared with 53% of those with High School degree or GED, 48% of those with some college, and 54% of those with a Bachelor’s degree or higher).

### **Barriers to Healthy Eating:**

- 10. Preparing and storing food:** 97% said they have a place to prepare food where they live; 96% have a place to store food.
- 11. Confidence:** More than 85% were “somewhat” or “very confident” in their ability to plan, prepare and shop for a healthy meal.
- 12. Lack of barriers:** A majority (82%) did *not* agree that taste (by them or their family) was a barrier to healthy foods. Similar majorities disagreed that time (78%), cooking know-how (77%), kitchen tools (84%), or transporting healthy foods (79%) prevented them from cooking healthy. More of the respondents between the ages of 35 and 44 years agreed that knowledge was a barrier, compared to both older and younger respondents.
- 13. Affordability:** However, a majority (64%) *agreed* that “it costs too much to cook healthy.”

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### Value of VEAP

- 14. **Produce outside VEAP:** On weeks not shopped at VEAP, 61% of surveyed clients reported less fruit and vegetable consumption than on weeks shopped at VEAP, with 59% reporting that there are food items at VEAP that are otherwise unaffordable. 57% of surveyed clients reported that it is “somewhat hard” or “very hard” to get fruits and vegetables that do not come from VEAP.
- 15. **Valued VEAP Foods:** Meats (89 respondents), fruits (56 respondents) and vegetables (50 respondents) were identified as the top items clients can’t afford when they don’t come to VEAP (the next most common item – bread – was mentioned by only 14 respondents).
- 16. **Using VEAP Food:** 76% *disagreed* with the statement that it is hard to make a healthy meal with the foods they get from VEAP.
- 17. **Other sources of food:** 77% said they never or rarely eat food from a low-cost or free meal program (such as Loaves and Fishes or a Senior Center). 25% report using another food shelf in addition to VEAP.

### Respondents:

74% Female	41% White	22% 18-34 yrs old
	31% Hispanic/Latino	30% 35-44 yrs old
	19% Black/African Amer.	24% 45-54 yrs old
		15% 55-64% yrs old
		8.5% 65+ yrs old
53% Bloomington	66% English spoken at home	22% <HS degree
34% Richfield	25% Spanish	28% HS Grad
12% Edina & S. Mpls	9% other/unknown	37% some college
		13% Bachelor’s +

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