

The background of the slide features several overlapping, wavy bands of color. From top to bottom, the colors transition from a deep purple at the top, through various shades of lavender and light purple, to a soft pink and finally a pale lavender at the bottom. The waves are fluid and organic, creating a textured, layered effect.

Food Insecurity and Public Libraries



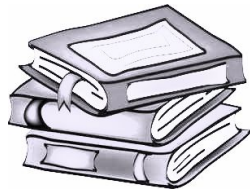
Presenter

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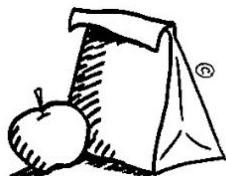
A Little About Me

- MLIS 2004 - Dominican University
- School and Public Librarian
 - Primarily middle and high school
 - 2 different public libraries
- PhD 2022 - Dominican University



The Study

- ❑ Original study SRP and Summer Meals
- ❑ COVID and a new idea
 - ❑ “Organic programs” refers to staff initiated programs
 - ❑ Focus on Illinois public libraries



Research Questions

1. What programs were formed organically by library staff in response to food insecurity during the COVID-19 pandemic in public libraries in Illinois?
2. What themes emerge in terms of library staff perception of the role of the public library in addressing food insecurity during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Study Participants

- 491 survey respondents
- 4 position categories in public libraries
 - Admin, Librarian, Library Asst, and Clerk
- 5 different community sizes served
 - From <10,000 to >75,000

What they were doing

- ❑ 174 participants had organic food programs
- ❑ 220 programs found (some had more than one program)

Themes

- ❑ Individual Organic Food Programs (49%)
- ❑ Cooperative Food Programs (51%)

Individual Organic Programs

- Food Pantry (40)
- Garden (16)
- Cooking (10)
- Snacks (10)
- Bag of Groceries (8)
- Gift Cards (7)
- Monetary Donations (6)
- Food Baskets (5)
- Blessing Bags (3)
- Compassion Fund (2)
- Mobile Farmer's Market (1)

Cooperative Programs

- Canned Food Drive (84)
- Meals (28)



Discussion

What is your library doing to address food insecurity in your community? Or, what do you wish your public library was doing?

Add your idea to the jamboard- <https://bit.ly/3HryAiD>

What they thought

- 380 answered an open ended question asking about the role of the public library in addressing food insecurity
- 6 themes emerged
 - Theme 0 - Unsure of the role = 24
 - Theme 1 - No role = 30
 - Theme 2 - A limited role = 18
 - Theme 3 - Have a role if no one else does = 10
 - Theme 4 - A supportive role = 186
 - Theme 5 - A lead role = 112

Overall Positive

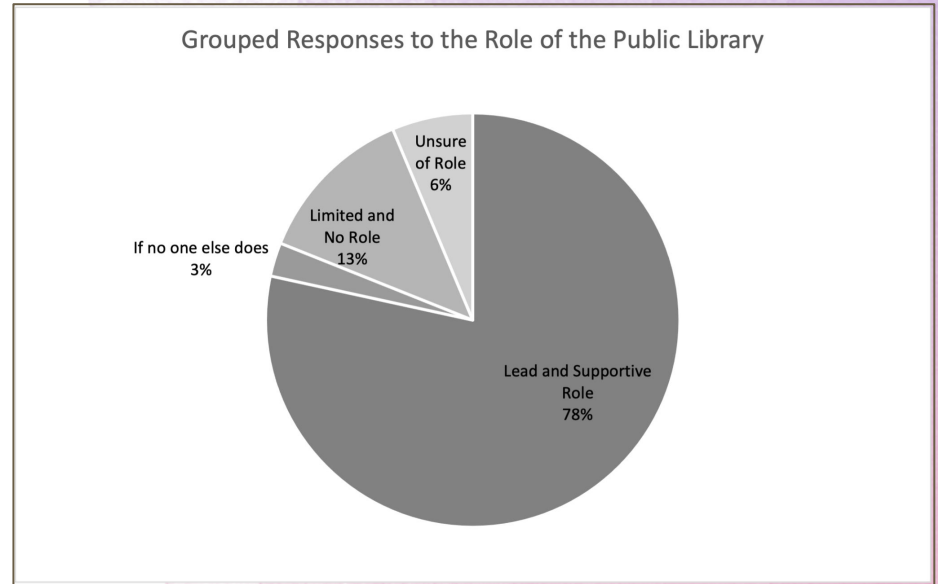
Grouped responses

Possible negative undertone (48)

- Theme 1 - No role
- Theme 2 - A limited role

Possible positive undertone (298)

- Theme 4 - A supportive role
- Theme 5 - A lead role



More Positive

- Intentional programs were created by public library staff in Illinois to address the needs of their community's food insecurity.
- Some programs were adapted to continue to meet the needs of the community during library closures during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Some interview respondents were identified as food justice activists.



Connections

Community Size and Role of the Public Library

- >75,000 people had 91% noting a supportive or lead role.
- <10,000 people had 63% noting a supportive or lead role.

Meals Served March 2020 to May 2021 and Role of the Public Library

- 57% of participants who served meals during the first 15 months of the pandemic identified a lead role.
- 24%, who did not serve meals during the first 15 months of the pandemic identified a lead role.

Tips and Takeaways

- ❑ Majority of respondents think the public library should play a role in addressing food insecurity.
- ❑ There were numerous reasons for not having programs.
- ❑ Collaboration is key.
- ❑ Half of all programs were initiated by library staff. Don't be afraid to start something.



Questions

Contact and Access to Study

Email: miriamzrosen@gmail.com

Study: https://research.dom.edu/er.php?course_id=87211 (2022 Dissertations)

