



Food Stamp Participation in Worcester

Eric Petrin, Ina Duka, and John Neary
 Advisors: Professors K. Wobbe and R. Traver



Background

The government funded food stamp program in the United States allows needy people and people with disabilities to purchase their food with a card issued by the government.

In order to qualify for food stamps, one must fill out an online application or get one at a food bank or a food stamp office.



Everyone should be entitled to have food stored in their homes

However, there are a number of issues which have come up. The reason for the low participation rate is due to the many factors, including

- Inability to read the food stamp applications, since many new immigrants have trouble reading English
- Being totally unaware of the food stamps program entirely
- Inability to make the trip down to the office
- Viewing the program as “welfare”



Do you qualify?

- In order to qualify for food stamps in Massachusetts, a family of three must make less than \$16,608 per year

Project Goals/Objectives

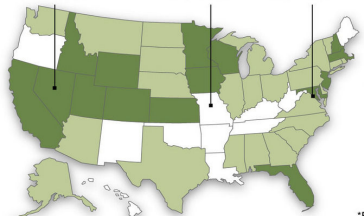
- Spread awareness about the food stamp program in Worcester
- Help out people who have trouble filling out applications
 - Hopefully raise the participation rate by 5%
- Crush the idea that food stamps are a type of “welfare”
- Ultimately facilitate in the process of feeding the world

Who's getting food stamps

The percent of eligible poor Americans getting food stamps varies considerably from state to state. The rates for 2004:

■ 32%-45% ■ 46%-60% □ More than 60%

Worst Nev. 32% Best Mo. 72% Best D.C. 72%



• Nationally, half of the 52 million eligible low-income people receive food stamps

• Government eligibility*: Income limit of \$19,767 for family of three

*Eligibility is an income less than 130% of the poverty level

Source: National Priorities Project
 Graphic: Judy Treible, Tim Goheen

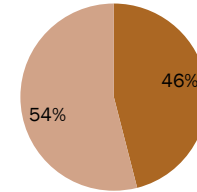
© 2007 MCT

Methods/Process

- Create a WPI sponsored community service program to help out at St. Paul's Outreach in Worcester, which is a 20 minute walk from WPI
- Possibly create another community service program to help elderly receive food stamp applications, by having a WPI sponsored bus run to elder houses to bring food stamp applications
 - Students will help facilitate the process of filling out applications
- Spread general awareness to the food stamp program, through television, radio, and possibly flier distribution
 - This media could also be used to generate better understanding and eliminate bad ideas about the program

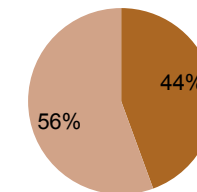
Current Food Stamp Participation

- People that are eligible but receive no benefits (92,900)
- People that receive benefits (109,800)



Food Stamp Participation up by 5%

- People that are Eligible but Receive no Benefits (89,720)
- People that Receive Benefits (112,280)



Notice that 3,200 more people will get food stamps for a small 5% increase

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank Frances Langille and the kind people who run the food stamps program at Worcester State College for taking the time to speak with us.

References

- <http://www.cbpp.org/states/foodstamp-fact-ma.pdf>
- <http://www.cbpp.org/foodstamp-video-text.pdf>
- <http://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/snapmain.htm>