

Perception and Implementation of the Foods to Encourage Framework in Lowcountry Food Bank's Partner Agencies

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Objective: Foods to Encourage (F2E) is a framework developed by Feeding America® for network food banks to approximate the nutritional value of their inventories. The purpose of this study was to investigate perception of F2E in partner agencies, identify issues with implementation, and determine potential improvement methods. *Methods and Instruments:* Telephone surveys were completed across the Lowcountry and assessed knowledge, purchasing, and incentives of F2E products. In Myrtle Beach 10 agencies were surveyed, in Yemassee 11, and in Charleston 20, for a total of 41 surveys. Annual agency renewal surveys from 2018, which asked about F2E knowledge and purchasing, were also reviewed and included 225 responses. *Results:* Telephone surveys revealed 66% of agencies did not know of F2E. Of this group, only 33% had purchased F2E product in the past. Of the 34% of agencies that knew of F2E, 100% had purchased F2E product. Responses were similar across regions. Common incentives to purchasing F2E were lowering cost and increasing availability. Cost and client preference most influenced shopping selection. Agency renewal surveys revealed that 47% of total agencies are unaware of F2E. Of this percentage, 3% had purchased F2E in the past. Of the 43% of agencies that knew of F2E, 81% had purchased in the past. 10% of agencies responded "non-applicable" when asked about F2E knowledge. *Conclusions:* Most partner agencies are unaware of the F2E program. Because agencies that are aware of the program purchase more F2E product, an education campaign is likely the most effective program improvement method.

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