

# Nutritious food for all Lack of access to healthy food before and during the pandemic

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## Introduction

The Salem Pantry works hard to provide healthy food to local and regional communities. The Salem Pantry has given out food in the City of Salem since 1991. Its mission is “to eradicate hunger in the Salem community by providing residents in need with nutritious foods in an atmosphere of dignity and respect.”(The Salem Panty, n.d.) The Salem Pantry builds partnerships and collaborates with a variety of organizations including the North Shore Community Development Coalition, Salem State University, Life bridge, and the Peabody Essex Museum.

## Related Literature

“Low income is associated with a poor quality dietary intake. Compared to those with higher income, lower income individuals consume fewer fruits and vegetables, more sugar-sweetened beverages and have lower overall diet quality”.( Lee, 2016). Eighty seven percent of people in low income countries can not afford healthy diets ( Beaudreault, 2021).



## Objectives

Research and compare the number of people who struggled financially before and during COVID. Determine the impact of people’s finances on the use/access to the Salem Pantry.



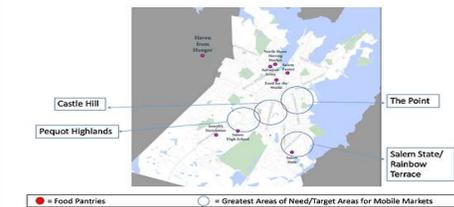
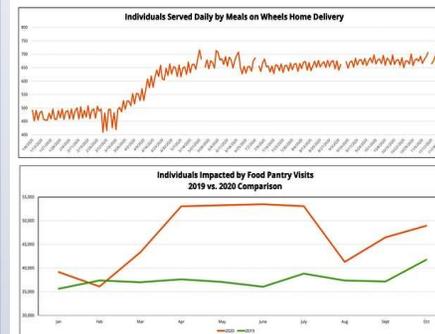
## Methods and Materials

Researched data on employment and salary levels. Collected data on use/access to the Salem Pantry. Compared the two data sets for trends and the impact that decreases in financial means may have had on the Salem Pantry.

## Results

- Before the global pandemic the Salem Pantry typically served 900 clients per month
- During the COVID pandemic the number of clients increased to 2,600 people per month

Before COVID more than 15 percent of Salem residents were living below the poverty line. Since COVID Salem Pantry staff have confirmed that poverty in Salem has gone up significantly by around 14%.



The graphics and data above illustrate that since the pandemic many more people are struggling financially and taking advantage of food pantries to access healthy food.

## Conclusion

The data clearly shows that many people lost their jobs due to COVID and are struggling financially. In addition there is a significant increase in the number of people utilizing the Salem Pantry for access to healthy food options during COVID. Staff and volunteers at the Salem Pantry also confirm that people that are having finance difficulties are the largest population taking advantage of the important services that the Salem Pantry offers. **What I learned**

During my internship I have learned that giving back is so important. Many people have had a hard time in life as a direct result of the COVID pandemic. The Salem Pantry is extremely valuable in the community as it provides access to healthy food options to people who are experiencing financial difficulties.

## References

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