



Policy Blog: Evening and Weekend Pantry Access in Adams County

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On September 25, CPFBI Impact and Policy Research will release their seventh Community Hunger Mapping report. Focused on Adams County, the report is the result of a year-long effort to understand the needs and experiences of food insecure neighbors in the county and assess the local charitable food system's response to hunger. The report will provide specific, actionable recommendations that can improve services and make progress toward ending hunger in the community, making the launch a fitting way for CPFBI and its Adams County partners to mark Hunger Action Month. **This policy blog previews a key finding from the report: while geographic access to pantries across Adams County is extremely strong – there are no census tracts that do not have at least one food pantry within a 15-minute drive – there are important gaps in time-based access, especially for weekend services.**

As shown in the chart at right, geographic analysis of pantry access that accounts for hours indicates that the entire food insecure population of Adams County lacks access to a nearby weekend food distribution, as there are no pantries open on Saturday or Sunday at any time anywhere in the county. This is the first county where Community Hunger Mapping has been completed in which there are no pantries with weekend hours.

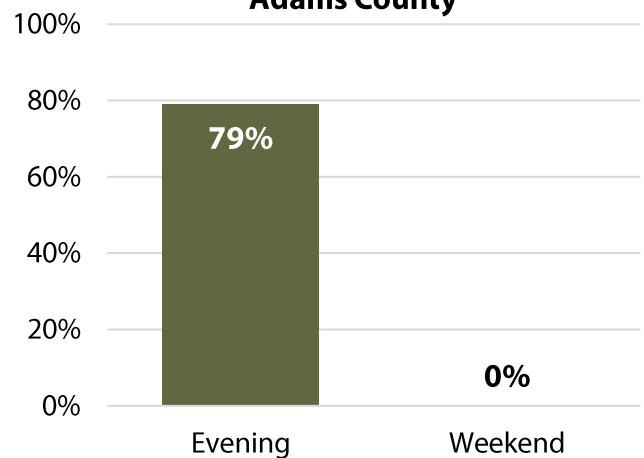
Additionally, though about four fifths (79%) of the food insecure residents of Adams County live within an approximately 15-minute drive of at least one pantry that offers at minimum one monthly distribution after 5PM, access drops substantially after accounting for the frequency of distribution. Seven in ten food insecure neighbors (68%) are in reasonable distance of a pantry with at least two evening distributions a month, and just two in five (38%) live near a pantry that offers evening distributions weekly or more.

Specific areas of the county that wholly lack access to an evening distribution include greater Fairfield and Carroll Valley in the southwestern corner of the county along with most of the northern edge of the county near the Cumberland County border.

Together, these gaps in service represent a major opportunity for improvement in the Adams County charitable food system. Expanding pantry service hours is important because a lack of evening or weekend options may make seeking help difficult or impossible for households with regular obligations during business hours, such as work or school. Indeed, the results of a survey of Adams County residents who do not presently visit food pantries show that the second most cited reason for not going to a pantry among respondents who screened positive for food insecurity was inconvenient hours, behind only concerns about eligibility.

Furthermore, in Adams County, full-time workers make up almost a third of the pantry visitor population (29%) and are among the most vulnerable to hunger. A staggering two in five pantry visitors (41%) who stated full-time work was their main income source experienced very low food security, the most severe form of food insecurity, and three quarters (75%) of full-time workers who visited pantries fell under 150% of the federal poverty line for their household size. These findings primarily illustrate the precarity of work for low-income neighbors, but they also highlight the importance of a charitable food network that ensures accessibility for everyone in need.

**Percent of Food Insecure
Individuals with Access to
Evening or Weekend Pantries,
Adams County**



The full report and launch event will feature much more analysis and many more recommendations that will guide the food bank, our partner agencies, and our community partners at other anti-hunger and anti-poverty organizations as they take action against hunger in September and all year round. To learn more, please join us at our launch event, which will be held on [Thursday, September 25 at 1:30PM at the Atrium at Gettysburg College](#). For those who cannot attend in person, [the event will also be accessible online via Zoom](#).

Editor's Note: This policy blog is a revision of the blog originally published Monday, September 8, which contained incorrect information about the percentage of food insecure Adams County residents with access to food pantries offering evening hours due to a technical error in the underlying data analysis. The number of food insecure individuals with access to an evening distribution is 79% rather than the 69% originally stated.