

SSCRC Food Pantry

2018 Mid-Year Report



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This report provides an overview of the activities, services, and costs of the SSCRC Food Pantry from January - June 2018. It is divided into three sections: Activities, Participant Household Data, and Food and Cost Data.

Activity Highlights

Selected activities from 2018:

- Completing five hygiene drives with another underway for our August distribution;
- Hosting representatives from Montgomery County's Health and Human Services Neighborhood Opportunity Network (NON) to help participants start applications for SNAP benefits and learn about other county programs;
- Hosting a representative from Maryland Disability Rights to help people register to vote, learn about early voting, and apply to vote absentee;
- Expanding our relationship with the community by developing a relationship with the Kemp Mill neighborhood, resulting in new food donations.

Participant Data

- The food pantry served an average of 71 households per month from January – June 2018. This added up to 423 household visits.
- 49 percent of visits were by households of five or more people; up from the same period in 2017 (38%).
- 46 percent of visits were by households in the church's 20902 zip code. Another 36 percent lived in adjacent zip codes.
- The 423 household visits represented 172 different households. 59 of these households came for the first time in 2018.

Food and Cost Data

- We received over 16,700 lbs. of food from the Capital Area Food Bank and donations. The cost of food from January – July was \$2,449.
- On average, we spent \$5.79 on food per household visit.

2018 Activities

Hygiene Project

In October 2017 we began offering a minimum of three hygiene items per household during food pantry distributions. This program is funded by a grant from the CRC's program for sustaining congregational excellence. Grant funding is designed to support the program for 10 months, and then the goal is for the program to operate through community donation drives or other outside funding.

In January we asked the congregation to identify possible community groups (e.g., schools, churches, businesses) that could organize a drive for hygiene items. The response was incredible. So far we have had five drives, and a sixth is in progress to support our August distribution. This success will allow us to extend the time that the grant funding will be able to support the program.

Food pantry participants have expressed gratitude for the hygiene items, which also include other essential household goods such as laundry detergent and dish soap.

Guest Service Providers

One of the goals for the food pantry this year was to invite guest service providers to visit the food pantry to help our participants connect to other community programs. So far, we have had two organizations represented.

In May a representative from Disability Rights Maryland came to share information about voting to help our participants be prepared for the June primary elections. Although she was able to help people register to vote, people who talked to her were most interested in learning about early voting and absentee voting. Several people took applications for absentee voting, particularly seniors who said they typically don't vote because it is difficult for them to get to the polls. We hope to have Disability Rights Maryland return this fall before the general elections.

We have also had representatives from Montgomery County Health and Human Services Neighborhood Opportunity Network (NON) visit the food pantry four times this year. They have helped people start applications for SNAP benefits and learn about community programs. The representative who is now coming regularly has a special connection to our church and community – she worshipped with Strong Tower Ministries when they met in our church building and is friends with Pastor Elmer. She is passionate about her work and about being able to do outreach at our food pantry.

Community Connections

In 2018 we've started to connect with the Kemp Mill neighborhood. Residents of Kemp Mill are starting a new volunteer organization (called a village) to support seniors who are looking for support to help them stay in their homes and connected to community. As part of their efforts, they have been talking to community groups, including churches, to find out what we are doing in the community. As a result, the food pantry has been advertised in the Kemp Mill neighborhood newsletter and we received donations

from a neighbor who has connections with a food pantry that serves our Jewish neighbors and is willing to give us shelf stable foods that they are not able to use.

Through the Bible Study at Arcola Towers, we've made another connection that is helping our food pantry. A resident of Arcola Towers volunteers at her church food pantry, which is open the day before ours. They occasionally have leftover packaged bread, and she has started bringing it to us.

These two relationships are both helpful and humbling. We did not seek them; rather they came to us from unexpected places. They are a reminder that God provides for us and for our participants in ways that we cannot anticipate.

Hunger Policy Education

This spring we started a hunger policy email group concerning opportunities to gain awareness of, consider, and/or engage public policy related to hunger. The intention of the email group is to raise awareness, not to advocate a specific position or policy. This group is, in part, a response to our call to Biblical justice, in particular for the hungry, following examples given by Esther, Mordecai, Daniel, and Nehemiah. Information for the emails has come from the CRC Office of Social Justice, Bread for the World, Maryland Hunger Solutions, the Food Research and Action Council, and the Capital Area Food Bank.

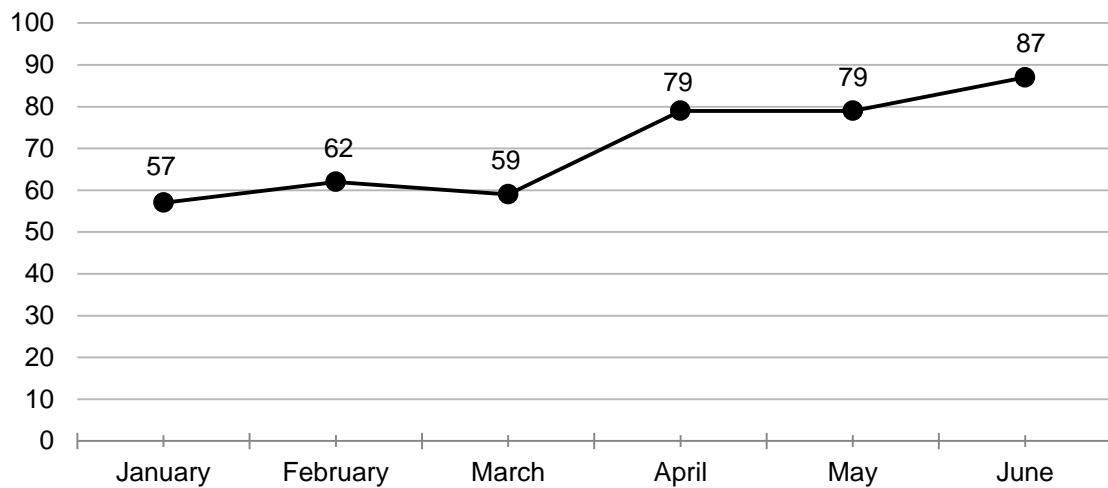
Participant Household Data

From January - June 2018 the food pantry served an average of 71 households per month. This added up to 423 household visits to date in 2018. This represents a drop in participation compared to the same time period in 2017 (Table 1). However, as shown in Chart 1, participation was particularly low from January – March, but increased from April – June.

Table 1. Food Pantry Visits, 2017 and 2018

	2017		2018		Change 2017 - 2018	
	Total	Monthly Average	Total	Monthly Average	Change	Monthly Average
Total Visits	461	77	423	71	-37	-7

Chart 1. Number of Household Visits Per Month, January - June 2018



The size of the households that we serve affects the amount of food that we order and distribute each month. We define a large household as one for which a food pantry participant reports at least five people living in the household. Large households are permitted to take double the amount of most food items. In the first half of 2018, 49 percent of food pantry visits were by large households. This is considerably more than during the same period in 2017, when 38 percent of visits were by large households.

Our aim is to be a food pantry that serves primarily people who live in the community near church. However, we do not require people to live in a particular zip code or set of zip codes to receive food. Table 2, below, shows that 46 percent food pantry visits to date were by households that lived in the church's 20902 zip code. Another 36 percent of visits were by households from zip codes adjacent to the church's zip code. Only 18 percent were from other zip codes. Households that live outside our church zip code could work in our church zip code or have children attending Arcola Elementary school.

Table 2. Food Pantry Visits by Zip Code, January – June 2018

	#	%
Church	192	46%
Adjacent*	154	36%
Other	77	18%
Total	423	100%

*20901, 20904, 20906, 20910, 20895

Many households that come to the food pantry come multiple times. To understand participation better it is helpful to know how many different, or unduplicated, households came. While adding households served each month gives the total number of food pantry visits, looking at unduplicated households offers insight into how broadly the food pantry impacts the community.

Table 3, below, compares the number of total food pantry visits to unduplicated visits and shows the number of new households that came to the food pantry. To date in 2018, the food pantry served 172 unduplicated households. 59 households came to the food pantry for the first time in 2018. This is similar to the same time period in 2017, when 55 new households came to the food pantry.

Table 3. Total Visits, Unduplicated Households, and New Households in 2017

	2017
Total Food Pantry Visits	423
Unduplicated Households	172
New Households	59

Food and Cost Data

The food we distribute at the food pantry comes primarily from the Capital Area Food Bank (CAFB). We also accept donations. As shown in Table 4, to date in 2018 we received 16,754 pounds of food for a cost of \$2,449. On average, this food cost us \$0.15 per pound.

The food we receive from the CAFB is priced in three different ways:

- Produce and bread are free. The amount of produce and bread available varies from month to month.
- Foods donated to the CAFB cost us \$0.19 per pound. The shelf stable items we receive are usually from this category.
- Foods purchased by the CAFB vary in cost to us but are more than \$0.19 per pound. We occasionally select items from this category to fill a need that we cannot fill from the donated foods. We regularly use this option to purchase rice, milk, peanut butter, pasta, and oil when they are not available at the lower \$0.19 per pound.

Table 4. Food Costs, January – June 2018

	Pounds Received	Cost	Cost per Pound
Shelf Stable	11,264	\$2,449	\$0.22
Produce	4,722	\$0	\$0.00
Bread	370	\$0	\$0.00
Donations	398	\$0	\$0.00
Total	16,754	\$2,449	\$0.15

Table 5, below, shows the average food cost per household visit. On average, we spend about \$5.79 per visit from January – June 2018.

**Table 5. Cost per Household Visit,
January – June 2018**

a. Food Cost January – June 2018	\$2,449
b. Total Number of Household Visits	423
Average Cost per Visit (a/b)	\$5.79