



## Non-Profit Helps Older Adults in Long Beach With Food Insecurities



### Using Evidence-based Interventions

After developing the Long Beach Food Pantry Delivery (LBFPD) program, the nonprofit Help Me Help You (HMHY) adapted a Community Preventive Services Task Force (CPSTF) recommendation to maintain, promote, and grow their program. The recommendation highlights evidence-based interventions to reduce malnutrition, increase energy intake, and improve health among older adults that the LBFPD program modeled.

Using the CPSTF recommendation allowed the LBFPD program to promote its work and seek funding.

Read the CPSTF recommendation, [Home-delivered and Congregate Meal Services for Older Adults](#).

### More Information

#### Help Me Help You

- o **Blog:** Long Beach Food Pantry Delivery Reduces Senior Malnutrition

#### The Community Guide

- o **One pager:** Nutrition: Home-delivered and Congregate Meal Services for Older Adults, CPSTF recommendation

*"Ending hunger will be measured by a reduction in the number of households with insufficient food (defined as very low food security) to less than 1% of households and cut the number of households struggling to put enough nutritious food on the table (defined as food insecurity) in half."<sup>1</sup>*

Millions of adults aged 60 and older in the United States are food insecure.<sup>2</sup> These adults have lower nutrient intake and suffer worse health outcomes compared with older adults who are food secure.<sup>3</sup> [Help Me Help You](#) (HMHY), a Long Beach, California-based nonprofit organization, adapted a Community Preventive Services Task Force (CPSTF) recommendation for home-delivered and congregate meal services for older adults to address the issue of food insecurity.

### Addressing Food Insecurity in Older Adults in Long Beach

Help Me Help You has offered weekly food pantry and financial literacy services since 2002. It has now expanded to include a variety of services that help more than 52,000 residents each year. With over 20 years of experience and 10 current school and community food pantry locations, Help Me Help You was driven to address the issue of food insecurity in its community's older population.

In November 2020, Help Me Help You launched the [Long Beach Food Pantry Delivery \(LBFPD\)](#) program for older adults, historically disadvantaged populations (Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, and Native American or Alaska Native people), and others with lower incomes, disabilities, and food insecurity. *"With the increase in residents lining up at our food pantry locations for essential groceries, the surge in COVID-19 infections, and stay-at-home orders, we had to find a way to serve our older residents and those with underlying health conditions. Food pantry delivery was the logical next step,"* said Ms. Zina Washington, Help Me Help You executive director.

### Launching the Program

Help Me Help You sought and received funding from the City of Long Beach through the [Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act](#) and from various other funding sources. This supported the launch of the LBFPD program and allowed them to provide their clients with a wide selection of nutritious foods. The LBFPD program is consistent with the home-delivered meal programs recommended by the CPSTF.

Help Me Help You posted an online [registration form](#) for the LBFPD program for people in 11 Long Beach zip codes who were aged 60, or over 50 years old with significant underlying health conditions. Using the completed forms, followed by phone interviews, Help Me Help You gauged interest in the LBFPD program and inquired about the clients' physical or medical conditions, such as their ability to cook or prepare meals, or a current COVID-19 diagnosis.

Within its first six months, the LBFPD program delivered food to 300 older adults. Clients selected their preferred food delivery day and time and dietary preferences, choosing from a variety of fresh and packaged grocery items in the [Five Food Groups](#). Food deliveries included weekly recipes, nutritional information, resources to help clients access other free benefit enrollment programs, and links to housing services, all available in English and Spanish languages.

## Building on Successes

In October 2022, HMHY conducted an [LBFPD Hunger and Nutrition Impact Client Survey](#) that revealed a substantial reduction in hunger and malnutrition among clients since the program started in November 2020. Of the 68 clients<sup>4</sup> who responded to the survey:

- 96% felt less concerned about getting groceries
- 79% were more aware of healthy foods
- 83% were getting foods their doctor recommended
- 91% were eating healthier; 89% ate more fruit and vegetables
- 78% had improvements in their health
- 92% saved money they could use for other expenses
- Approximately 80% of clients who qualified are racial or ethnic minorities; 84% reported their cultural food preferences were being met, making them more likely to consume the foods
- Delivery of meals was especially important for clients (3%) who require assistive devices (cane, wheelchair) and clients (16%) who cannot prepare meals independently<sup>5</sup>

*"Without Long Beach Food Pantry Delivery, I would struggle to buy groceries and survive. This service is a great reliever of stress and anxiety off my mind and body during this inflation and pandemic fearful time! HMHY are life savers and real angels. I pray they continue this wonderful service to give seniors the freedom and hope to live our best life, said J. B. Hernandez LBFPD program client."*<sup>6</sup>

## Weathering Changes

Since the program started, it has expanded its delivery to nearly 500 older adults in the Long Beach area. With the rising prices in 2022,<sup>7</sup> HMHY anticipates that more older adults in Long Beach will experience hunger, and some may not be aware of the LBFPD program.

*"This service has proven to be **life-changing** for many and **life-saving** for some,"* said Ms. Washington.

## Lessons Learned

- **Providing food pantry delivery services** for older adults may be particularly important with food insecurity on the rise and when mobility may limit their access to healthy foods.
- **Delivering ready-made meals** supports older adults who cannot prepare meals independently or require assistance.

<sup>1</sup> White House. [Biden-Harris Administration National Strategy on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health](#). Released September 2022. Accessed November 30, 2022.

<sup>2</sup> Feeding America. [The State of Senior Hunger in 2020](#). Released May 2022. Accessed November 16, 2022.

<sup>3</sup> Gundersen C, Ziliak JP. [The Health Consequences of Senior Hunger in the United States: Evidence from the 1999-2016 NHANES](#). Released August 2021. Accessed November 16, 2022.

<sup>4</sup> Soliman-Gardner S, Personal communication, October 28, 2022.

<sup>5</sup> Help Me Help You. [LBFPD Hunger & Nutrition Client Impact Survey Results October 2022](#). Accessed November 16, 2022.

<sup>6</sup> Soliman-Gardner S, blog post, [Long Beach Food Pantry Delivery Reduces Senior Malnutrition](#). Released August 22, 2022. Accessed November 16, 2022.

<sup>7</sup> United States Census Bureau. [Long Beach City, California](#). Accessed November 16, 2022.

The Community Guide worked with Help Me Help You staff to develop this story, and would like to thank Zina Washington, Summer Soliman-Gardner, and Brandon Fallon for their participation.

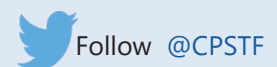


## What is The Community Guide?

The Guide to Community Preventive Services (The Community Guide) is an essential resource for people who want to know what works in public health. It provides evidence-based recommendations about public health interventions and policies to improve health and promote safety.

The Community Preventive Services Task Force (CPSTF)—an independent, nonfederal, unpaid panel of public health and prevention experts—bases its recommendations on systematic reviews of the scientific literature. With oversight from the CPSTF, scientists and subject-matter experts from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention conduct these reviews in collaboration with a wide range of government, academic, policy, and practice-based partners.

[www.thecommunityguide.org](http://www.thecommunityguide.org)



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