

## CHA/GBFB Fruit & Vegetable Mobile Market Academic Publications

**Babbin, M., Zack, R. M., Granick, J., & Betts, K. (2021). Food access initiatives: An integral piece of the Revere, Massachusetts, COVID-19 response. *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development*. <https://doi.org/10.5304/jafscd.2021.102.017>. (open access article)**

**Summary:** For this paper a CHA research intern interviewed City of Revere officials, GBFB Senior Data Analyst Dr. Rachel Zack, and CHA Revere mobile market Director Jean Granick to discuss best practices that helped all three organizations coordinate a food response in the face of increased need at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

CHA was able to serve approximately twice as many people at the monthly free fruit & vegetable market at the Revere Health Center by working closely with GBFB and joining forces with the City of Revere for market promotion. GBFB supported CHA and the City of Revere by more than doubling the amount of food distributed to Revere (from an average of 39,000 to 87,000 pounds a month) in the first few months of the pandemic. Market operations were modified to reduce exposure risk and abide by social distancing measures. Additionally, to help people stockpile food, non-perishable food items were added to the market offerings. CHA increased awareness of the market through partnering with other nonprofit partners and the City of Revere that promoted the market through their established social and traditional media presence. The City of Revere's outreach included tens of thousands of phone calls to residents, especially seniors, families, and new mothers to increase awareness of food and financial assistance.

The City of Revere officials a) shared their best practices for adapting to a sudden high demand for food assistance, b) offered advice for other programs looking to adapt to the increased demand, and c) discussed policy and systems solutions they see as crucial to the long-term support of food security. The city focused on repurposing their workforce, recruiting volunteers city-wide, and creating a central phone helpline for city residents. The phone line served as a hub for learning about community members' needs and connecting them to resources. Revere expanded existing programs, restarted past food programs, reorganized food distribution efforts for efficiency, and created new programs such as food delivery services for homebound residents. Federal government funding was crucial in sustaining existing food initiatives and creating new food initiatives, while also supporting local food businesses that were impacted by the pandemic. Lastly, this paper highlights local upstream policy recommendations to support food security including increasing economic mobility, workforce development, small business development, and anti-displacement policies.

**Dunn C, Vercammen KA, Bleich S, Mulugeta W, Granick J, Carney C, Zack R. (2021). Participant perceptions of a free fresh produce market at a health center. *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S1499404621000968>.**

**Summary:** In this paper we summarize findings from focus groups with CHA Revere fruit & vegetable market attendees that were conducted to understand attendee perspectives on 1) barriers and facilitators to fruit & vegetable market engagement, 2) perceived benefits of market participation, and 3) suggestions for market improvements. These seven focus groups were conducted in English, Spanish, and Arabic from June 2019 to January 2020.

We found that the market was widely accepted, with reported facilitators including accessibility (e.g., convenient location and timing), program experience (e.g., positive interactions with volunteers), and characteristics of goods and services (e.g., acceptable variety of produce). Barriers included transportation challenges, inclement weather, and insufficient quantity of fruits & vegetables for larger households. Participants reported that the market helped them to both eat a healthier diet and improve their financial situation. Additionally, participants provided suggestions to improve the market including: distributing non-produce foods (e.g., meat and spices) or non-food items (e.g., toiletries), and augmenting existing initiatives aimed to help attendees make use of the fruits & vegetables (e.g., handing out recipe cards, providing spices). These findings may be used for quality improvement of charitable fruit & vegetable markets.

Adams E, Babbin M, Bronico J, Granick J, Weil R, Mitchell E, Carney C, Fiechtner L, Mulugeta W, Zack R. (2021). Providing Food Assistance During the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Case Study from a Produce Market at a Low-Income Serving Health Center. *Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved*. <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/837352/pdf>.

**Summary:** In this paper we describe how, at the start of the pandemic, the CHA Revere market staff responded to quickly meet the exponential growth in the need for food assistance due to the COVID-19 pandemic, while also complying with new COVID-19 safety protocols. The pandemic impacted the coordination and training of volunteers, the distribution of food, and the interaction with market attendees. At the height of the pandemic (April-October 2020), market attendance had increased by 142%, from an average of 232 households to 564 households per month, compared to the same time period the previous year.

We also share feedback from CHA Revere patients that was gathered from visits with CHA medical providers. For instance, some patients expressed surprise and gratitude that the market was remaining open and providing healthy food through the pandemic, while many other businesses or programs were closing or limiting their operations. Additionally, to increase awareness of the market during the pandemic, the market expanded media outreach in multiple languages, like posting live footage from the April 2020 food distribution on social media through El Mundo Boston, a local Spanish-language media outlet, which garnered 27,000 views as of October 15, 2020.

This case study also highlighted key partnerships CHA initiated or strengthened to increase capacity at the market, which included working with The Greater Boston Food Bank, the City of Revere, Tufts Health Plan, and Good Measures. Moreover, we review lessons learned from the process of adapting in real-time to the pandemic, as well as mobilizing resources and partners.

Zack RM, Bronico JVR, Babbin M, Nguyen T, Weil R, Granick J, Fiechtner L, Mulugeta W, Odayar V, Cortés DE. Facilitators and Barriers to Patient Attendance at a Free Health Center-Based Produce Market. *The American Journal of Preventive Medicine*. [Accepted for Publication in Fall 2022](#).