

A background photograph showing two volunteers at a food bank. One volunteer in a red shirt and white mask is packing carrots into a brown paper bag. Another volunteer in a green shirt and blue cap is visible in the background. Several brown paper bags filled with groceries are in the foreground.

Breaking Down Silos: Collaborative Research to Inform City of Austin Food System Response During COVID-19

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Michael & Susan Dell Center for Healthy Living Webinar

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Panelists



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Post-doctoral Fellow, University of Texas
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Moderator



Alexandra (Sandra) van den Berg, PhD, MPH

Associate Director, Michael and Susan Dell Center for
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A photograph showing two volunteers in high-visibility vests and face masks loading cardboard boxes and brown paper bags into the open trunk of a car. In the background, a white truck with the Central Texas Food Bank logo and a photo of a child is parked. The scene is outdoors on a sunny day.

The Need

A large warehouse filled with rows of brown paper bags, likely for food distribution. The bags are stacked in neat rows, filling the foreground and middle ground. In the background, there are several large black bins or containers, some of which are partially filled with bags. The warehouse has a high ceiling and large windows, and the floor is a light-colored concrete. The overall scene suggests a large-scale food distribution or storage operation.

The Ask



Pivoting to Identifying Areas with Unmet Food Needs Using 2-1-1 Call Data During the Pandemic

Kathryn Janda, PhD, MPH

Postdoctoral Fellow

UTHealth School of Public Health – National Cancer Institute Cancer Control Research Training Program

Background on Using 2-1-1 Call Data

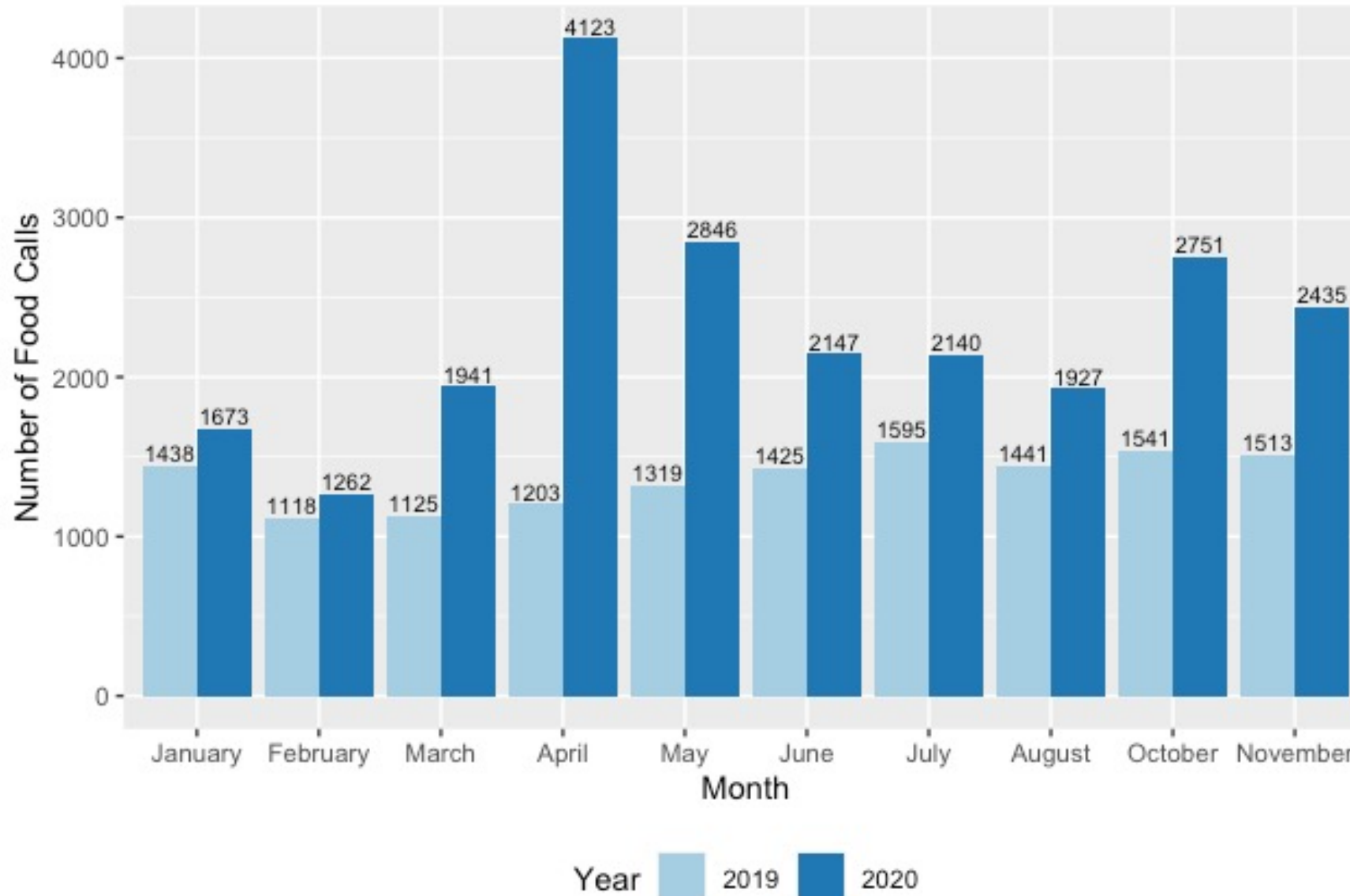


- Collaboration with United Way for Greater Austin and their 2-1-1 Call Navigation Program
- 2-1-1 connects callers to resources in their area
- Previous experience using 2018 2-1-1 call log data to identify areas with food needs and limited geographic food access

Purpose of the Analysis

- Purpose of the analysis was to identify areas with unmet food needs due to COVID-19 in Travis County and to share this information with collaborators and other stakeholders
- Analyze data by:
 - **January – August, October-November 2020**
 - **January – August, October-November 2019**
 - **Call Reason**
 - Zip Code
 - **Food Access Locations during COVID-19**
 - Limited demographic data*

Food Calls to 2-1-1 by Month



Geographic Analyses - Findings




- Call volume is highest in the Eastern Crescent of Travis County for:
 - Overall Call Volume
 - Food Need Call Volume
 - This is somewhat expected given 2018 American Community Survey Data
- Maps depicting the proportion of food calls to 2-1-1 by zip code and location of food assets were also created for each report


Demographics of Travis County by Zip Code Using 2018 American Community Survey Data

Legend


2018 Poverty Rate Over 15%

 Poverty Rate Over 15%

Racial/Ethnic Majority of Zip Code

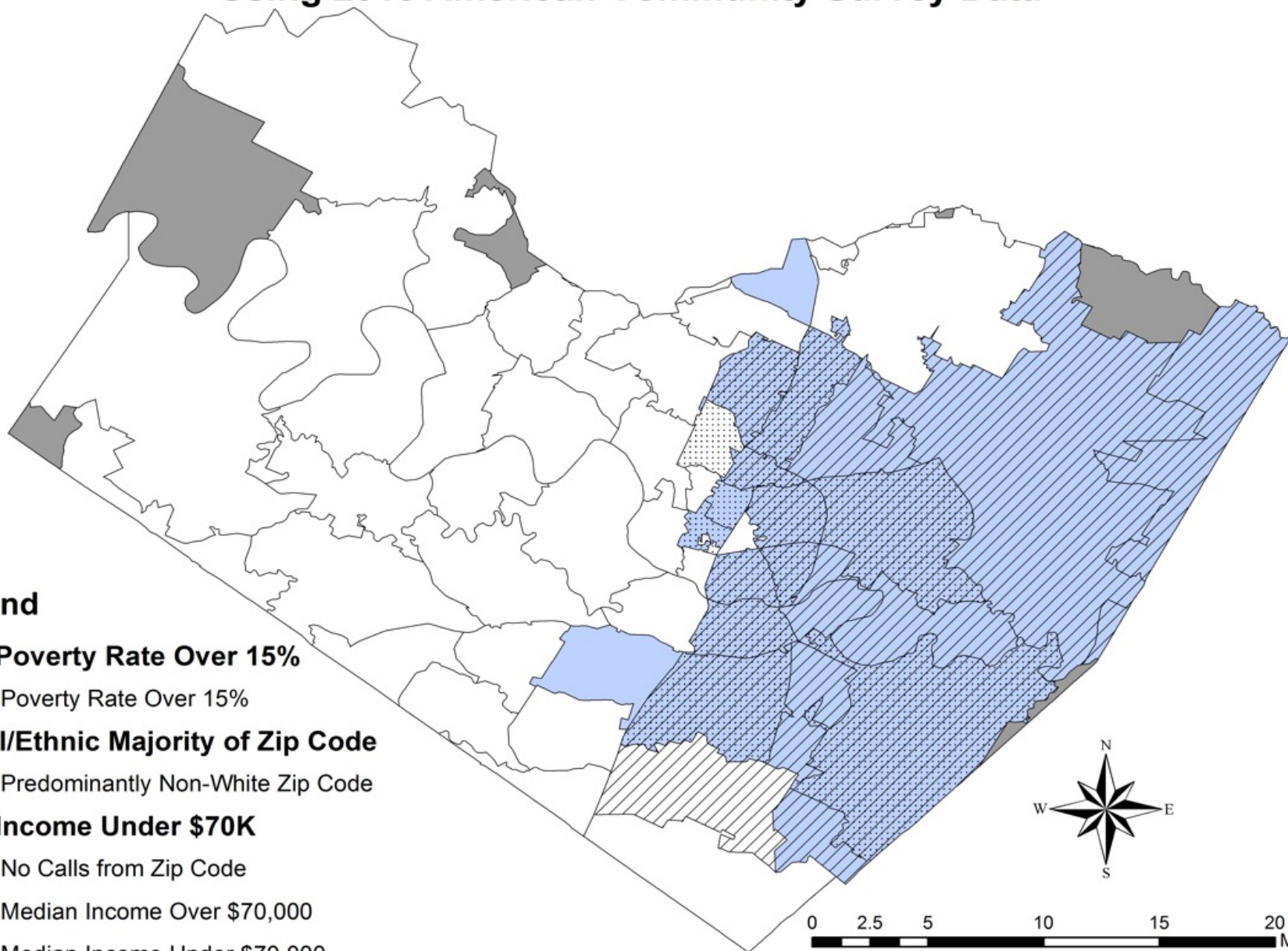
 Predominantly Non-White Zip Code

2018 Income Under \$70K

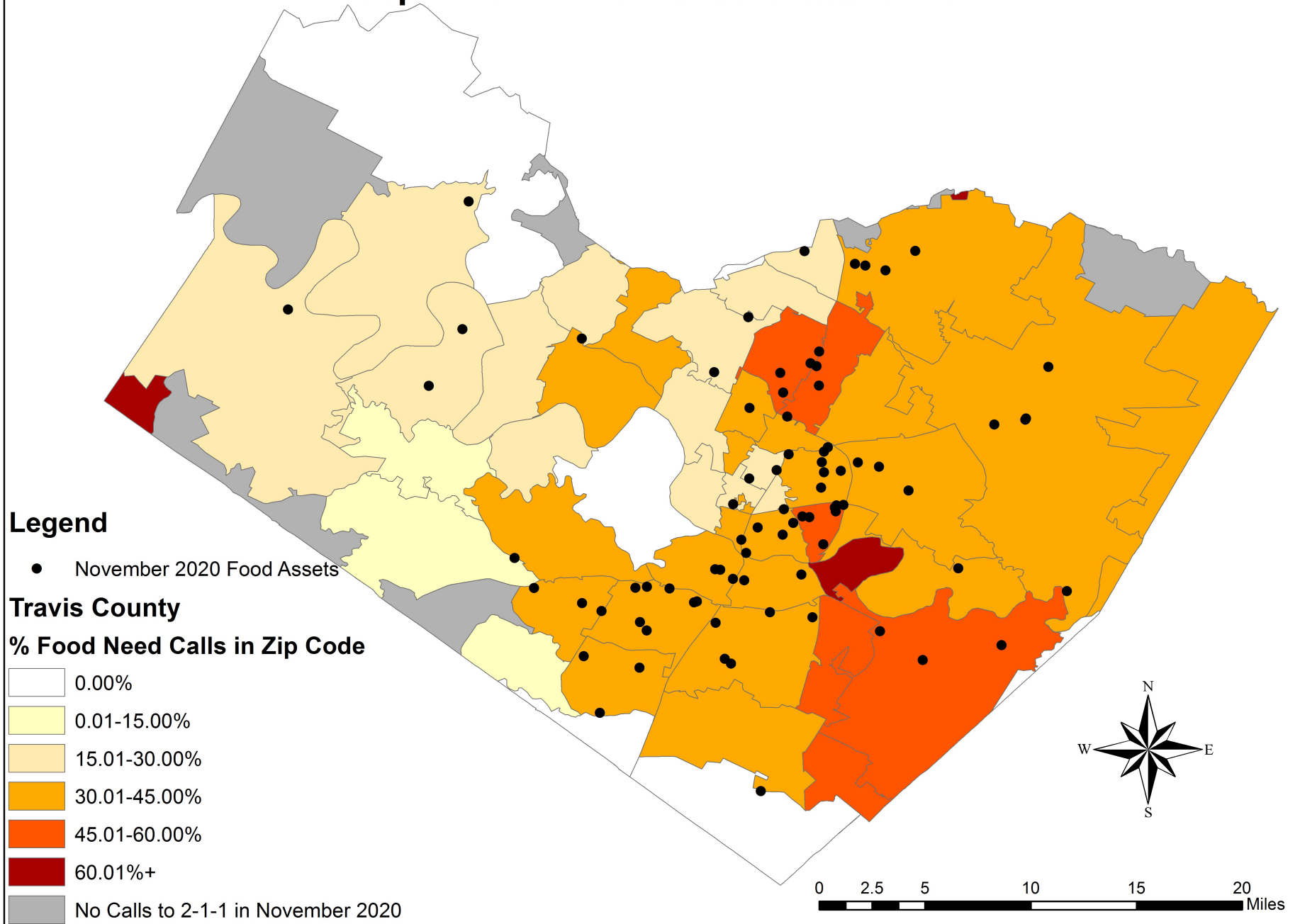
 No Calls from Zip Code

 Median Income Over \$70,000

 Median Income Under \$70,000



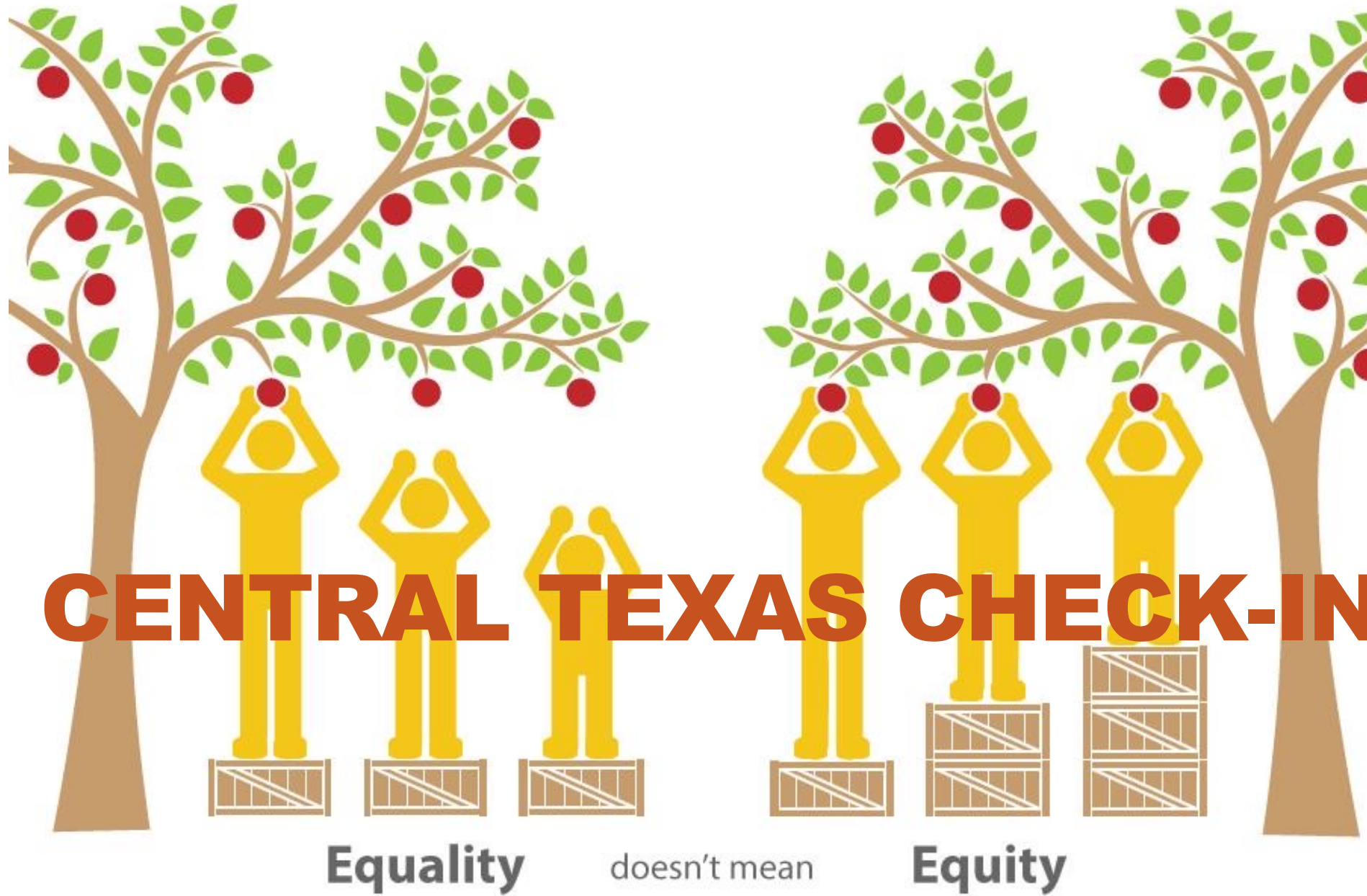
Percent of Food Need Calls and Emergency Food Assets within the Zip Code to 2-1-1 in November 2020



Deliverables and Research → Policy/Practice



- Reports have been created and shared with City of Austin, United Way for Greater Austin, Dell Medical School and other collaborators.
- Provided recommendations for placement of emergency food assets in two zip codes, and to closely monitor additional zip codes that have emergency food assets, but may still have unmet needs
 - One zip code received an asset in September 2020





HOUSEHOLD LEVEL ASSESSMENT (HOLA)

- Targeted geographic area
- In-person data collection
- Follow up by phone to connect participants to resources and services
- Ongoing follow-up/check-ins



CONTACT TRACING

- COVID+ and those in contact with COVID+
- Opt-in only
- Piloted “Check-In” survey tool
- Applied HoLA processes
 - Secure database
 - Follow-up interviews by phone
 - Referrals to local resources and services





CENTRAL TX CHECK IN



- English and Spanish, online version
- Targeted priority populations
- Two data collection periods: Aug-Sept, Oct-Dec
- Distributed through trusted community orgs and leaders
- 4 areas covered: Health Care, Food Access, Employment, Housing

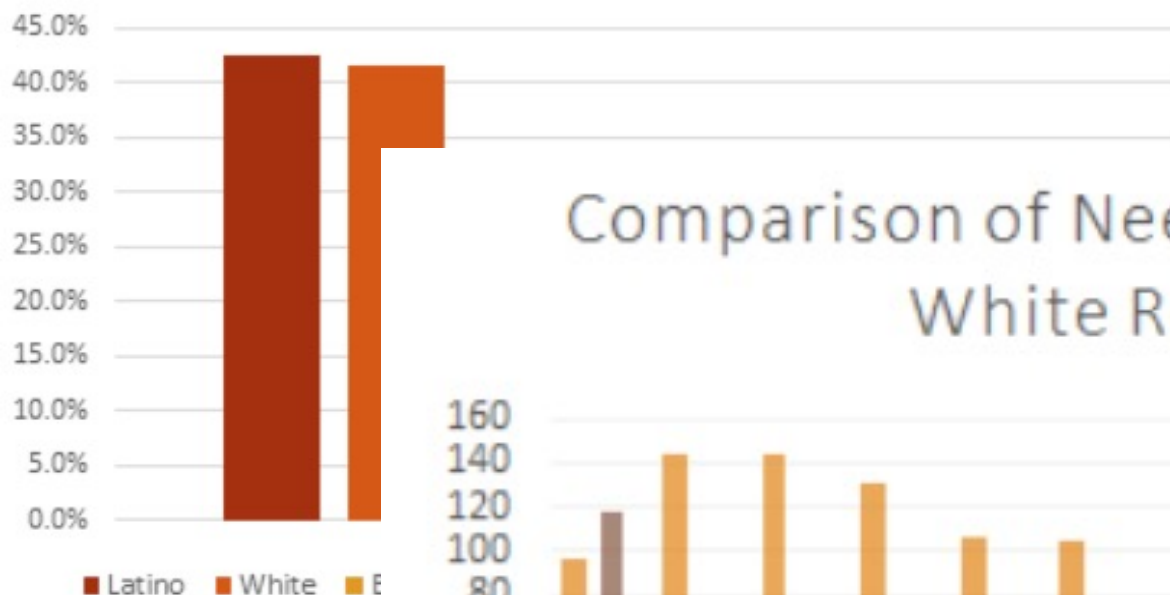
RESULTS

- Greatest needs were:
Cash, Food and PPE
- Co-occurring needs
- Vicious effect: COVID+
diagnosis -> no work ->
less cash flow -> missed
payments -> COVID
exposure/evictions





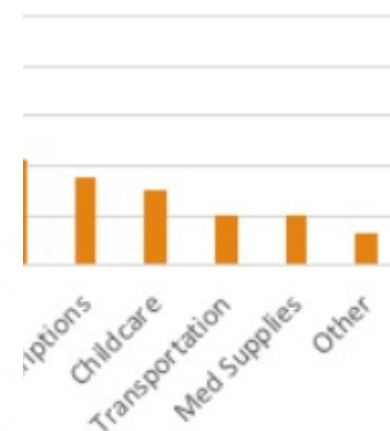
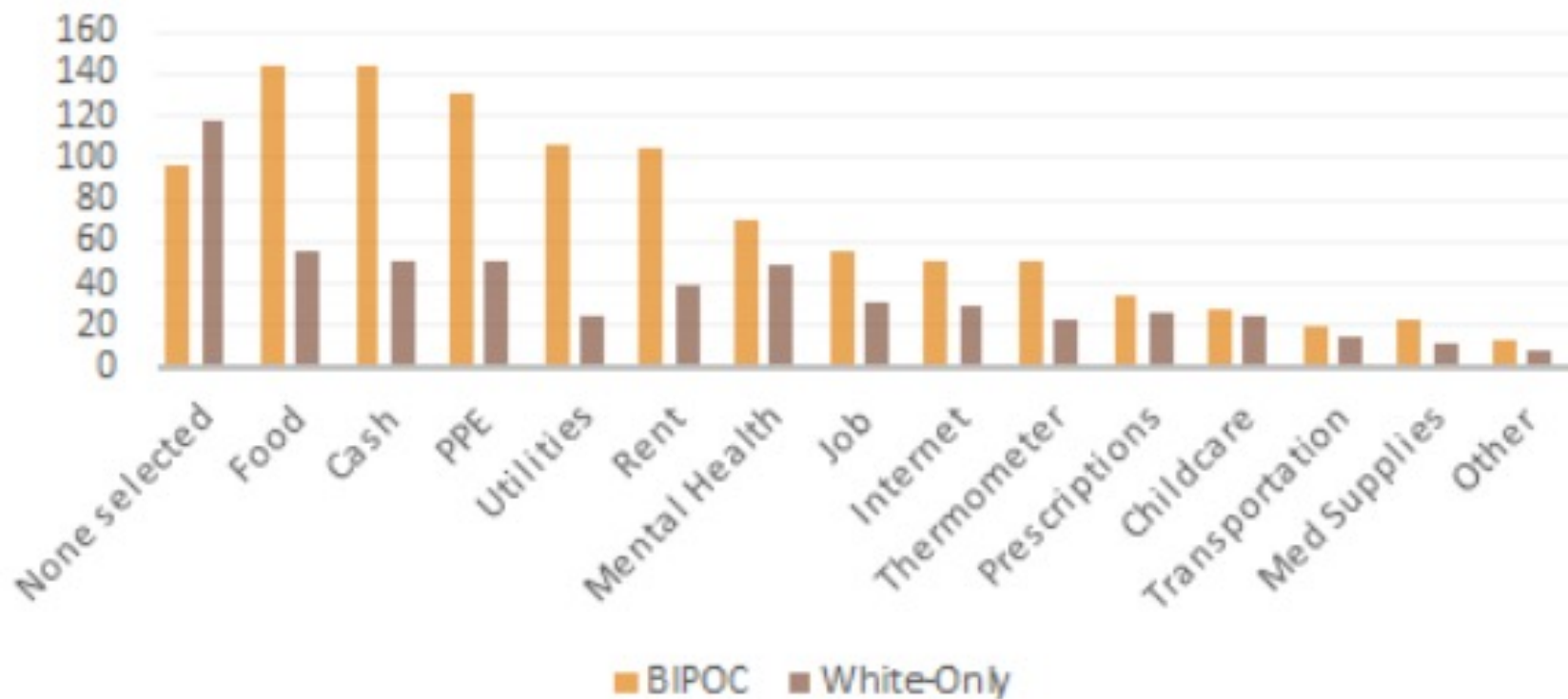
Race and Ethnicity



What services or resources do you or your family need at this time due to COVID-19?

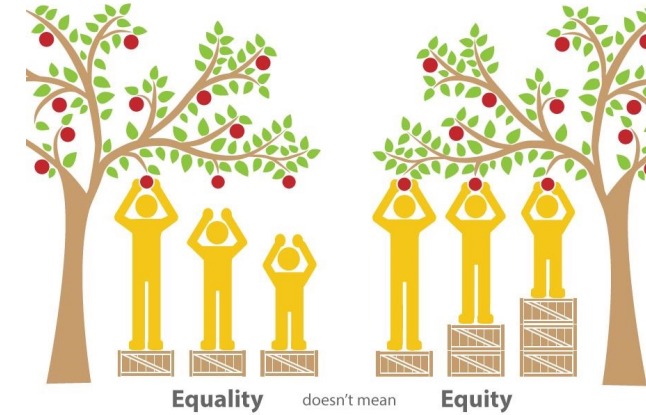
35.0%
30.0%

Comparison of Needs of White and Non-White Respondents





FOOD ACCESS EQUITY



- Some people **don't have cars to drive** to a location to pick up food and many don't deliver in our rural areas.
- [There] needs to be **more transportation options** for seniors who do not have vehicles.
- I live alone, **don't drive**, have no family and am paying up to 45% more for my groceries by having to use delivery services, due to mark ups, delivery costs and mandatory tipping. I'm unable to get to food banks on foot and many distribution points are not on public transportation routes.
- The importance of affordable home **delivery** of fresh food and groceries for those of us who live alone, **lack transportation** and are sheltering. Using food delivery services increases my grocery bill by between 25 and 50% due to markups, delivery charges and required tips, depending on the frequency of use. Difficult on a fixed income that is near the poverty level.
- It is difficult to get free school meals **without transportation** or childcare. Some families need food **delivered** to their homes.



40 PARTNERS

•Alliancefor African American Health in Central Texas•Allgo•BASTA•Blackland Community Development Council•Call for Ideas, Idea Originators•CHIP Newsletter•The Challenger•COA Commission onSeniors•COA Equity Office•Colony Park Next Door•Communities of Color United•CTOSH•ECHO•Grassroots Leadership•HIV Planning Council•ICE Fuera De Austin•LBJ Neighborhood Association•Mama Sana•MISMA•Mobile Loaves and Fishes•Mt. Zion Baptist Church•Sparks for Success•Texas Folk Life•Undoing White Supremacy Austin

Asian American QOL Advisory Commission•Austin Community College•Austin Independent School District•Austin SexualHealth and Wellness Clinic•AVANCE•El Buen Samaritano•Farmshare Austin•Go Austin Vamos Austin•Good Apple•Meals on Wheels•Senior QOL Commission•Travis County Health and Human Services•Welcome Table•WIC•UT School of Public Health•Office of Sustainability

The background of the slide is a photograph of several black plastic food trays. Each tray contains a meal consisting of a large, white, oval-shaped item (possibly a chicken breast or a large dumpling) wrapped in clear plastic, a portion of bright green peas, several round, brown meatballs, and some red, textured food items (possibly tomatoes or a sauce). The trays are arranged in a grid-like pattern, and the image is slightly faded to allow the text to be prominent.

Panelist Q & A

Thank you!



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<http://austintexas.gov/page/food-system-research-reports>