



FOOD PANTRY NETWORK

Portrait of a Food Pantry Visitor

Data, Demographics, and Disparities

FY2023

July 1 - June 30

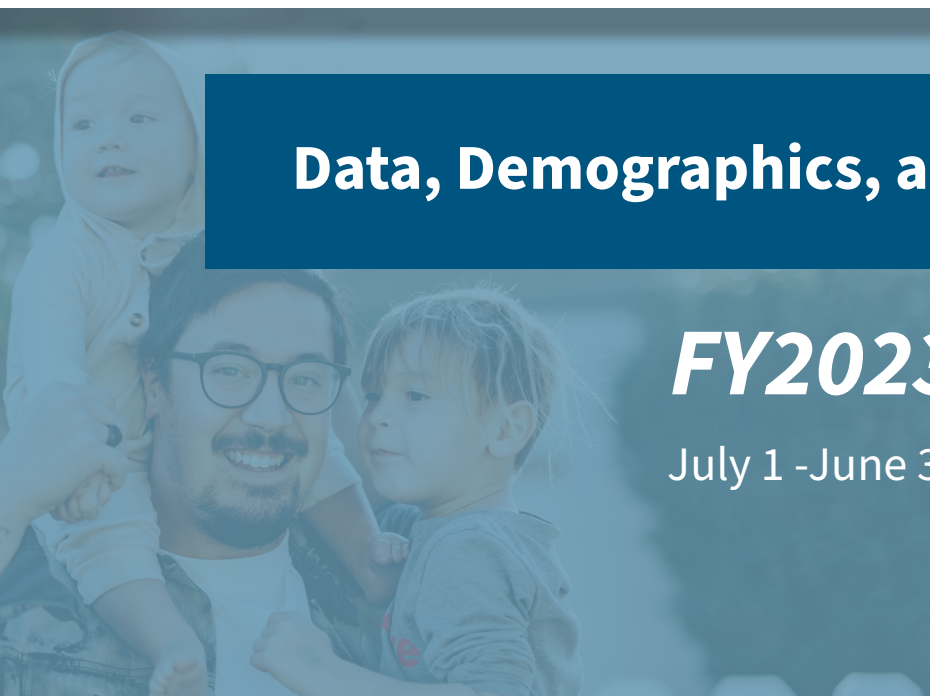


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Thank you for your interest in a better understanding of those who visited our Food Pantry Network over this past fiscal year. This is the third year that DMARC has released this report and each year has brought its own insights and challenges. Our goal in releasing this data has and always will be to turn the data-driven insights we collect into community-wide action.

A LETTER FROM THE CEO



So often I get asked, “why do DMARC’s food pantries need an intake process? Why not just ask people for their simple contact information?”. While I acknowledge being asked questions about a situation you are in can sometimes be difficult, I think this report shows exactly why it is critical we collect and review such information. As I’ve said many times, food insecurity cannot and will not be solved simply by providing food to people. We need to get at the root causes driving people into food insecurity. That starts with the data.

So how are we collecting this data in the least intrusive and most responsible way? The process will look the same at every DMARC network food pantry. The first time you come, in addition to general contact information for the household, we ask five or six questions about your education, income, employment status, health & allergies, and whether you are a veteran. Other than household size, the answers to these questions do not impact if or how much food someone can receive. Coupled with demographic information—as this report will show—we can begin to see some patterns across different geographic areas and other key demographics. At subsequent visits, those doing intake will just quickly verify that none of their information has changed. While the questions are definitely different, the process is not too dissimilar than your first visit when getting a membership to a place like Sam’s Club or Costco.

This report is a tool we utilize to address the root causes of poverty, so many of which remain remarkably consistent from year to year. Despite historic levels of visitors seeking out a food pantry during this time, you will find the demographics and disparities that we’ve identified around food insecurity are not often drastically different from year to year, just more pronounced. While we have a long way to go, there are real and actionable steps we can be taking today to address these disparities.

With this report, we hope to collaborate with other nonprofit organizations where there is shared mission and goal. We hope to create road maps that address barriers to receiving assistance in a different and more targeted way. We hope to improve our own services and shed light on the bad faith arguments we hear so often that aren’t based in fact. And most importantly, we hope to show the community the situations those in need of food assistance are really facing, with real data that we can back up with personal stories from many of those with and for whom we work.

If, in reading this, you see something that sparks your interest or inspires an idea.... let’s talk! Hopefully, in a year from now, we can look back on progress we made together after taking action today.

Matt Unger
Chief Executive Officer, DMARC

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STATE OF PLAY

Late March 2022 - DMARC moves into larger warehouse and headquarters. New space streamlines operations, expands storage capacity, and enhances the networks purchasing ability.

April 2022 - Maximum allotments for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP; formerly food Stamps). Iowa households receiving SNAP see their benefits drop by an average of \$200 a month.

June 2022 - US inflation rate peaks at 9.1 percent - the highest level in four decades.

Sept. 2022 - DMARC-Ket Southside Food Pantry opens becoming first brick-and-mortar food pantry staffed and operated by DMARC.

February 2023 - New partnership agreement with the Food Bank of Iowa introduces changes to how DMARC distributes food to pantry visitors. Repeat visits begin to grow.

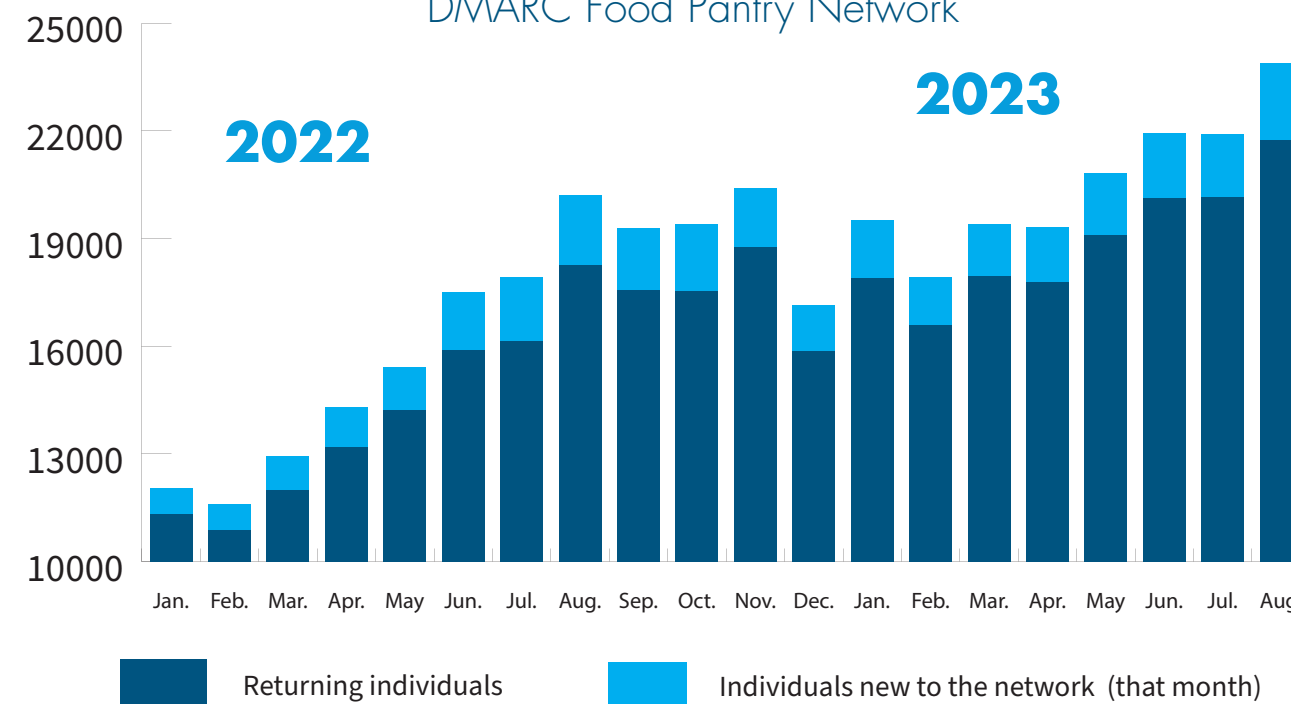
June 2023 - 2nd busiest month in the history of the DMARC Food Pantry Network - 21,927 unique individuals assisted.

June 2023 - SF494 is signed into Iowa law. The legislation will add additional restrictions to accessing SNAP like asset testing and create additional hurdles to enrolling in the program.

August 2023 - 23,886 unique individuals were assisted during the busiest month on record. Shortly after, Sept. 5 becomes the all-time busiest day on record assisting 1,991 unique individuals.

Present

Unique Individuals assisted -
DMARC Food Pantry Network



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Des Moines Area Religious Council (DMARC) Food Pantry Network consists of 14 partner food pantries, multiple mobile food pantry locations, and a no-contact home delivery service. The DMARC Food Pantry Network operates a shared intake system and database. Food pantry visitors are asked a series of 12-14 questions about their household to help us understand the specific needs of our community.

We are often asked what a “typical” visitor to a food pantry looks like. In truth, We assist people of all races, genders, ages, incomes, and educational attainment. While the number of individuals we are assisting now continues to grow, the answer to this questions remains largely the same. But if we look at the most common responses to the intake questions, we can say the most likely person to visit a food pantry is:

A White - Not Hispanic woman who graduated high school, has one child, is living below the poverty line, does not receive SNAP benefits, is in and out of employment, and only visits a food pantry once per year.

While half of everyone assisted by the DMARC Food Pantry Network is White - Not Hispanic, you will see that stark racial disparities exist in every part of our community. These inequities are not unintentional, but are by design as specific federal, state and local policies were created to advantage and disadvantage various populations in our society. As the DMARC Food Pantry Network saw a 27 percent increase in the number of individuals assisted, many of the trends seen in previous reports remained and expanded - With a huge increase in the number of individuals utilizing a DMARC Food Pantry for the first time .

Previous versions of this report have focused on providing an in-depth breakdown of examined racial disparities through the lense of each demographic and racial group. All the data used in this report is from DMARC’s fiscal year 2023 (July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023) where our food pantry network saw a record level of individuals assisted. While most of the disparities examined in previous reports remain consistent with the previous report, this version aims to break down and highlight those observed disparities with a tighter focus on the greatest areas of need that remained consistent - even as the numbers of pantry visitors hit record levels.

It is our hope that with this version of the report we will inform the public and policy makers about these disparities, why they exist, and potential ways we can remedy them in our community, as it is critical to understand the ways in which previous inequitable policies influence, and often negatively impact, people’s current realities today. If while reading this you are inspired to want to take action, please do not hesitate to reach out about partnering on finding solutions.

Land Acknowledgment

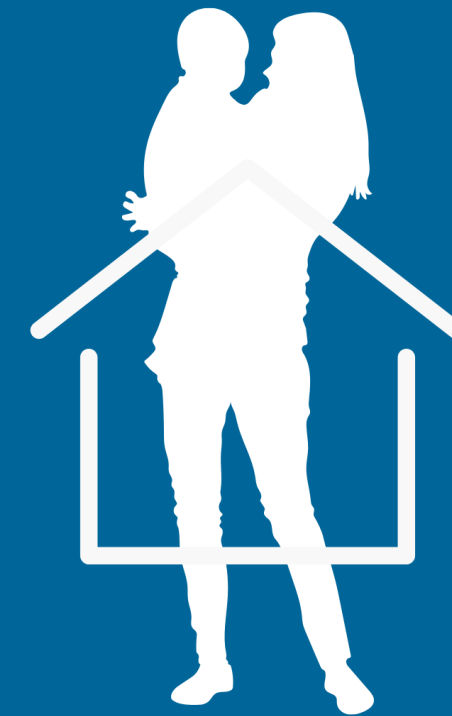
We acknowledge that we are located on the ancestral land and territories of the Báxoje (bah-kho-dzhe) or Ioway, Sauk (Sac), and Meskwaki (Fox) Peoples. This land was taken by force and coercion of white colonizers and the government of the United States. We wish to pay respect to elders of the past, the over 1,000 Native Americans currently residing in our community, and future generations.

“TYPICAL” VISITOR TO A FOOD PANTRY

While there is no such thing as a “typical” food pantry visitor, these are the demographic trends that are most common throughout the individuals assisted by the DMARC Food Pantry Network.

A White - Not Hispanic woman...

45% of all women assisted are White - Not Hispanic.



who graduated high school,

68% of adults (25 and up) assisted highest level of educational attainment held is a HS degree, HS & some college, HSED, or GED.

does not receive SNAP benefits,

40% of all individuals assisted were enrolled in SNAP (formerly food stamps) at some point.

has one child, is living below the poverty line,

5% of individuals (18-64) assisted were stay at home parents.

...and only visits a food pantry once per year.

49% of all individuals assisted only utilized a food pantry 1-2 times/year.

KEY FINDINGS

MORE THAN ONE IN THREE HOUSEHOLDS ASSISTED USED THE DMARC FOOD PANTRY NETWORK FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER.

From July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022, almost 1 in 3 individuals utilizing the DMARC Food Pantry Network was a first-time food pantry visitor. While the number of people receiving food assistance continues to reach record levels, many of the demographic disparities observed previously remain consistent or are more pronounced with the increased need. The average household size for new individuals increased by 9 percent and is driven by an increase in new individuals that identify as Asian/Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders, Black/African Americans, Other/Unknown - Hispanic, Other/Unknown - Non-Hispanic, White - Hispanic, and White - Non-Hispanic pantry visitors.

WHY? The biggest contributing factor for the increase in new individuals was the record level of inflation experienced across almost every industry in 2022. For many first time visitors, a reduction in benefits coupled with the rise of prices at the grocery store, gas station, rent, and other cost of living expenses meant seeking out additional support for food assistance.

- *Nearly half of Des Moines metro renters are cost burdened, according to a 2023 report released by the Joint Center for Housing Studies (JCHS) of Harvard University.*
- *According to the consumer price index, the cost of food made at home increased 13.1 percent from July 2021 to July 2022.*
- *The average cost of gasoline in Des Moines peaked in June 2022 at \$4.77 per gallon.*

Racial disparities among food pantry visitors exist in all communities across Greater Des Moines, but are especially pronounced in suburban communities.

In some cities, certain racial groups are more than ten times as likely to use a food pantry compared with the general population. This points to significantly different financial realities between White - Not Hispanic people and people of color within suburban communities. Much of this reality can be traced back decades. Redlining policies of the 1930's shaped our neighborhoods and prevented people who were not white from building wealth through homeownership. The same neighborhoods that were disengaged through racist policies nearly 100 years ago are still some of the areas of greatest need today.

However, some disparities are more pronounced today based on new barriers to access. For example, Hispanic people are less likely to receive disability benefits, social security, and SNAP. This can likely be attributed to documentation status limiting program eligibility and fear of repercussions for using programs even when eligible. This also highlights the higher level of need for non-governmental resources for Hispanic people in our community.

Gender disparities exist across all races and ethnicities. Across nearly every category, women are more likely to use a food pantry than men. There is no gender disparity among children. The level of disparity increases with age, from a gap of 5 percentage points among young adults to a 16 point gap among seniors. This points to financial disparities between men and women, and suggests a greater reluctance for asking for help from men.

Avg household size and average number of visits have increase

The average household size being assisted by the DMARC Food pantry network increased from 2.34 to 2.43 individuals this fiscal year. This points to an increase of young adults and seniors living with family members as the cost of living and rent in the DSM metro outgrew wages and income in 2022.

Just under half of all pantry visitors use a food pantry once or twice a year. The average food pantry visitor uses a food pantry 3.9 times in a year - an increase from last fiscal year. Only 4% of everyone who used a food pantry did so for all twelve months of fiscal year 2023. This points to the fact that most people use a food pantry only as a last resort when other options are not available.

Seniors and people who identify as Asian, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander use food pantries at a higher frequency than others. While the average food pantry visitor used a food pantry 3.9 times a year, seniors visited food pantries 5.1 times a year on average, and people who identify as Asian, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander visited food pantries 5.4 times a year on average. Asian seniors visited an average of 6.6 times a year.

THE LEVEL OF CHILD POVERTY HAS INCREASED AND SO HAS THE PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN BEING ASSISTED BY DMARC

The child poverty rate in the United States more than doubled between 2021 and 2022, according to data from the U.S. Census Bureau.

WHY? A critical factor in this was the expiration of the pandemic-era expansion of the child tax credits. Just a year after the rate hit a historic low of 5.2 percent, the percentage of children living in poverty jumped to 12.4 percent in 2022 after congress allowed the policy to sunset. A key difference in how the policy operated previously was making the tax credit refundable, allowing millions of low income families to qualify who didn't make enough to owe income tax.

This year's report shows that child poverty affects some demographic groups more than others. More than one in three of all people assisted were children (0-17 years old) but for white - Not Hispanic people, less than one in four assisted were children. 68.5 percent of those who identified as Multi-Race - Non-Hispanic were children, which is especially important as our communities are becoming more racially diverse.





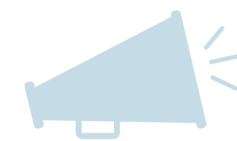
AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

We envision a community where everyone has access to the food they want and need at all times. As we look back at the past three years, there are many areas where this vision seemed more attainable than ever before. When people have access to nutritious food, it has a ripple effect on other areas of their life including education, employment, safety and wellbeing, physical and mental health, and so much more.

We can make this vision a reality when our leaders make intentional policy decisions and our community works together on solutions to remove barriers to people accessing their essential needs.

This report suggests a number of areas of opportunity for DMARC to begin addressing these disparities, including, but not limited to:

Policy Advocacy:



- Increasing access to SNAP benefits and SNAP benefit amounts
- Eliminating barriers to federal assistance for certain groups
 - Advocating for the expanded child tax credit, P-EBT, and other low barrier assistance that alleviate child poverty
- Increasing disability and social security benefit amounts
- Requiring “minority impact statements” on proposed pieces of legislation

Partnerships and Outreach:



- Promoting High School Equivalency Degree (HSED) programs for adults
- Providing additional outreach about SNAP and assistance with applying, especially targeted to seniors and those who are most susceptible to disenrollment in response to state and federal changes to SNAP
- Referrals to job training and placement programs

Our Services:



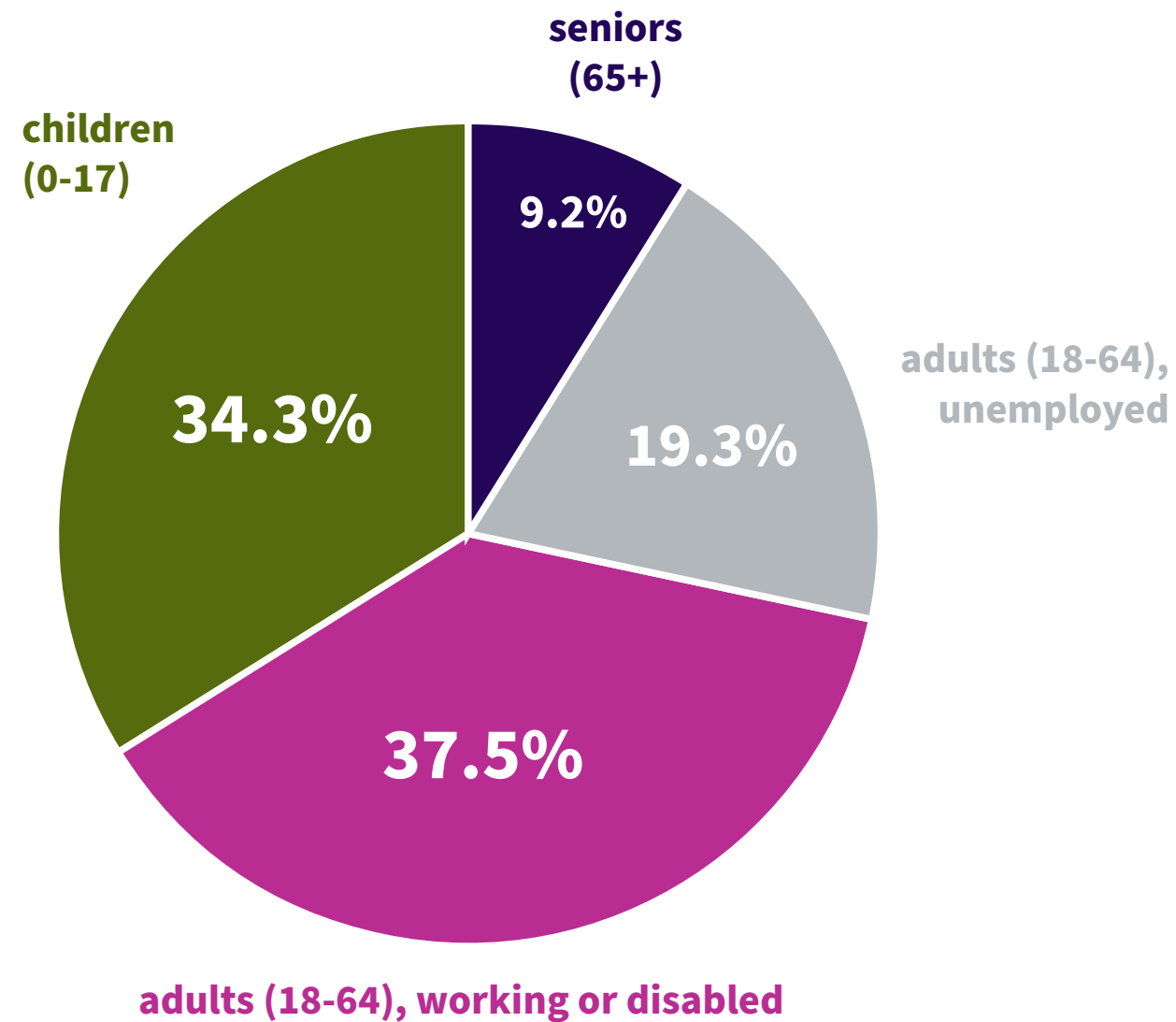
- Expanding food selections at food pantries to address the wants and needs of a diverse set of food pantry visitors
- Targeting outreach to Hispanic communities to build trust and correct misconceptions

Further Research:



- Conducting a deeper dive to better understand barriers people are facing that are leading to disparities, such as conducting an annual survey to ask questions that are not included in the standard intake process
- Collaborating with other community groups and organizations who work with and for groups facing the largest disparities to better understand why these disparities exist and how we can work together to improve, and eventually, eliminate them

DEMOGRAPHICS AND DISPARITIES



OVERALL DEMOGRAPHICS

59,844

unique individuals assisted

27% increase from previous year

24,661

households assisted

24% increase from previous year

2.43

average household size

32.2%

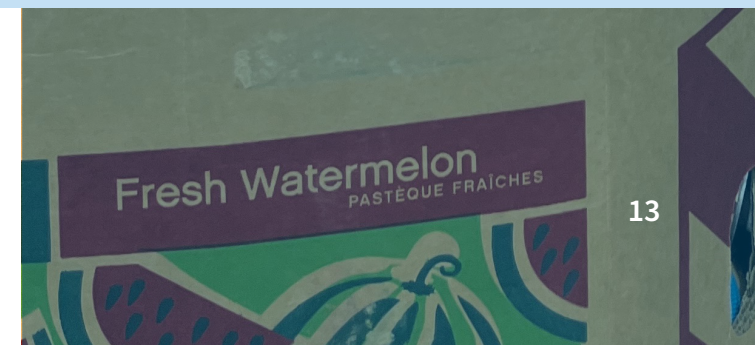
first-time individuals

39.3%

first-time households

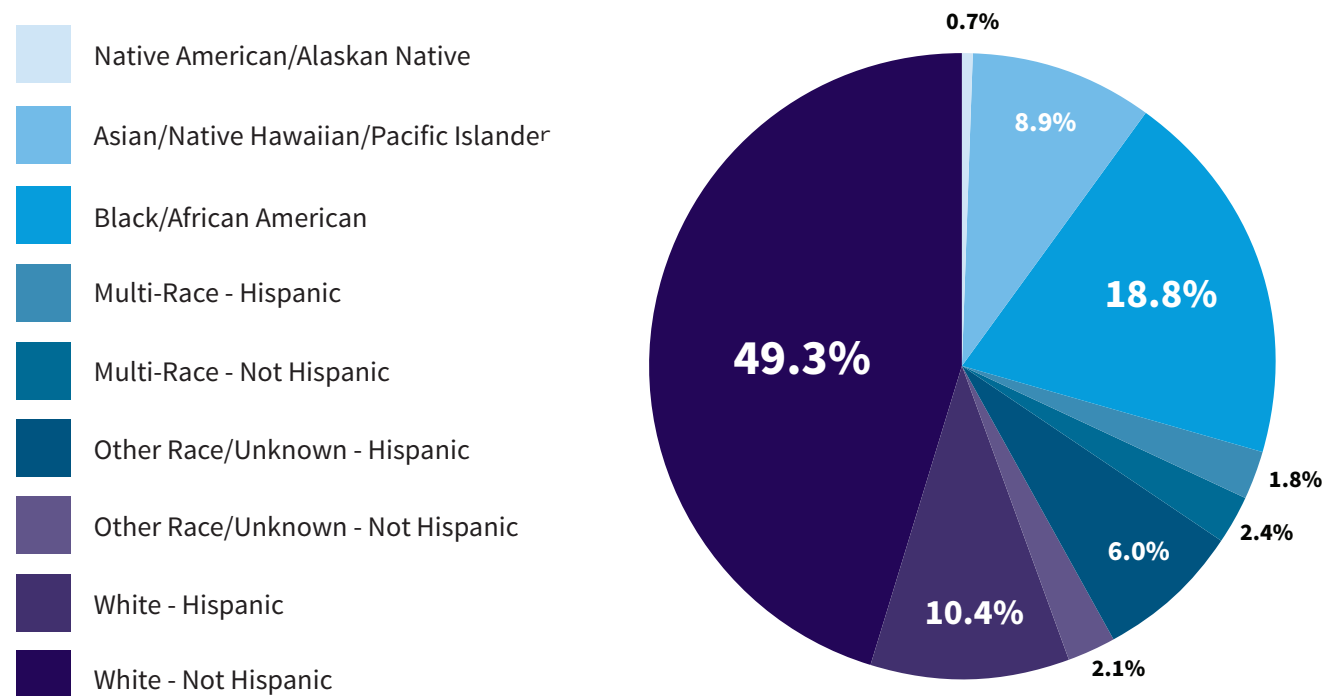


The number of new individuals utilizing a food pantry spiked in FY23 with a monthly record being set 14 months in a row respectively.



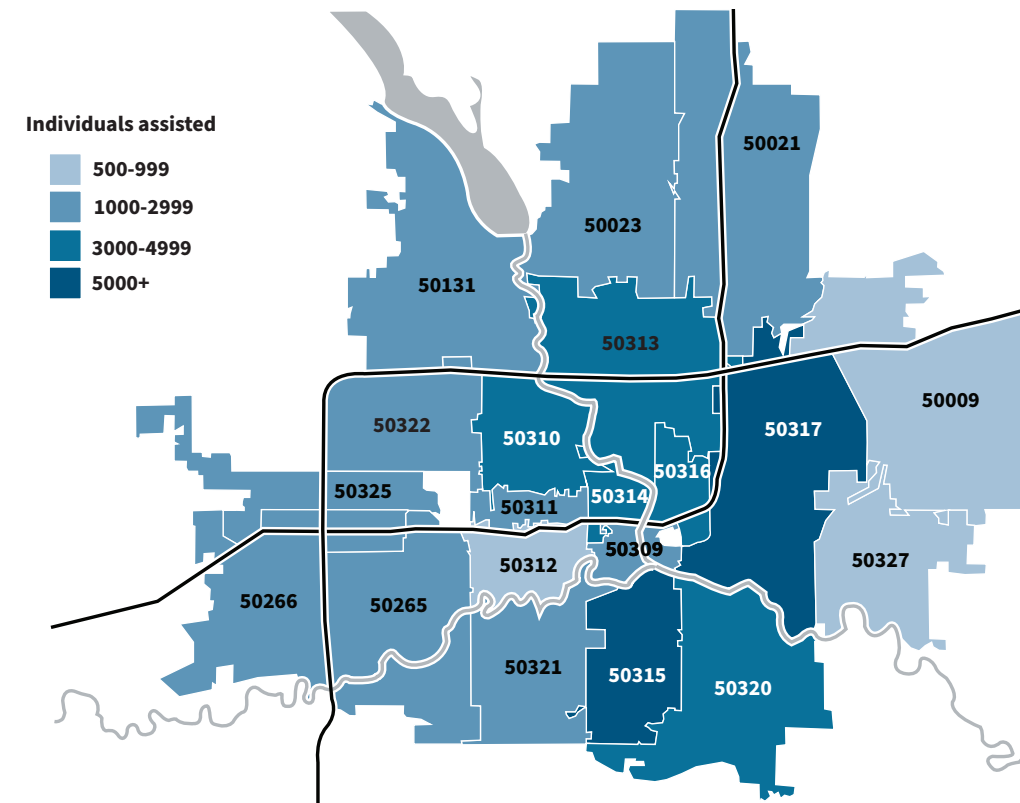
OVERALL DEMOGRAPHICS

Race & Ethnicity



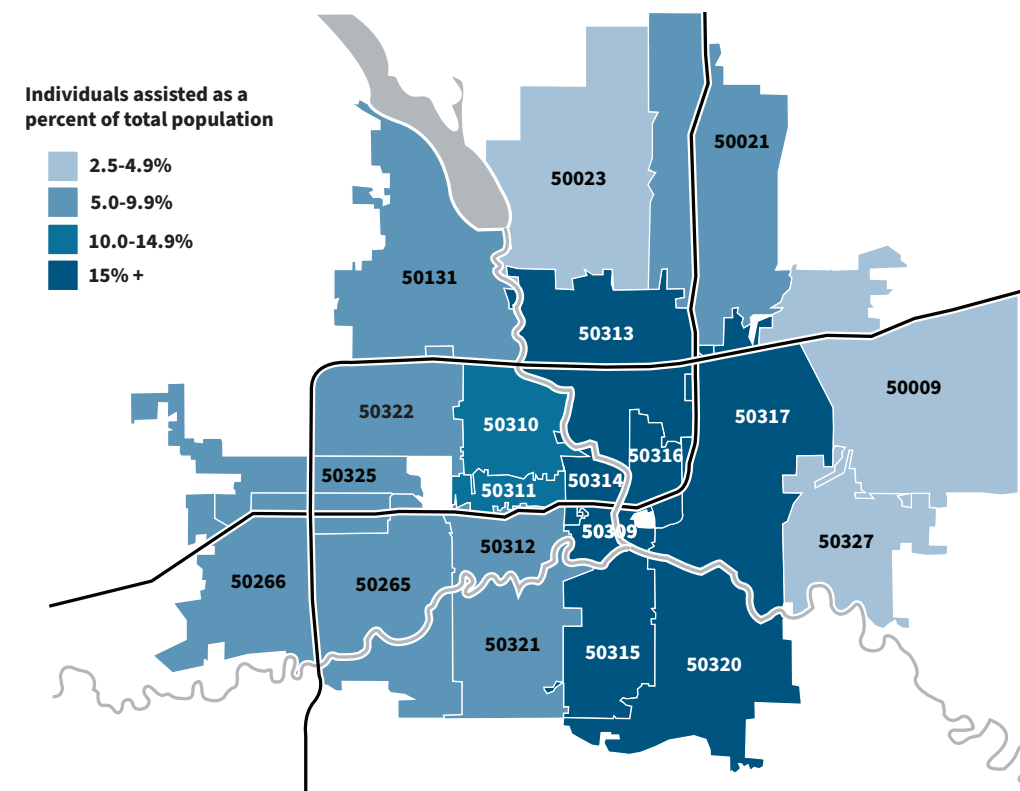
Busiest zip codes	50317 previous fiscal year	50317 current fiscal year	50315 previous fiscal year	50315 current fiscal year
All/Average	6376	7520	6046	8103
American Indian/Alaskan Native	33	51	34	37
Asian/Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	268	300	499	712
Black/African American	828	1136	984	1311
Multi-Race - Hispanic	133	212	128	253
Multi-Race - Non-Hispanic	110	147	166	252
Other/Unknown - Hispanic	379	557	391	582
Other/Unknown - Non-Hispanic	88	121	94	142
White - Hispanic	586	748	594	836
White - Non-Hispanic	3955	4248	3159	3978

OVERALL DEMOGRAPHICS



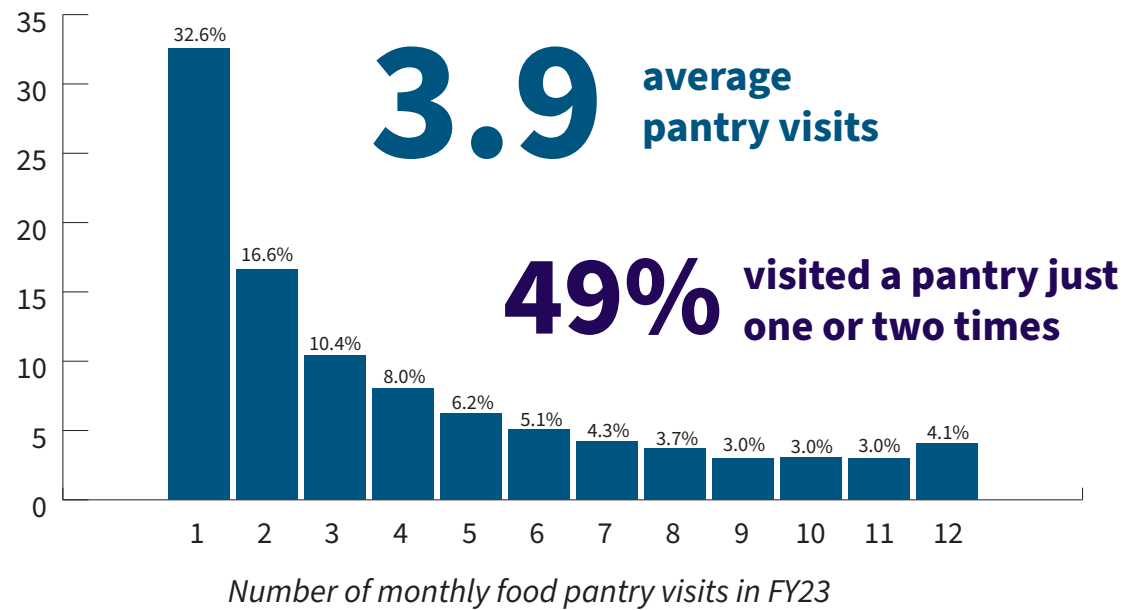
56% of all food pantry visitors lived in the following six ZIP codes:

- 50310
- 50314
- 50315
- 50316
- 50317
- 50320

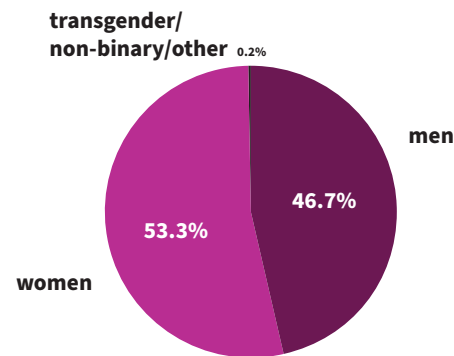


50314 had the greatest concentration of food pantry use, with 33.2% of residents using the DMARC Food Pantry Network in FY23.

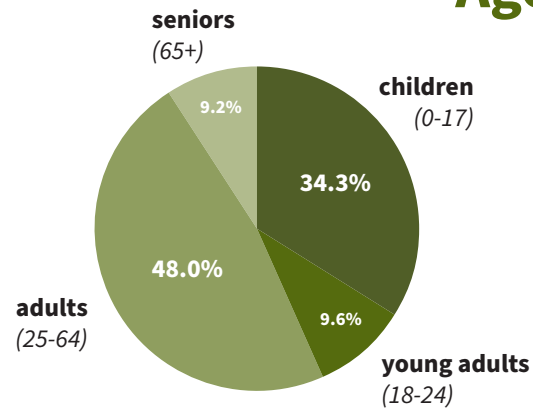
OVERALL DEMOGRAPHICS



Gender

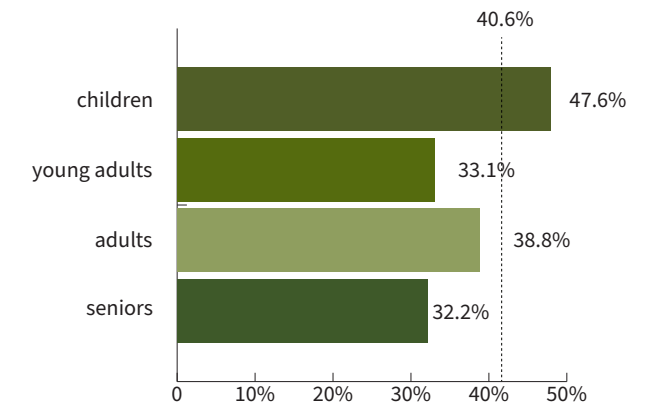


Age

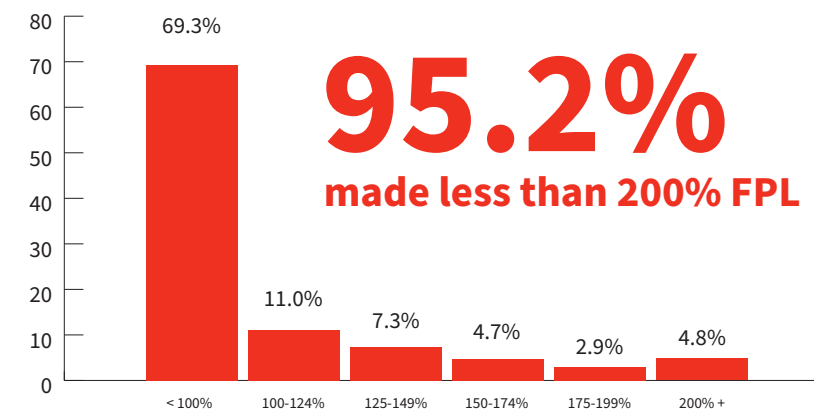


OVERALL DEMOGRAPHICS

40.6% received SNAP benefits at some point in FY23



Household income as a percentage of federal poverty level



Federal Poverty Level 2023

HH Size	100% FPL	200% FPL
1	\$14,580	\$29,160
2	\$19,720	\$39,440
3	\$24,860	\$49,720
4	\$30,000	\$60,000
5	\$35,140	\$70,280
6	\$45,420	\$80,560



Seniors and people who identify as Asian, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander use food pantries at a higher frequency than others. While the average food pantry visitor used a food pantry 3.9 times a year, seniors who identified as Asian, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander visited food pantries 6.6 times a year on average.



Nearly 3 out of 4 food pantry visitors live below the federal poverty line.

White - Not Hispanic people who used a food pantry had higher incomes compared to other racial groups. This, too, illustrates the different financial realities between White - Not Hispanic people and people of color in Greater Des Moines.



Demographic insight: **AGE**

Observed Disparities -

Specific findings based on the age of respondents include:

- Food pantry visitors who identified with the following demographic groups were much younger than the “typical food pantry visitor”.
 - Black or African American were more likely to be children (0-17) and less likely to be a senior. 42% of Black/African American food pantry visitors were children.
 - Food pantry visitors who identified as Multi-Race and Hispanic were nearly twice as likely to be a child and one-third as likely to be a senior.
 - Food pantry visitors who identified as White and Hispanic were more likely to be a child and less likely to be a senior.
- Food pantry visitors who identified as White and not Hispanic were less likely to be a child or young adult, and more likely to be an adult or senior. 23.6% were children and 68.5% were 25 years of age or older (14% were 65+). This group was also more likely to receive disability benefits and social security benefits pointing to the opportunity for increased outreach among seniors who identify as white - not Hispanic.

68.5%

of those who identified as
Multi-Race - Non-Hispanic
were children
(0-17 years old).

69.2%

of food pantry visitors that
are 65+ identified as
white - non-Hispanic

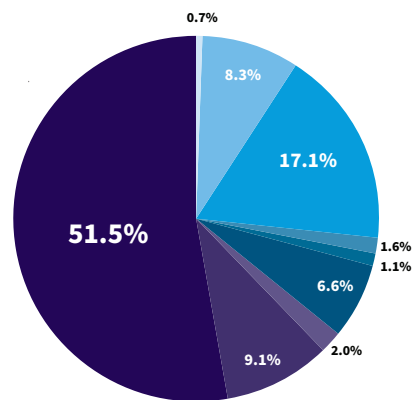
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Average number of visits of
food pantry visitors that are 65+
(3.6 overall)

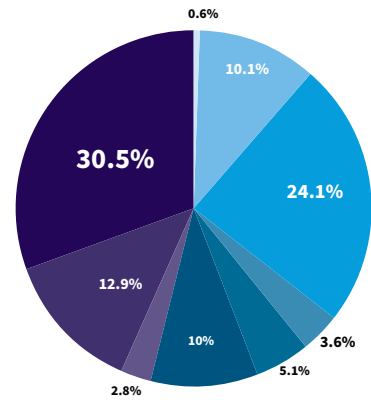
Iowa’s Latinx population is younger, faster-growing and more likely to work compared to the rest of the state’s median age. According to the State Data Center of Iowa, the median age of Iowa’s Latinx population in 2022 is 38.9 years old (compared to 38.9 statewide).

AGE

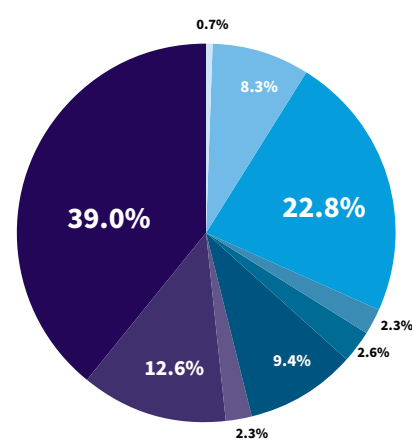
Percent of all children, young adults, and adults (Assisted by race and ethnicity)



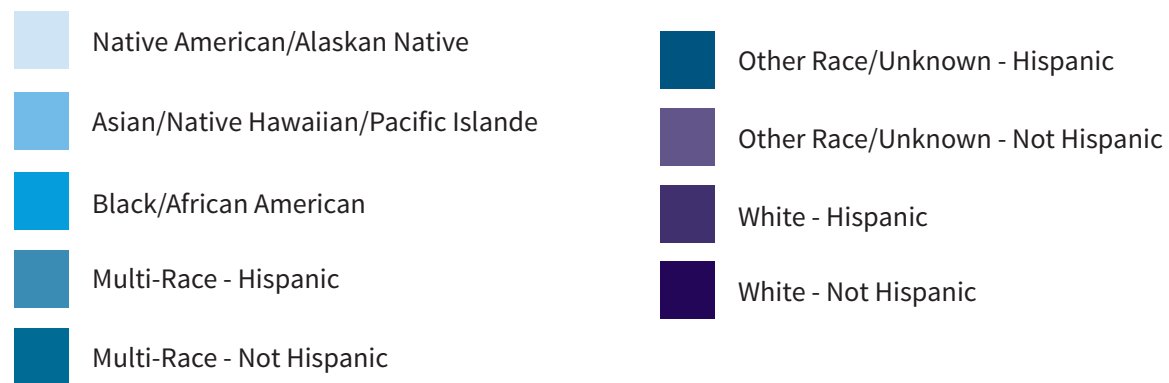
The DMARC Food Pantry Network assisted 28,701 adults (25-64) in FY23.



The DMARC Food Pantry Network assisted 20,529 children (0-17) in FY23.

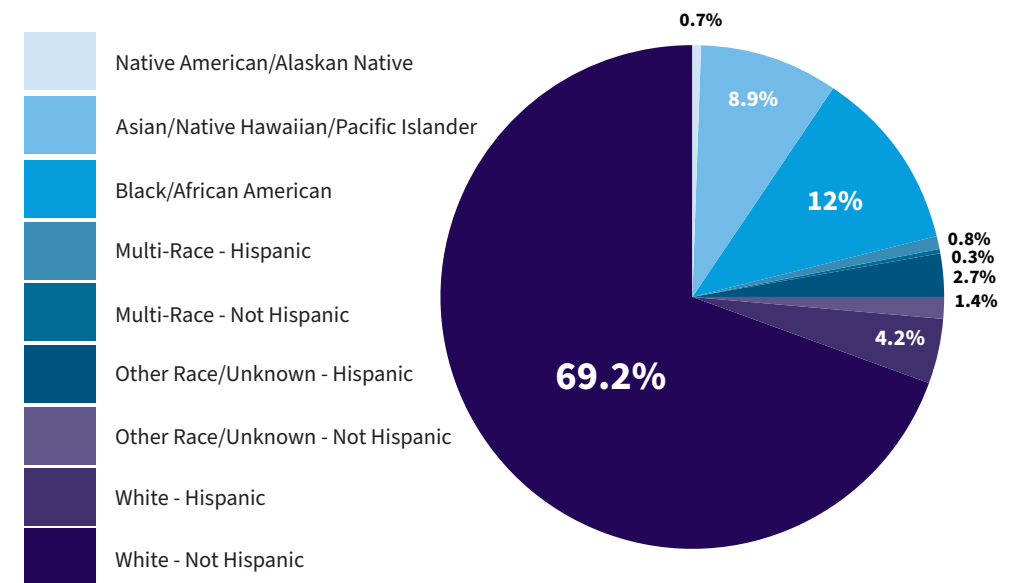


The DMARC Food Pantry Network assisted 5,769 young adults (18-24) in FY23.

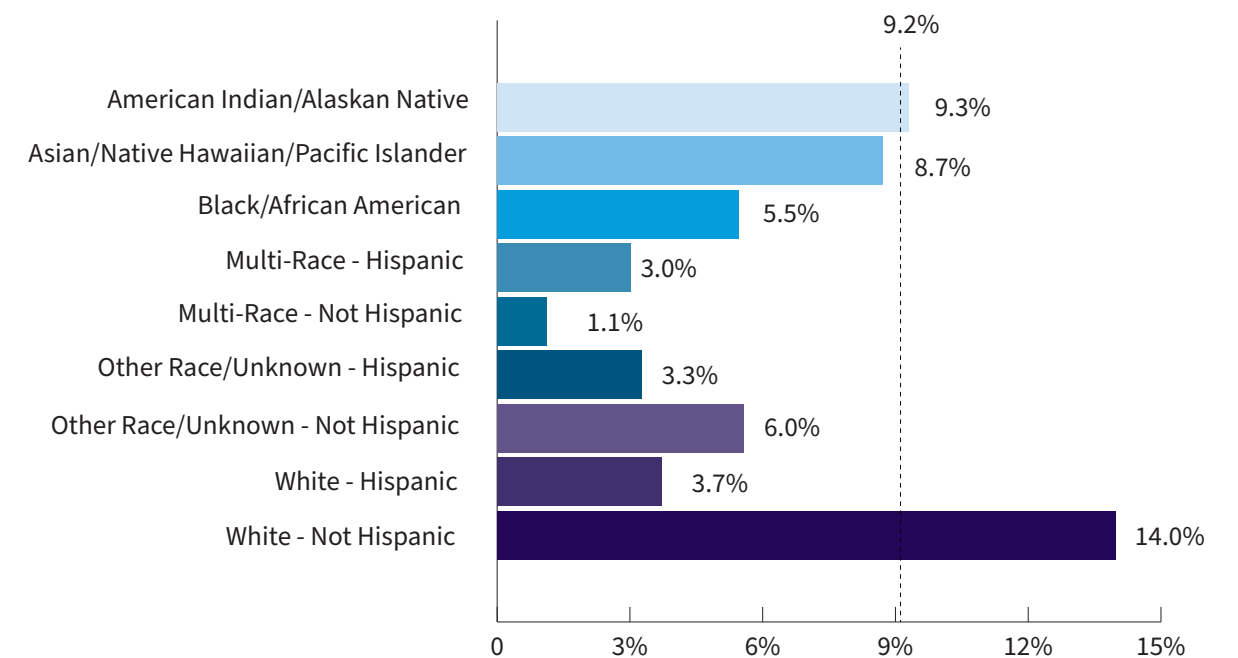


A CLOSER LOOK: SENIORS

Percent of all seniors assisted by race and ethnicity



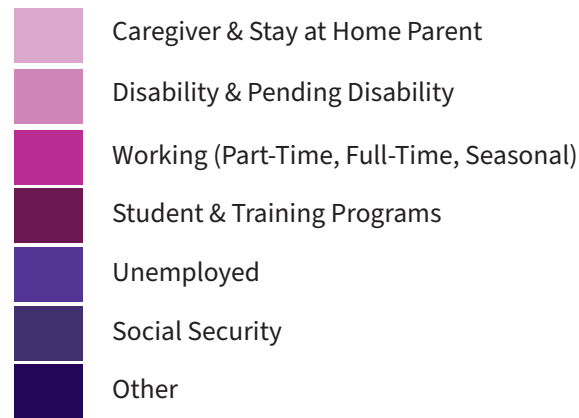
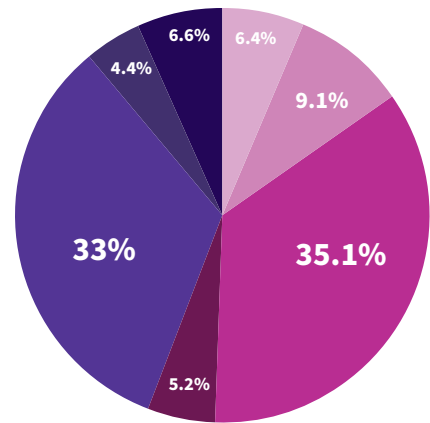
Seniors assisted as a percent of all individuals assisted by race and ethnicity



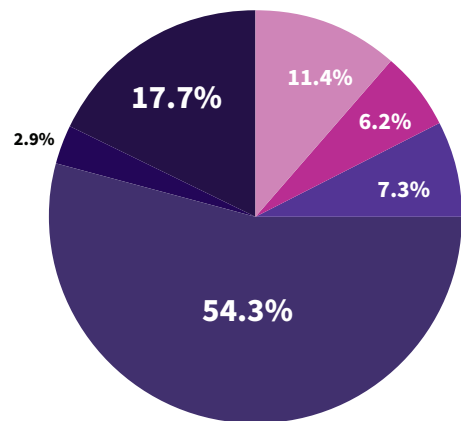
The DMARC Food Pantry Network assisted 5,475 seniors (65+) in FY23. Seniors were much more likely to be White - Non-Hispanic than their younger peers.

Children and young adults being assisted by the DMARC Food Pantry Network are much more likely to be racially diverse than their older peers.

Demographic insight: AGE



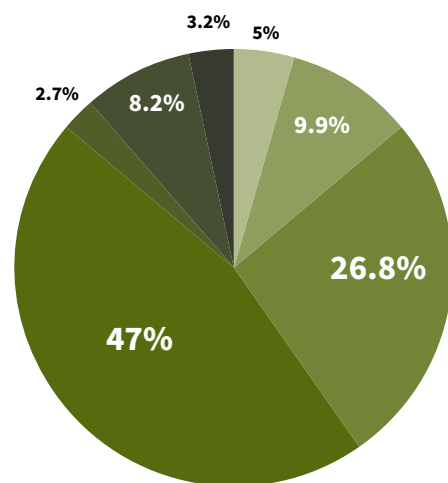
Source of Income, Ages 18-64



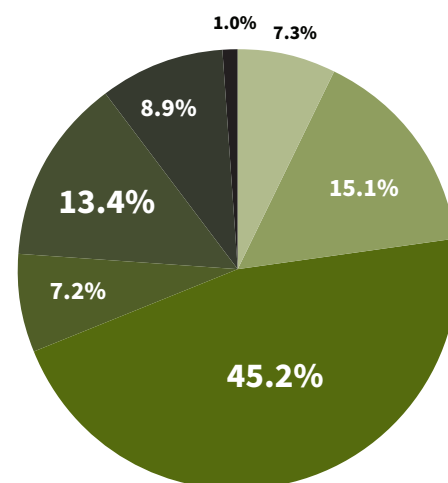
Source of Income, Ages 65+

Seniors rely heavily on Social Security, disability & pending disability, as sources of income compared to younger counterparts but are less likely to participate in SNAP.

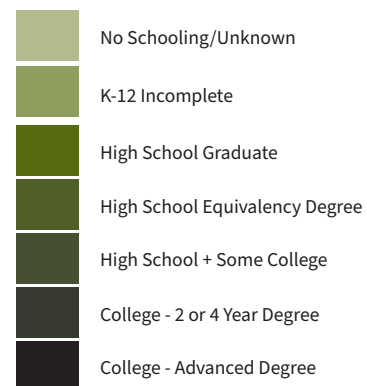
This points to areas of opportunity around SNAP outreach, especially with impending changes at the state and national level around work requirements and asset restrictions.



Education, Ages 18-24



Education, Ages 25+



Demographic insight: EDUCATION

Observed Disparities -

Specific findings based on the education of respondents include:

Food pantry visitors who identified as Asian/Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander were more educated the younger they were. Young adults were more likely to have completed high school and some college, while those age 25 and above were more likely to have no schooling or to have dropped out of school.

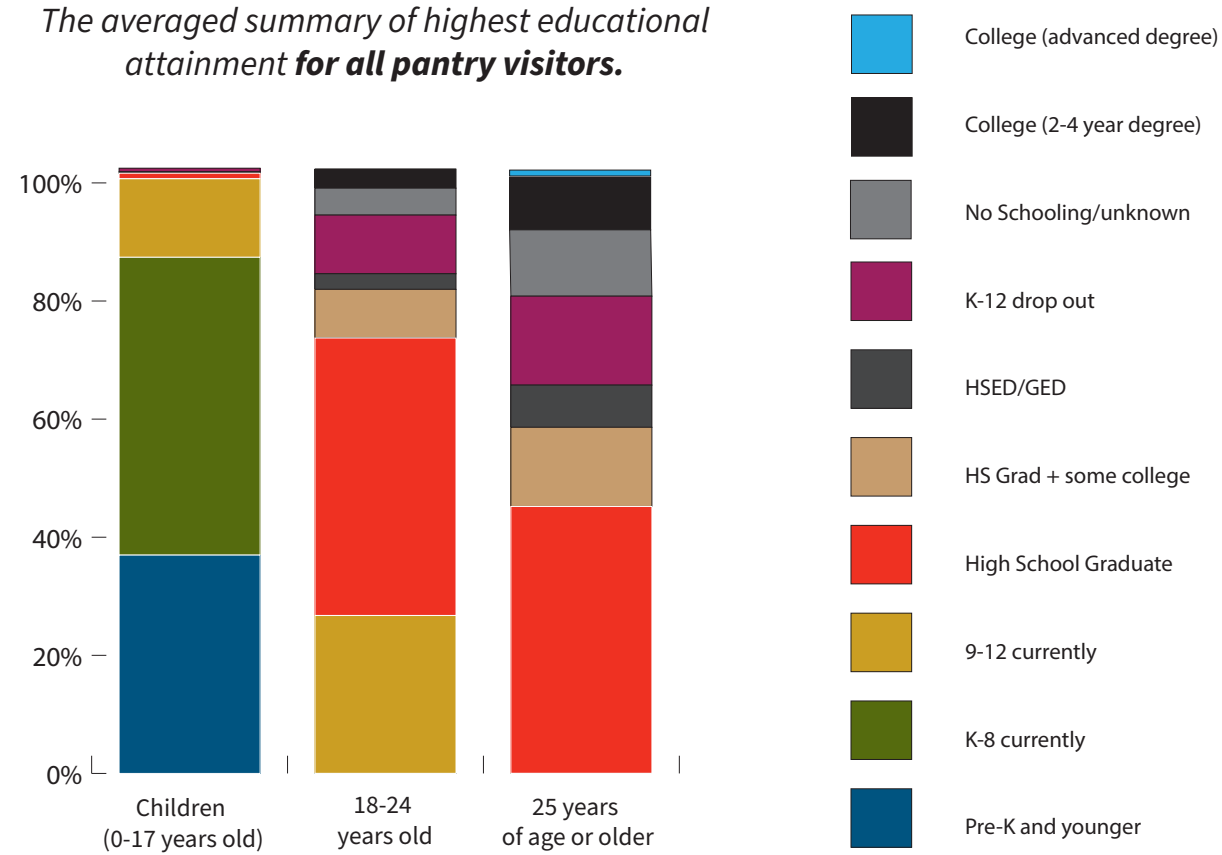
Food pantry visitors who identified as Black or African American were less likely to have dropped out of school and more likely to have completed high school and some college.

Young adults who identified as White not Hispanic were more likely to have graduated high school and completed some college, and adults above the age of 25 were more likely to have graduated high school, completed some college, have a 2 or 4 year college degree, and have an advanced college degree.

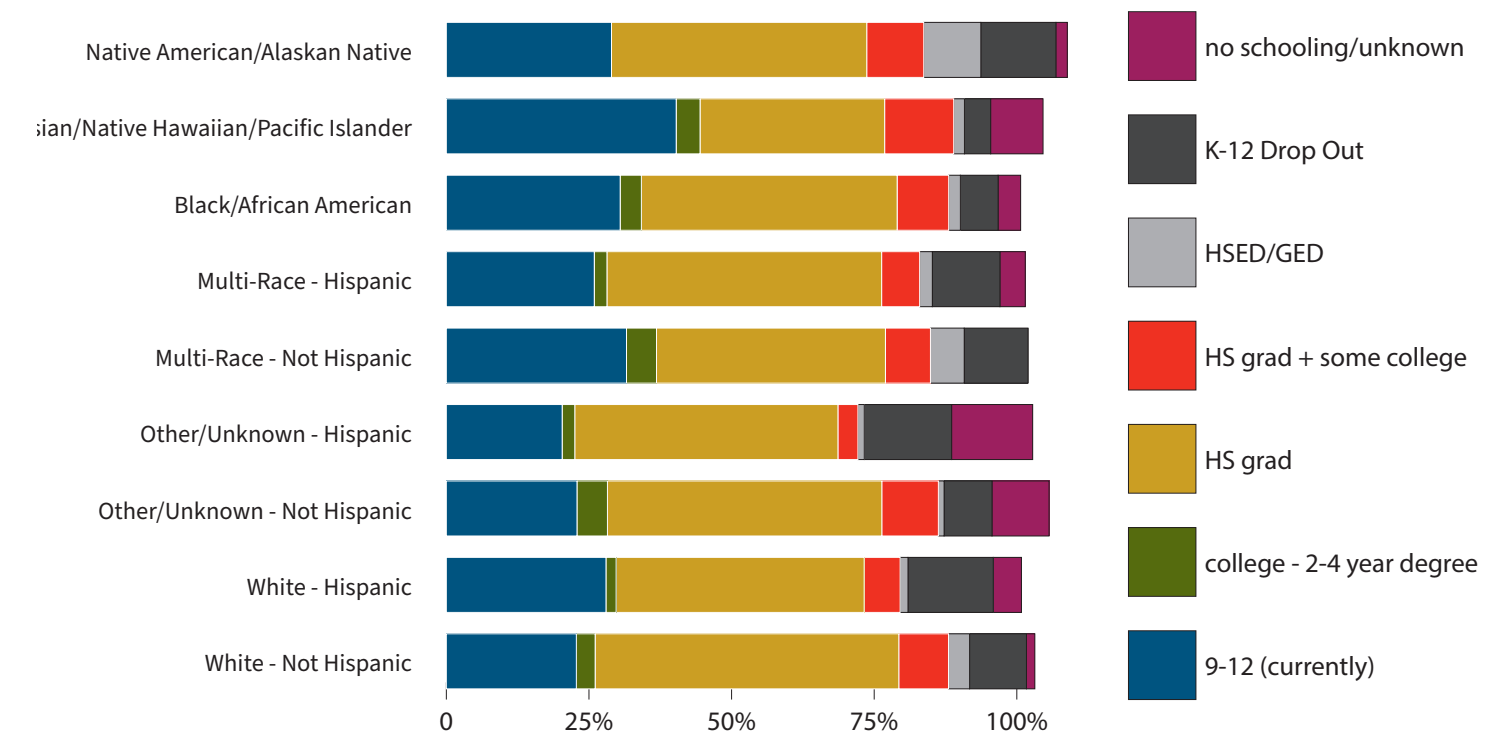


EDUCATION

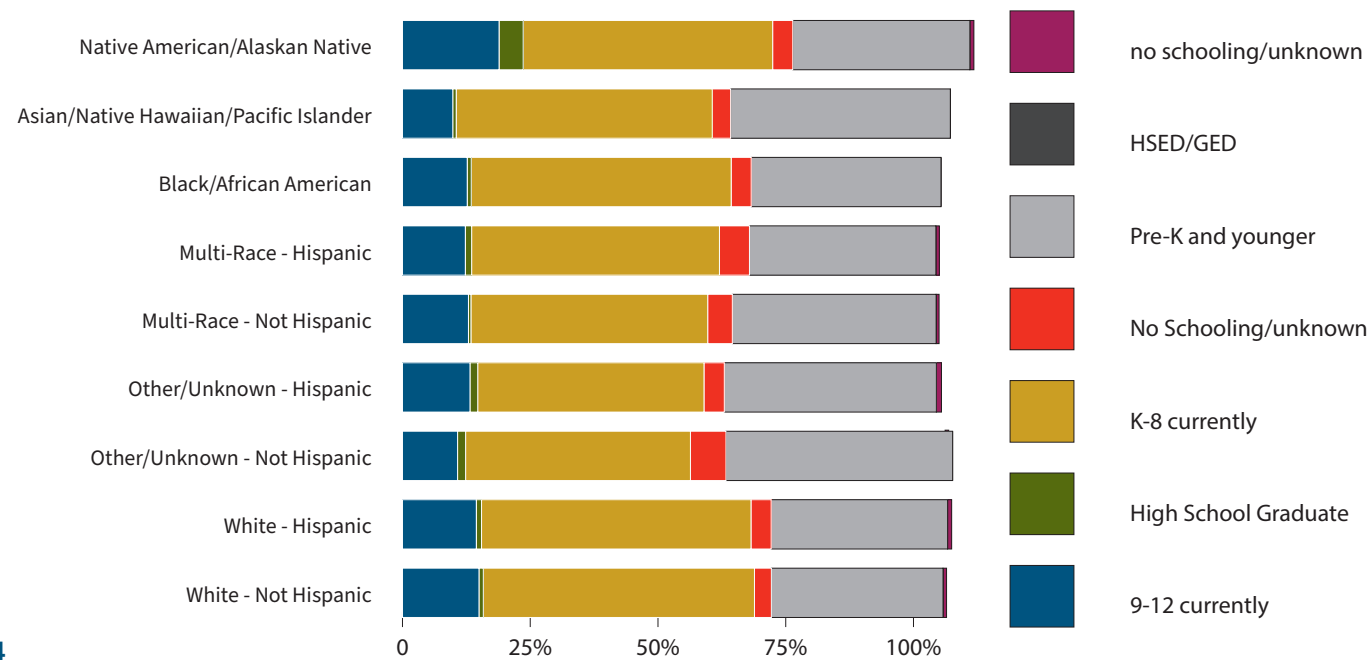
The averaged summary of highest educational attainment for all pantry visitors.



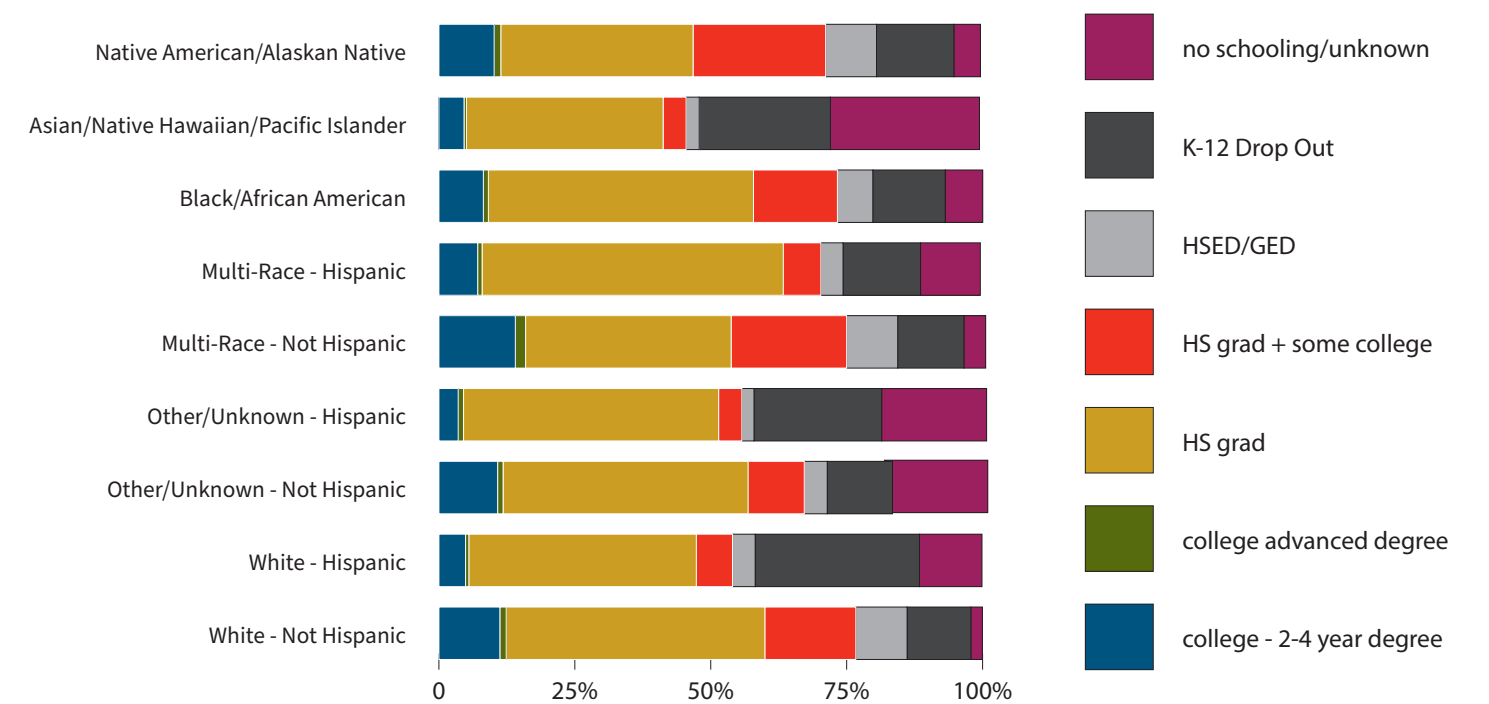
A summary of the highest educational attainment of young adult (18-24 years old) pantry visitors.



A summary of the highest educational attainment of children (0-17 years old) pantry visitors.

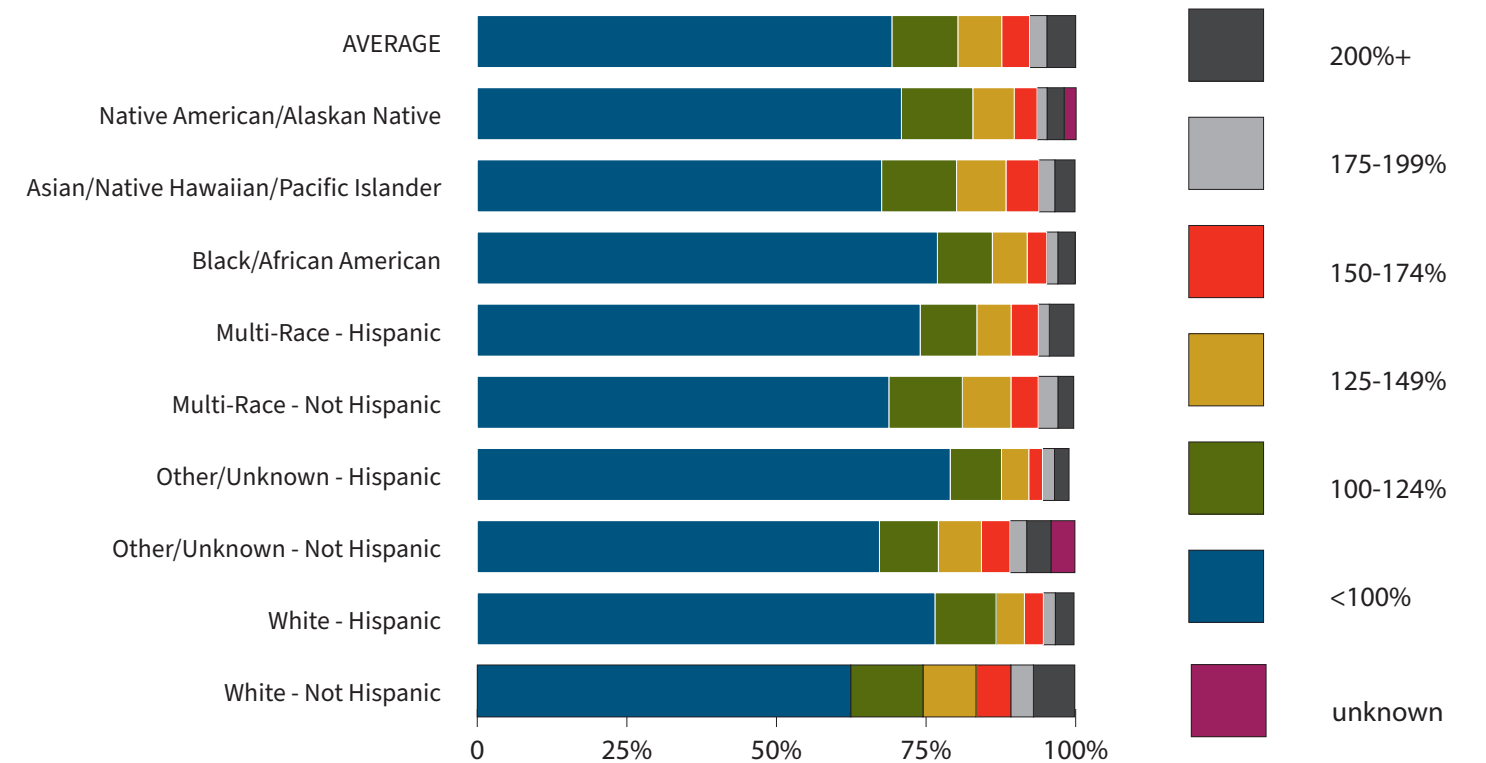


A summary of the highest educational attainment of adults (25 years or older) pantry visitors.



Demographic insight: **INCOME**

Household income of Food Pantry Visitors based on the federal poverty level



Observed Disparities -

Specific findings based on the income of respondents include:

- Other/Unknown - Hispanic food pantry visitors were more likely to have a household income below the federal poverty line, and less likely to have an income above 200% of the federal poverty line.
- 42% of food pantry visitors between the ages of 18 and 64 who identified as Multi-Race and Hispanic were working, compared to 35% of all adults who used a food pantry.
- Among food pantry visitors between the ages of 18 and 64 who identified as Asian/Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, 43.4% were working, compared to 35.1% for all pantry. 15.7% were a stay at home parent or caregiver, compared to 5.5% of all food pantry visitors.



35.1%
of those 18-64 years of age were working - the highest income category.
This is consistent throughout all demographic groups.

54.2%
of those 65 years or older were receiving social security benefits.
Pantry visitors who identified as multi-racial were less likely than others to receive Social Security.

14.1%
of food pantry visitors ages 18-64 who identified as Asian/Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander that were stay at home parents (compared to 4.9% overall).

Demographic insight: **GENDER**

Observed Disparities -

Specific findings based on the gender of respondents include:

While gender disparities exist across all races and ethnicities, men may have a greater reluctance to visit a food pantry. Across nearly every category, women are more likely to use a food pantry than men. There is no gender disparity among children. The level of disparity increases with age, from a gap of 5 percentage points among young adults to a 16 point gap among seniors. This points to financial disparities between men and women, and suggests a greater reluctance for asking for help from men.

Food Pantry Visitors that identified as Transgender and Non-binary visited the pantry less than those who identified as a man or woman (an average of 3 visits).

OTHER RACE/UNKNOWN - NOT HISPANIC

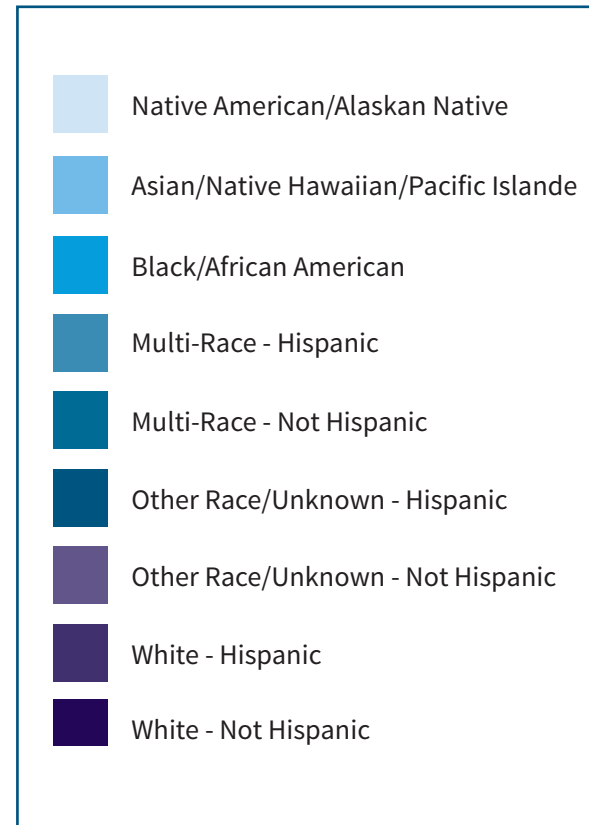
The closest to gender parity of any racial and ethnic group observed.
(2.6% difference between men/women)

AMERICAN INDIAN/ALASKAN NATIVE

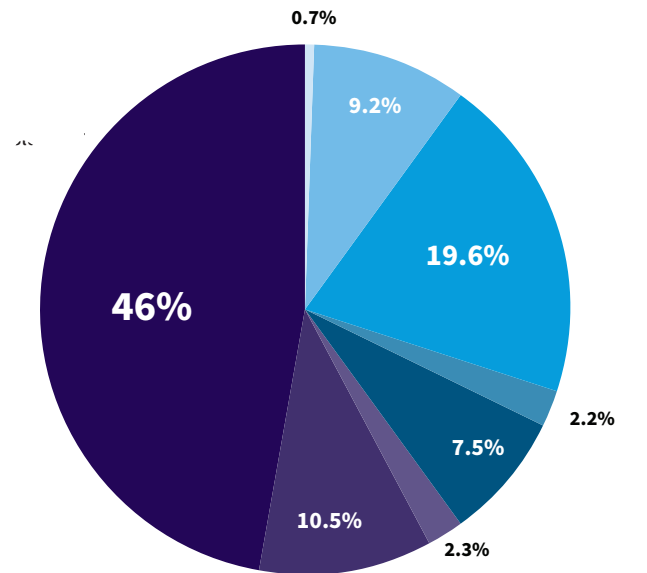
The farthest from gender parity of any racial and ethnic group observed.
10.3% difference between men/women

3.9

The average number of visits for both men and women

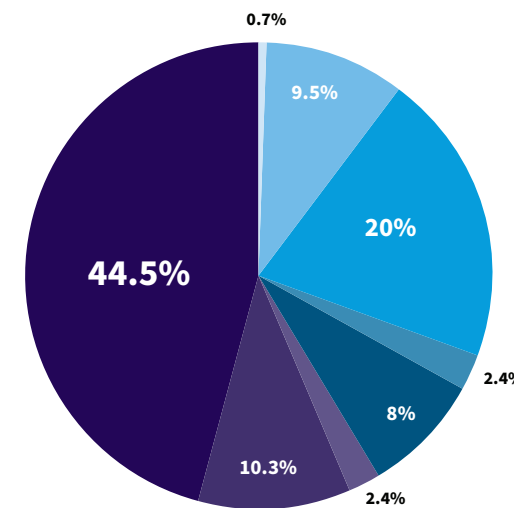


WOMEN *Percent of all women assisted by race and ethnicity*



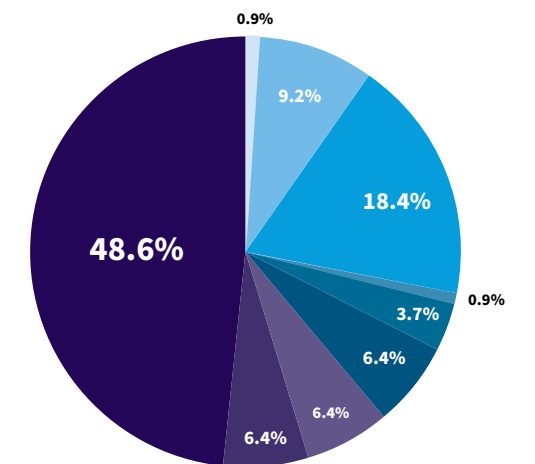
The DMARC Food Pantry Network assisted 31,874 women in FY23.

MEN *Percent of all men assisted by race and ethnicity*



The DMARC Food Pantry Network assisted 27,934 men in FY23.

TRANSGENDER/ NON-BINARY *Percent of all transgender/non-binary/other assisted by race and ethnicity*



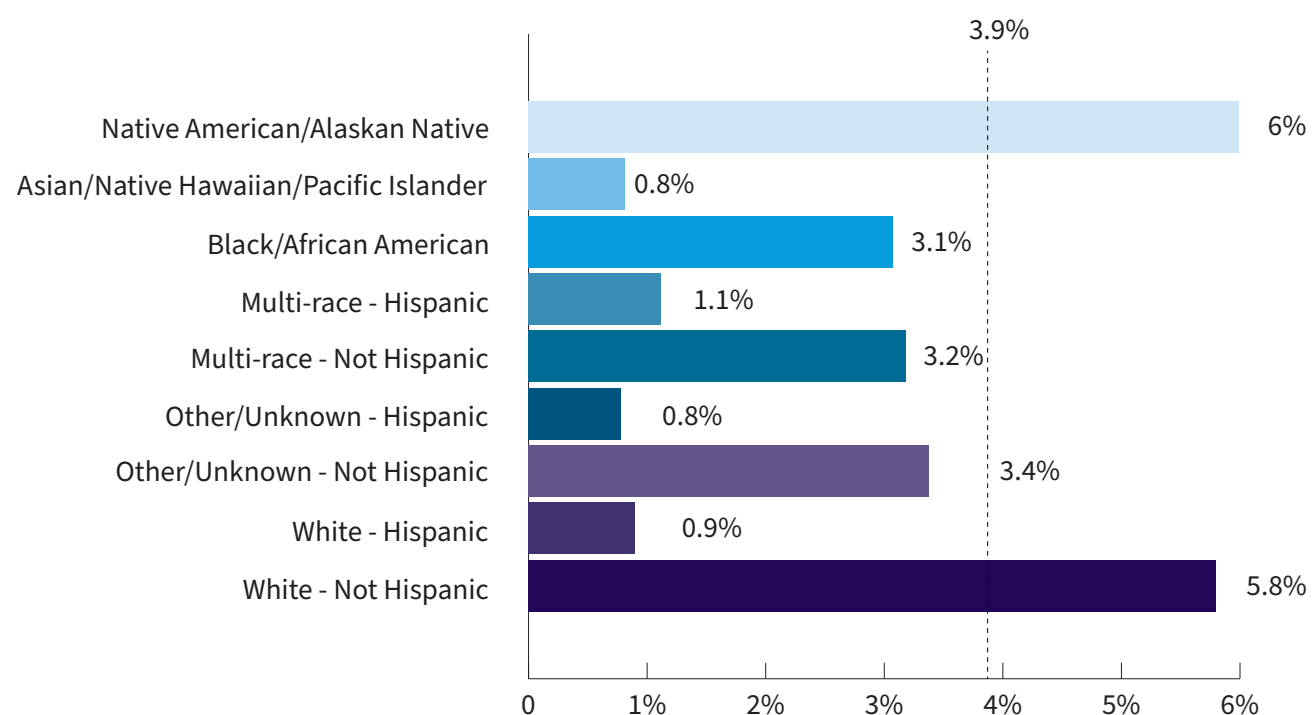
The DMARC Food Pantry Network assisted 109 people who identified as transgender, non-binary, or some other gender in FY23.

Demographic insight: VETERAN STATUS

Observed Disparities

- Compared to all food pantry visitors, those who identified as Veterans (18 years or older) visited a food pantry more frequently than their peers. Veterans visited a food pantry on average 4.3 times a year compared to 3.9 times overall.
- Those who identified as American Indian/Alaskan Native or White - non-Hispanic were more likely to be veterans than their peers.

The DMARC Food Pantry Network assisted 1,557 veterans in FY23.



Demographic insight: SNAP PARTICIPATION

Observed Disparities

Compared to all food pantry visitors, those who identified as SNAP PARTICIPANTS were...

- More likely to be children
- Less likely to be Hispanic
- Less likely to be seniors
- Just as likely to use food pantries at a similar frequency

Children are much more likely to be enrolled in SNAP than other food pantry visitors, especially seniors. Just one in three seniors who used the DMARC Food Pantry Network was enrolled in SNAP. SNAP enrollment was also much lower for all populations who identified as Hispanic. SNAP enrollment rates were lower for all ages of people who identified as Hispanic, but were especially low for Hispanic seniors. Only 22% of Hispanic seniors who used the DMARC Food Pantry Network were enrolled in SNAP.

SNAP enrollment continues to fall while food pantries break records

The number of Polk County residents participating in SNAP is currently at a 14-year low. Meanwhile, the DMARC Food Pantry Network continues to assist record-breaking numbers of individuals, including a large number of first-time food pantry visitors. Just four in ten food pantry visitors in FY23 were enrolled in SNAP. We've seen this trend playing out for a while, starting in the fall of 2013. That October, additional SNAP benefits from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act expired, participants saw a reduction in their SNAP benefits, and rules around work requirements resumed.

Continued on following page...

In Polk County, 50,302 lowans were enrolled in SNAP in June 2023 (10% of the population). The average per-meal benefit was \$1.86, and the total amount of SNAP benefits distributed was \$8.4 million (**with an economic impact of \$12.9 million**).

SNAP enrollment continues to fall while food pantries break records

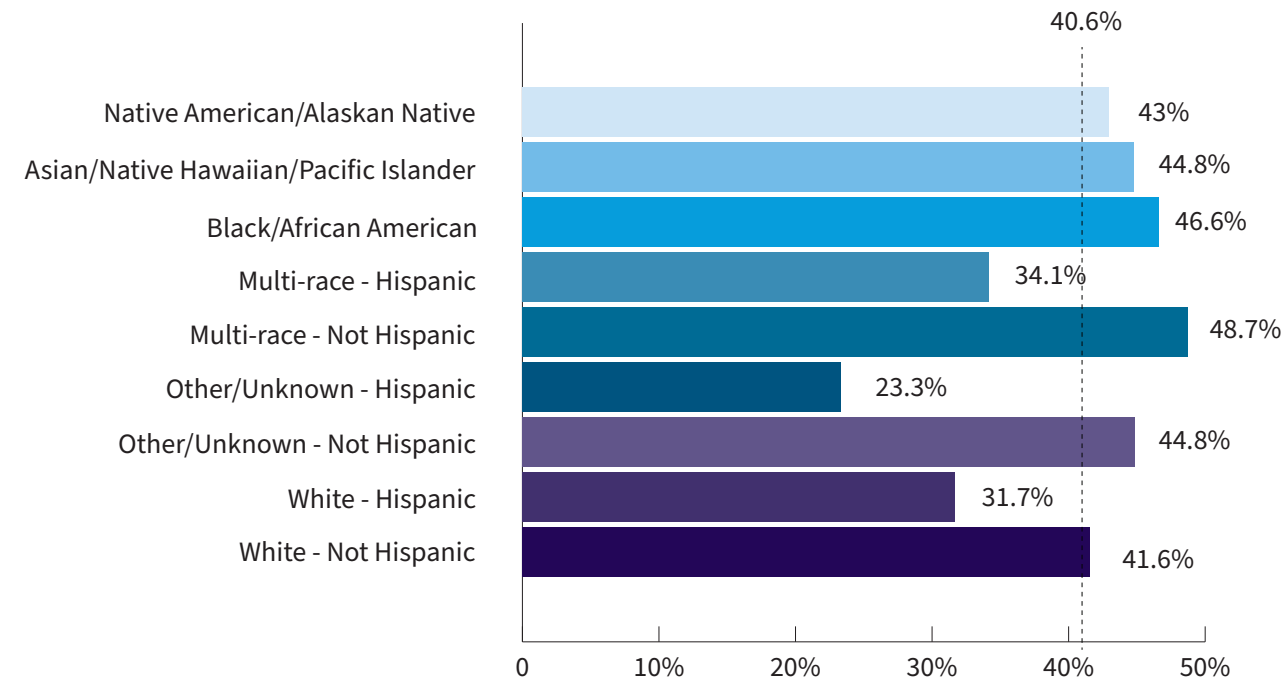
The following year, DMARC saw a 20% increase in use across our Food Pantry Network, while SNAP enrollment steadily declined. The trend of rising food pantry use and falling SNAP enrollment continued until the COVID-19 pandemic, when additional SNAP benefits helped keep families afloat and food pantries saw a decrease in use. But when those additional benefits went away in April 2022, the DMARC Food Pantry Network saw dramatic increases in food pantry use, which have continued to this day.

We know from these previous examples that when SNAP is more accessible, and benefit amounts are more adequate, we see less people turning to food pantries to make ends meet. The policies set by our government, and the rhetoric espoused by our leaders, have real impacts on the lives of people experiencing hunger and food insecurity – and they also influence their decision on whether or not to apply for SNAP.

With the passage of Senate File 494 in Iowa in 2023, SNAP is set to become only more restrictive and difficult to access. SF 494 will implement new eligibility and identity verification processes, as well as establishing an asset test for SNAP in Iowa. On the federal side, work requirements were recently expanded during debt ceiling negotiations this summer. While our government is making it more difficult for people to access nutrition assistance, food pantries will continue to see record-breaking numbers of lowans turning to them for help.

The DMARC Food Pantry Network assisted 24,264 people who were enrolled in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in FY23.

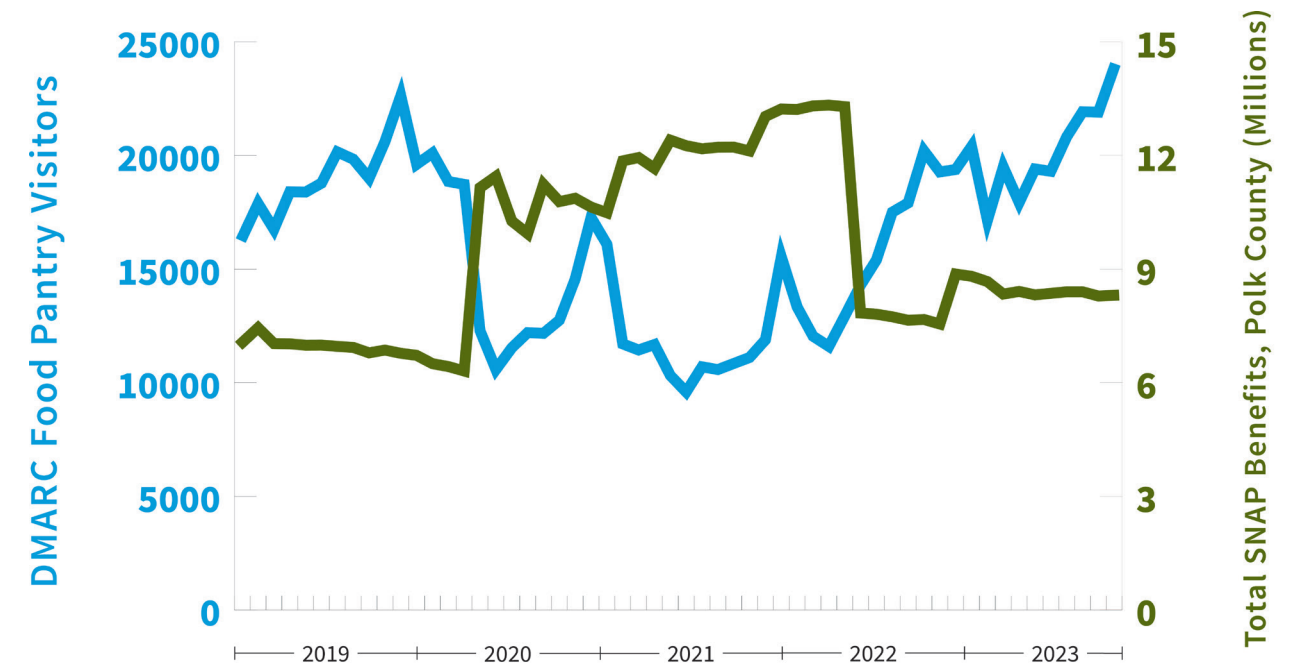
Percent of pantry visitors who were enrolled in SNAP at any point in FY23 by race and ethnicity



Common myths about SNAP

People who receive SNAP benefits aren't working

More than half of SNAP recipients are children or seniors. The large majority of people enrolled in SNAP who can work, do work. **Work requirements already exist for most adults** between the ages of 18 and 52 who are physically and mentally capable of working. Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs) in Iowa may only receive three months of SNAP benefits every three years if they are not working at least 20 hours per week. The Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023 expanded this punitive time limit to adults age 50-54 (to be fully implemented by 2024), while providing new exemptions for veterans, people experiencing homelessness, and young adults who have aged out of foster care.



People just buy junk food with their benefits

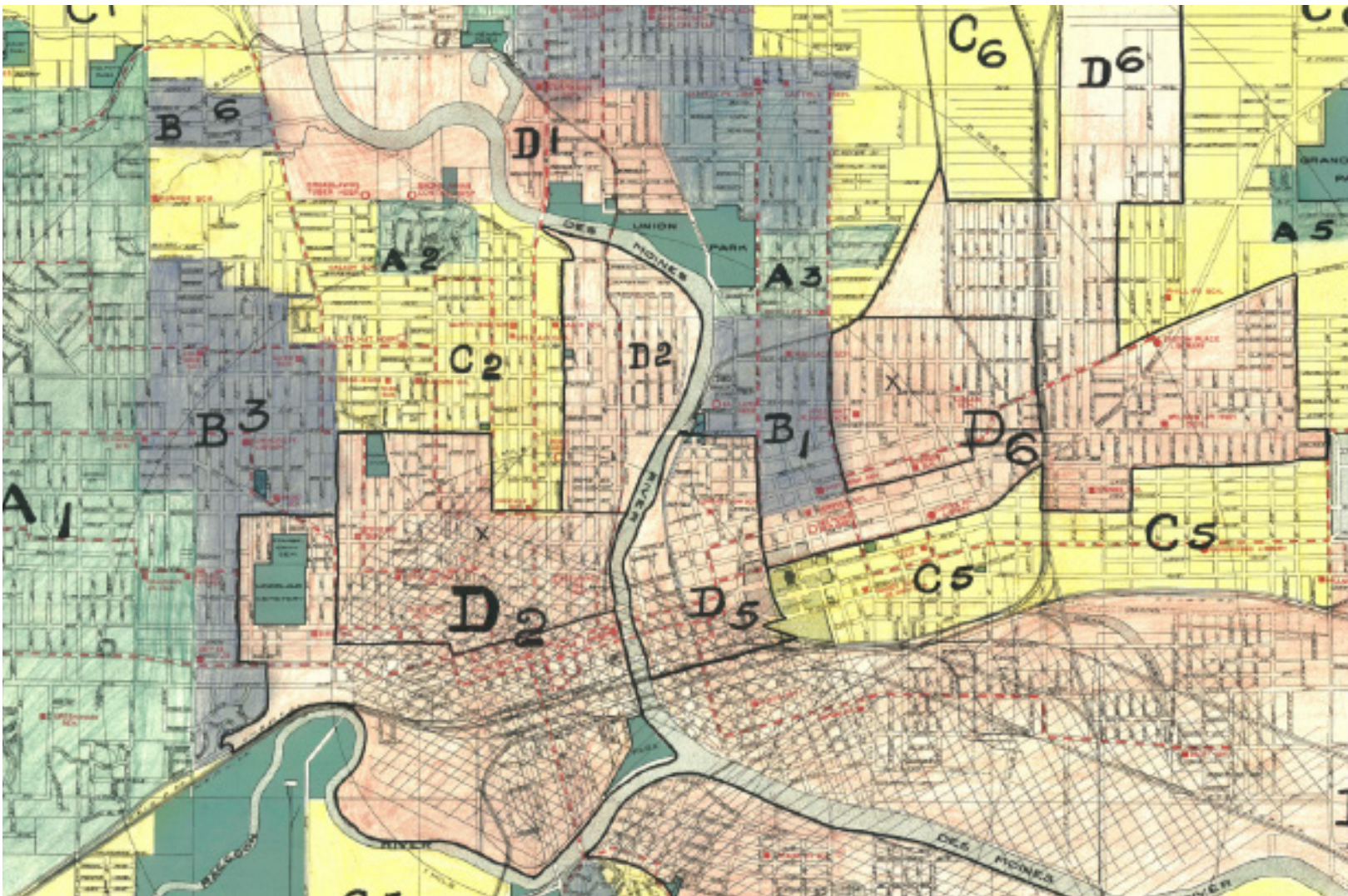
SNAP benefits cannot be used to purchase cigarettes, alcohol, non-food items like diapers or personal care items, or hot prepared foods. In 2016, one of our Red Barrel grocery stores shared with us a list of the foods most frequently purchased using SNAP benefits. The top items on the list were **milk, meat (chicken drumsticks/ wings and ground beef), and bananas**. Of the top 100 items, 47 were meat/fish of some kind, 15 were fruits and vegetables, and 12 were dairy or egg products.

SNAP has a high rate of fraud and abuse

Iowa uses a number of systems to verify the identity and income of people applying for SNAP benefits. In FY22, the state of Iowa Department of Health and Human Services disqualified 195 individuals for misuse of SNAP, a **fraud rate of 0.07%**. The USDA has a robust Quality Control (QC) process to audit participant eligibility across states, as well as having its own SNAP fraud investigative team.

[Read more about SNAP myths at dmarcunited.org](https://dmarcunited.org)

DES MOINES - REDLINE MAP

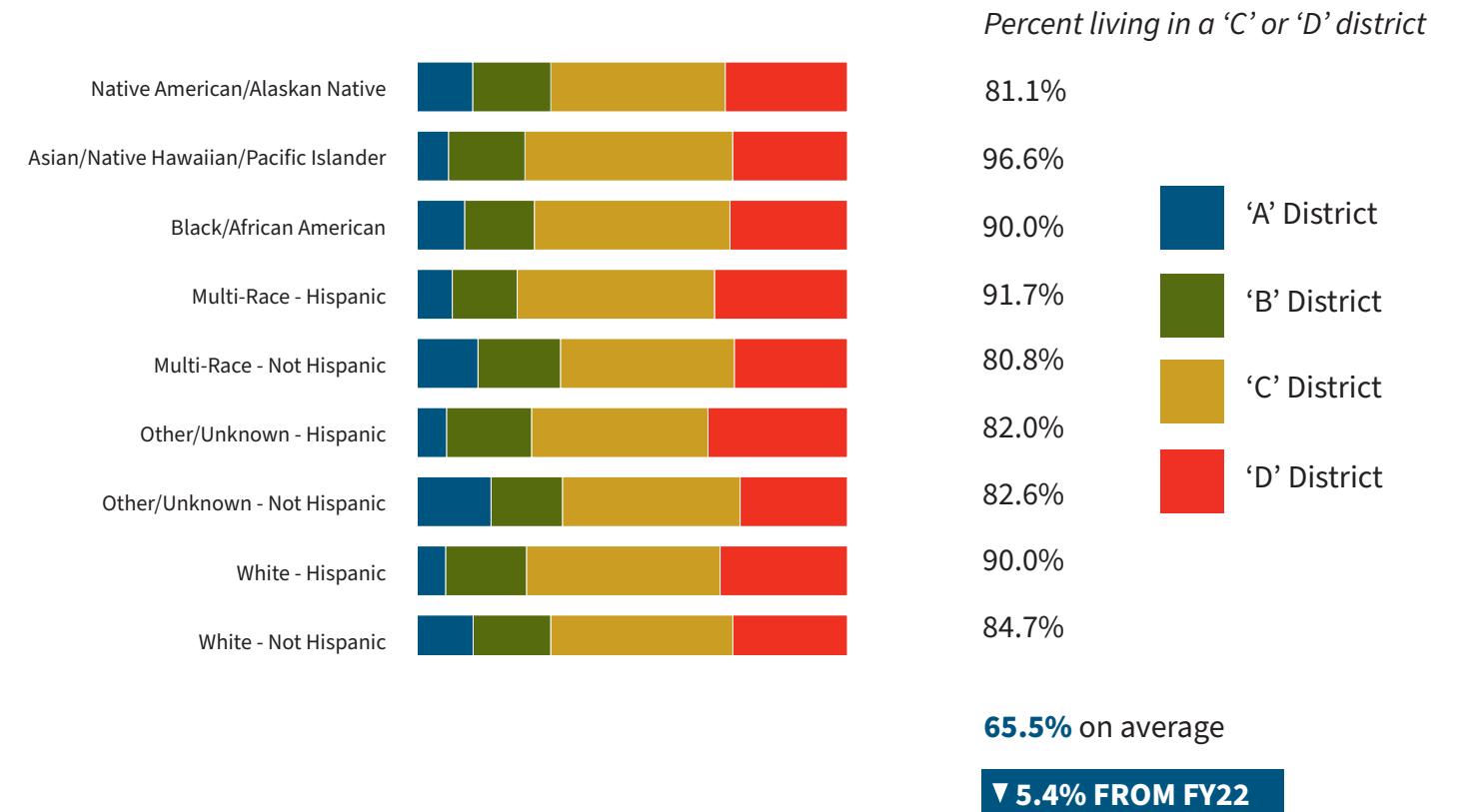


“Redlining” was a racist housing policy that led to segregated neighborhoods and prevented generations of Black families and other communities of color from building wealth through homeownership.

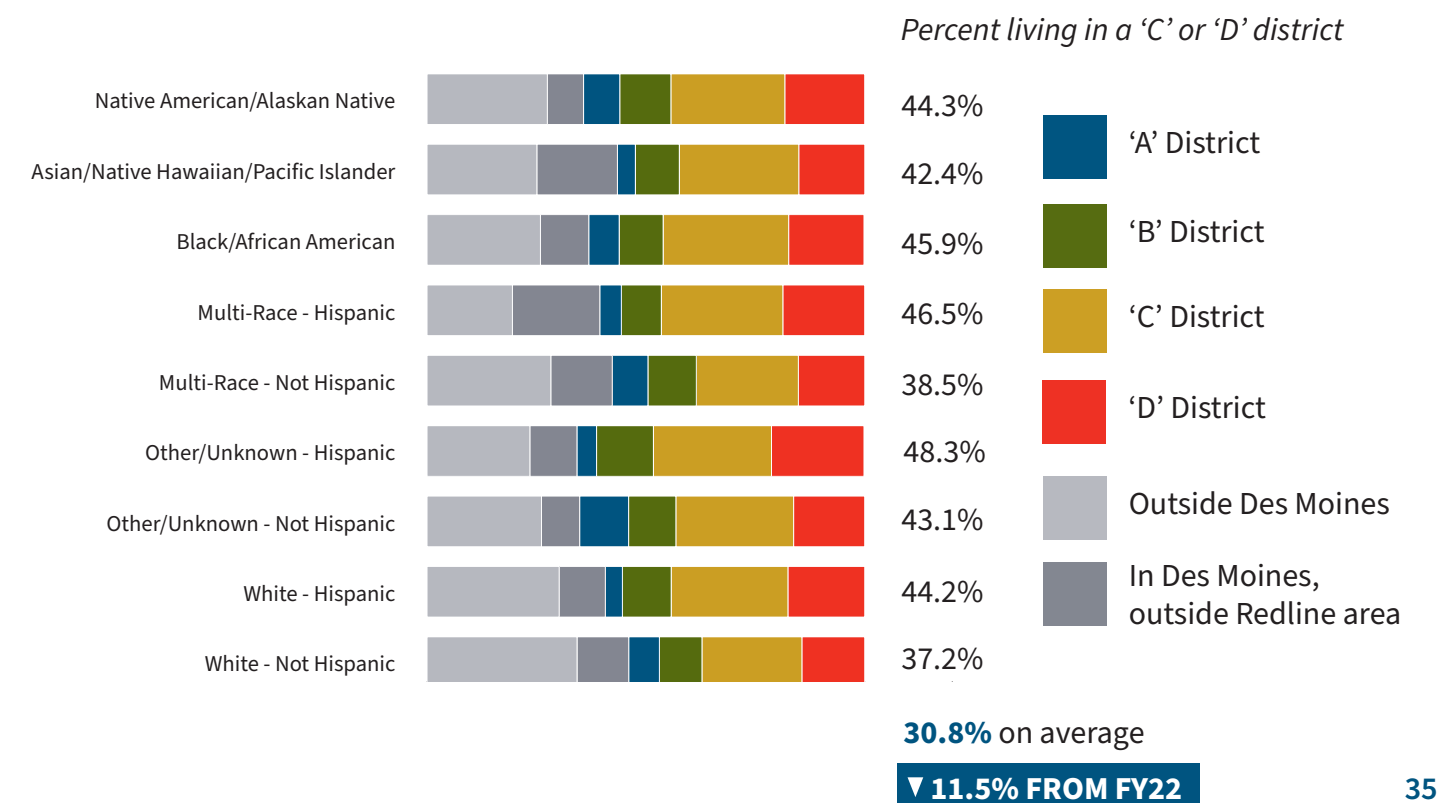
In the 1930’s, the United States government’s Home Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC) produced redline maps for cities across the country, including Des Moines. Areas rated ‘A’ or ‘B’ were considered the “best” neighborhoods, while ‘C’ and ‘D’ were deemed “risky” in-part due to “hazardous populations.” As little as a single Black family could downgrade a neighborhood to a risky rating, thereby cutting off the residents from receiving federal assistance with home loans. This policy helped white people purchase homes in white areas, and kept people of color and low-income people from accessing this same sort of assistance.

This racist policy of the past has implications for food pantry use in our community today. As you will see, historical areas of disinvestment continue to be areas of high-need today.

FOOD PANTRY VISITORS WHO LIVE WITHIN THE BOUNDARIES OF THE HISTORIC REDLINE MAP



ALL FOOD PANTRY VISITORS



RACIAL DISPARITIES BY CITY OF RESIDENCE

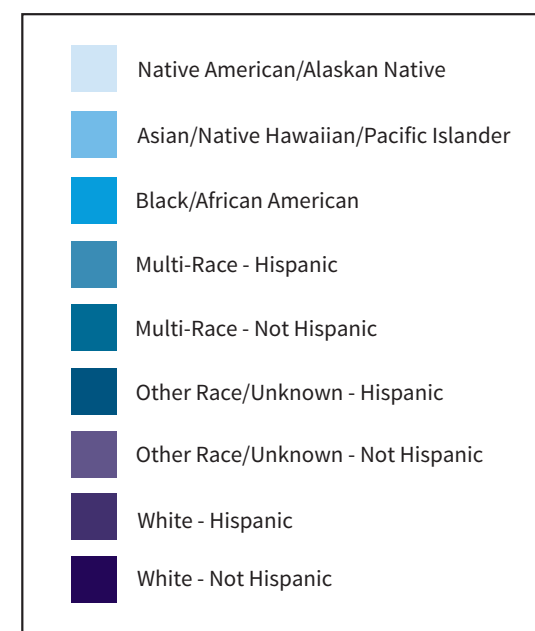
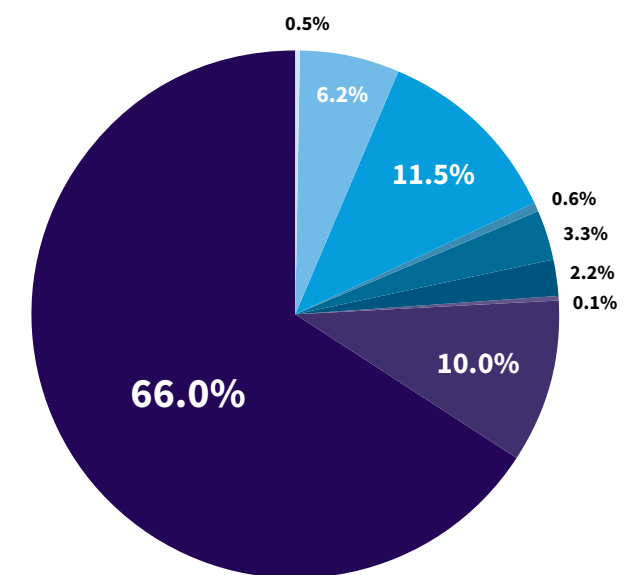
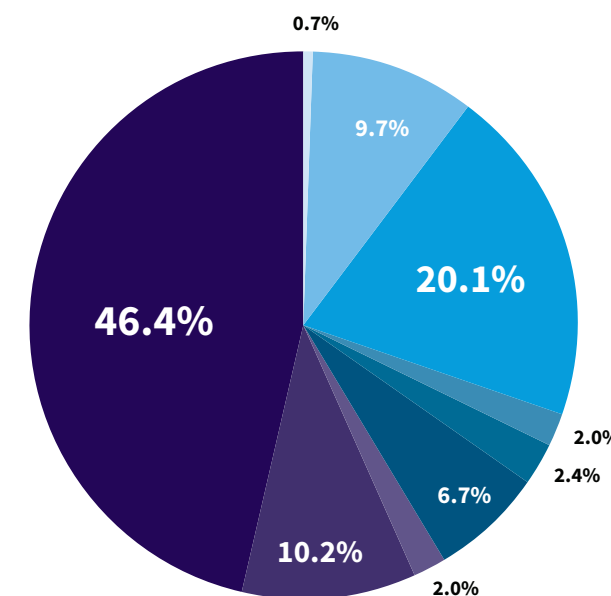
DES MOINES RESIDENTS

The DMARC Food Pantry Network assisted 41,926 residents of Des Moines in FY23, which is 19.4% of the total population of Des Moines.

Compared with the general population, residents who used a food pantry were less likely to identify as White - Not Hispanic or Multi-Race - Not Hispanic, and more likely to identify as all other races and ethnicities.

FOOD PANTRY VISITORS

GENERAL POPULATION



18.8% of food pantry visitors that identified as Multi-Race - Hispanic lived in the 50315 zip code.

19.1% of those who identified as Asian/Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander lived in the 50310 zip code.

DES MOINES
41,926
 unique individuals assisted
 ▲ 26% FROM FY22

ANKENY
2,731
 unique individuals assisted
 ▲ 43% FROM FY22

CLIVE
1,340
 unique individuals assisted
 ▲ 39% FROM FY22

JOHNSTON
1,303
 unique individuals assisted
 ▲ 28% FROM FY22

URBANDALE
2,890
 unique individuals assisted
 ▲ 25% FROM FY22

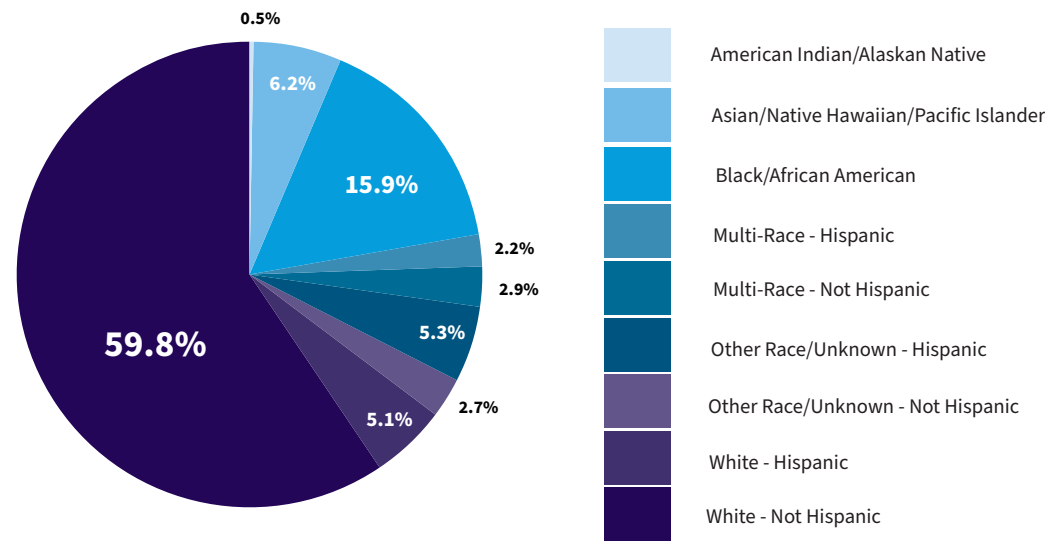
WEST DES MOINES
4,140
 unique individuals assisted
 ▲ 26% FROM FY22

ANKENY RESIDENTS

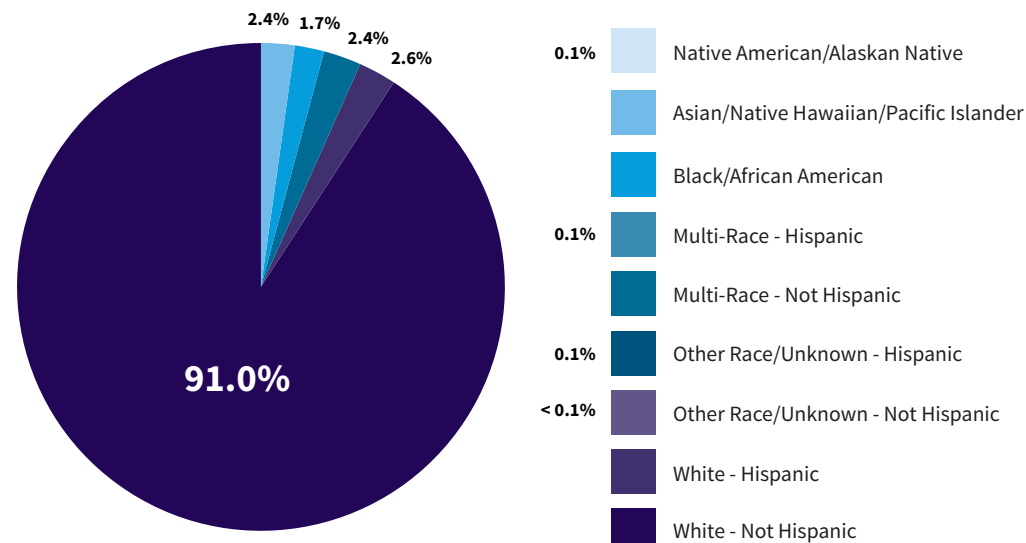
The DMARC Food Pantry Network assisted 2,731 residents of Ankeny in FY23, which is 4.2% of the total population of Ankeny.

Compared with the general population, residents who used a food pantry were less likely to identify as White - Not Hispanic, just as likely to identify as Multi-Race - Not Hispanic, and more likely to identify as all other races and ethnicities.

FOOD PANTRY VISITORS



GENERAL POPULATION

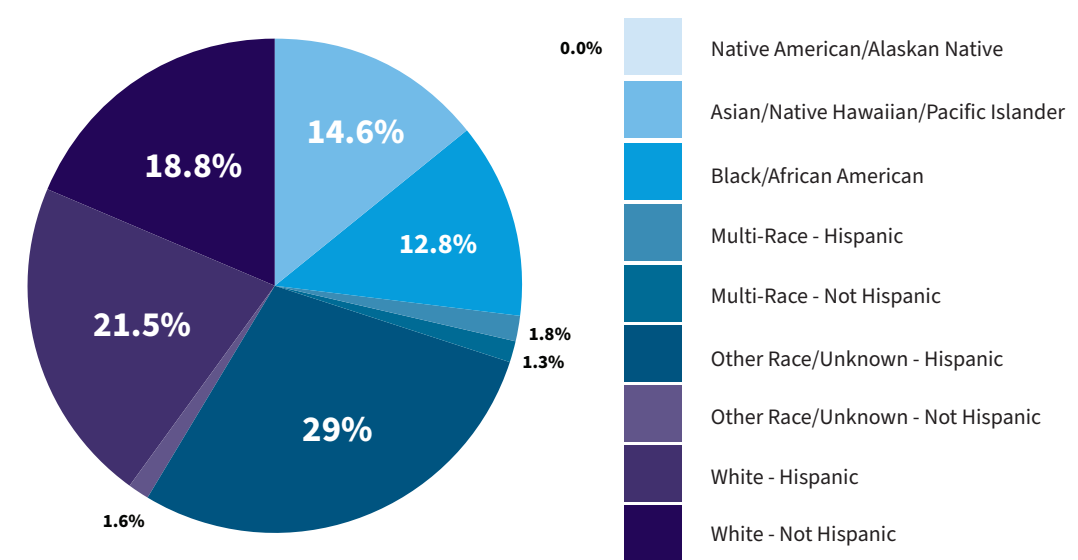


CLIVE RESIDENTS

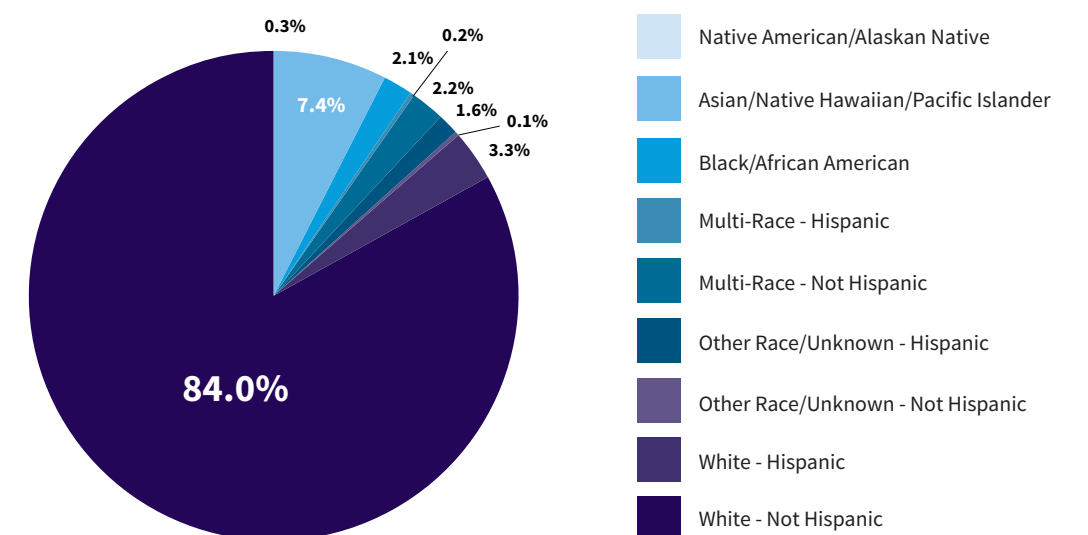
The DMARC Food Pantry Network assisted 1,340 residents of Clive in FY23, which is 7.8% of the total population of Clive.

Compared with the general population, residents who used a food pantry were less likely to identify as White - Not Hispanic or Multi-Race - Not Hispanic, and more likely to identify as all other races and ethnicities.

FOOD PANTRY VISITORS



GENERAL POPULATION

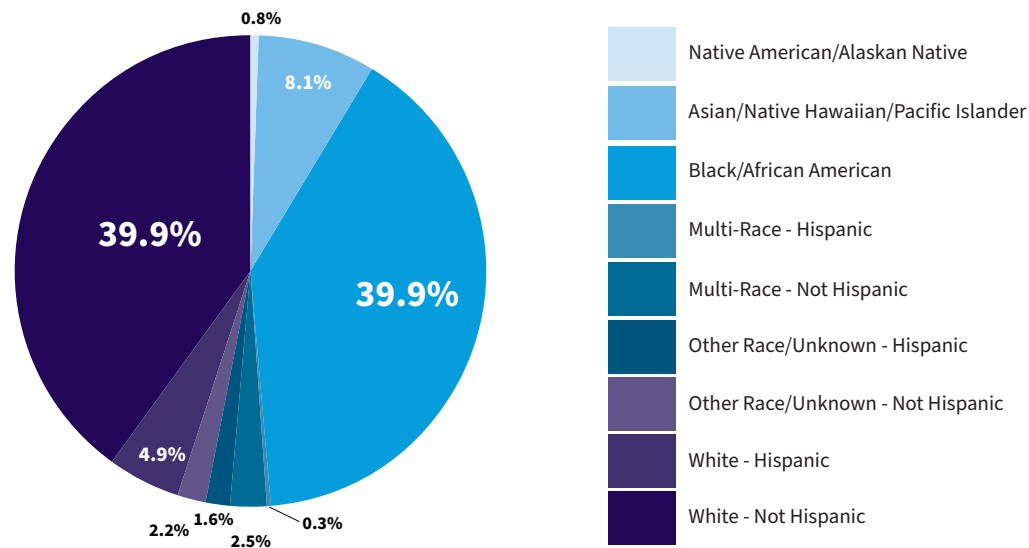


JOHNSTON RESIDENTS

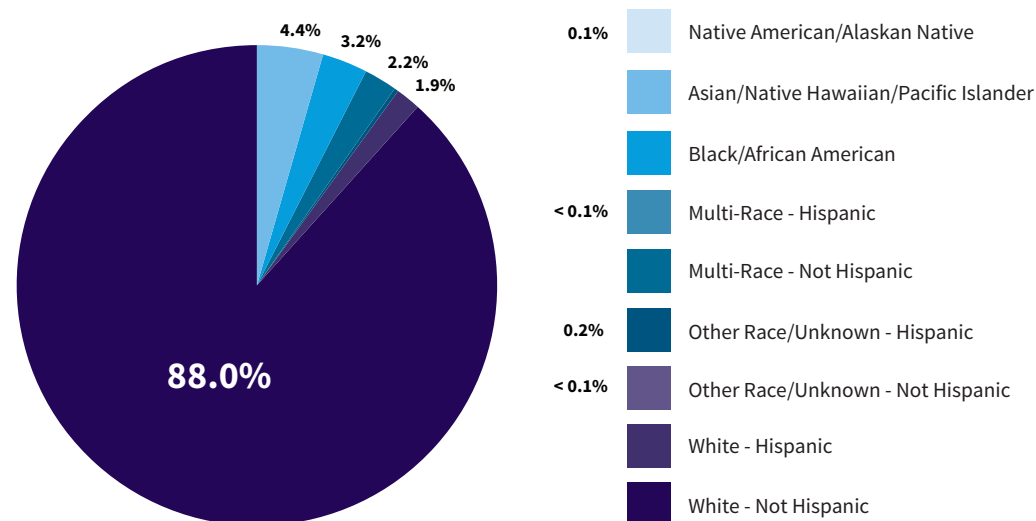
The DMARC Food Pantry Network assisted 1,340 residents of Johnston in FY23, which is 6.1% of the total population of Johnston.

Compared with the general population, residents who used a food pantry were less likely to identify as White - Not Hispanic or Multi-Race - Not Hispanic, and more likely to identify as all other races and ethnicities.

FOOD PANTRY VISITORS



GENERAL POPULATION

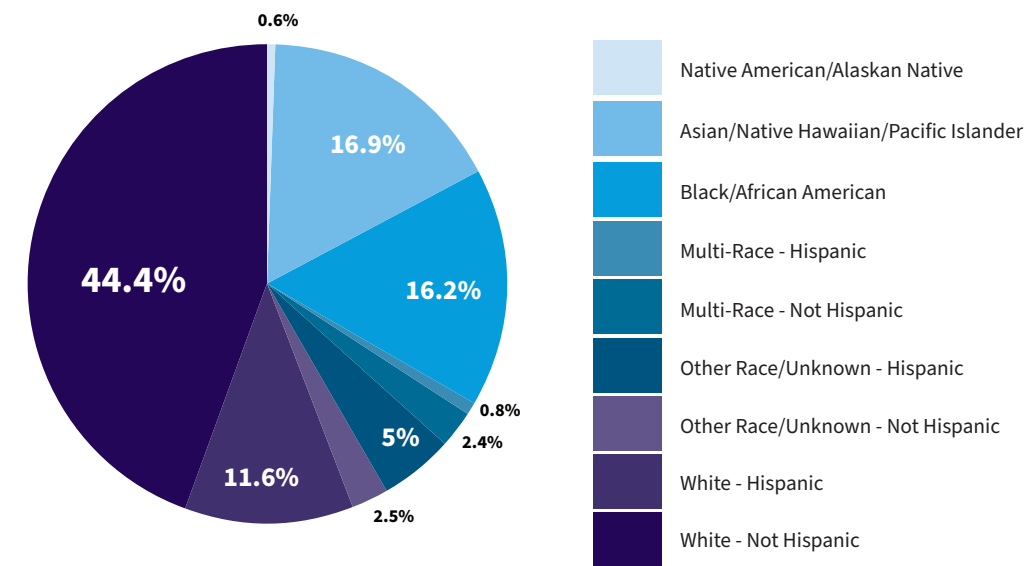


URBANDALE RESIDENTS

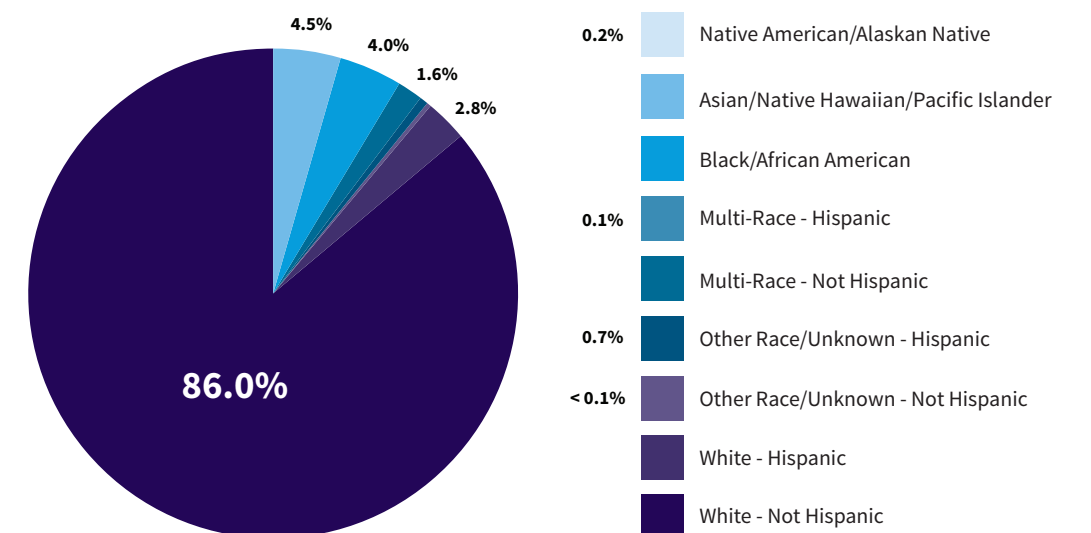
The DMARC Food Pantry Network assisted 2,890 residents of Urbandale in FY23, which is 6.5% of the total population of Urbandale.

Compared with the general population, residents who used a food pantry were less likely to identify as White - Not Hispanic, and more likely to identify as all other races and ethnicities.

FOOD PANTRY VISITORS



GENERAL POPULATION

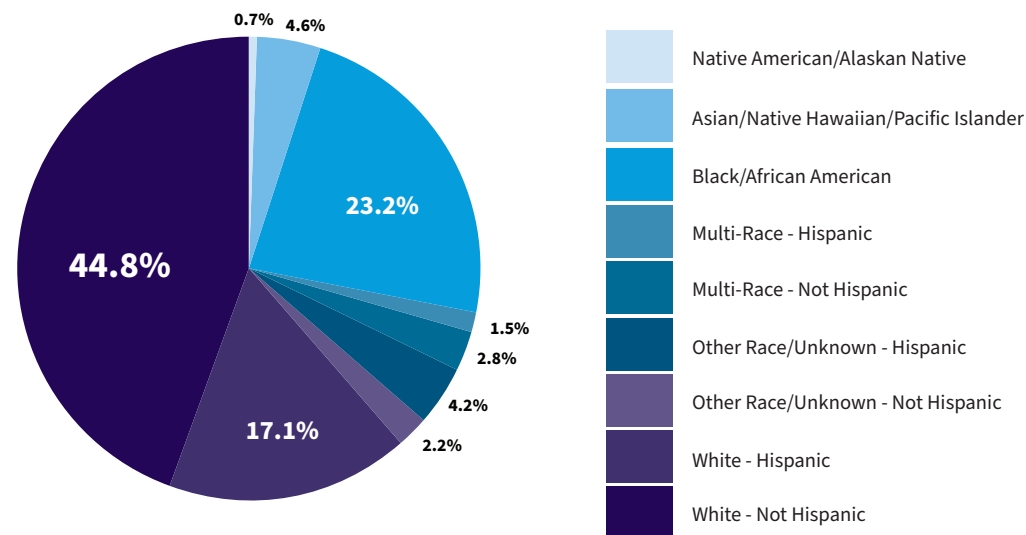


WEST DES MOINES RESIDENTS

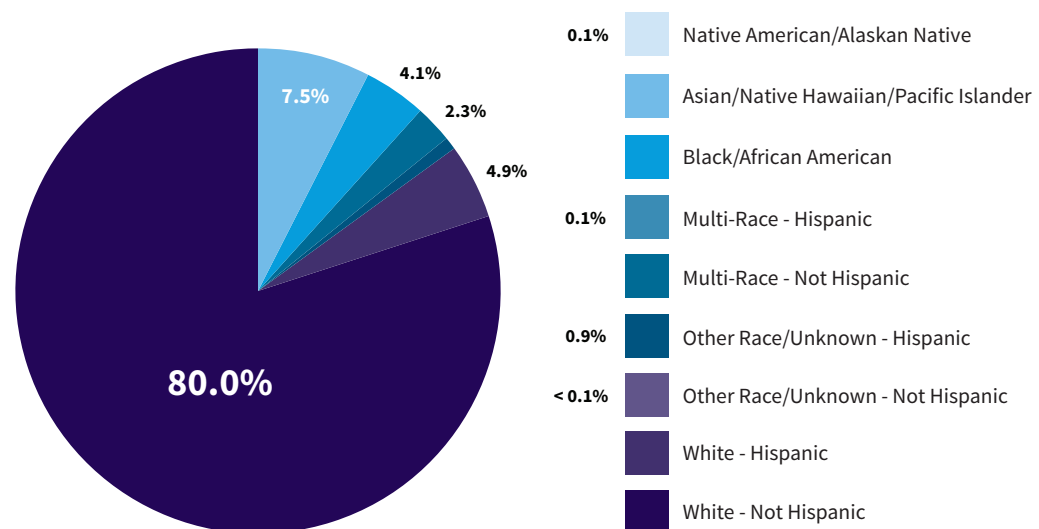
The DMARC Food Pantry Network assisted 4,140 residents of West Des Moines in FY23, which is 6.2% of the total population of West Des Moines.

Compared with the general population, residents who used a food pantry were less likely to identify as White - Not Hispanic or Asian/Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and more likely to identify as all other races and ethnicities.

FOOD PANTRY VISITORS



GENERAL POPULATION



VIEW THE COMPLETE DATA SET AVAILABLE

ONLINE AT:

<https://bit.ly/3tmbt4s>



QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS REPORT?

Contact us at info@dmarcunited.org