COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES: IMPROVING FOOD ACCESS

A conversation on food access with African American, Asian American, and African-born populations in King County

northwest HARVEST .org | GROWING FOOD JUSTICE ACROSS WASHINGTON

PROCESS & APPROACH

Hosting

Accessibility

Review

Recommendations

TOPICS FOR TODAY'S DISCUSSION

△ African American population: key learnings

△ Asian American population: key learnings

△ African-born population: key learnings

△ Recommendations across all populations

ATLANTIC
STREET
CENTER

THE SHOP
AT EARTHSEED

MCCOWAN & ASSOCIATES LLC
·
HOW WE MET APOTHECARY
·
SEAWEED INTERNATIONAL
·
UNITED STORY
·
UJIMA

1. Inconvenient hours to access a food bank

2. Food banks tend to be too crowded and too busy

3. Waiting in line over 30 minutes to visit a food bank

4. Seniors and individuals with disabilities need transportation to access food banks

5. Restrictions placed on ability to access a food bank

6. Ability to visit a food bank more frequently

7. Assistance accessing other resources besides food

ACCESSIBILITY & ENVIRONMENT

"[THERE'S A] STIGMA THAT IF YOU ARE POOR, YOU USE FOOD BANKS."

Allow for choice in food selection

Eliminate rotten and expired foods

Offer organic, kosher, and gluten free food options

CHOICE, QUALITY, & TYPES OF FOOD

Table 2.1: Food Preferences in African American populations

Fruits	juice, fresh and frozen fruit varieties
Vegetables	sweet potatoes, yams, turnip greens, collards, mustard greens, okra, cabbage, root vegetables, plantains, fresh and frozen vegetable varieties, tropical climate produce
Plant Protein	nuts, black eyed peas, beans, mung beans
Animal Protein	ham hocks, oxtails, turkey necks/neck bones, pigs feet, chitterlings, beef jerky, catfish, white fish, shrimp, canned seafoods *(sardines, tuna, smoked oysters, etc.)*
Dairy & Non-Dairy Substitutes	milk, eggs
Grains	grits, flour, injera, teff flour
Spices & Herbs	Johnny's, Zatarain's, O'Bay, and Slap Ya Mama
Cooking Ingredients	oil, honey
Prepared Meals	precooked frozen meals, twist top soups and chili for homeless populations

Among the other cultural foods, community members listed foods that regard dietary restrictions such as gluten free, low sodium, sugar-free, halal, kosher, nut-free, raw vegan food/plant-based food.

TOPICS FOR TODAY'S DISCUSSION

African American population: key learnings

Asian American population: key learnings

African-born population: key learnings

Recommendations across all populations

Table 3.1: Ethnicities Represented in Asian American Listening Sessions

(# of participants)	Ethnicity	Time since immigration
	Asian (2)	30 years
	Vietnamese (32)	46-16 years
	Cambodian (16)	35-37 years
	Chinese (15)	47-8 years
	Filipino (1)	40 years
	Khmer (1)	37 years
	Laos (1)	43 years
	Japanese (1)	Did not answer
	American (1)	Born here

1. Inconvenient hours to access a food bank

2. Do not know where food banks are located

3. Waiting in line over 30 minutes to visit a food bank

4. Prioritize accessibility for disabled individuals

5. More locations/not easy to access locations
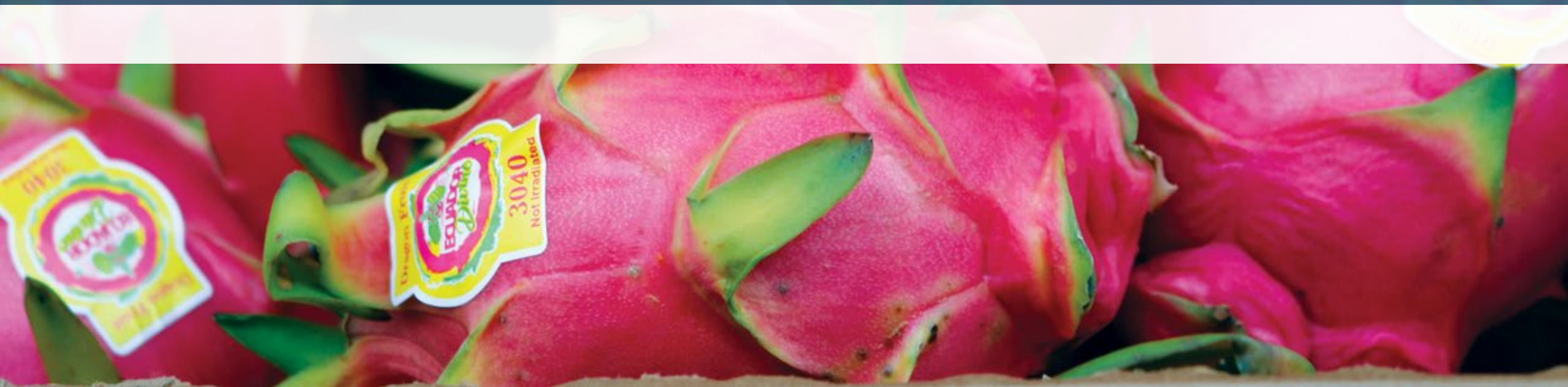
6. No one speaks customer's language

7. Assistance accessing other resources besides food

ACCESSIBILITY & ENVIRONMENT

"FOOD BANKS SHOULD BE NEAR VIETNAMESE OR CAMBODIAN TEMPLES, CHURCHES, MARKETS, AND/OR NEIGHBORHOODS."

Table 2.2: Food Preferences in Asian American populations

Fruits	mangos, pineapple, dragon fruit, jack fruit, sour sob, coconuts, cassava, taro, longans, lychees, bitter melon, oranges, green papaya, grapes
Vegetables	bitter greens, Chinese broccoli, bok choy, broccoli, cabbage, lettuce, celery, green beans, ong choy, squash, pea vines, Asian eggplant, yardlong bean, Chinese cabbage, yu choy, sweet potatoes, garlic, green onions, shallots, cauliflower
Plant Protein	edamame, tofu, red beans
Animal Protein	fish (or any seafood), salmon, pork, chicken, beef
Dairy & Non-Dairy Substitutes	butter, milk (cow, almond, rice, soy)
Grains	jasmine rice, noodles, oatmeal
Spices & Herbs	lemon leaf, waterlily, ginger, galangal root, turmeric, cilantro, mint, coriander, basil, lemongrass
Cooking Ingredients	fish sauce, soy sauce, sugar, salt, oil
Prepared Meals	N/A

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Table 3.2: Ethnicities Represented in African-born Listening Sessions

(# of participants)	Country of Origin	Time since immigration
	Somalia (21)	
	Congo (3)	3-26 years
	Iraq (1)	
	Congo (16)	
	Central Africa [includes Central African Republic, Angola and Chad] (6)	7 months-17 years
	Kenya (3)	
	Eritrea (15)	
	Ethiopia (6)	3-10 years
	Sierra Leone (1)	

Never heard of food banks

Do not know where food banks are located

Not enough locations

Do not feel respected

No one speaks customer's language

It is hard to get food without accepted identification (government issued ID, driver's license); this is critical for recent immigrants who do not yet have IDs

ACCESSIBILITY & ENVIRONMENT

Fresh food is desired but not available (food is expired, rotten, or very close to going bad)

No foods that are preferred or needed

CHOICE, QUALITY, & TYPES OF FOOD

Food Preferences Identified in African born Populations

Fruits	banana, juices (apple, grapefruit, orange)
Vegetables	carrots, cassava leaves, corn, garlic, jalapenos, maize, onion, sour-sour leaves (also called ngai-ngai or red sorrel), sweet potato leaves
Plant Protein	beans, fava beans, kidney beans, lentils
Animal Protein	fresh and dried fish, Halal meat (beef & chicken), lamb
Dairy & Non-Dairy Substitutes	milk
Grains	amaranth, barley, gluten free oats, rice, cassava flour, semolina flour, teff flour, whole wheat flour, bread, pasta
Spices & Herbs	berbere spice, bitter herbs, black pepper, cloves, coriander, cumin, ginger, turmeric
Cooking Ingredients	oil, palm oil, sugar
Prepared Meals	N/A

"WE KNOW OUR DIET AND WHAT IS GOOD FOR US. IF YOU TELL THEM [FOOD BANKS] WHAT WE EAT AND THEY HAVE IT, WE WILL ACCESS IT."
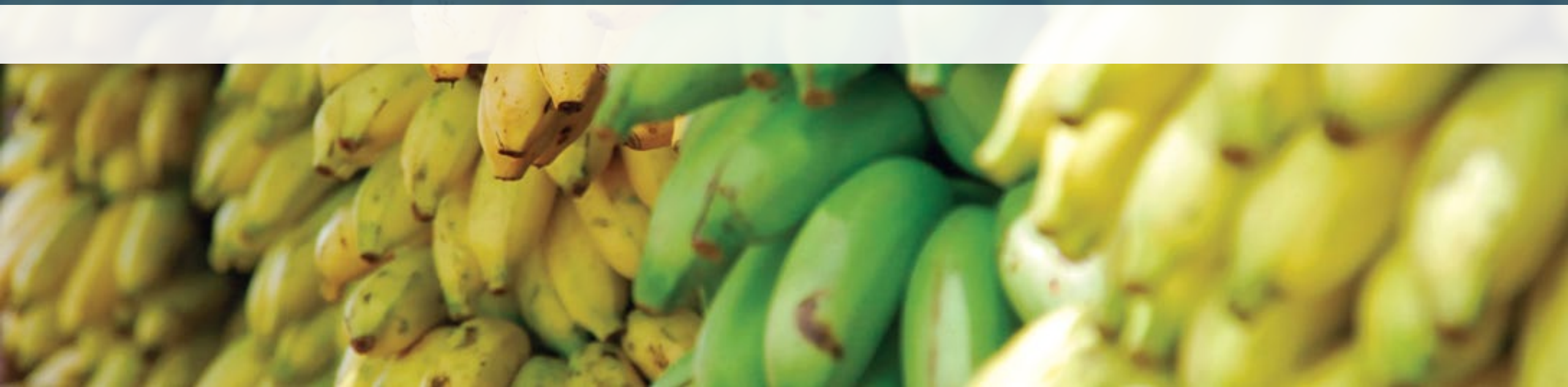
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Make food available in more locations

Increase access and reduce food bank requirements

Provide information about where and how to access food banks

CONVENIENCE

Prioritize translation and interpretation

Build and maintain customer advisory groups

Provide ongoing anti-racist trainings

Create community resource rooms

CONNECTION

Source culturally relevant foods

Implement quality control for rotten and expired foods

QUALITY

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NORTHWEST HARVEST

Culturally relevant food guide

Additional listening sessions (e.g., Russian, Latinx)

Food safety education on best by/sell by dates

Outreach, education, and narrative change to reduce the social stigma associated with food banks

READ THE REPORT:

NORTHWESTHARVEST.ORG/COMMUNITY-PERSPECTIVES