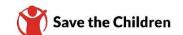
#### **Technology & Innovation:**

Finding Digital Connections for Rural Communities

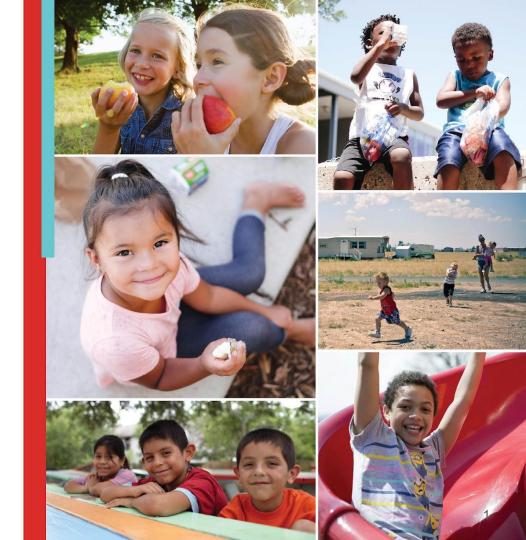
**2022 RURAL CHILD HUNGER SUMMIT** 





SPONSORED BY:





#### **2022 Rural Child Hunger Summit**

The **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program** (SNAP, formerly known as food stamps) provides food assistance to eligible households through monthly benefits received on a debit-style Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card that is used to purchase food from approved retailers.

#### **SNAP Helps**



Lift Families Out of Poverty



Local Economies



**School Finances** 







#### **OVERVIEW**

- Online Shopping Intervention
- Qualitative Interviews with SNAP Customers
- Policy Implications
- Questions and Thoughts

### ONLINE SHOPPING INTERVENTION



#### **ONLINE + INTENSIVE INFORMATION**

- Online ordering\*
- PLUS tailored nudges sent 3x per week, such as meal planning tips and recipes, support for maintaining online shopping habits, and Facebook group for social support



#### **ONLINE ONLY**

- Online ordering\*
- NO tailored nudges



#### **BRICK AND MORTAR**

- Brick and mortar in-store grocery shopping with no assistance
- This is the comparison group

\*Note: BOTH online groups received initial help setting up cart, \$5/week to defray fees, and reminder to shop online.

## INCREASE IN FREQUENCY OF SHOPPING ONLINE

During the intervention, the 'Online Only' group and 'Online + Info' group shopped online 60% and 65% of the time, respectively.

The Intervention influenced households to shop online more frequently.

#### **Purchasing Habits Across Study Arms**

	Brick and Mortar	Online Only	Online + Intensive Info
Purchasing Type (% of time shopped at fo	od venue)		p=.001
In-Store	87%	40%	35%
Online	13%	60%	65%
Purchasing Habits (mean)			
Total Bill (In-Store and Online)	\$128.39 (5.69)	\$115.25(7.08)	\$116.54(7.11) p=.552
Online Bill	\$106.88(12.07)	\$90.31 (6.48)	\$90.11 (5.78) p=.506
In-Store Bill	\$83.91 (19.91)	\$79.99 (10.65)	\$91.65 (15.33) p=.51
Total Fruit & Veg Purchases (In-Store and			
Online)	\$9.67 (.66)	\$12.27 (1.15)	\$16.23 (1.33) p=.26
Online Fruit & Veg Purchases	\$9.90 (1.45)	\$10.92 (1.16)	\$13.31(1.34) p=.40
	In-Store Online Purchasing Habits (mean) Total Bill (In-Store and Online) Online Bill In-Store Bill Total Fruit & Veg Purchases (In-Store and Online)	Purchasing Type (% of time shopped at food venue)  In-Store 87%  Online 13%  Purchasing Habits (mean)  Total Bill (In-Store and Online) \$128.39 (5.69)  Online Bill \$106.88(12.07)  In-Store Bill \$83.91 (19.91)  Total Fruit & Veg Purchases (In-Store and Online) \$9.67 (.66)	Purchasing Type (% of time shopped at food venue)  In-Store 87% 40%  Online 13% 60%  Purchasing Habits (mean)  Total Bill (In-Store and Online) \$128.39 (5.69) \$115.25(7.08)  Online Bill \$106.88(12.07) \$90.31 (6.48)  In-Store Bill \$83.91 (19.91) \$79.99 (10.65)  Total Fruit & Veg Purchases (In-Store and Online) \$9.67 (.66) \$12.27 (1.15)

# INCREASE IN FRUITS AND VEGETABLE PURCHASES

The 'Online + Info' group specifically increased purchases of fruits and vegetables while spending the same overall on their total bill.

Providing tailored nudges via text messages seems to be an effective way to increase fruits and vegetables purchases on average.

## Intervention effect on total purchases and purchases of fruits and vegetables, across study arms (Table 3)

	O ,	<b>3</b>
	Total Bill	Average across 8-weeks
	study arm	
	Brick and Mortar	comparison
	Online Only	-11.83 (-38.85, 15.19)
	Online + Message	-14.78 (-39.66, 9.90)
	Online Bill	
	study arm	
	Brick and Mortar	comparison
	Online Only	-3.45 (-45.61, 38.71)
	Online + Message	11.55 (-38.69, 61.71)
	In-Store Bill	
	study arm	
	Brick and Mortar	comparison
	Online Only	-15.75 (-55.36, 23.86)
	Online + Message	4.36 (-36.44, 45.16)
_	<b>Total F/V purchases</b>	
	study arm	
	Brick and Mortar	comparison
	Online Only	3.12 (46, 6.72)
_	Online + Message	6.84 (3.58, 10.11)*
	Online purchases of F/V	
	study arm	
	Brick and Mortar	comparison
	Online Only	1.58 (-3.71, 6.88)

3.34 (-2.05, 8.73)

Online + Message

#### **GREATER CHALLENGES FOR RURAL RESIDENTS**



More urban shoppers feel online prices are affordable compared to rural.



More urban shoppers than rural report that the online site isn't difficult to use.



More urban shoppers have option for delivery compared to rural.



There are opportunities to facilitate online ordering in rural areas.

## **SNAP QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS**

64 households that participate in SNAP, have children, and live in urban or rural communities



## SNAP Customers- Key Themes



#### **Challenges to Online Shopping**

Pick-up times, Substitutions, Selection



#### **Positives of Online Shopping**

Convenience, privacy, time savings, less stress



#### **Spending Differences**

SNAP customers report spending less when they shop online



Ease of using EBT card online

Findings based on baseline data after removing the N/A responses.

## SNAP Customers- Key Themes



#### **Shopping Preferences with App**

Make it easier to browse items, provide helpful features for choosing food items



#### Coupons

Enthusiasm and ease of using online coupons and linking accounts



#### **Purchase Variety**

Consistent availability between online and in-store, availability of preferred foods, open to trying new foods



## Meal Planning/Meal Prep with App and Advertisements

Helpful and reduces impulse buying

Findings based on baseline data after removing the N/A responses.

## **SNAP Customers-**Illustrative Quotes

"I found everything I looked for. So it was, as far as I knew, everything that they had in the store was listed online pretty much."

> seen some stuff that I hadn't even seen in the store. So I changed up a meal. I was like oh, lets, I'm going to do this instead of that... I was

"I save money... Like if I'm in a store I'm going down every single aisle and I'm just picking up random stuff and I end up spending more money as opposed to being here, opening the refrigerator or the cabinets and being able to know what I need and what I don't need. And it's making me meal plan more and kind of stray away from just getting random stuff."

## SNAP **Customers-**Illustrative Quotes

"It was pretty easy because you just clip it to your account and then when you ring out with that, you can see the coupons come off at the end."

"[Store Name] has it where, once you make an account with them, they've got online coupons where you can just upload. And I've got a membership with [Store Name], but it's through [Third Party]. So any market that you're dealing with through [Third Party], you can put your membership, any membership from any market that they do contracts with, it already be stored on there. So when you upload the coupons... they deduct it at your final pay."

#### **SNAP** customers say benefits include:

- Convenience
- Less impulse buys
- Less or similar spending
- Improved meal planning



## **Overall Takeaways from SNAP Customers**



#### Online shopping holds great promise for SNAP customers

Prices are similar and customers report spending less or equals what they would spend in-store. They also report trying new items, especially with coupons. Qualitative and quantitative results support this finding.



## SNAP customers remain excited about online shopping

Although there are barriers with pick-up times and substitutions, SNAP shoppers still reported a desire to continue online shopping given other benefits

## **Implications**

- Online platforms can be leveraged to support families seeking to make the most of their food dollars to purchase affordable, nutritious foods—tailored shopping tips, meal planning suggestions, and easy-to-use coupons can help.
- Rural communities face additional barriers to online ordering. It is important to address challenges experienced by both retailers and customers in rural areas to support access to online ordering including SNAP EBT.
- Online platforms could potentially serve as an entry point to facilitate enrollment in SNAP (for eligible non-participants) or other programs

## **Discussion**





## **Technology & Innovation**

Zareena Meyn | Executive Director, mRelief Chanel Griffin | Food Nutrition Coordinator, Catholic Charities Northeast Kansas









#### Catholic Charities of Northeast Kansas

We provide innovative programs and solutions that stabilize and strengthen individuals and families, moving them from a place of needing help to one of having hope.

#### The Problem

**\$13 billion** in SNAP benefits goes unclaimed each year because of the cumbersome application process.

#### Our Mission

mRelief's mission is to transform access to social services for the inherent dignity of all people.

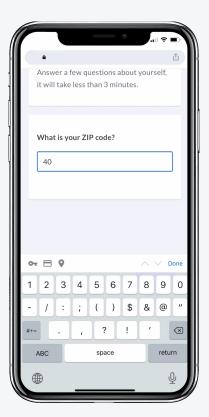
#### **Our Vision**

Anyone can access the safety net without it adding to the stressful circumstance of poverty.

#### **Facebook Outreach**

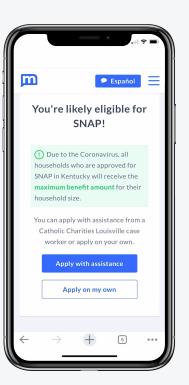


#### Eligibility Screener



#### 1. Accessibility

Clients can choose between options that work for them, based on their level of access to internet.



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## 2. Applying over the phone with ease

The caseworker will call them during their scheduled appointment time and complete the application over the phone.



#### 3. Uploading Documents

Finally, we collect documents in the way that is most accessible for clients, by allowing them to photograph and upload the documents securely from the privacy of their own home, and on their own time.

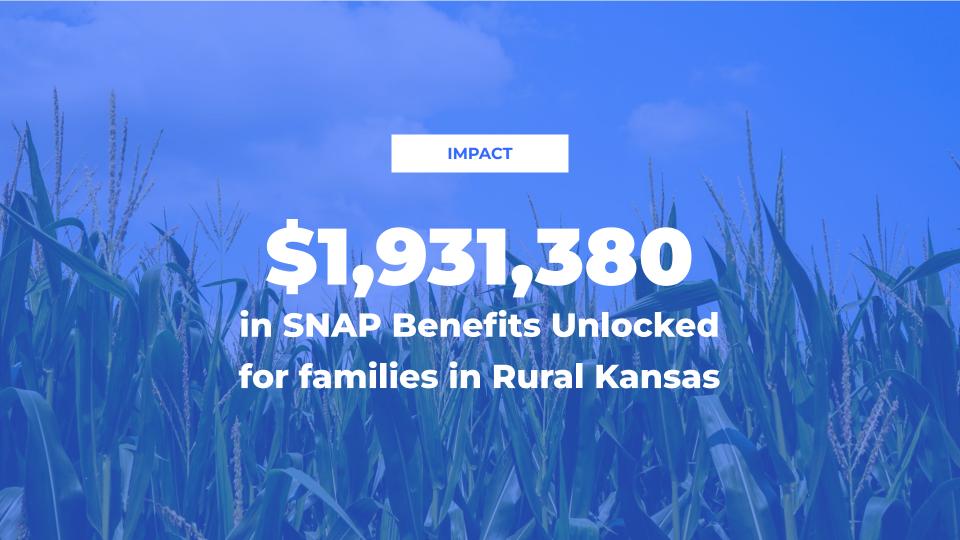






#### What worked

- 1. Outreach
  - a. Facebook Ads and flyers
- 2. Accessibility
  - **a.** Mobile accessible eligibility screening and application
- 3. Choice
  - a. Clients are able to decide their preferred application method
- 4. Follow-up
  - a. Clients receive reminders about next steps in the process and other resources





**(1)** 

"Way easier process to help clients than online or through the paper application."

"We have clients who apply, receive a follow-up within 10 days, and approval for benefits in about a month's time."

- Family Support Center Caseworkers

Technology & Innovation: Finding Digital Connections for Rural Communities

**2022 Rural Child Hunger Summit** 









## HEALTHY LIVING, HEALTHY FOODS

Drew, MS Food Access & Engagement Survey December 19, 2019

IF THERE WAS A STORE IN DREW, MS...

On the scale below, what is the importance of a grocery store being located in Drew? 3% 5%

non, fix's xaxe ix or ix

This is what I've

81%

## **Grocery Online Ordering Distribution Service**





## OUTREACH TO COMMUNITY

#### Join We2gether on

Tuesday November 9, 2021 from 2p.m.-3p.m & 5p.m.-6p.m.

Grocery Ordering Online Distribution Service (GOODS)

Drew's grocery online ordering and delivering service and learn how to place your order.

\*Delivering service is temporary.



4127 HWY 49 Old National Guard Drew, MS 38737

Refreshments will be served. (2) \$100 gift prizes will be given away.







#### Resources

- mRelief: <u>mrelief.com/</u>
- Catholic Charities of Northeast Kansas: <u>catholiccharitiesks.org/</u>
- We2Gether Creating Change: we2gether.org/ & GOODS:
   drewgoods.org/
- No Kid Hungry SNAP Outreach Toolkit: COVID-19
   <u>bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/snap-outreach-toolkit-covid-19</u>
- SNAP online purchasing: <a href="mailto:fns.usda.gov/snap/online-purchasing-pilot">fns.usda.gov/snap/online-purchasing-pilot</a>



