



City of Los Angeles Department of Aging
Home Delivered Meals
Survey Results
Fall 2008

I don't know what I would do without your meals.

Home Delivered Meals Programs (HDMP) often make the difference in a senior's ability to remain in their home.

More than 3,000 seniors receive one hot nutritious meal everyday. In May of 2008, LADOA conducted a survey of HDMP respondents with the intent of exploring the unmet need of clients in the program.

Method

A total of 2,100 surveys, in English and Spanish, were distributed to HDMP participants through delivery drivers. Drivers also collected completed surveys and returned them to LADOA with a 47% response rate (981). Surveys were returned from each of the City's 15 Aging Service Areas (ASA).

Profile of Respondents

The average age of respondents was 81 years old and 51% live alone. Over half (54%) rated their health as fair or poor and 40% had been hospitalized in the last year. Overall, (74%) respondents are satisfied with their life, with two-thirds reporting that they are happy most of the time.

I cannot stand without a walker and cannot manage to do any cooking and yet the balanced meal keeps me healthy.

On average, respondents have been in the HDMP for two and half years, with the longest participating for 22 years. One-third indicated that as a result of the program, they feel less lonely.

50% with of clients reported needing assistance with preparing meals and 57% with shopping for personal items.

The Home Delivered Meals Program

Almost 80% of respondents rated the HDMP overall as good or excellent. The majority rated the variety of the food as good or excellent and just over half rated the taste of the food as good or excellent as well.

By and large the greatest response related to the HDMP was about the drivers and delivery of the food, with 90% rating this as good or excellent.

A little over a third of respondents throw away some portion of their meal from 1-5 times a week. Respondents who identified throwing away a portion of their meal were asked to specify what they throw away and why. Food was

typically thrown away for the following reasons: spice, sugar and salt (too much or not enough), how the food was prepared (dry, too hard, overcooked or undercooked), health reasons (cannot chew hard food, cannot digest, problems swallowing, too gassy, allergic, or medical condition) or the food is unappetizing (smells bad, mixed with other food on the plate or appearance). Most often the items of food thrown away are vegetables, spinach, fish and rice.

The driver is courteous, patient and positive. He makes me smile and feel less lonely.

A third of respondents indicated that they have a dietary requirement and that the meal met those dietary needs for 60% of them.

Respondents were asked about what they liked most about the meal. Overwhelmingly, they liked the variety of the meal and how nutritious they are. Additionally, they appreciate the time it takes to create this nutritious well meal and how the drivers are always friendly and smiling. enjoy the juice, milk, fresh fruits and vegetables and

Life would be hard for me without these meals.

they balanced They also desserts.

Respondents were asked about how the meal could be improved. A common theme of the responses was that the meals should have more variety, include more fresh fruit and vegetables and better quality in the ingredients used (fish and salad). Specifically, a number requested that special meals be provided (for health and religious reasons), that food be packaged in separate containers to avoid spillage/cross contamination, that gravy be put on the side, that vegetables be cooked correctly, spinach be left raw or not overcooked and more desserts and sandwiches.

Thirty-eight percent of respondents split their meal between lunch and dinner. Only a third of respondents indicated that they would like a hot/frozen meal on Saturday and/or Sunday, a frozen dinner meal or a monthly non-perishable food basket. However, over half indicated that they would like a monthly fresh fruit and vegetable basket.

Lastly, respondents were happy with the food and were thankful for the service. Several asked for menus, larger portions, softer food items, and adjustments in the time of delivery; several respondents asked if the timing could change in case of a doctor appointment. Respondents said that the “price is right” for the program, that they are very happy with their delivery person, and that the program is helpful because of health problems that make it difficult to prepare meals.

Thank you for creating this program, it has helped me remain independent and in my home.

Priorities

As a result of this survey LADDA will focus on:

1. Raising funds and/or develop partnerships to provide a monthly fresh fruit and vegetable basket for Home Delivered Meals participants.
2. Providing “special” dietary menus for people with health conditions (i.e. diabetes) or religious restrictions (i.e. Kosher or Vegetarian meals).
3. Providing more fresh fruit and vegetables as part of the daily meals.

I don't know what I would have done without your help. I am eternally grateful.

Home Delivered Meals Survey Data

Age

40-49 .02% 80-89 47%
50-59 1% 90-99 13%
60-69 14% 100+ .05%
70-79 26%

Self Rated Health

Poor 18%
Fair 36%
Average 25%
Good 14%
Excellent 4%

Mental Health

(yes responses)

Satisfied with your life? 74%
Life is empty? 22%
Good spirits? 78%
Feel happy? 67%

Home delivered meals make me

More lonely .02%
Lonely .07%
About the same 32%
Less lonely 30%
Not lonely 34%

Hospitalized in last 12 months?

Yes 39%

Live alone?

Yes 51%

Receive or need assistance with: (yes responses)

Bathing 33%
Toileting 12%
Dressing 21%
Transferring 16%
Eating 10%
Preparing meals 50%
Managing money 21%
Shopping 57%
Housework 61%
Using telephone 14%

Rate Home Delivered Meals program?

Poor .04%
Fair 6%
Average 14%
Good 43%
Excellent 35%

Rate variety of the food?

Poor 2%
Fair 12%
Average 26%
Good 44%
Excellent 15%

Rate taste of the food?

Poor 2%
Fair 14%
Average 28%
Good 42%
Excellent 13%

Rate delivery of food?

Poor .06%
Fair 2%
Average 5%
Good 38%
Excellent 54%

Rate the driver?

Poor .04%
Fair 1%
Average 3%
Good 28%
Excellent 62%

How often do you throw away a portion of the meal?

Never 53%
1 time a week 22%
2 times a week 8%
3 times a week 3%
4 times a week 2%
Everyday 3%

Dietary Requirements?

Yes 36%

Does the meal meet these requirements?

No 26%

Do you split your meal?

Yes 38%

Meal services expanded, would you like to participate in any of the following?

Delivered hot meal on Saturday 34%
Delivered hot meal on Sunday 32%
Frozen dinner Mon-Friday 30%
Frozen lunch for Sat-Sunday 30%
Monthly food basket 33%
Monthly fresh fruit and vegetable basket 51%