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FreshLink Ambassador Model:

Connecting Residents to Resources to Improve Community Health



FreshLink Ambassador Model in Virginia

Elizabeth Borst

Virginia Community Food Connections
Virginia Fresh Match Statewide Co-Lead



Nurturing Healthy Communities
and Resilient Local Food Systems



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2018 FreshLink
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The FreshLink Ambassador Intervention (PI: D. Freedman) was developed through funding from Cooperative Agreement Number 1U48DP005030 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (PI: Elaine Borawski) awarded to Case Western Reserve University from October 2014 to September 2019. It is the Core Research Project of the Prevention Research Center for Healthy Neighborhoods.



Objectives

By the end of this presentation, participants will be able to:

- Describe the components of the FreshLink Ambassador Model.
- Describe the impact of the program on potential shoppers, ambassadors, markets and communities.
- Locate tools and resources to further their understanding of how to implement the model.

Glossary of Terms

- **PRCHN:** Prevention Research Center for Healthy Neighborhoods at Case Western Reserve University.
- **FLA:** FreshLink Ambassador(s)
- **SNAP:** Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
- **SNAP Incentives:** incentives provided to SNAP recipients at the point-of-sale to increase the purchase of fruits and vegetables
- **Produce Perks:** Ohio local incentive provides a dollar to dollar match up \$20 to spend on produce when farmers' market shoppers use their SNAP at the farmers' market
- **FM Tracks:** iOS application and web-based portal to collect, manage, and evaluate information about the farmers' market

Evolution

2010-2014

- CDC Funded
- PRC Core Research
- Study Phase

2014-2019

- CDC Funded
- PRC Core Research
- Plan
- Implement
- Disseminate

2019→

- Capacity Building
- Tailored Models

What is FreshLink?



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Vision

FreshLink bridges residents to resources to foster healthy communities



Mission

To increase farmers' market use among people receiving SNAP benefits through peer-to-peer outreach to promote **awareness** of and **social connectedness** to markets



Values

Welcoming: Members of the FreshLink team are welcoming by listening, being open minded, and personable to everyone.

Respectful: In order to be respectful, FreshLink team members view themselves as equal towards everyone they come in contact with and use active listening to empathize with others. Subject matter expertise is shared as a suggestion not a directive.

Racial Equity: FreshLink team members recognize that not all individuals have the same opportunities to be healthy and, in Greater Cleveland, this injustice is rooted in unfair policies and practices that limit opportunities for people of color.

Educating: FreshLink team members educate the community by increasing awareness of new information and resources while demonstrating educational points.

Engaging: In order to engage the community, members of the FreshLink team possesses a positive and inviting demeanor while being creative in how they approach interacting with individuals.

Connecting: By sharing personal experiences, encouraging individuals to utilize resources, and welcoming back individuals

returning for assistance, FreshLink team members successfully connect with the community.

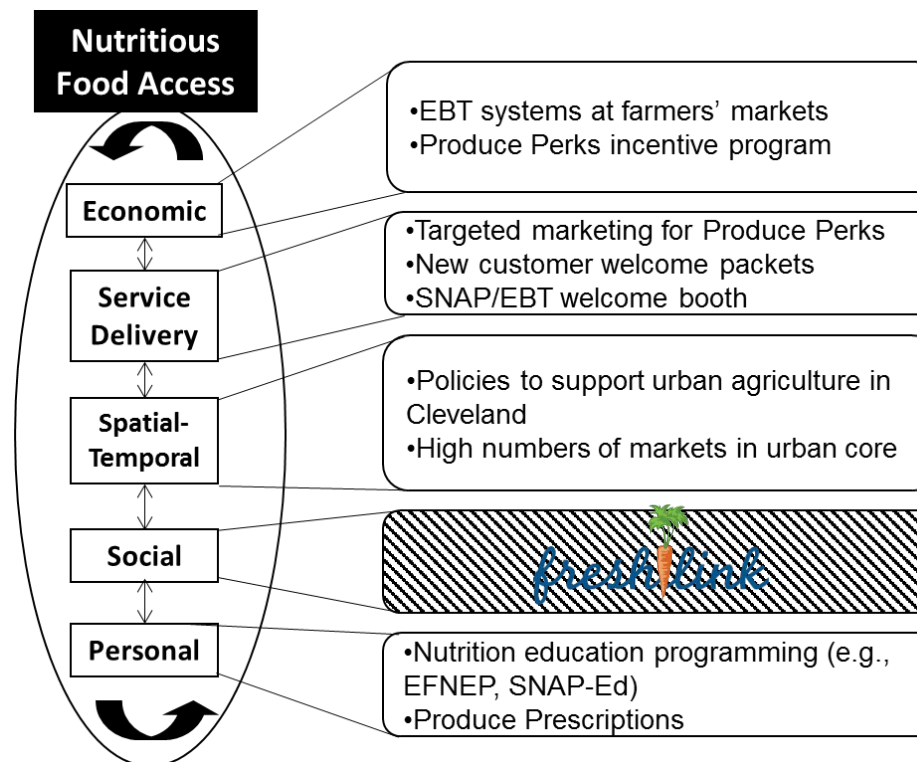
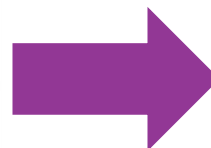
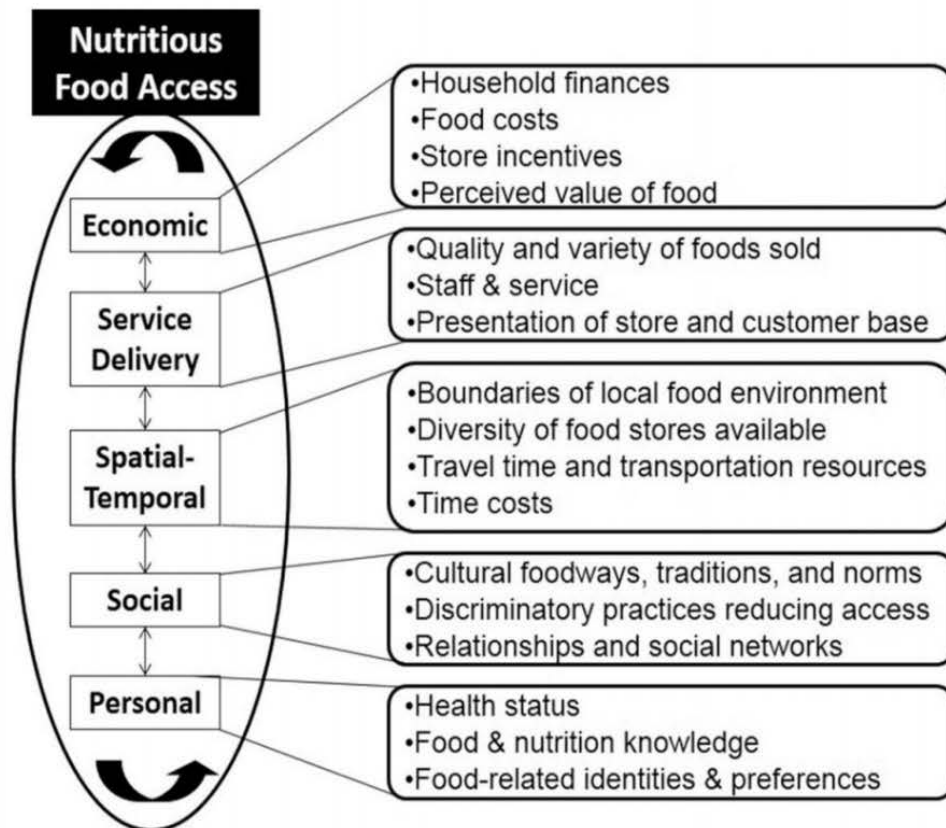
Inspiration: FreshLink team members will inspire communities by learning from individuals where they are at while sharing enthusiasm for and demonstrating the knowledge the team members themselves possesses.

Nutritious Food Access Framework

Freedman et al., 2013, *Journal of Community Practice*

The Nutritious Food Access Framework suggests 5 main influencers of access to healthy foods

Applied to Greater Cleveland farmers' market programming

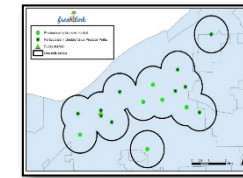


Steps to Developing FLA Model



**What are farmers' market awareness and use patterns among people receiving SNAP?
How do we track farmers' markets use to support evaluation?**

- Survey Research: Year 1 (2015)
- Development of FM tracks



<https://access.fmtracks.org/>

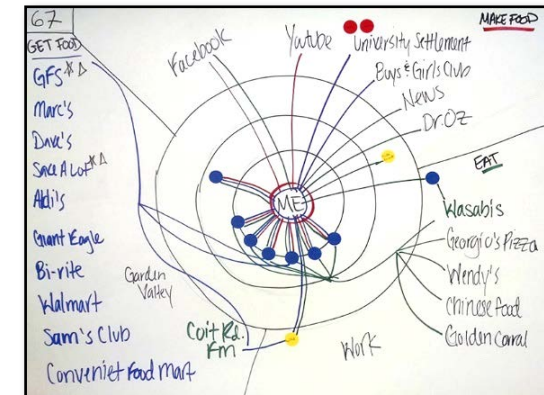


**How do farmers' markets fit into food habits?
In-depth Interviews: Year 2 (2015-16)**



What are the logistics of the FLA Intervention?

- Pilot Study: Year 2 (2016)
- Intervention Amendments: Years 3 & 4 (2017/2018)



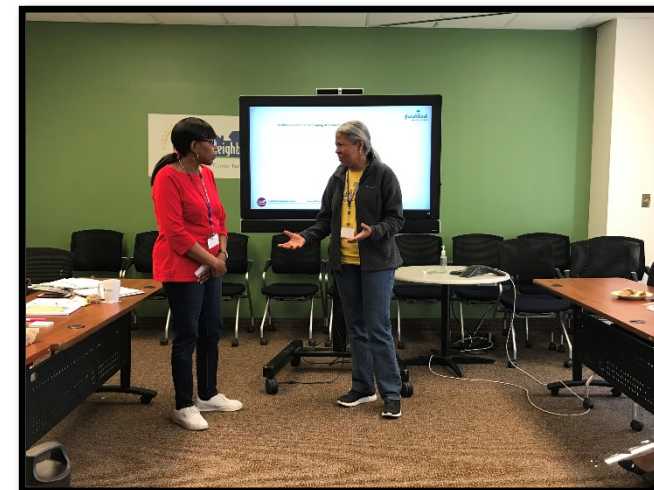
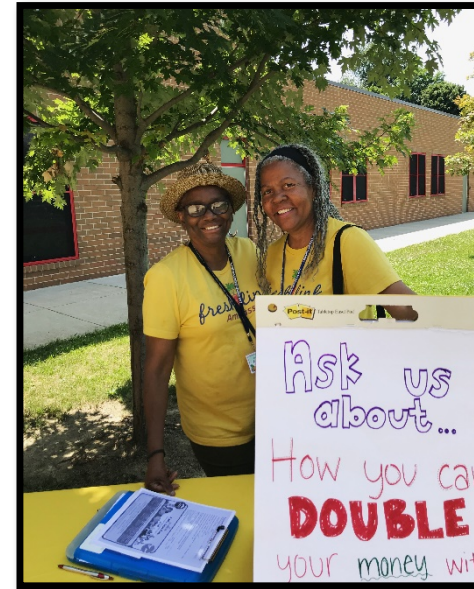


Audience Question: What are the tools FM managers use for marketing, and how effective are they?

- Coupons in mailers (<1 % redemption)
- Coupons distributed by trusted agencies (<10%)
- Banners/Signs



FreshLink Ambassador Testimonial



Core Elements of Model

Diffusion of Information
within Networks



Build on Connections
across Spheres of Influence




freshlink
Ambassadors

Promote Compatibility &
Trialability



Community Connection &
Presence

References

Monteban, M.F., Bess, K.D., Walsh, C.C., Baily, H., Flocke, S.A., Borawski, E.A., Freedman, D.A. (2018). People and places shaping food procurement among recipients of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). *Health and Place*. 53; 155-163. PMID: 30142499

Freedman, D.A., Lee, E., Flocke, S., Sommer, R., Trapl, E.S., Osborne, A., and Borawski, E. (in press). Evaluation of a peer-to-peer approach to improve the reach of farmers' markets among low-income populations. *Health Behavior Research*.

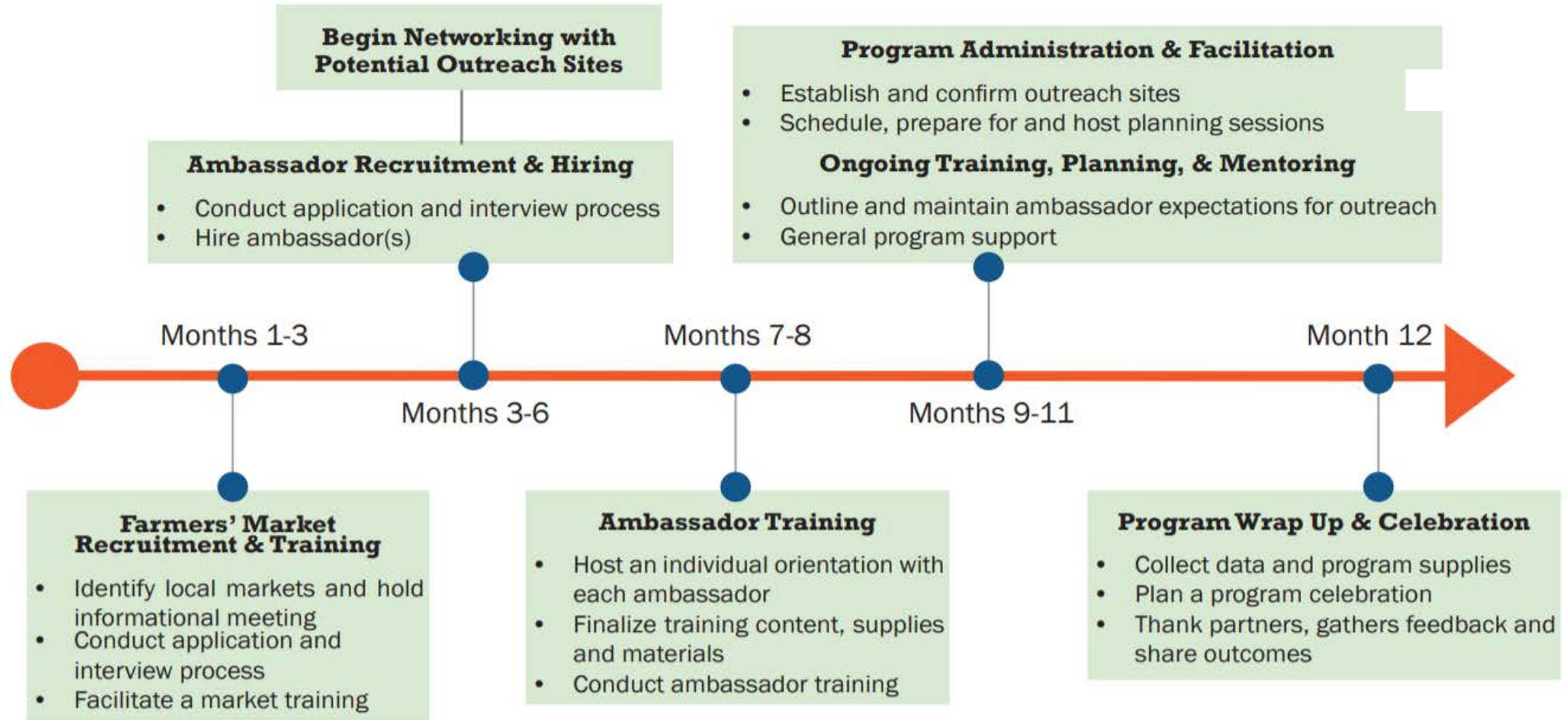
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Program Timeline



Market Recruitment & Training

Months 1-3



*FreshLink bridges residents to resources
to foster healthy communities*

Now seeking market sites to participate in the 2018 FreshLink Ambassadors Program!



What is the FreshLink Ambassador Program?

- FreshLink is the core research project of the Prevention Research Center for Healthy Neighborhoods (PRCHN) funded by the Center for Disease Control.
- FreshLink's mission is to increase farmers' market use among people receiving SNAP benefits through peer-to-peer outreach to promote **awareness** of and **social connectedness** to markets.
- We achieve our mission through working with community ambassadors with strong ties to the targeted neighborhoods in Greater Cleveland.
- FreshLink Ambassadors conduct outreach in target communities to raise awareness about the benefits of farmers' markets and the Produce Perks program available to SNAP users.



What are the Benefits to Participating Farmers' Market?

FreshLink Ambassadors...

- Increase awareness of the availability of farmers' markets in the community.
- Help to attract and increase SNAP sales at your market.
- Provide a welcoming presence to visitors at the market.
- Build connections and community at the market.

For more information, call or e-mail
Rachael Sommer, FreshLink Program Manager.
216.368.5774

Apply by December 20, 2017

Interviews will be conducted the week of
January 15th, 2018.

Which Farmers' Markets are Eligible to Take Part in 2018?

- Markets with 2 years of sales data in FM Tracks.
- Markets located in or adjacent to areas with 30% SNAP recipients according to census data.

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www.facebook.com/freshlinkCLE



@FreshLinkCLE


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Ambassador Recruitment & Training

Months 3-6



FreshLink bridges residents to resources to foster healthy communities

Join the FreshLink Team to raise awareness about the benefits of farmers' markets in your community!!

As a FreshLink Ambassador you will...

- Promote healthy food access by raising awareness and social connectedness to farmers' markets within select communities in Greater Cleveland
- Be a part of a team working toward a common goal
- Grow your skills as a leader & communicator through trainings and during summer outreach
- Invite first-time customers to visit and use benefits at farmers' markets
- Provide a welcoming presence at farmers' markets
- Collect data as part of FreshLink evaluation

Qualifications

- 18+ years old
- Attend all Ambassador trainings and assigned shifts
- Live, work and/or have strong connections with market neighborhoods (Listed in application)
- Passionate about your community
- Willing to conduct outreach at community sites and markets across Greater Cleveland
- Available to work up to 10 hours a week between May 1- September 2, 2018
- Enjoy working with diverse groups of individuals
- Seeking individuals who are team players, creative, detail-oriented timely and embody the FreshLink core values:

Welcoming Respectful
Racial equity Educating
Engaging Connecting
Inspiration

Compensation

Work Hours: Up to 10 hours a week
May 1-September 2, 2018
Payment: \$13 an hour
Based on completion of trainings, outreach activities, & reporting documentation.
Stipend: Ambassadors will receive \$10 weekly stipend to spend on fruits and vegetables at FreshLink market sites from June-August 2018

Apply by March 12, 2018

For more information and to apply, call or e-mail Rachael Sommer, FreshLink Program Manager.
216.368.5774
freshlink@case.edu
Visit our website at:
<http://www.prchn.org/JobOpps.aspx>

Follow us on Facebook and Instagram!

www.facebook.com/freshlinkCLE @FreshLinkCLE

This research is funded by the Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Research Center supported by Cooperative Agreement Number 1U49DP005030 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention awarded to the Prevention Research Center for Healthy Neighborhoods at Case Western Reserve University.

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HEALTHY NEIGHBORHOODS
CASE WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY

Version 12.7.2017

Examples of FreshLink Training Session Topics



- Market Overview
- Farmers' Market Scavenger Hunt
- Mock Introductions



- Market Manager Panel
- Team Building Exercise



- Crafting, adapting and practicing messages
- Responding to change talk

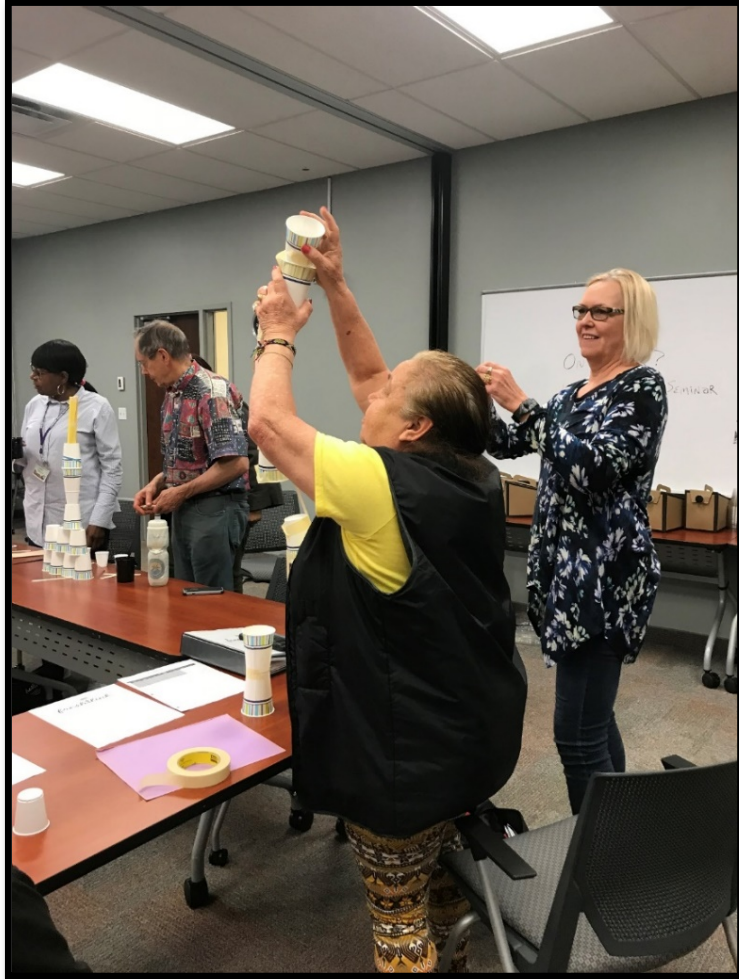
Ambassador Recruitment & Training

Field Based Training: Farmers' Market Scavenger Hunt



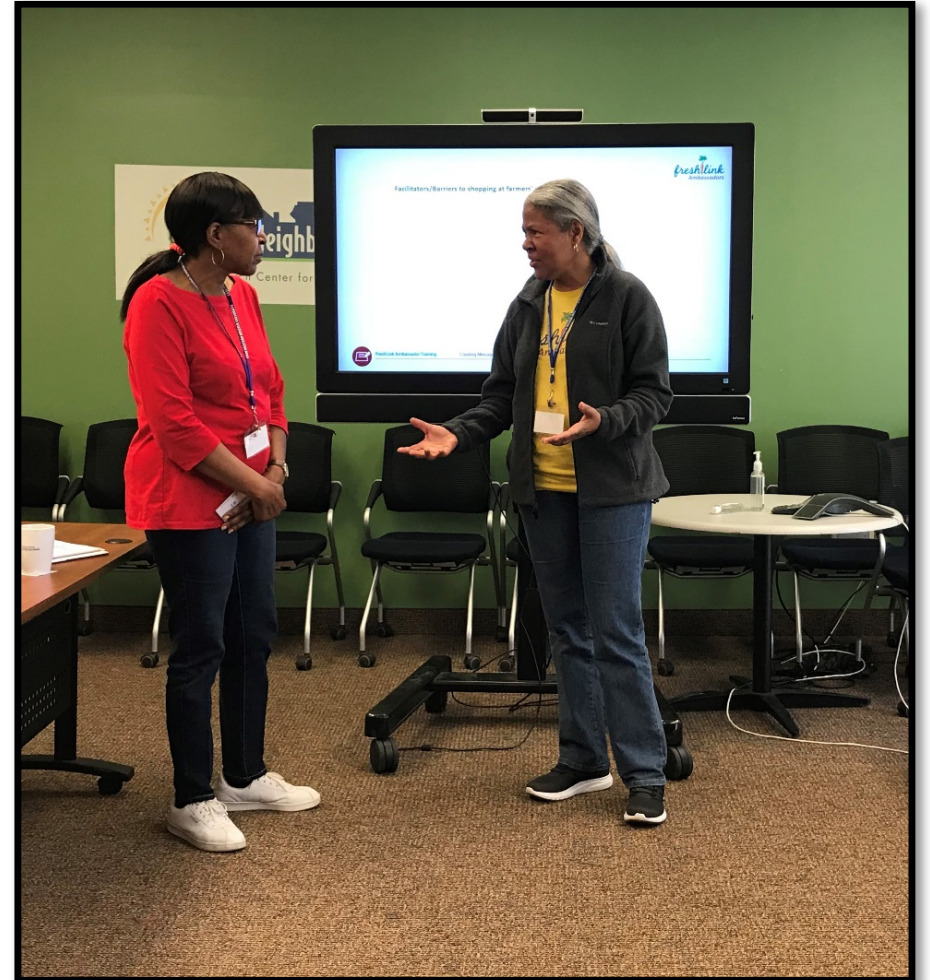
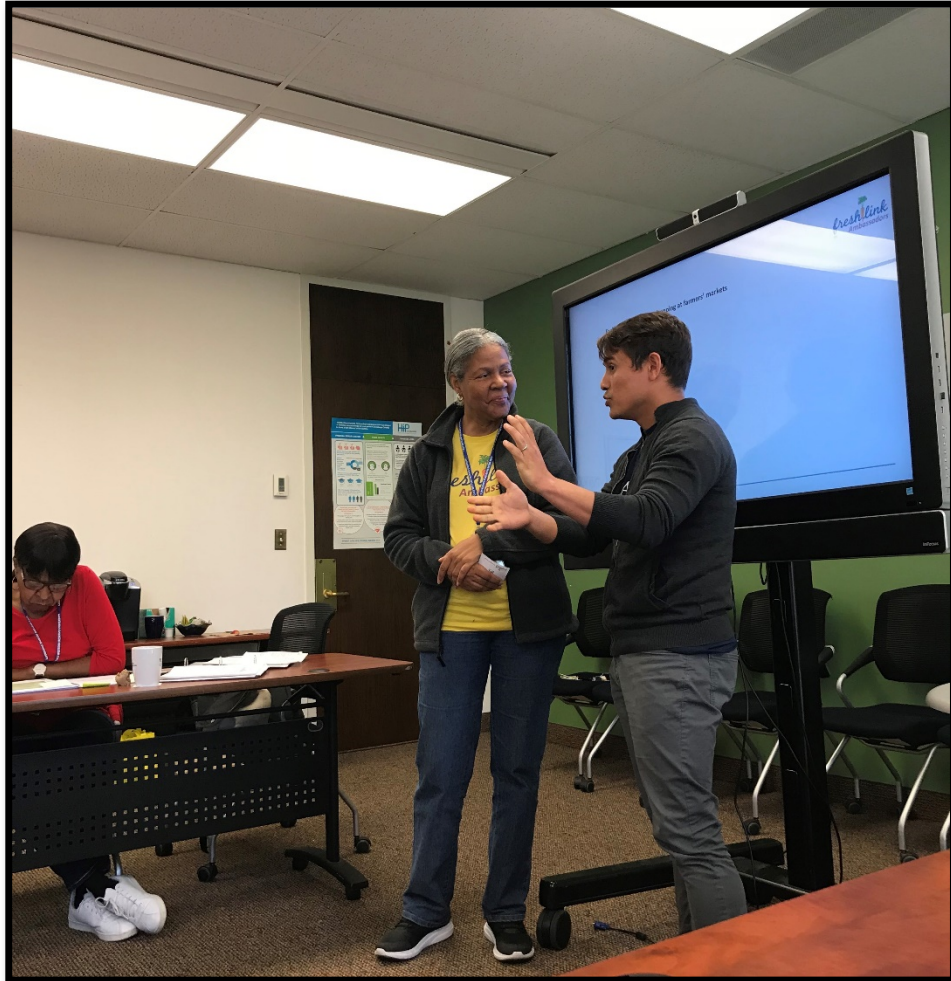
Ambassador Recruitment & Training

Market Manager Breakfast: Teambuilding



Ambassador Recruitment & Training

Crafting Messages: Responding to Change Talk



Key Messages Shared by FreshLink Ambassadors

You can use
SNAP at the
farmers'
market...here's
how.



You can
match your
SNAP up to
\$20 with
Produce
Perks!



Use a
FreshLink
Coupon & try
your local
Farmers'
Market for
free!



Program Administration

Months 9-12



Customer Information

This information helps us understand who is taking part in the FreshLink Program.

Customer Name: _____ Customer Zip Code: _____

Have you ever shopped at a farmers' market? ☐ Yes ☐ No

What age group are you in? ☐ Less than 18 ☐ 18-49 ☐ 50+

What is your gender? ☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Other

What is your race/ethnicity? Please all that apply. ☐ White ☐ Black ☐ Hispanic/Latino ☐ Asian ☐ Native American ☐ Other

Are there any children under 18 years living in your household? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you receive SNAP benefits? ☐ Yes ☐ No

How do you feel the prices of fruits and vegetables at farmers' markets compare to the prices at other food stores?

☐ Farmers' Markets have lower prices ☐ Prices are about the same ☐ Farmers' Markets have higher prices

What mode of transportation do you plan to use to get to the farmers' market? Mark all that apply.

☐ Car ☐ Get in ride ☐ Bus/Rapid ☐ Bike ☐ Walk

For FreshLink Ambassadors Only:

FreshLink ID: _____ Event Type: ☐ on 1 ☐ Community Event ☐ DDPS Site

Event Location: _____ Event Dates: 1 / 2018

FreshLink Ambassador's Relationship to Recipient: ☐ New Contact ☐ Acquaintance ☐ Friend ☐ Family

Ambassador Signature: _____

Try it. No cost.

Farmers' Market New Customer Coupon

\$5.00

Redeemable for \$5.00 of fruits and vegetables at one of these six farmers' markets:

Coll Road Farmers' Market 15000 Woodloch Avenue East Cleveland, Ohio 44110 (216) 298-0505 Wednesday 10:00-11:00am Saturday 10:00-11:00am	Good Earth Farm Stand 9610 Madison Avenue Cleveland, Ohio 44106 (216) 286-0100 Monday 9:00am-12:00pm Saturday 12:00-3:00pm	The Village Market 5106 1st Avenue Cleveland, Ohio 44110 (216) 691-1182 Monday 10:00-12:00pm	Gateway 105 Farmers' Market 1522 E. 105th St. Cleveland, OH 44115 Friday 3:00-7:00pm	North Union Farmers' Market at Shaker Square 1311 Shaker Square S.W. Cleveland, Ohio 44115 Tuesday 7:00-9:00pm Saturday 8:00-12:00pm	North Union Farmers' Market at University Hospitals 2625 Hillcrest Road Cleveland, Ohio 44115 (216) 781-2506 Thursday 10:00-12:00pm
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Customer: Take coupon to Market Manager Booth to validate

One coupon per household. There is no cash value to this coupon. Upon receipt, coupon is used to redeem \$5 in produce. All funds must be used at one vendor. No cash or credit returned to customers.

PRC ID: _____ Expires: 9/30/2018

Find us online at: freshlinkCLE.com & facebook.com/freshlinkCLE

FreshLink Partners with 20 Cleveland-area nonprofits to provide a financial and social safety net for families. No additional cost. For details, visit www.freshlinkCLE.com.
 Funding by City of Cleveland, Cleveland Foundation, PNC Foundation, Cleveland Foundation, and other donors.



FreshLink Ambassador program Evaluation

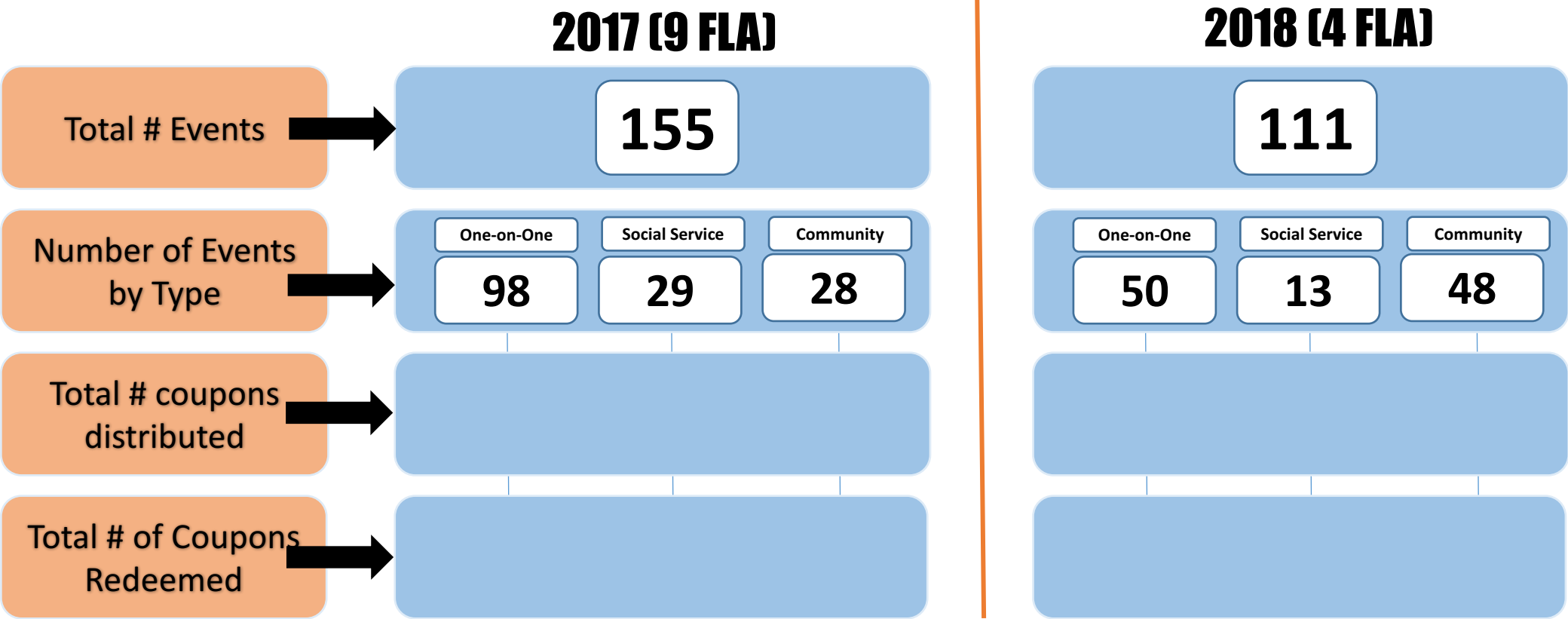
- 1.Total SNAP dollars spent**
- 2.Total number of SNAP transactions**
- 3.Number of coupons distributed by each FLA**
- 4.Number of coupons redeemed**

Who did FreshLink Ambassadors reach out to?



About half (45%) of people that received coupons had never been to a Farmers' Market, (53%) had children under 18 years old in their household, were SNAP recipients (60%), and were African American.

Number of coupons distributed and redeemed





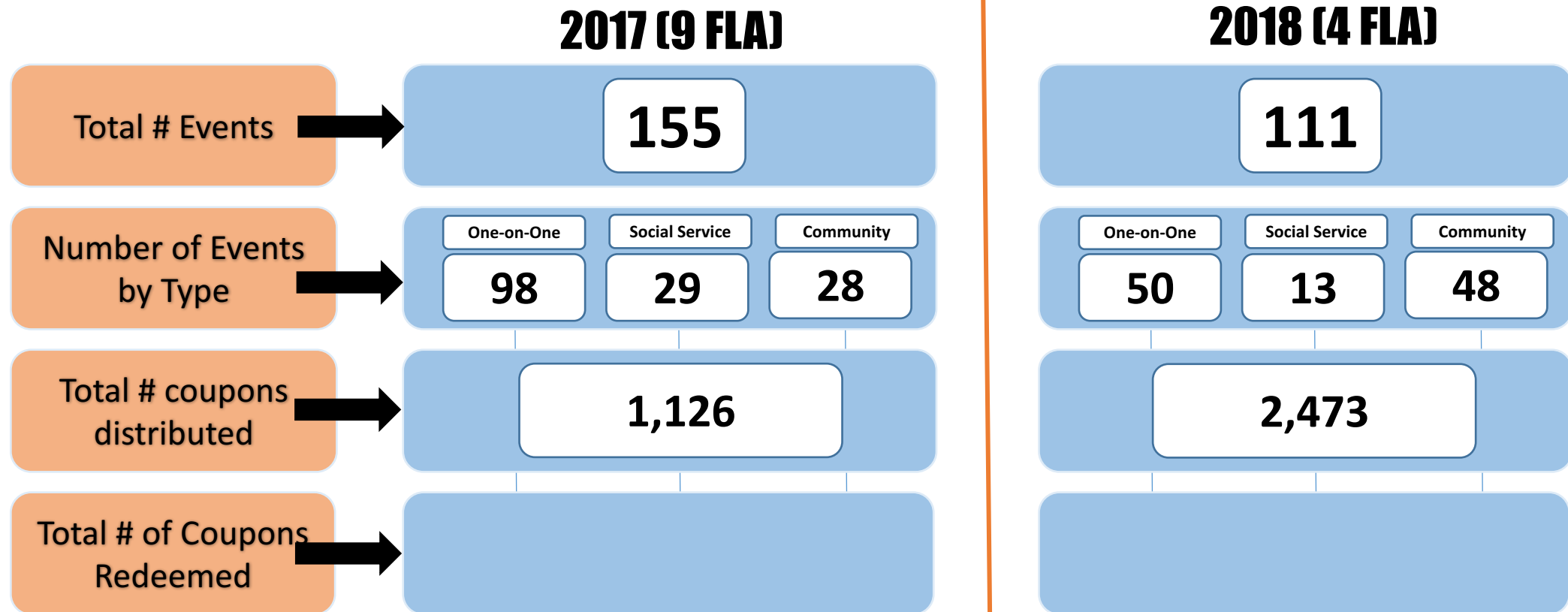
Audience Question:

About how many coupons were distributed by the FreshLink Ambassadors in 2017 and 2018?

- A. 0 to 1000
- B. 1001 to 2000
- C. 2001 to 3000
- D. 3001 to 4000



Number of coupons distributed and redeemed





Audience Question:

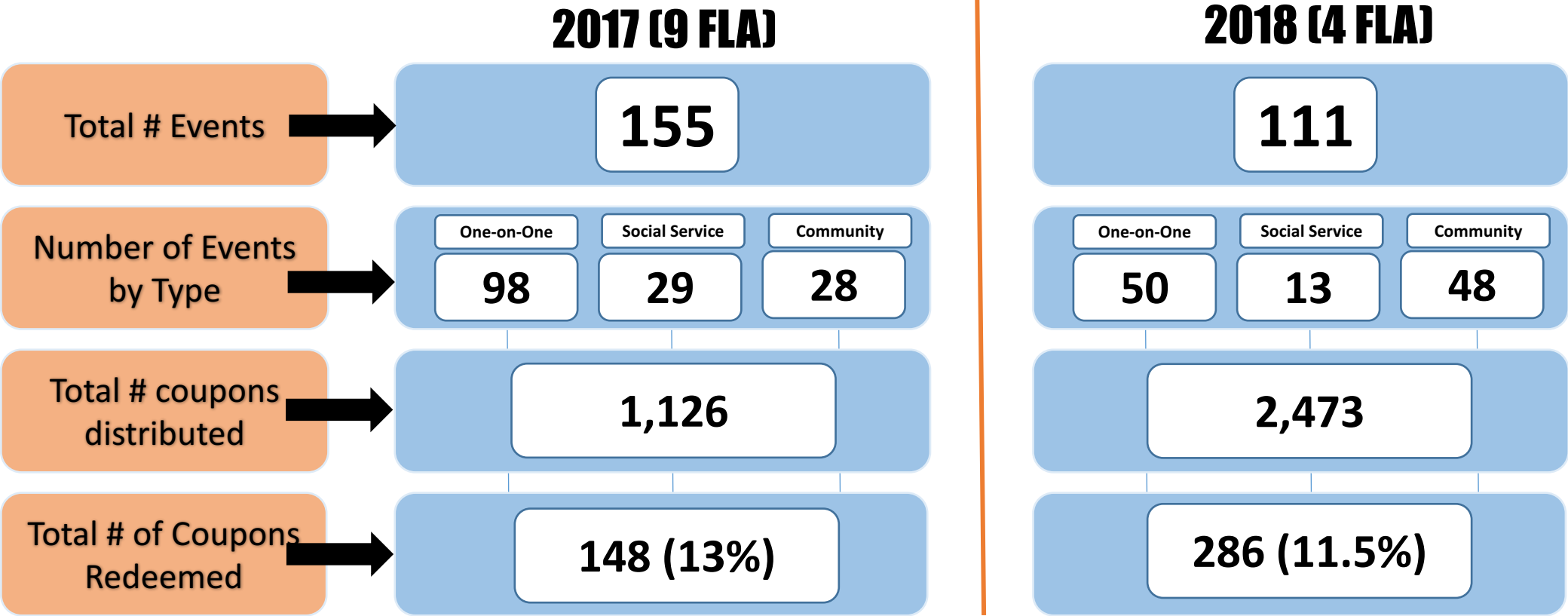
What percentage of new customers coupons were redeemed at farmers' markets in 2017 and 2018?

- A. 0 – 10%
- B. 11-20%
- C. 21-30%

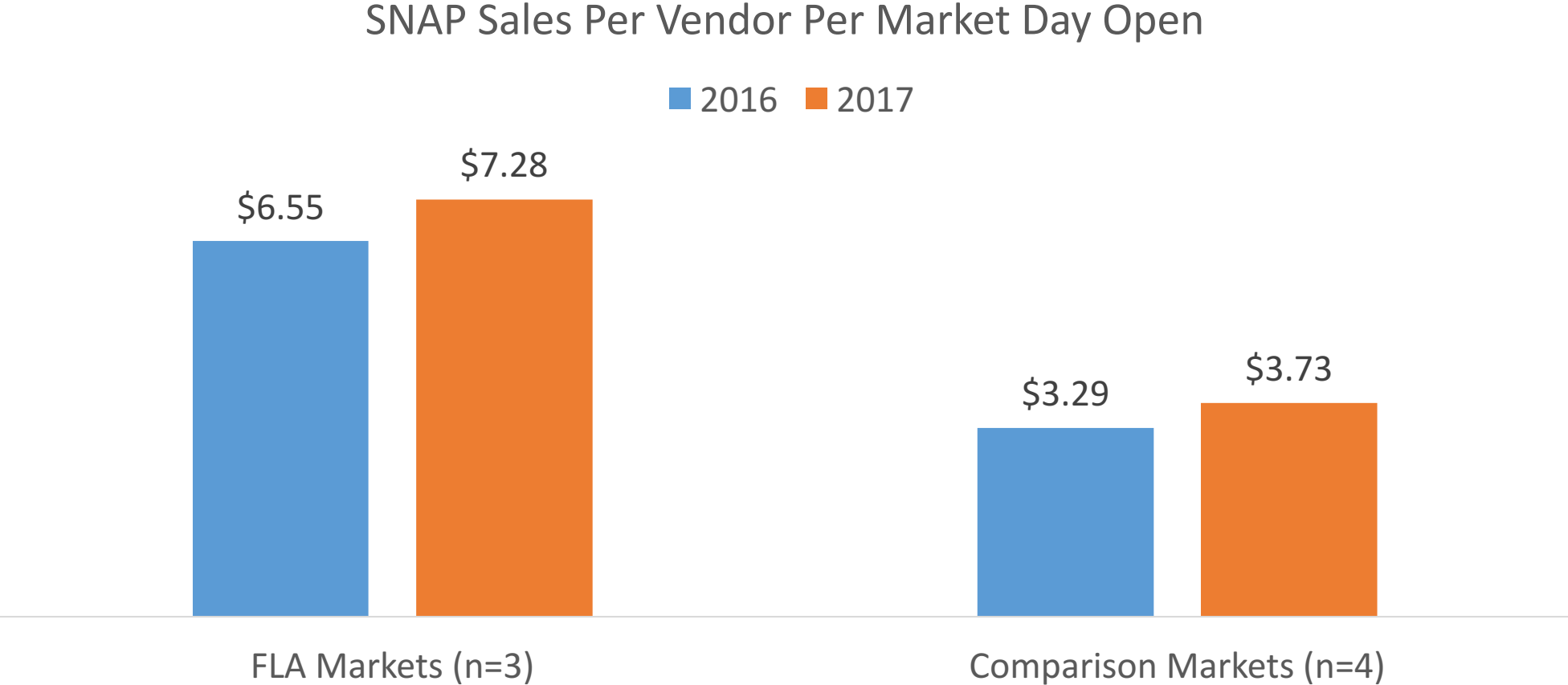
Hint: The national average for coupon redemption (such as free-standing coupons in the mail) is less than 1%.

Reminder: The number of coupons distributed by FLA in 2017 and 2018 was 1126 and 2473 respectively.

Number of coupons distributed and redeemed

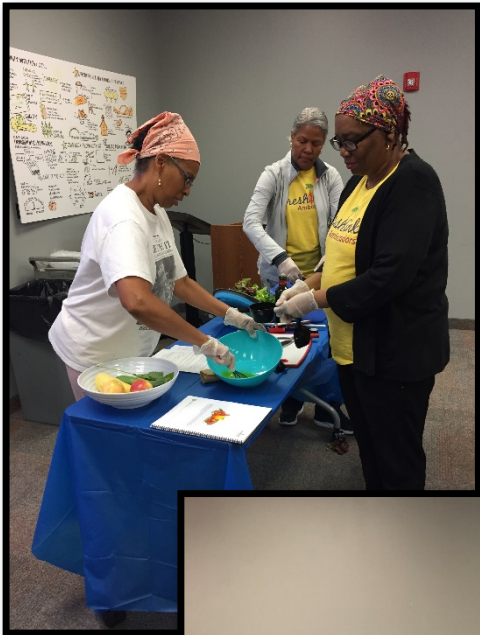


Change in SNAP Sales (\$) from 2016 to 2017



FreshLink Markets had 1.7x more growth in SNAP sales.

Market Manager Testimonial



Other Results

- 100% of the Farmers' Markets participating in the program remained in the program.
- By the second year of the FreshLink Ambassador Program implementation, Farmers' Markets were willing to pay for some of the costs associated with hiring a FreshLink Ambassador indicating the value of the program to market bottom line.
- Nearly all FreshLink Ambassadors (91%) completed the full program indicating good fit between the model and Ambassador interests.

Lessons Learned

- Having a greater number markets (6), participate in the program allowed for a higher return on coupons – more choice for customers.
- Allowing for ambassadors to create their own schedules provided a more effective outreach process for ambassadors.
- Eliminating a cap on the number of coupons an ambassador could disseminate created higher dissemination and redemption of coupons.

FreshLink Ambassador Toolkit



**FreshLink Facilitator
Manual**



FLA Workbook



**FLA Training
Curriculum**



**FLA Employee
Handbook**

[https://www.prchn.org/PRC
HNToolKits.aspx](https://www.prchn.org/PRC/HNToolKits.aspx)

FreshLink Ambassador Training in Virginia

Date: Wednesday, March 18th

Location: Lynchburg, VA.

For more information contact: Elizabeth Borst

Email: elizabethborst@gmail.com

Organizers/Sponsors: Virginia Fresh Match, Local Environmental Agriculture Project (LEAP), SNAP-ED, Virginia Community Food Connections.



Questions?

Contact:

Rachael Sommer

ras333@case.edu

www.prchn.org/freshlink_home.aspx

Thank you!!