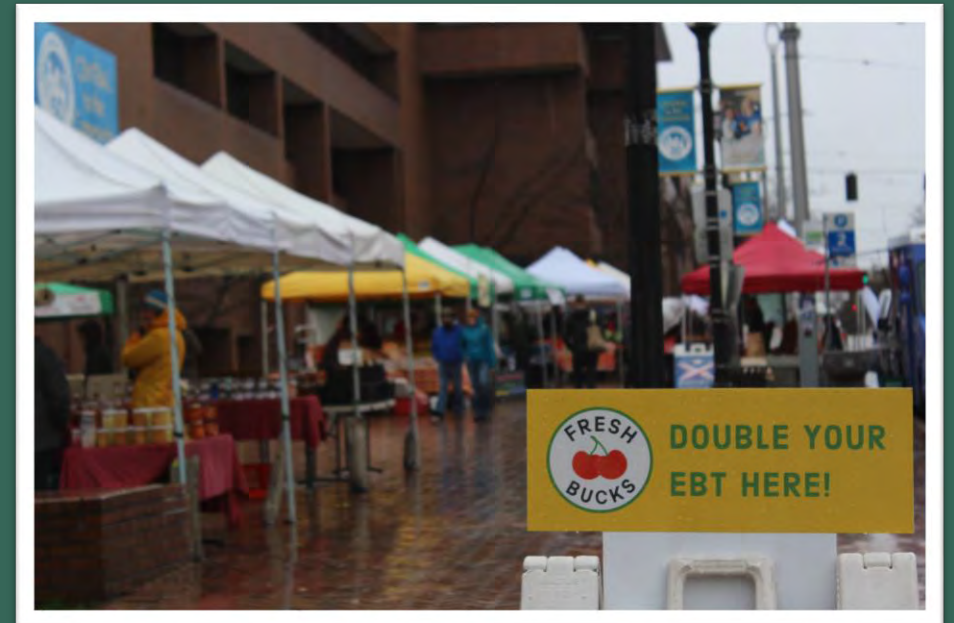


UNDERSTANDING BARRIERS TO ACCESSIBILITY IN WASHINGTON STATE FARMERS MARKETS: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

MARCH 9TH, 2017

UW NUTRITIONAL SCIENCES
MPH/MS CLASS OF 2018
NUTR 531 PUBLIC HEALTH NUTRITION
COURSE PROJECT



OVERVIEW FOR TODAY'S PRESENTATION

- Background and Purpose
 - Literature Review
 - Project Overview
- Study Methods
 - Data Collection Tool
 - Participants
- Data Analysis and Results
- Tool Development
- Conclusion

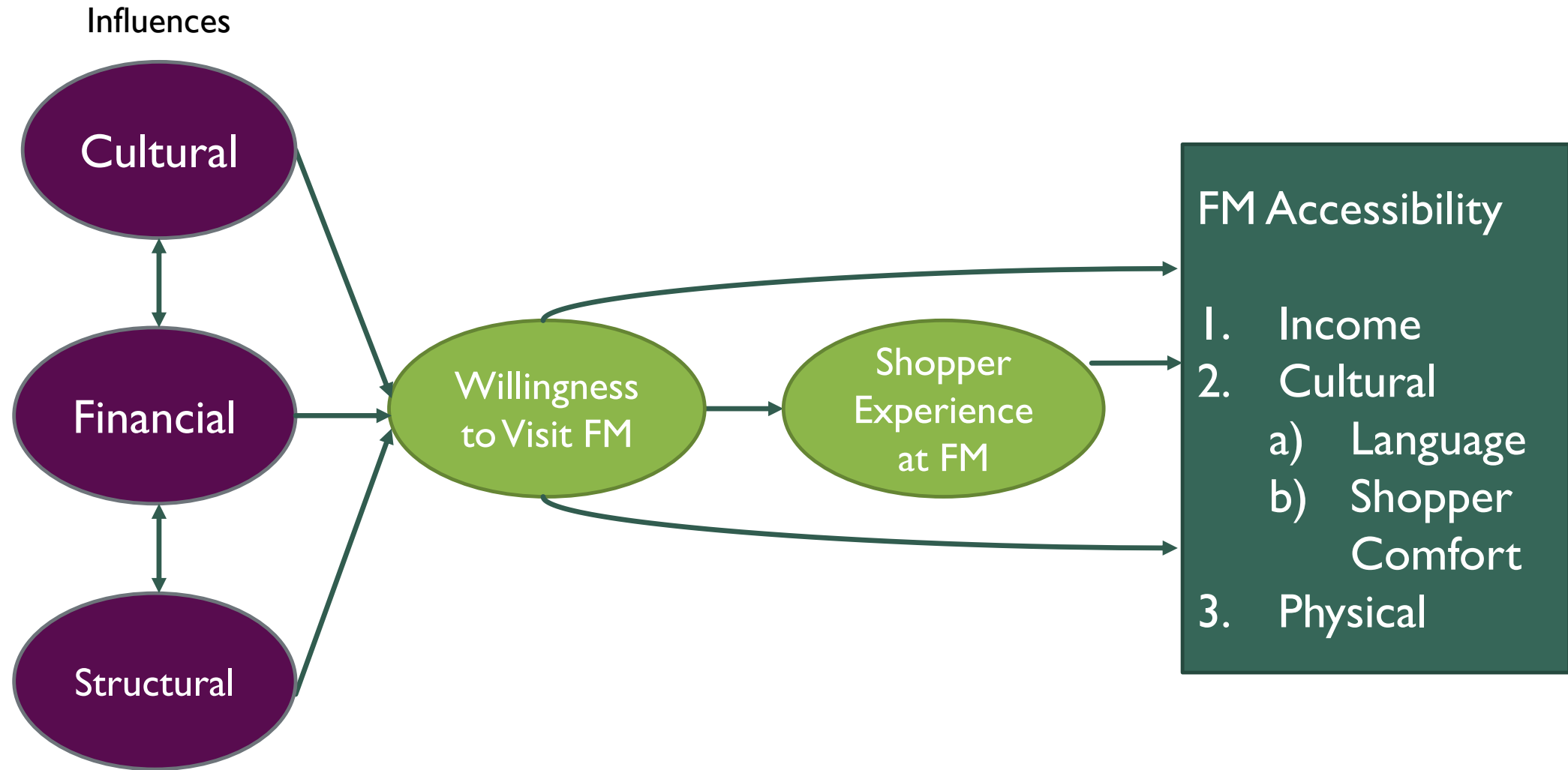


DEFINING DIVERSE POPULATIONS

- Diverse populations include:
 - People from non-white ethnicities
 - People who do not speak English, or for whom English is not a first language
 - People of low economic status
 - People with physical disabilities
 - Elderly populations



CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



STUDY PURPOSE

To understand existing efforts and ongoing challenges that FM face in their efforts to serve diverse populations



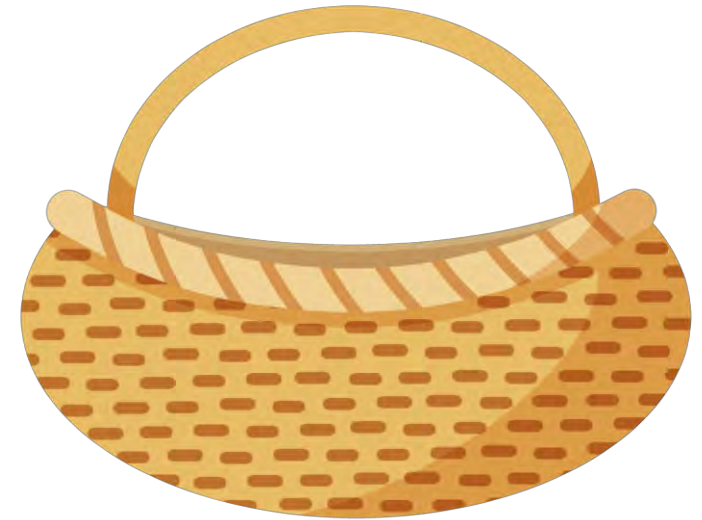
BACKGROUND

STUDY METHODS

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

TOOL DEVELOPMENT

CONCLUSION

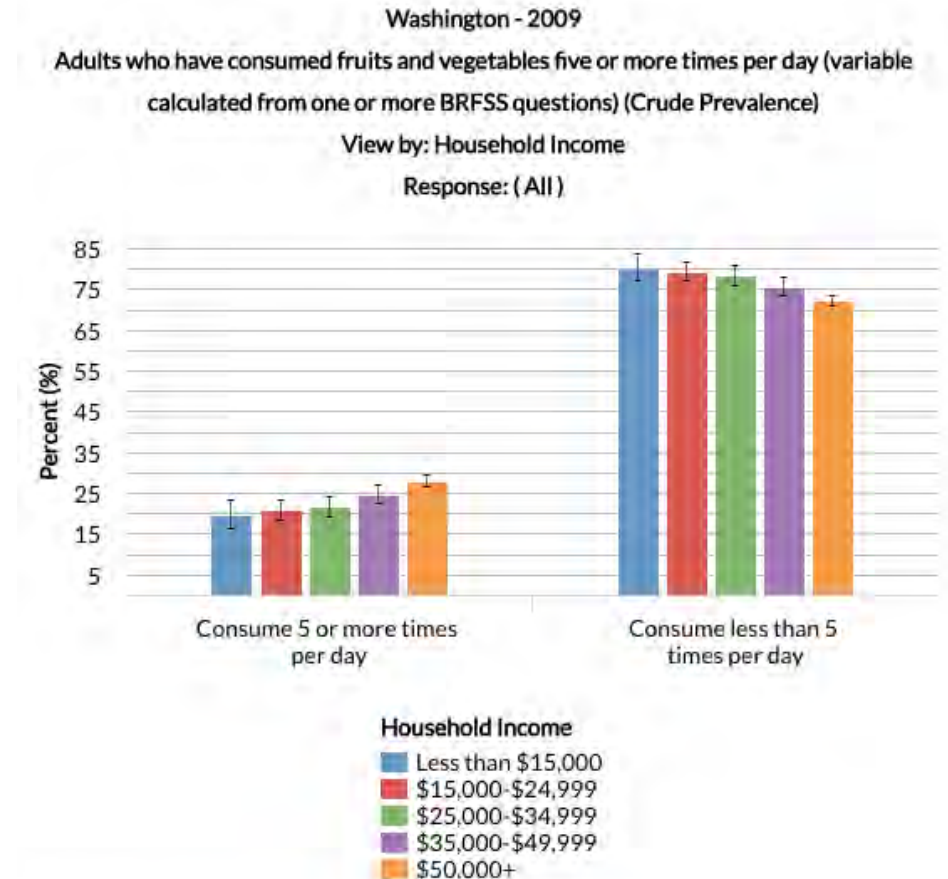


LITERATURE REVIEW GUIDING QUESTIONS

- What is the role of farmers markets (FMs) in addressing disparities in fruit and vegetable (F/V) consumption?
- What are barriers to accessing FMs of diverse populations?
- What are strategies for FMs to improve accessibility by diverse populations?
- What are remaining challenges faced by FMs to be inclusive of these diverse populations?

DISPARITIES IN FRUIT AND VEGETABLE

- SNAP recipients consume fewer F/V than people who are not on SNAP¹
- F/V consumption rates are lower among low-income Americans compared to high-income²
- Current SNAP benefit levels may be too low to enable a healthy diet³
- FMs can provide cost savings for F/V to low-income and diverse populations through incentive programs⁴



Data Source: Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS)



Fruit & Vegetable Consumption

Percent of WA State adults who report consuming
F/V < once per day: **10.5%** (2013-2015 BRFSS)

2011: **11.3%**

2013: **10.8%**

2015: **10.3%**

Fruit & Vegetable Consumption

Percent of WA State adults who report consuming F/V < once per day by race:

- Black: **16.2%** (statistically significant)
- American Indian/Alaska Native: **14.6%**
- Asian: **11.2%**
- Pacific Islander: **7.9%**
- Hispanic: **11.7%**
- Multi-race: **11.7%**
- White: **9.8%**

Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, WA State, 2011-2015; Adapted from WA DOH

PERCEIVED BARRIERS TO ACCESS

- Perceived barriers to FM access:
 - Perceptions about benefit acceptance
 - Perceived higher cost
 - Belief that food variety at FMs was limited ^{2,5}
- Actual barriers to FM access:
 - Location of market
 - Lack of transportation
 - Low racial/ethnic diversity at the FM
 - EBT acceptance
 - Lack of knowledge about times and locations ^{2,5}



CURRENT STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE ACCESS

■ F/V Incentive Programs

- Programs that provide **coupons and incentives** to FMs have been successfully implemented around the country, with participants reporting **increased F/V consumption**³

■ Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) Education

- Education of EBT has **increased acceptance of EBT** in participants about using benefits³

■ Community Partnerships

- FMs have **partnered with community groups** to provide cooking demonstrations, community gardens, and an overall **inviting space** for low-income residents⁵

FOOD INSECURITY NUTRITION INCENTIVE GRANT

- Washington DOH reports that eating F/V < once per day is associated with food insecurity³; 15% of Washington households are food insecure.⁴
- DOH was awarded FINI grant from USDA in 20XX.
- Primary goal of FINI is to increase nutritional quality of SNAP participants, especially through increased F/V intake at FMs.
- Our project goal is to better understand how FINI is impacting the shopping base and practices of FMs, especially in SNAP-recipient dense areas.





WA'S FINI GRANT: AT A GLANCE

Start | End

April 1, 2015 – March 31, 2020

Award

\$5.86M

Subawardees

11 – diverse food system stakeholders

**Incentive
Strategies**

1. Farmers Market / CSA Match
2. Fruit and Vegetable Prescription
3. Grocery Store Coupons

Outlets

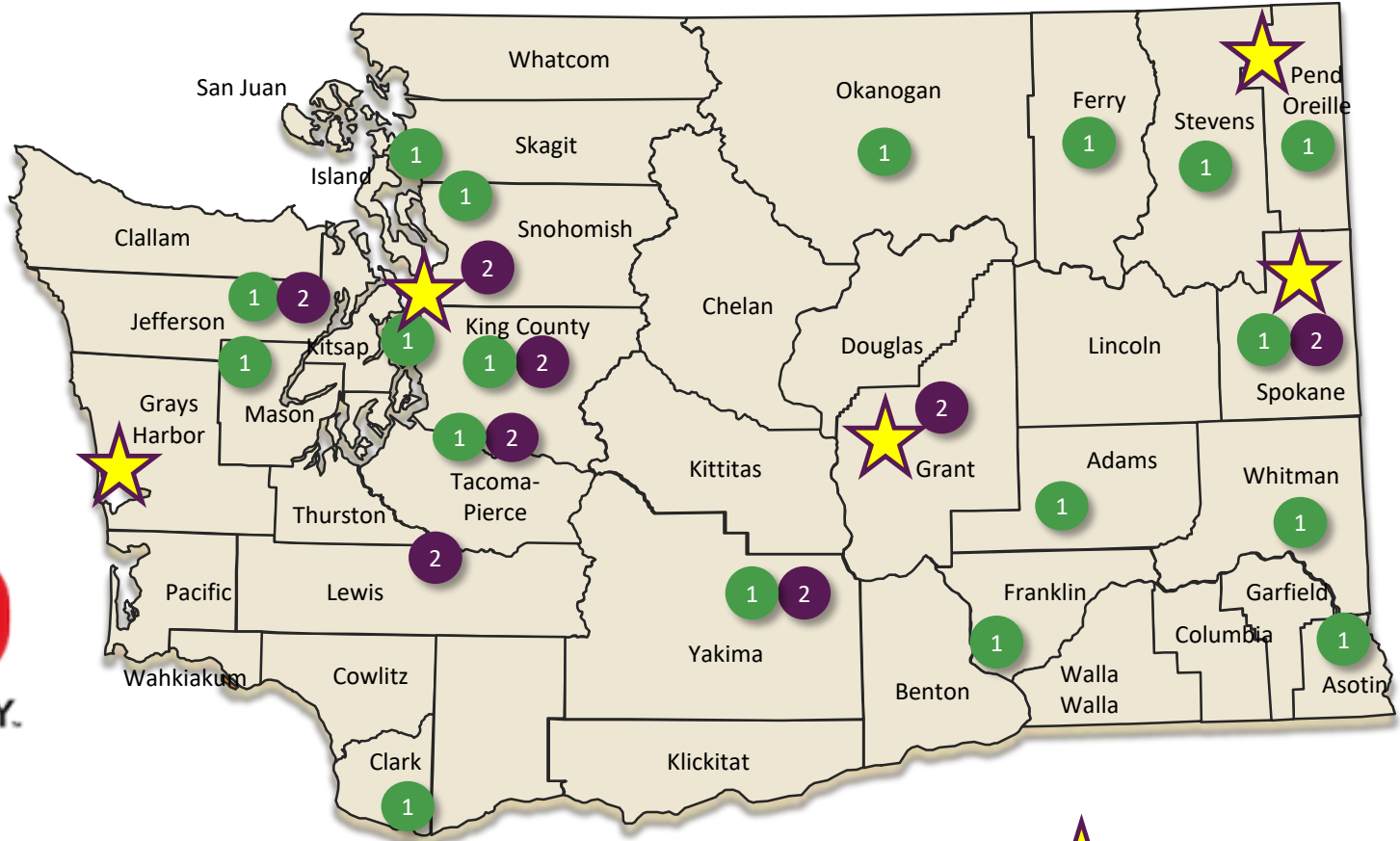
~77 markets/CSA
~170 Safeway grocery stores

Potential reach

836,000 SNAP participants



LOCATIONS OF WA FINI STRATEGIES



1 Farmers Market/ CSA Match

2 Fruit & Vegetable Prescription

★ Grocery Store Coupons (Locations TBD)

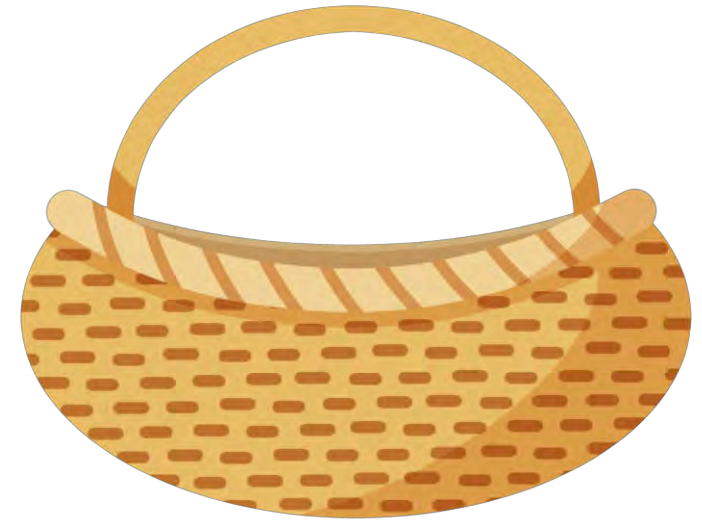
BACKGROUND

STUDY METHODS

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RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. To what extent do low income shoppers with differing race/ethnicities, languages, and cultures shop and feel comfortable shopping at FMs?
2. What challenges have FMs faced in efforts to become more accessible to diverse groups? Which of these challenges are FM managers willing and able to take on?
3. What best practices and opportunities exist for supporting FMs in serving and attracting culturally and linguistically diverse shoppers?
4. What would a FMs Cultural Competence/Accessibility Tool contain and how useful would such a tool be to markets from the perspective of market managers?

INTERVIEW GOALS AND METHODS

■ Overall Goal:

1. To understand current efforts and prevailing barriers to promoting accessibility in FMs for diverse groups.
2. Gain insight on possible resources that would further increase use and access of incentive programs like FINI.

■ Interview Process:

- Audio-recorded interviews conducted via phone
- Transcriptions were then coded using Dedoose qualitative analysis software.
- Codes were created directly from interview findings and from the interview guides.
- Interview results used to guide tool development concepts



PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT (N=24)

- UW-CPHN recruited 6 FINI Regional Leads
- Regional Leads then informed FM managers about the study
- FINI Market Managers who were interested in participating in the study contacted UW-CPHN staff to schedule the interview
- Conducted **21 FM manager interviews** and **3 FINI Peer Ambassador** interviews
- Approximately 1/3 of all FINI Market Managers participated in an interview
- Verbal informed consent obtained before interviews, WA DoH Institutional Review Board approved all study procedures

FARMERS MARKET INTERVIEW

■ Three Main Intents:

- To understand current shopper base, as well as vendor and volunteer support
- To gain insight into how current incentive programs used including FINI, SNAP/EBT, senior FM nutrition program influence accessibility
- To collect information on current resources used and probe participants for possible further helpful tools and resources.

FARMERS MARKET INTERVIEW – SAMPLE QUESTIONS

- **To understand current shopper base, as well as vendor and volunteer support**
 - “Please describe your market’s shopper-base and any distinguishable language or cultural groups.”
 - “Tell me about any feedback you’ve received from vendors and their experience with new initiatives to increase accessibility.”



FARMERS MARKET INTERVIEW:

- **Gain insight into how current incentive programs used including FINI, SNAP/EBT, senior FM nutrition program influence accessibility**
 - “How accessible do you feel your incentive programs are to diverse groups.”



FARMERS MARKET INTERVIEW:

- **Collect information on current resources used and probe participants for possible further helpful tools and resources.**
 - “Our class is exploring the potential benefits to a checklist-type tool that managers can use to assess their current efforts to promote accessibility at their markets to diverse groups and to set goals for becoming more accessible. Do you feel this would be helpful in your market and do you have any recommendations of what you’d like in this tool ?”

PEER AMBASSADOR INTERVIEW

- **Three Main Intents:**
 - **To understand the focus/purpose of each organization**
 - “Please tell me a little bit about the organization that you work with, which farmers market you interact with directly, and the population you serve.”
 - **To gain insight on successful or unsuccessful methods of communication about FMs**
 - “What are some successful ways you have seen or heard about farmers markets reaching out to meet the needs of diverse groups of shoppers?”
 - **To gather information on accessibility to populations and ideas for improvement**
 - “In what ways could farmers markets successfully serve the population you work with?”

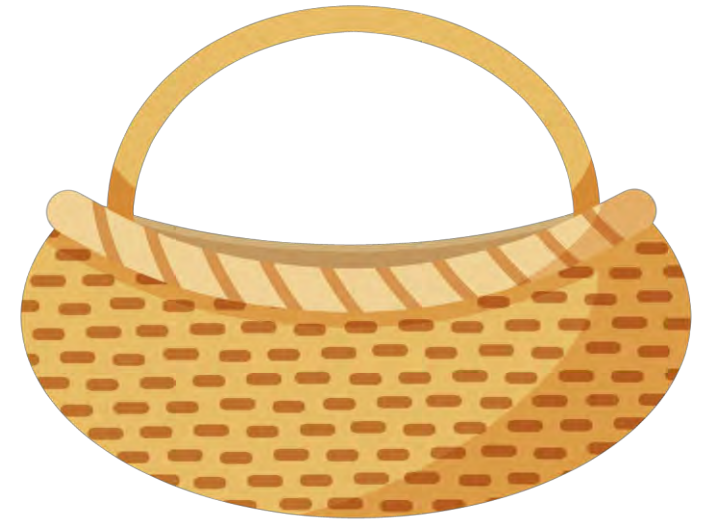
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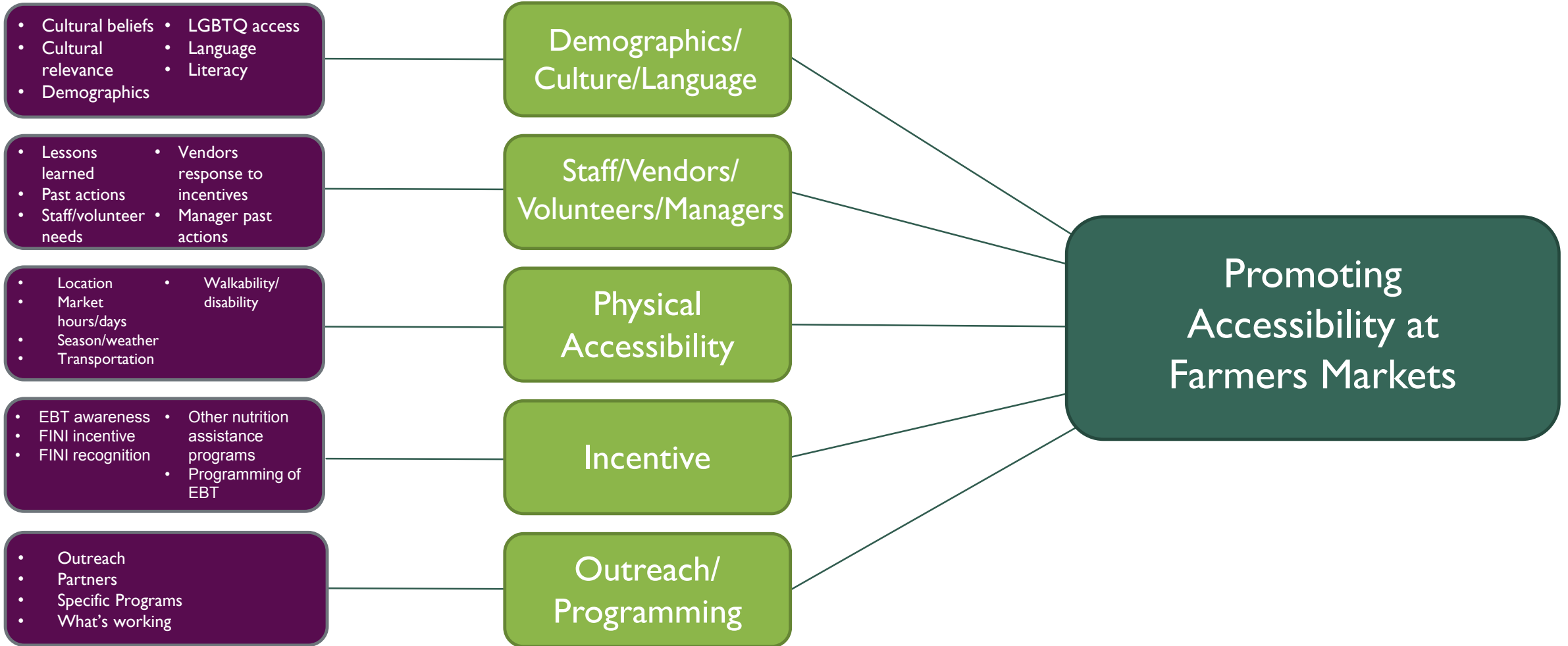
DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

TOOL DEVELOPMENT

CONCLUSION



TOPIC I: PROMOTING ACCESSIBILITY AT FARMERS MARKETS



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Theme 1: Market managers value diversity and have made consistent efforts to increase access to FM for diverse groups.

■ **Demographics**

- **"Our market was started to reach out to underserved groups**, so we pay as much attention to them as possible. Demographically, [the area] is 97-98% white so reaching out to more diverse groups may be much harder here than in other areas."
- "We have **a wide range of folks** shopping ... a **wide array of English speaking skills.**"

TOPIC I: PROMOTING ACCESSIBILITY AT FARMERS MARKETS

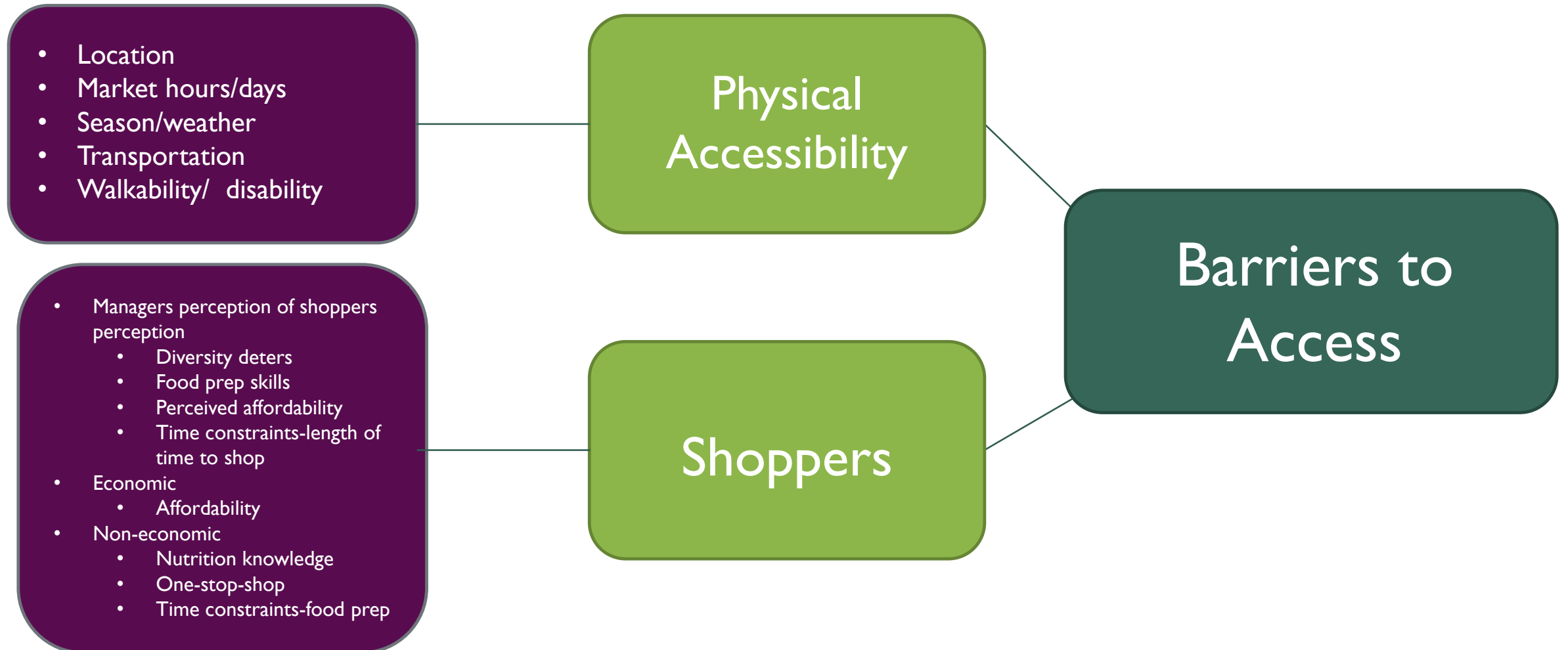
■ *Use of signage, translation services, and outreach programs*

- “Well, **word of mouth**, I think, is the most effective and having our gardeners represent the cultural groups that are living in the community at the time...”
- “...we did some signage and put a big sign up that said “We Accept EBT.” They were prettier than the ones in the corner store - it was night and day! We would have 10-12 people in a day that said, “We just saw that sign!”...**we had all these people coming to our markets who had EBT in their pockets and had no idea they could use it.**”
- “We have several, maybe **a few of our vendors are bilingual** and there is one especially that helps me communicate with the Spanish speaking vendors and occasionally **translates for shoppers** as well.”

TOPIC I: PROMOTING ACCESSIBILITY AT FM

- *Nutrition incentive programs were successful at increasing the number of people shopping at their market as well as the diversity of these shoppers*
 - “We have the EBT incentive program that has really just gone **beyond my expectations** of bringing people in which is wonderful.”
 - “...Compared to other outreach efforts that we’ve had **[Fruit and Vegetable Prescription] has done more to increase diversity.**”
- *One interviewee noted that in their market increasing access for diverse populations deterred a single shopper group*
 - “**White people are not comfortable** going because they are afraid of the populations who shop there.”

TOPIC 2: BARRIERS TO ACCESS



TOPIC 2: BARRIERS TO ACCESS

*Theme 2a: Market managers cite **physical configuration and time-centered constraints** as static market barriers.*

■ **Market related barriers**

- "Farmers markets **vary in terms of times they are open** during the year, some are year round like we are, some are open a few months, some are open from May-October. If I were a customer who depended on using my card for my incentive benefits to feed my family, **it would be nice if I had immediate access.**"
- "...The [FMs] that are in the streets are a little bit **more accessible** because it's **even ground** and people can have a wheelchair. Whereas we're on the sidewalk, and it can get really tight."
- "One of our markets is actually right in between two large low-income senior housing units so many of our **shoppers are walking right across the street with their walkers...** so it's really accessible for them"

TOPIC 2: BARRIERS TO ACCESS

■ *Shopper related barriers*

- “There’s something else, some **other facts of life** that are working against us. **\$10 free money is not enough incentive** to get somebody to change their work schedule, their lifestyle, their cooking habits, whatever it is we’re working against.”

■ *Nutrition incentives*

- “The biggest issue that we have is **educating vendors and customers** about how to use those tokens...you occasionally get someone who buys EBT tokens and then doesn’t realize that they can’t get anything they want in the market.”
- “We are really working on **[marketing and signage]** and have some good suggestions around **making it easier for folks who are using the program** to navigate the market rather than just showing them a map. [That way] folks can really see where to go, who accepts EBT, who accepts those kinds of things **so it doesn’t feel scary** to use those markets because those markets can feel a little bit intimidating”
- “I think one of the hardest things is **how to help people navigate poundage and pricing**. We are really trying to work with more of my vendors [on clarifying pricing]...I think that can really sometimes be **sticker shock**.”

TOPIC 2: BARRIERS TO ACCESS

Theme 2b: Market managers perceive that shoppers' personal obstacles are dynamic barriers to accessibility.

*Theme 2c: Market managers recognize that **low-income shoppers are hesitant to use FM** due to **perceptions of unaffordability**.*

*Theme 2d: Market managers perceive that **shoppers' food preparation knowledge and skills** may **limit use of FM**.*

TOPIC 2: BARRIERS TO ACCESS

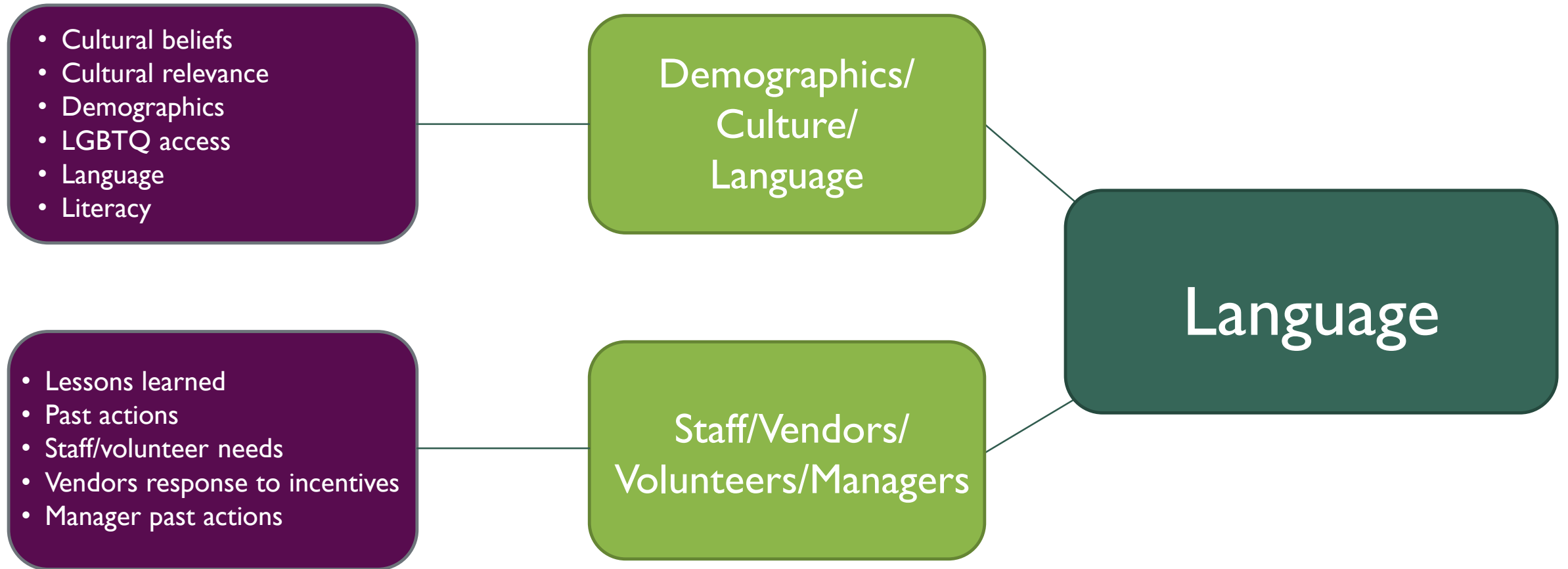
■ *Overcoming Perceived Affordability*

- “There [are] **perceptions that markets are more expensive**, that produce is more expensive, and there’s some truth to that. [There are] bigger economic challenges that we can only do so much to alleviate.”
- “I see all these ramifications when someone comes with these [EBT and] FMNP vouchers, they are eating healthier and **they are supporting usually a very, very small farmer** who can then channel it back in to grow more and better produce. So it is this beautiful circle, and it is doing everything it intended to do along that chain.”

■ *Food Preparation Knowledge*

- “...before we started someone came up to me with carrots and said **“I just bought these, how do I cook them?”** This shows the **education deficit** that we have. They had seen carrots before in the grocery store but they had bought them frozen.”

TOPIC 3: LANGUAGE



TOPIC 3: LANGUAGE

Theme 3a: Most market managers do not have consistent translation services, which is a major barrier towards achieving accessibility.

■ **Most markets do not have consistent translation services**

- **"I need more translators** at all of my markets, instead of just having them at one market. You know it's just so I would like to expand that because I think it makes a huge difference."
- "No, **we don't have any volunteers or staff that speak additional languages** at this time."

■ **Translation materials**

- "One of the limitations in particular is [that] **we will translate things and often folks can't read the information.** They didn't have the opportunity even in their home country to go to school and so we are relying on printed information and the material is not sufficient..."
- "[The] **written materials do an okay job of educating people,** but it would be much **more helpful to have people that spoke the predominant languages** of the people that we work with."

TOPIC 3: LANGUAGE

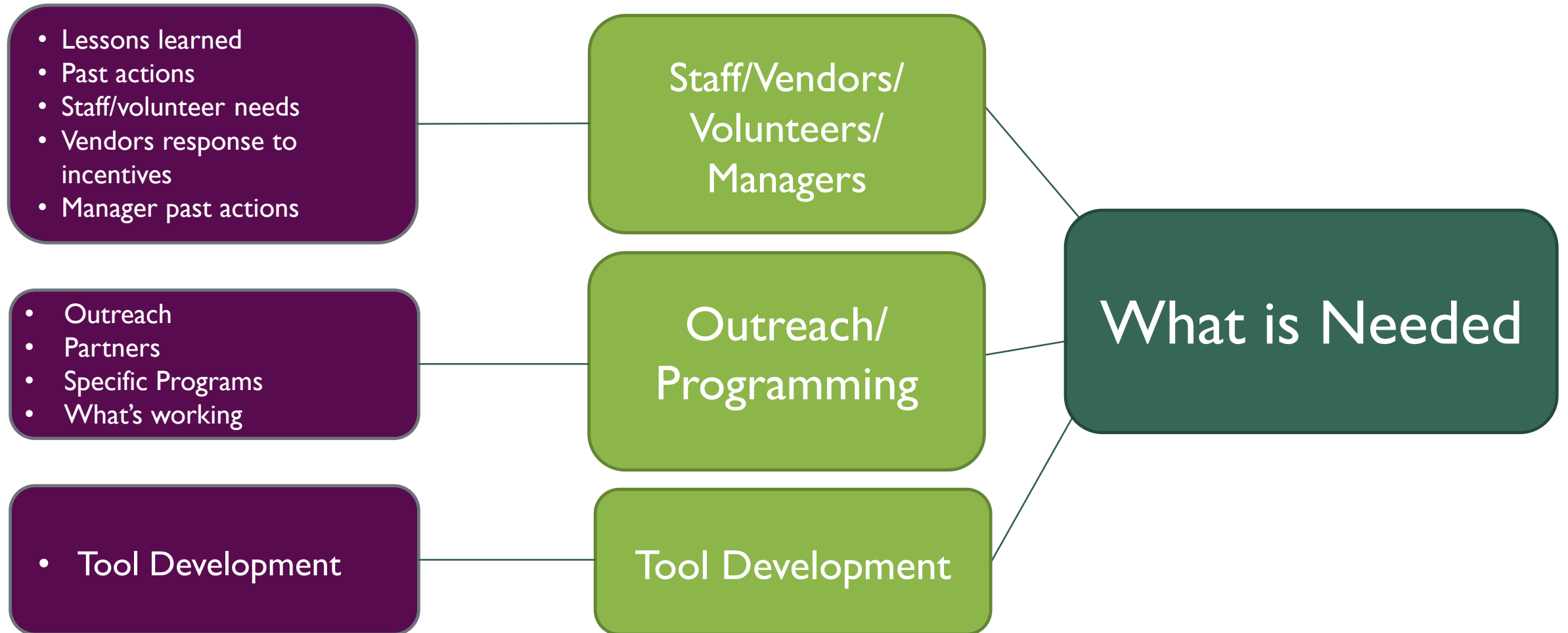
- *Other forms of communication*

- “**Show and tell really helps...** trying to communicate with diverse people. And so, we’re all very accustomed to explaining programs and kinda how to shop at the market and everything.”
- “...**the children can translate** for their mom or dad and there doesn’t seem to be a problem.”

- *Vendors play an important role in communication*

- “We have some **vendors who speak Spanish**. I know a little bit of Spanish, but not enough to explain things to people, so **I will walk them over to a vendor who speaks fluent Spanish** and interpret for them.”
- “It’s rare, but when we do we have a few Spanish-speaking vendors. **We have a Polish-speaking vendor** who is able to help with the Eastern European folks when they are [having] difficulty communicating.”

TOPIC 4: INCREASING DIVERSITY: WHAT IS NEEDED



TOPIC 4: INCREASING DIVERSITY: WHAT IS NEEDED

Theme 4a: Market managers report that outreach events **bring in initial shoppers** but may **not successfully retain customers**.

- **Partnerships with organizations and social services**
 - “[**Information about EBT**] got out in mailers, there were about 8000 flyers sent out in a area with about 60,000 people and that is really an impressive number.”
 - “We will be **videoing [cooking demos]**, then [shoppers] will have access online if anyone is interested...”
 - “And then we also have a **partnership with our free clinic...** and this year [people received] \$20 produce **vouchers for participating** in their free clinic that is focused on diabetes health awareness.”
- **Partnerships with community partners**
 - “...allies who are familiar with the market and with the [incentive] program who are not necessarily volunteers with our organization, but who **are volunteers with other organizations** [and] can **bridge that gap** between us and the community that we’re trying to reach.”

TOPIC 4: INCREASING DIVERSITY: WHAT IS NEEDED

Theme 4a: Market managers report that outreach events **bring in initial shoppers** but may **not successfully retain customers**.

■ **Outreach Programming**

- “We realized that the education component is really important and **it starts with the kids**. This program also allows single mothers and single parents to drop their kids off while their mothers went shopping.”
- “We are looking at the value of these **one-time specific events**, thinking that putting on a special event...[these] tend to be highly time intensive. They ...they **don't seem to be delivering any tangible or measurable goals**. People enjoy them, but it doesn't seem to change the market at all.”
- “Another outreach tool is...**cooking demos**. We have a chef come in and make something quickly with stuff they just bought at the market. **So these are how we make inroads with the low-income population.**”

TOPIC 4: INCREASING DIVERSITY: WHAT IS NEEDED

Theme 4c. Managers expressed limited interest in a self-assessment tool, rather a resource sharing tool was described as desirable.

■ **FM Cultural Competence and Accessibility Tool**

- “I think the **resource sharing**, like what other people are doing really well ... there are so many great things happening that we just don't know and so being able to share that ... I know we all want to know how to do this better.”
- “**I just have a lot of lists in my life**, I'd want it to be super **relevant so it could be functional.**”
- “And also since I know there is just such **high turnover in market managers** and market staff, having **something that can live year after year** is just incredibly helpful to markets.”

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Improve Communication at Markets
2. Provide Nutrition Incentive Programs
3. Increase Opportunities for Communication Between Markets

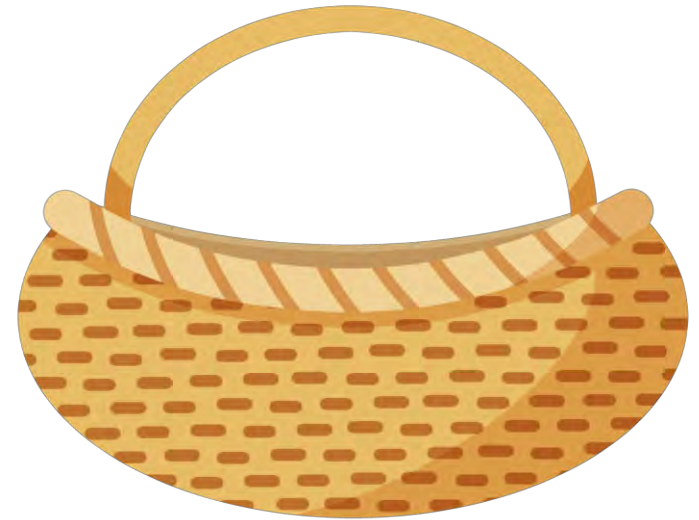
BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

STUDY METHODS

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

TOOL DEVELOPMENT

CONCLUSION



REVIEW OF EXISTING FM ASSESSMENT TOOLS

- Farmers Market Audit Tool in Rural and Urban Communities
 - Assesses food environment at FM between the two different settings.
- Rapid Market Assessment Tools (OSU)
 - Dot surveys
 - Customer counts
 - Outside managers or others visit and study the market, providing “fresh” eyes and insight
- Farmers Market Coalition Resource Library
 - Database of resources shared from organizations and markets throughout the country.



SUMMARY OF DATA AND REVIEW

Managers expressed a need for a:

- Resource
- Useful, directed action
- Able to be tailored to each market
- Electronic - not paper based
- Less interest in a self-assessment of efforts to improve accessibility



ELEMENTS OF THE PROPOSED TOOL

- **Elements of tool:**
 - Web based
 - Self assessment (survey) mixed with resource guide
 - Moderated database of resources and current FM efforts
 - Opportunities to contribute ideas/resources



SELF ASSESSMENT

Do you have ways to collect shopper feedback?

YES
 NO

Do you collect information on market population barriers to accessing the market?

YES
 NO

Do you feel that you have the tools necessary to make your market more accessible?

YES

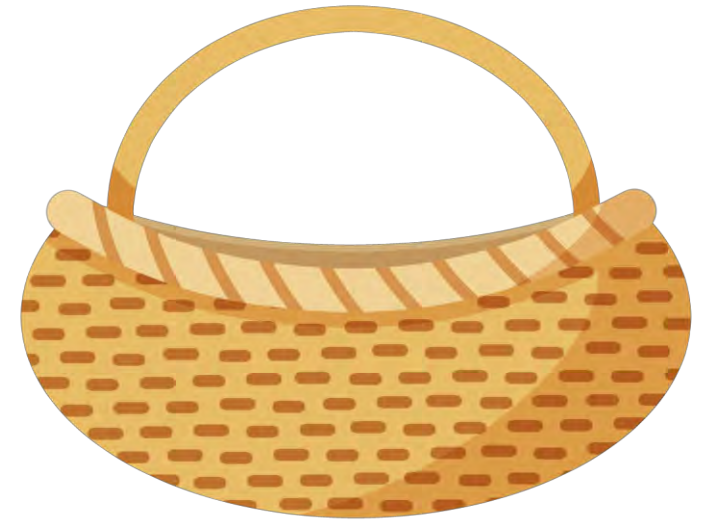
BACKGROUND

STUDY METHODS

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

TOOL DEVELOPMENT

CONCLUSION



CONCLUSION

- **FM Managers:**
 - Value diversity and are making consistent efforts to promote accessibility across different shopper bases.
 - Feel that markets reflect their neighborhood, which works either for or against their market.
 - Are very perceptive to their shoppers' barriers, but feel that these barriers are overcome by incentive programs.
 - Feel that among barriers, language is a main barrier in terms of communicating to shoppers about using incentive programs.
- **With these key recommendations in mind, a web-based tool was proposed**



QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

- **FM Managers:**
 - Value diversity and are making consistent efforts to promote accessibility across different shopper bases.
 - Feel that markets reflect their neighborhood, which works either for or against their market.
 - Are very perceptive to their shoppers' barriers, but feel that these barriers are overcome by incentive programs.
 - Feel that among barriers, language is a main barrier in terms of communicating to shoppers about using incentive programs.



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