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Analyzing the Impact of Community Programs and Mutual Aid on Food Insecurity

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Background

- Food insecurity in the Southern Tier is an issue that low-income communities have long been facing and the economic crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic had a drastic effect on the issue.
- At the height of the pandemic government assistance programs, such as SNAP, were extremely overwhelmed which resulted in long wait times for applications to be reviewed
 - This led to a drastic increase in the use of food aid networks
- The purpose of this study is to analyze the impact food aid networks have had on food insecurity in Broome County

Methods

- Conducted interviews with organizers of food aid networks in Broome County
- Volunteered with CHOW in order to gain insight into how the organization is run
- Conducted a literature review of scholarly sources surrounding food insecurity and charitable feeding systems

Food aid networks were vital in addressing food insecurity in Broome County, especially during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic

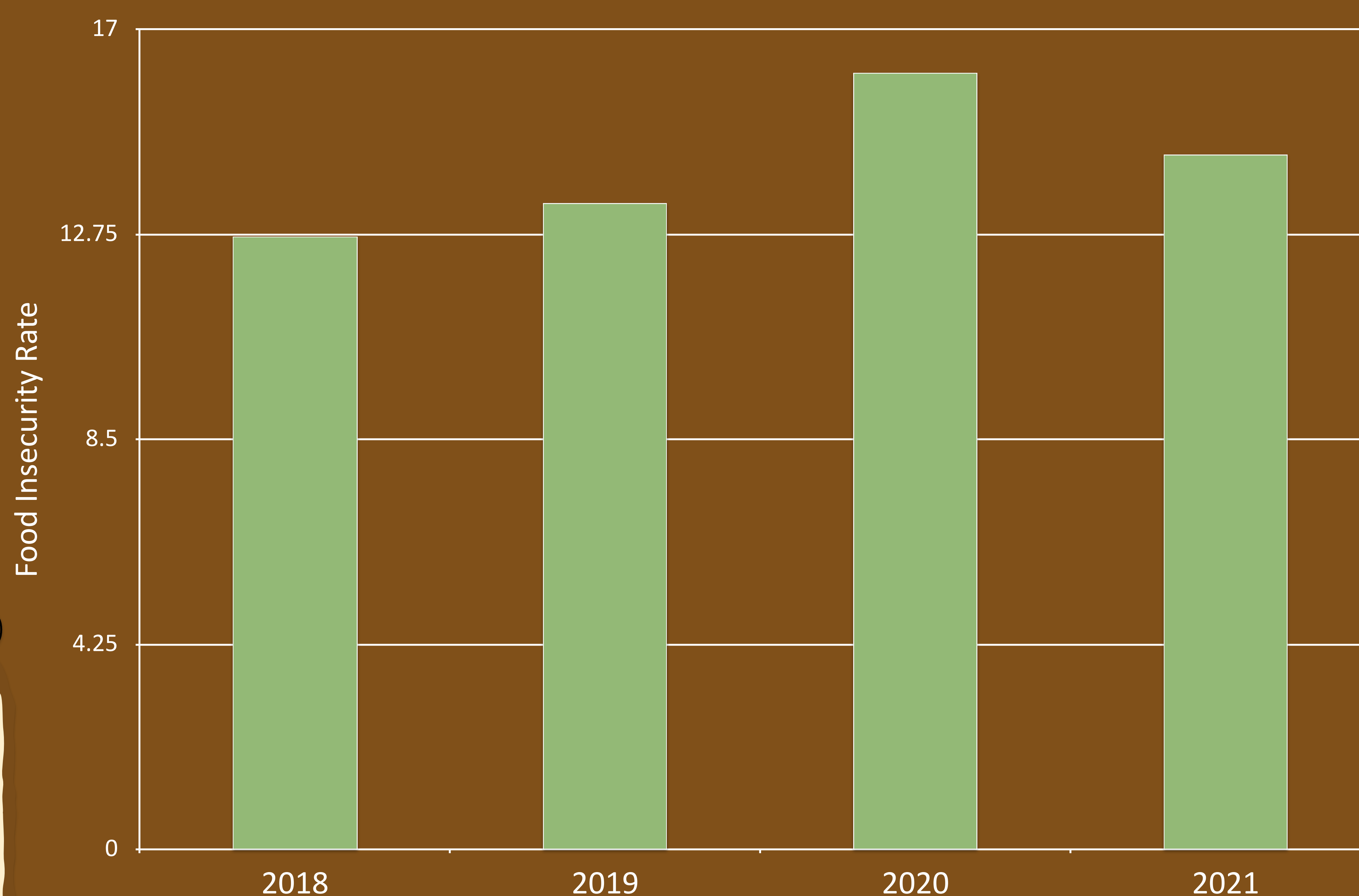


Fig. 1

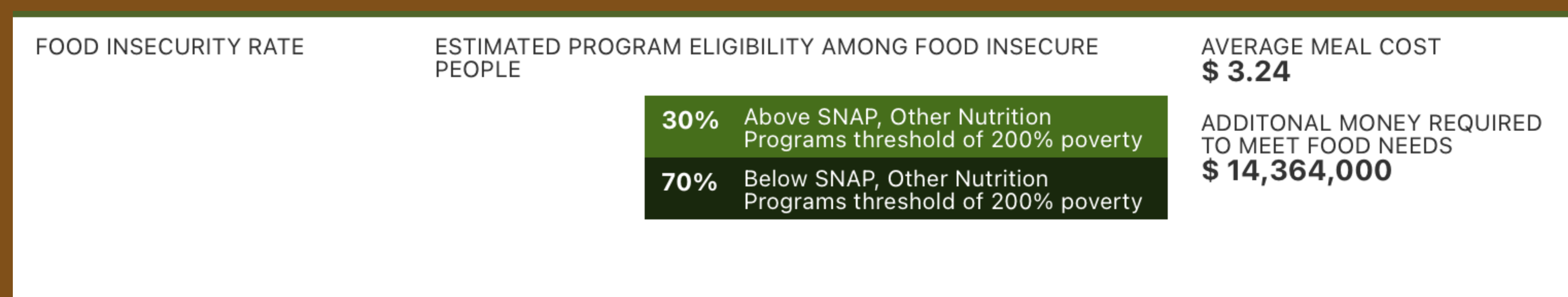


Fig 2.

Conclusions

- Programs offered by CHOW and The Food Bank of the Southern Tier, were vital for low-income households during the pandemic because the need for food drastically increased
 - This is due to the unemployment rate skyrocketing and households not being able to afford enough food
- Through interviews, I discovered that while the usage of food banks drastically increased, community food donations have decreased
- Food banks have been working towards offering more healthy options
 - In 2021, 51% of the food offered by CHOW was produce
- A common theme found throughout the interviews conducted is that more work must be done on a policy level in order to enact long-lasting change regarding this issue

Implications

- Some organizations have yet to respond to my request for an interview
- The data provided in Fig. 1 includes projections of future food insecurity rates in Broome County by using unemployment and poverty rates

References

