

Food Pantry Accessibility in New Hampshire

Nathaniel Livernois BA Theology
NH-ME LEND Self-Advocacy Trainee

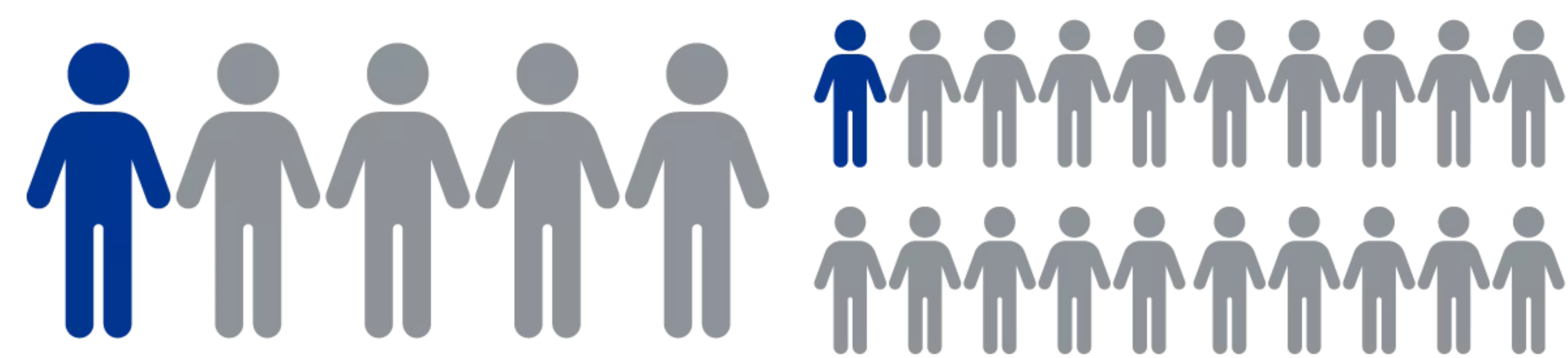


Background

The New Hampshire Disability and Health Program (DHP) seeks to use evidence-based practice to improve the health of people with disabilities. By engaging in areas including partnerships with other groups, performing needs assessments, and sharing of key learned information. This project focused on communicating with food pantries to assess accessibility and provide feedback for improvements.

Methods

- Met with Disability and Health Advisory Work Group (DHAWG) to acquire feedback on potential issues
- Researched to find appropriate tools to assess for appropriate tools
- Contacted Food pantries in the local area, collected data, and gave feedback



1 in 5

1 in 5 NH adults with disabilities are food insecure.

1 in 20

1 in 20 NH adults without disabilities are food insecure.

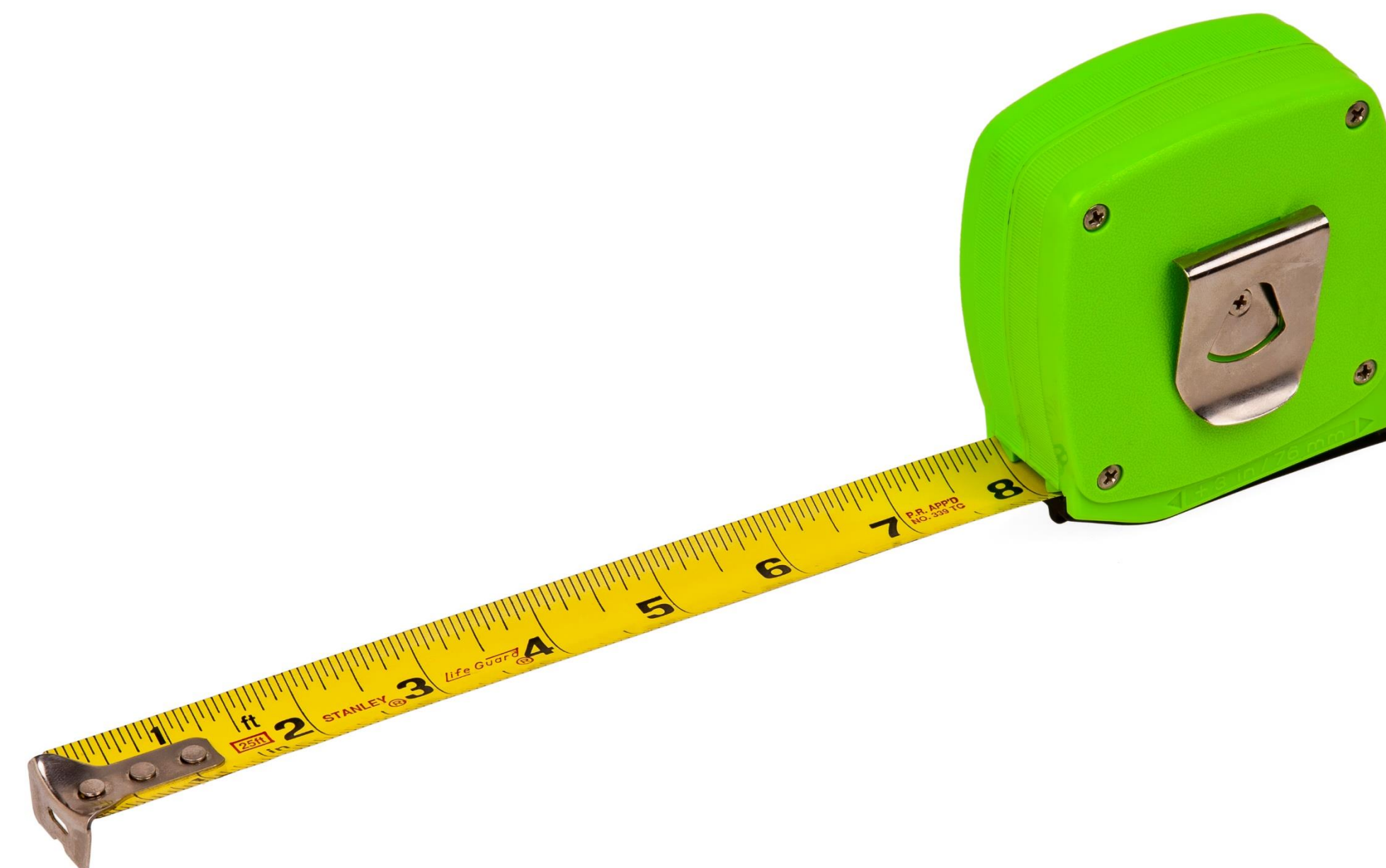
Scan the QR Code to the right or follow the link below to read the full 2023 Needs Assessment on Food Security and Disability:



<http://tinyurl.com/dhp2024>

The Tools

- An abridged version of the Community Health Inclusion Index (CHII) was chosen to help gauge accessibility of food pantries. It is broken up into two parts.
 - Organizational Assessment: This looks at what the food pantry is doing for people with disabilities before they arrive on-site, such as training, awareness, and transportation.
 - On-Site Assessment.: This focuses more on the physical accessibility and handles everything from the parking lots/public transportation to how well a person with disabilities can navigate the site on his or her own.



During the CHII, tools such as measuring tape were used to measure properties such as door width to check for accessibility.

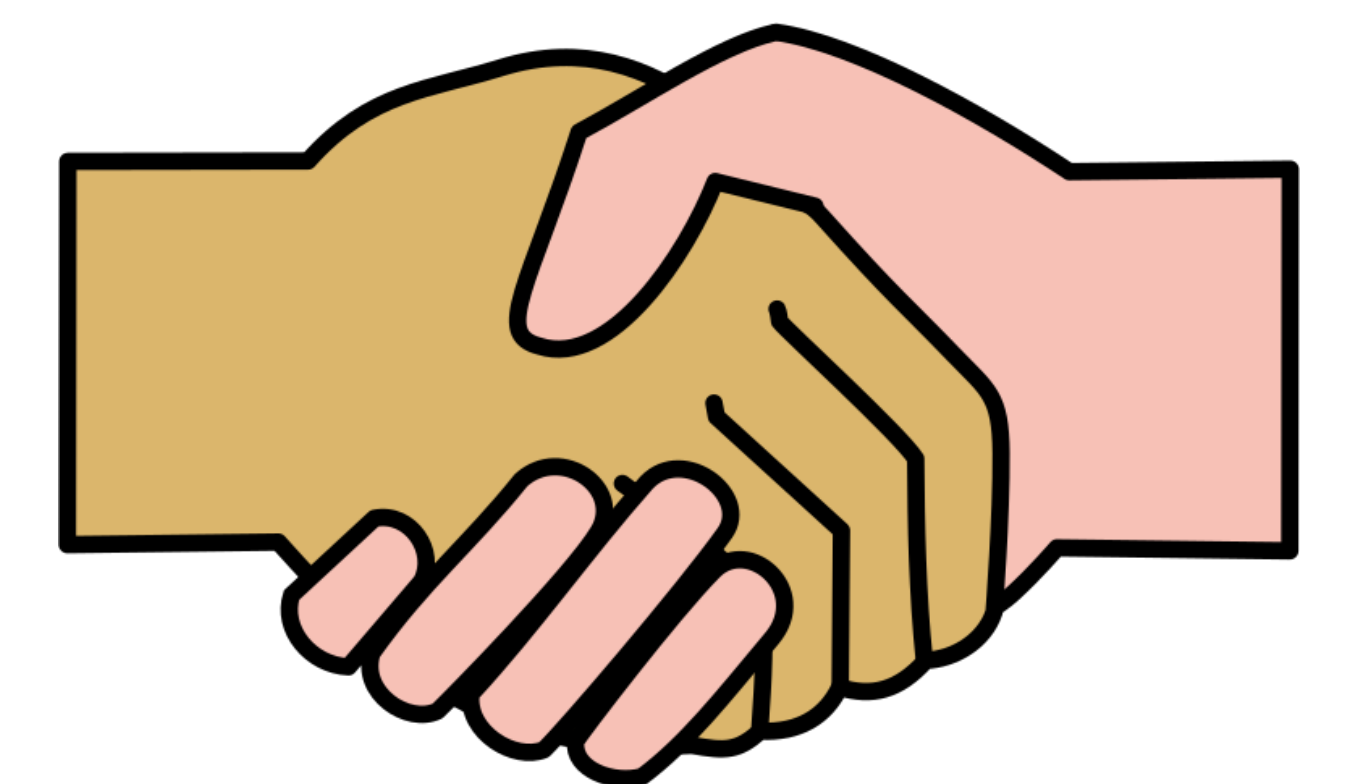
Roadblocks

- Communication can often pose a challenge
 - Whether by email or phone, contacting the right person is often a lot harder than it needs to be.
- Identifying the right tool was difficult, and this one doesn't cover everything it probably should. No system is perfect.
- Not all food pantries were initially open to the idea of an accessibility assessment.



Outcomes

- Provide helpful feedback to food pantries so they can improve their accessibility through policy, systems, and environmental change
- Educated organizations on the importance of inclusion for people with disabilities
- Shared the project with community groups to further awareness of accessibility for people with disabilities
- Created a process, tools, and network to continue this work in the future



References

- Stott, G., Henly, M., & Poehlman, E. (2023). Food Security for Adults with Disabilities in New Hampshire. University of New Hampshire. Institute on Disability: Durham, NH

The New Hampshire Disability and Health Program is funded through June 2026 by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) under Grant Number DD000025. The contents of these webpages are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the CDC or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

