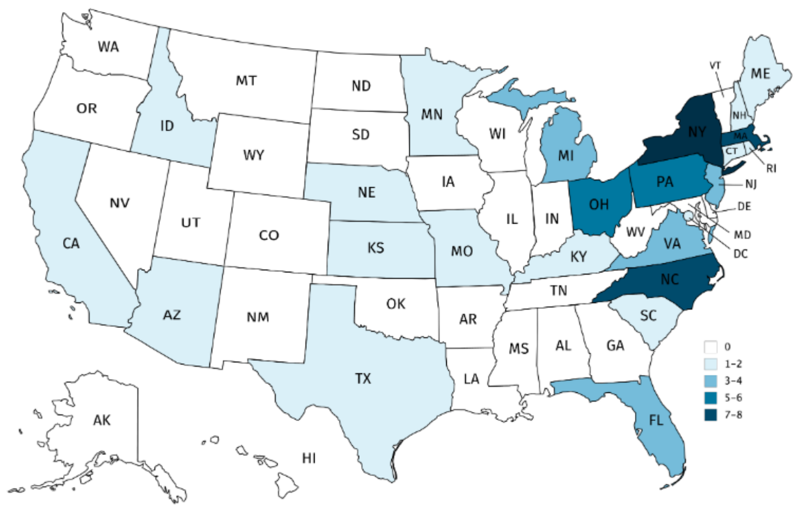
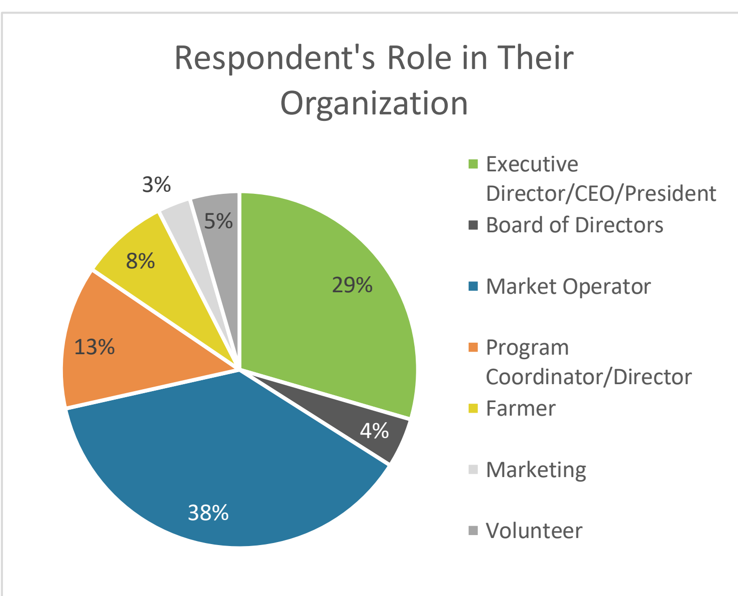
2019 Mobile Market Summit Survey Report

Thank you to those who attended the inaugural Mobile Market Summit in March 2019 and filled out the supplied survey from which these results were gleaned. We had a great sample size of 77 respondents, although not all respondents answered all questions. We hope this report helps mobile markets to develop their programs and acquire new information or novel ideas relevant to their current models. This report will provide information about the following topics: community interest, mobile market sites, mobile market personnel, finances, marketing strategies, food, and setup and equipment.

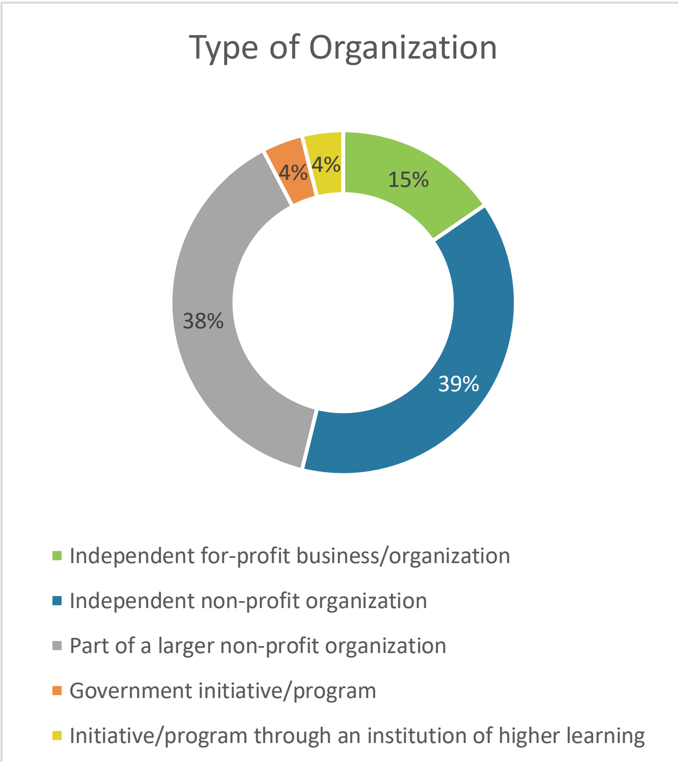
RESPONDENT BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The majority of respondents are from New York State and the Northeast region. One respondent was from New Brunswick, Canada. This is not indicative of the density of mobile markets in each state, just the localities of those Mobile Market operators who attended the 2019 summit in Buffalo, NY.



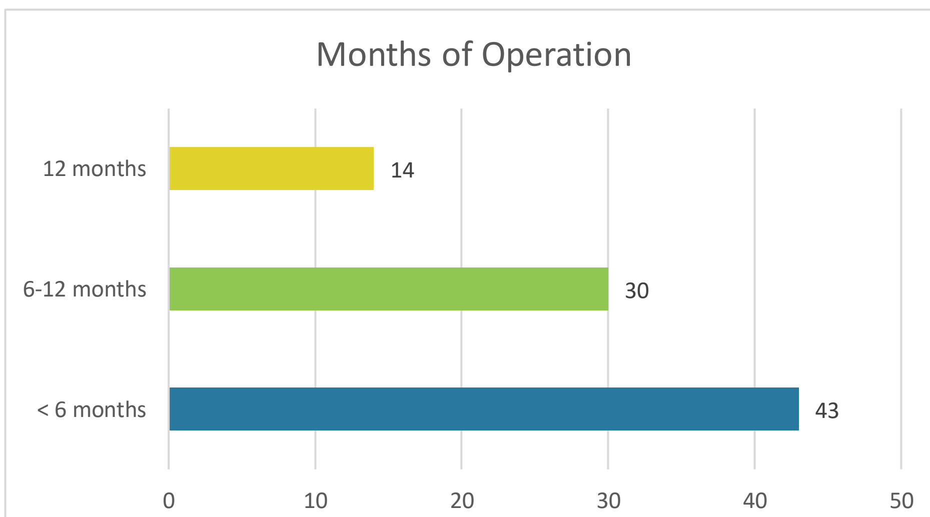


The majority of respondents are the Market Operator (38%) or Executive Director/CEO/President (29%) of their mobile market.



The majority of represented mobile markets are either independent, non-profit organizations (39%; n=10) or part of a larger non-profit organization (38%; n=10).

Most mobile markets operate less than 6 months out of the year (57%; n=43) followed by 6-11 months (25%; n=19) and finally, year-round operation (18%; n=14).

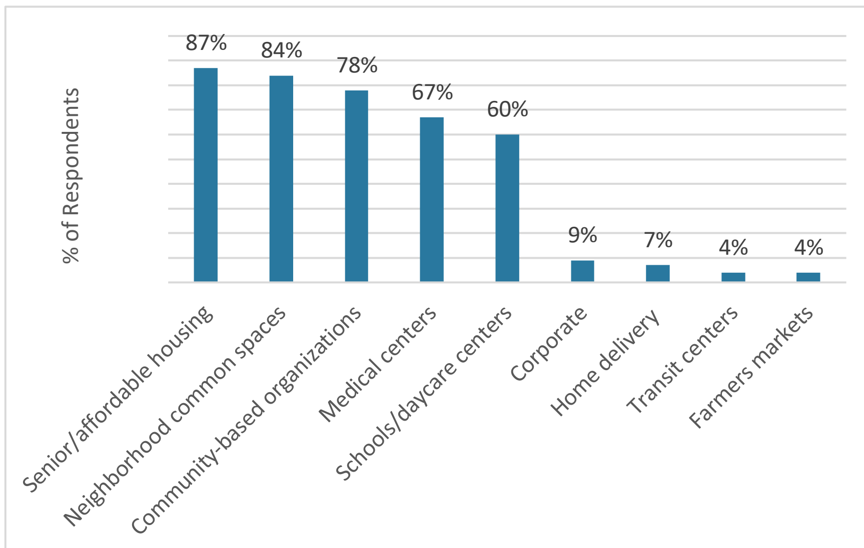


COMMUNITY INTEREST

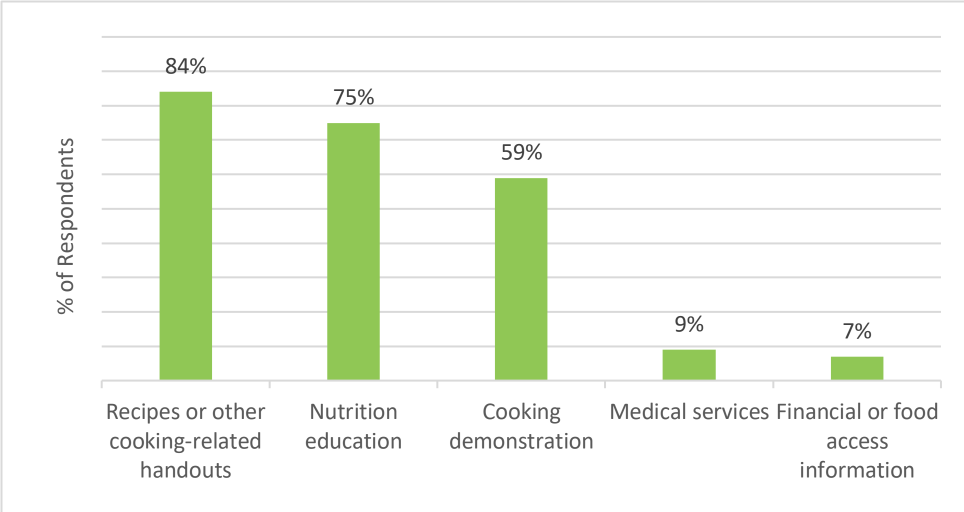
Over two-thirds of individuals surveyed (78%; n=40) reported there is a lot of interest within their community in mobile markets that serve low income areas, while only 18% (n=9) said mobile markets are not well understood or appreciated. Some of the community-level barriers to implementing a mobile market are outreach limitations (n=1), financial support and commitment of individuals (n=2), language barrier (n=1), being able to reach all low-income areas that have food insecurity and maintain interest (n=2) and keeping up with demand (n=1).

MOBILE MARKET SITES

Mobile markets are selling food at a variety of sites, with senior/affordable housing and neighborhood spaces being the most common—followed by neighborhood common spaces, other community-based organizations, medical centers, and schools/daycare centers.

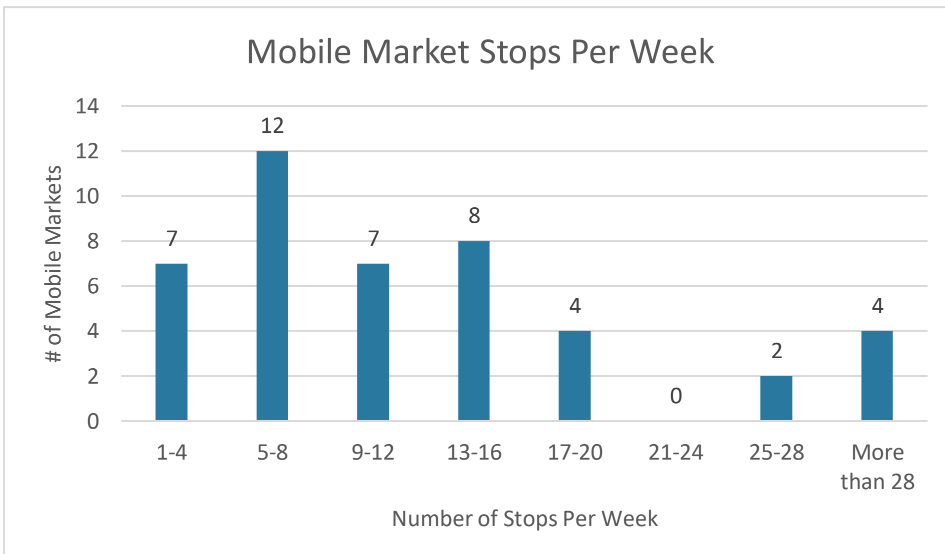


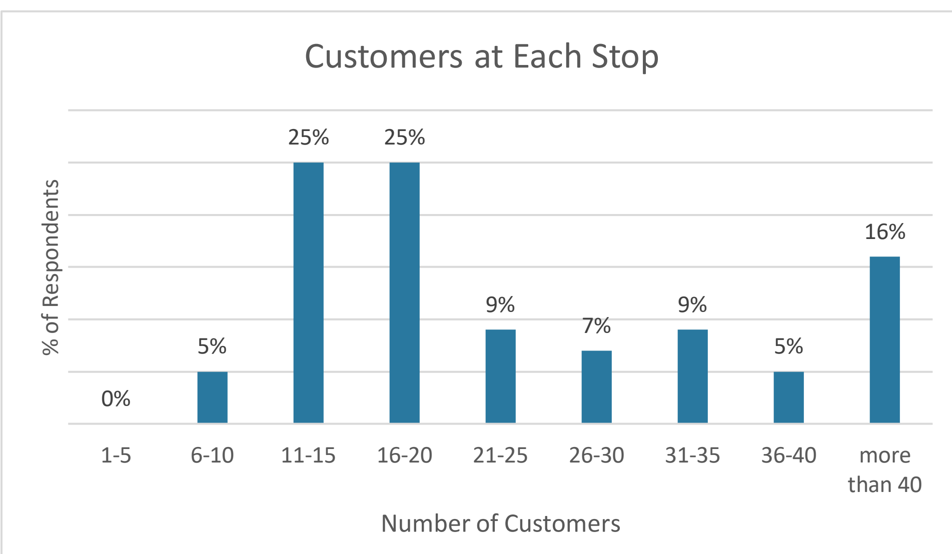
Most mobile markets represented in this survey target low-income customers (91%; n=41 respondents) and most are serving an urban area (67%; n=30 respondents) or a location that is a mix of urban, rural, and/or suburban (27%; n=12).



The majority of mobile markets offer services at their stops including handouts, nutrition education, and/or cooking demonstrations.

The majority of surveyed mobile markets (27%; n=12) made 5-8 stops per week.

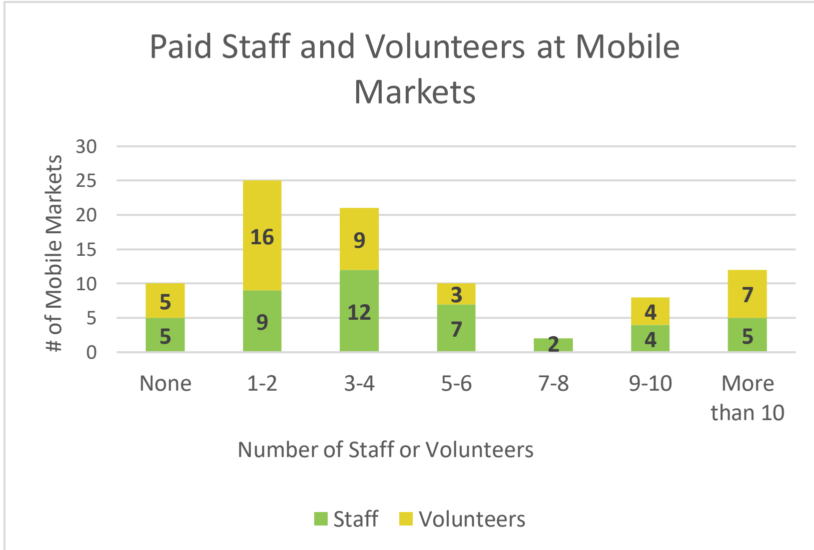


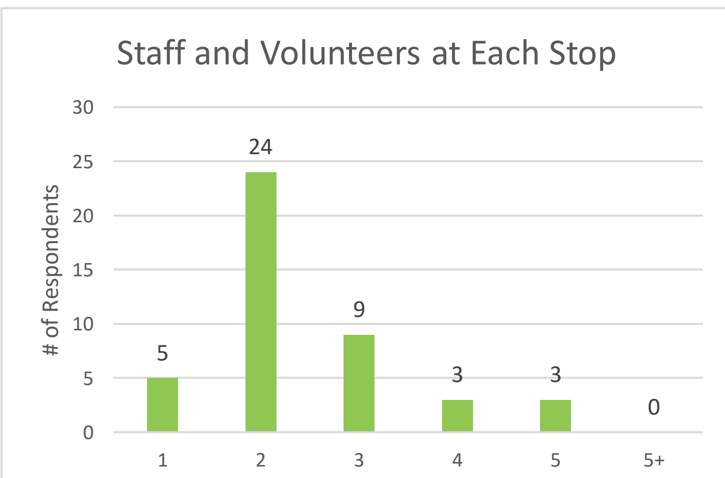


Half (50%; n=22) of mobile markets have between 11 and 20 customers at each stop, and 16% (n=7) have more than 40 customers at each stop.

MOBILE MARKET PERSONNEL

Mobile markets are using a mixture of paid staff and volunteers, with only 11% (n=10) having no paid staff or volunteers. The majority of mobile markets (56%; n=25) have between 1 and 4 volunteers and almost half (47%; n=21) have between 1 and 4 paid staff.

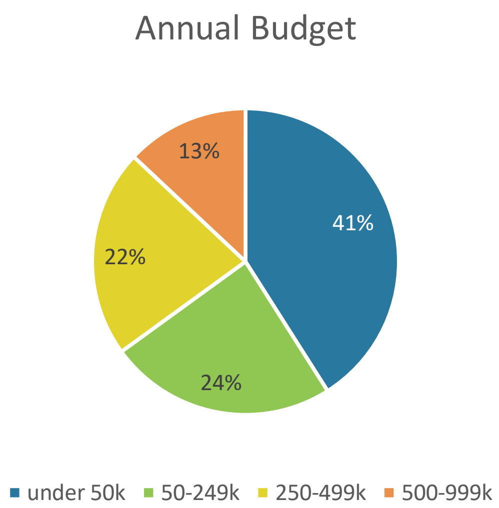


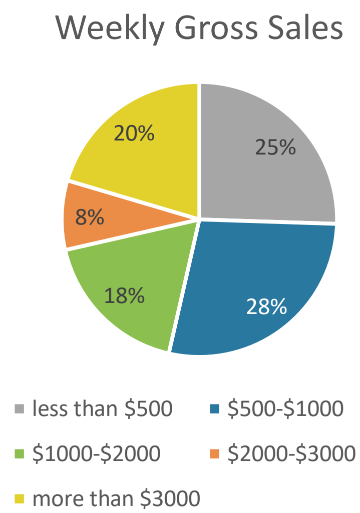


The majority of mobile markets (55%; n=24) have two staff or volunteers present at each stop.

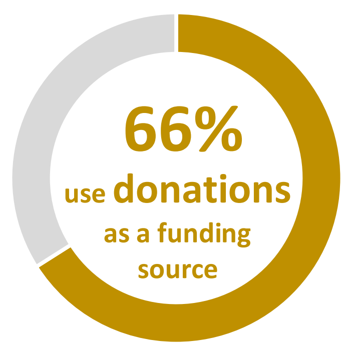
FINANCES

The majority of mobile markets have an annual budget less than $250,000, but there is a wide range. Gross sales vary widely from less than $500 to over $3,000 per week.



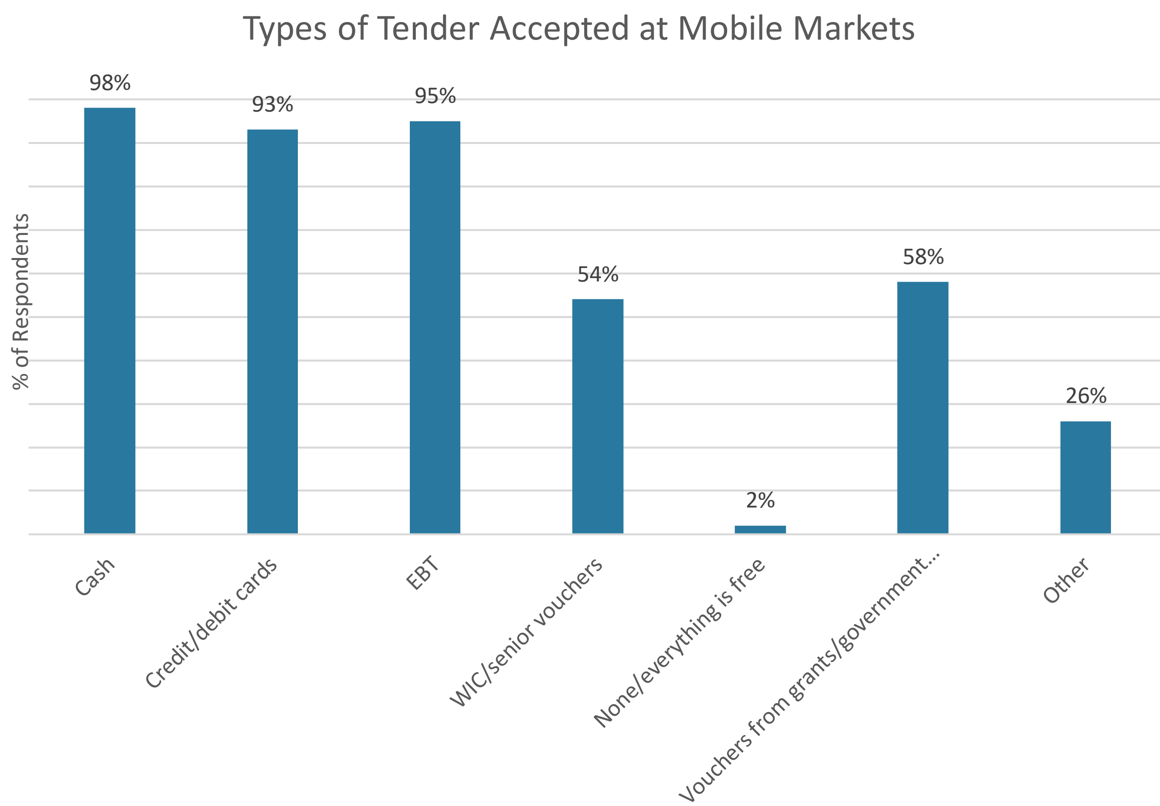


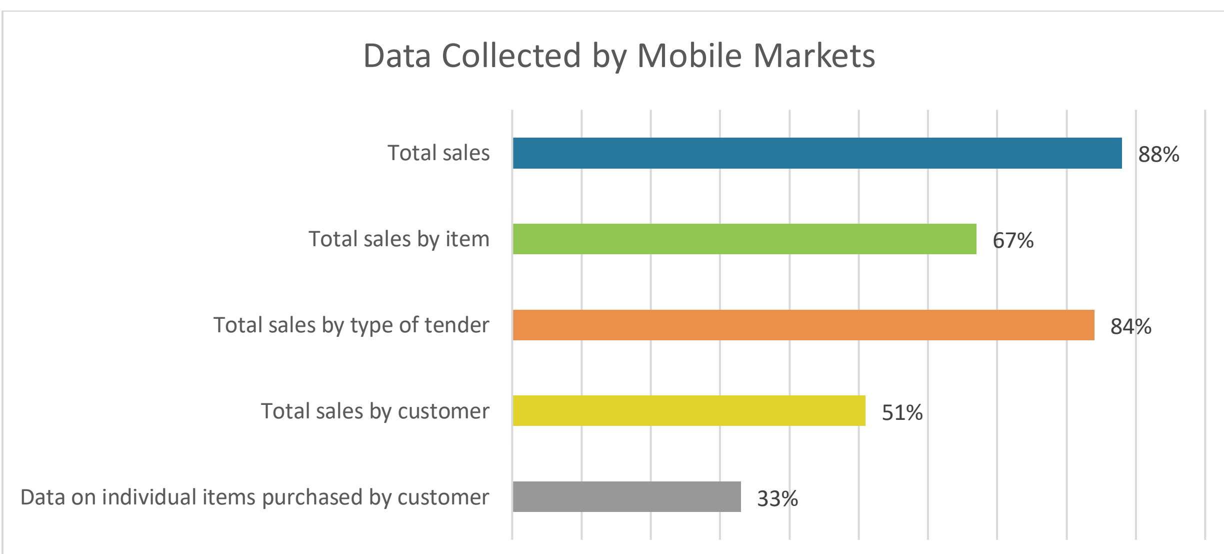
Mobile markets are using multiple funding streams, with market sales, grants, and donations being the most common funding sources.



Mobile markets are mostly purchasing produce to sell. Very few (5%; n=2) are growing everything themselves and no respondents rely completely on donations.

Almost all mobile markets accept cash, credit/debit cards, and EBT as forms of payment. A little over half of mobile markets accept WIC vouchers and vouchers from the government.

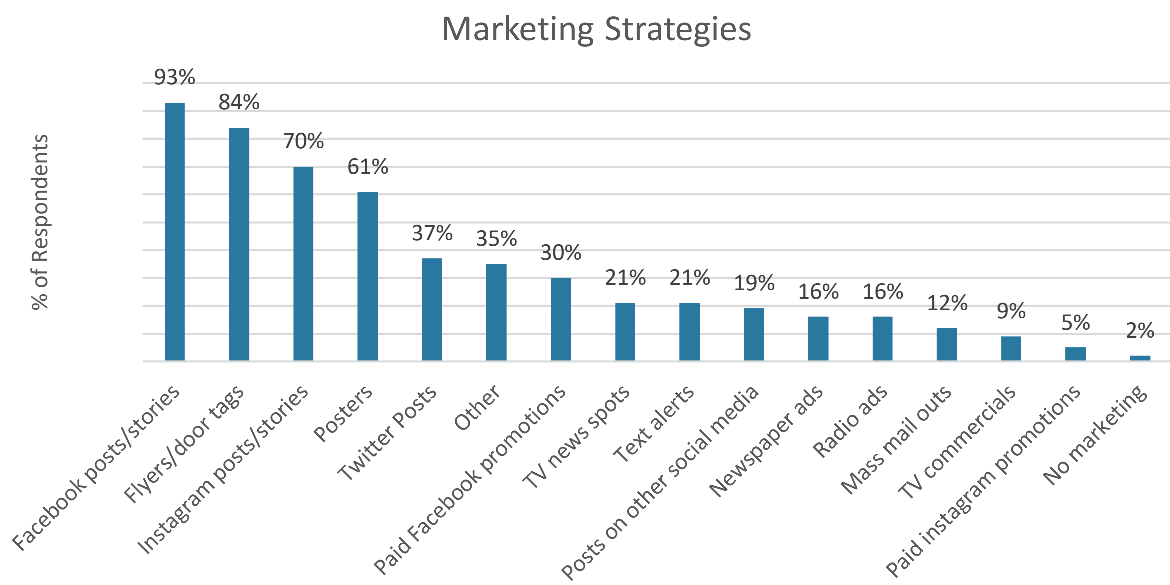




Mobile markets collect a variety of data, including total sales, total sales by type of tender, and total sales by item. Only 2% (n=1) did not have any tracking systems in place.

MARKETING STRATEGIES

The most commonly used marketing strategies are free Instagram posts and or stories, free Facebook posts and or stories, posters, and flyers or door tags. Only 2% (n=1) did not use any marketing strategies.

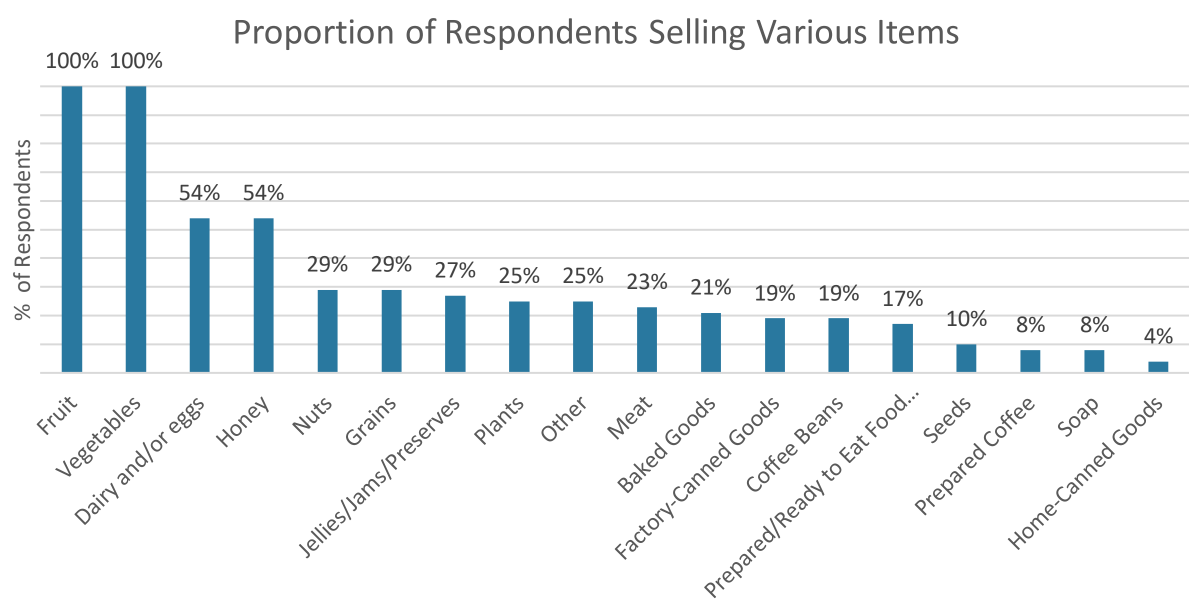


The most effective strategies are represented by this word cloud (the largest words are the most frequently mentioned by respondents):

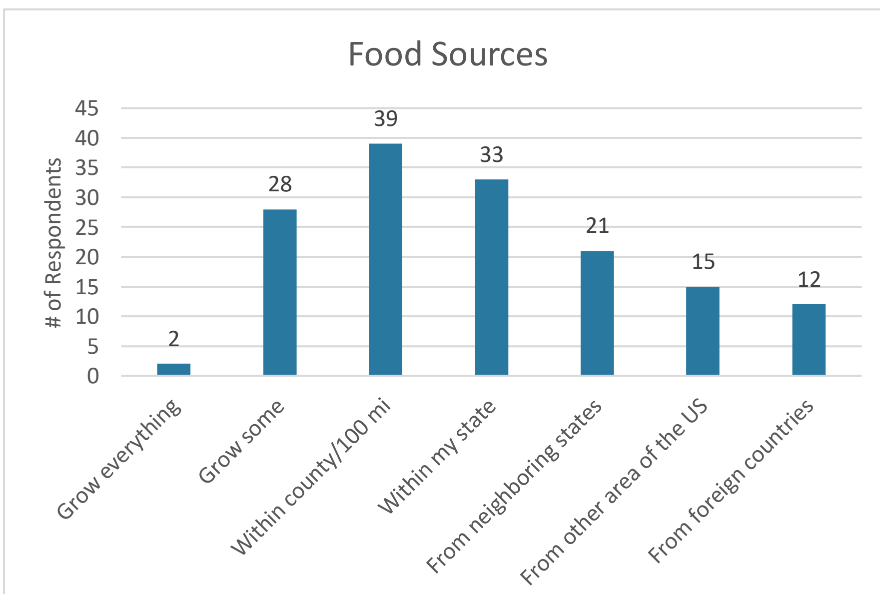
Word of mouth was the most effective marketing strategy; other effective approaches include social media, specifically Facebook, and flyers.

FOOD

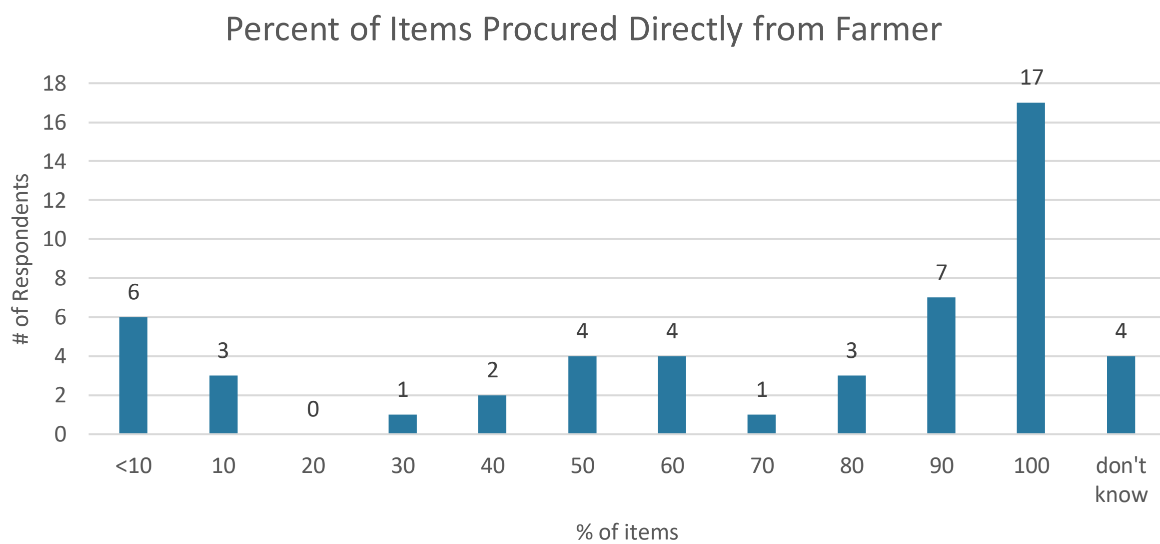
100% of respondents (n=52) sell fruits and vegetables at their mobile markets, with dairy/eggs and honey being the next most common products sold (54%; n=28 for both variables). Other items are shown in the following chart:



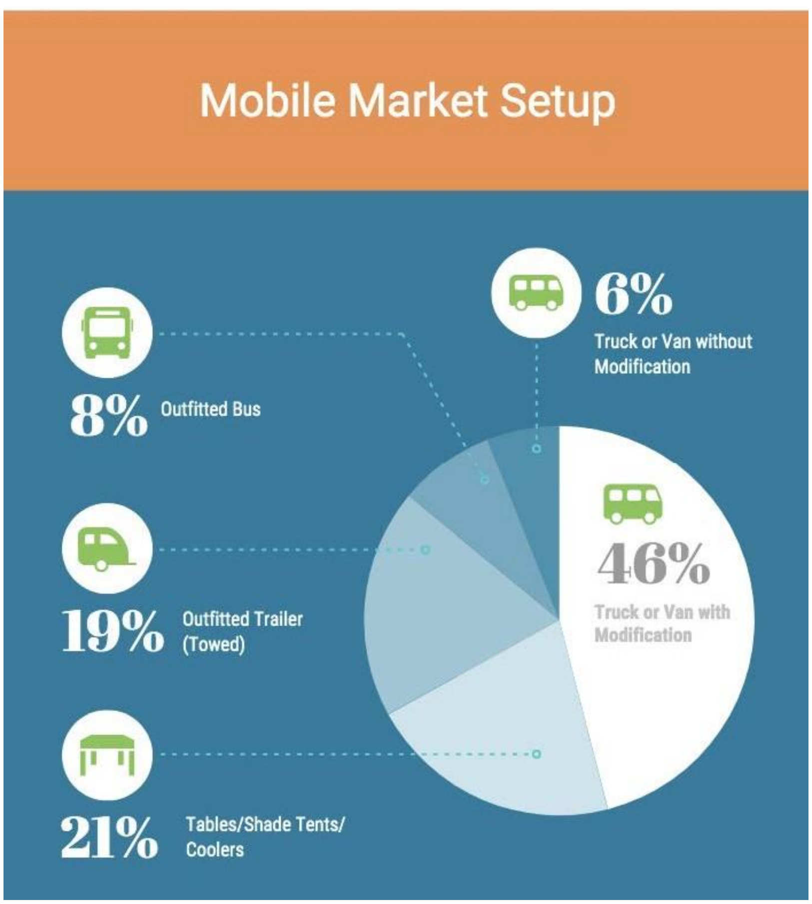
Respondents are sourcing food items for their mobile markets from a variety of sources, with most acquiring products grown in or originating from their county (73%; n=39) or state (63%, n=33). Some are also purchasing items from other areas of the U.S. (29%; n=15) or other countries (23%; n=12).



About a third of respondents (n=17) source all their items directly from the farmer/rancher/producer; another 13% (n=7) procure at least 90% of their items directly from the farmer/rancher/ producer.



SETUP AND EQUIPMENT



The most common mobile market set-up is a modified truck or van (46%); for example, one mobile market used an old delivery truck retrofitted with chest freezers and a pull-out tray.

The majority of respondents (52%) use refrigerators on their mobile market. Other common pieces of equipment are a register system (48%), and overhead lighting (40%).