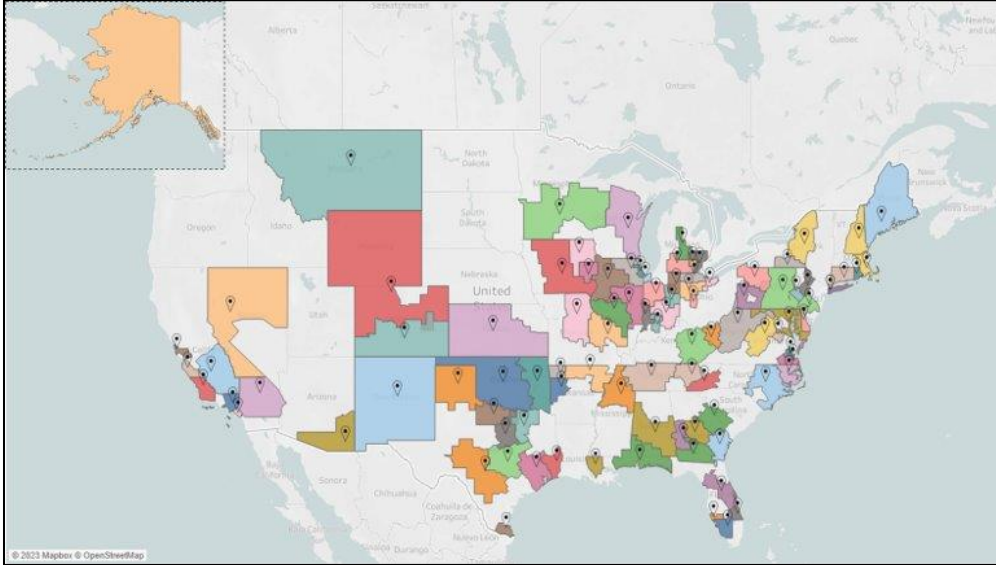
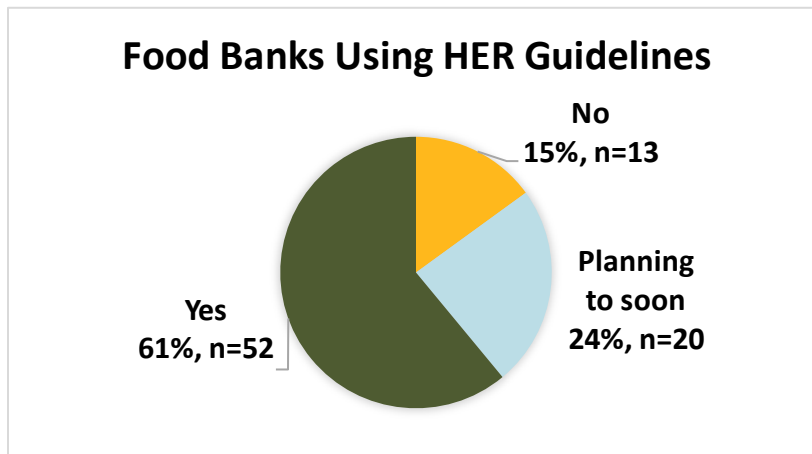


Feeding America Survey about HER Nutrition Guidelines Implementation Findings Brief, June 2023

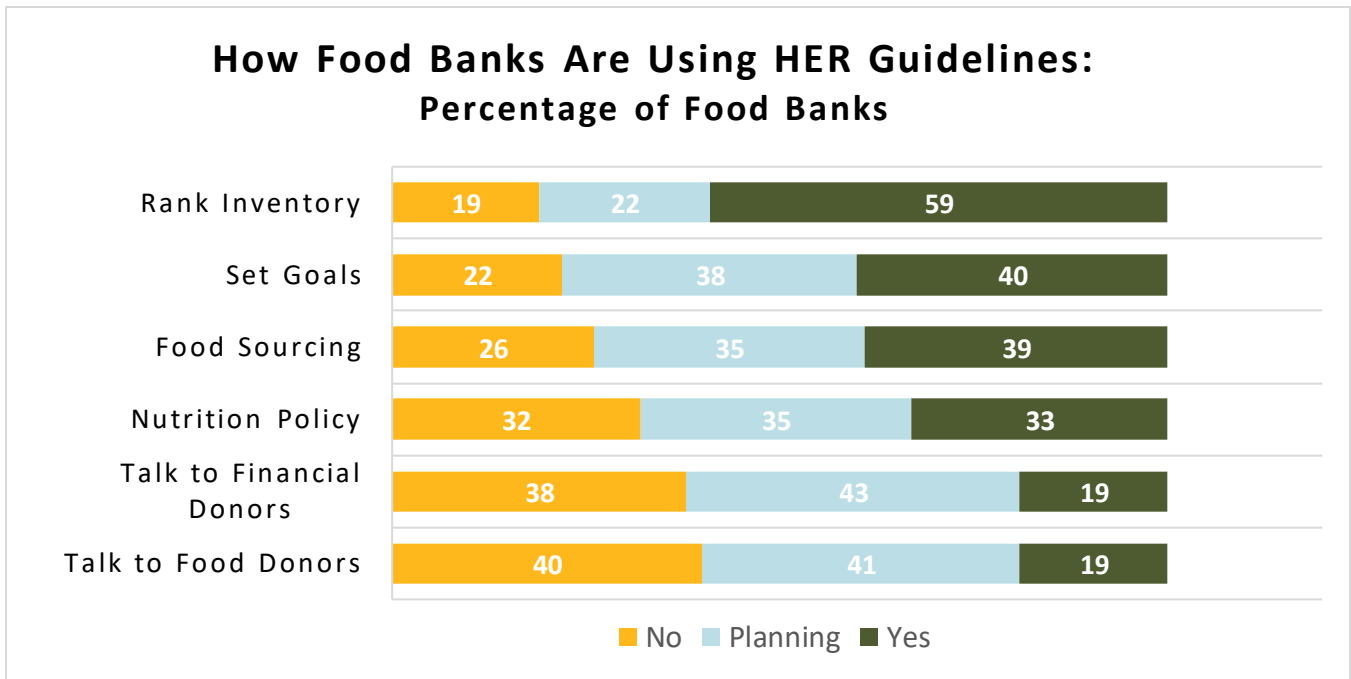
Each year, on the Feeding America Network Activity Report (NAR), member food banks are asked what nutrition ranking system the food bank uses. Based on results collected in November 2022, 73 food banks were identified as using the Healthy Eating Research (HER) Nutrition Guidelines. In addition to these food banks, More Than Food Consulting is aware of several other food banks who received funding from Partnership for a Healthier America (PHA) to implement the HER Guidelines or have indicated that they are using the HER Guidelines. In total, we estimate that 101 food banks nationally are using the HER Guidelines, see map below.



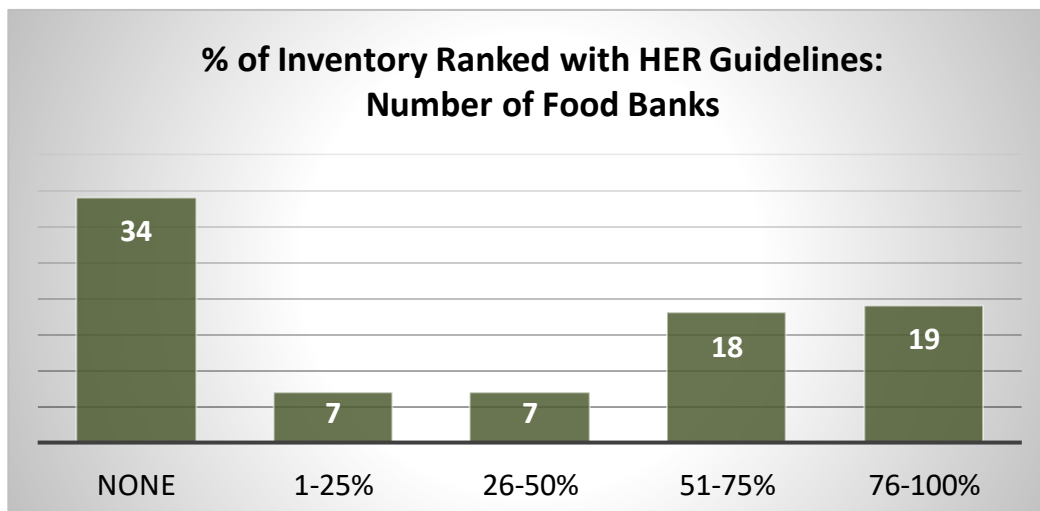
To better understand these numbers, the Feeding America National Office (FANO) sent a brief survey in May 2023 through distribution channels of food banks engaged in food sourcing or community health and nutrition. Questions asked whether and to what extent food banks are using the HER Guidelines. A total of 97 people responded, and 12 food banks had 2 responses. Duplicates were removed to include only one response for each food bank. A total of 85 unduplicated food banks responded, representing 43% of the FANO network. The majority of food banks that responded to the survey (61%) are currently using the HER Guidelines, and another 24% are planning to soon.



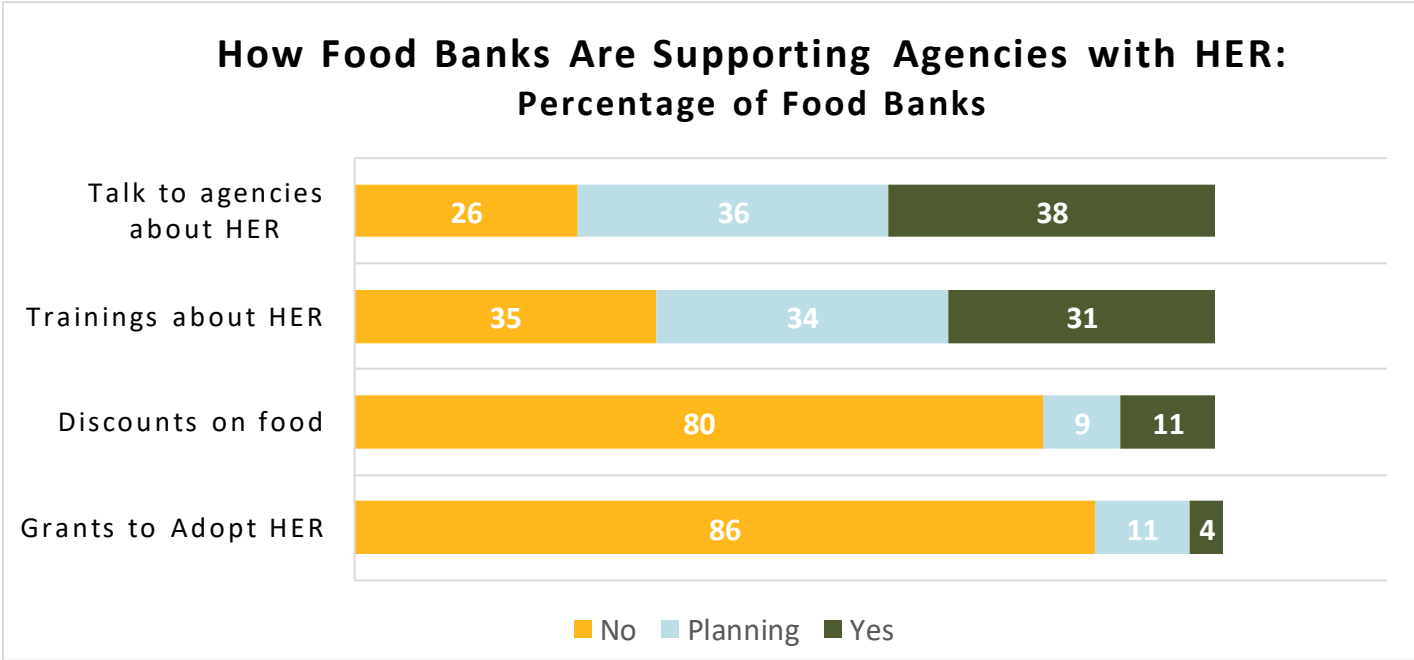
To better understand “how” food banks are using the HER Guidelines, the survey asked several additional questions. Just over half (59%) are ranking food in their inventory. Many food banks use the HER Guidelines to set goals for nutritious food and when making food sourcing decisions. One third of respondents have a nutrition policy that includes the HER Guidelines. Fewer food banks are talking to financial donors or food donors about the HER Guidelines. It is important to note that the "Planning" group exceeds the "No" group for all categories below - indicating now is a critical junction for food banks to begin using the HER Guidelines. There appears to be a lot of momentum to build on the work.



A survey respondent mentioned that “We used this fiscal year as a benchmark and plan to develop goals in the upcoming new fiscal year to increase green and yellow ranked items. In addition, we have begun talking with our vendors regarding the HER Guidelines.” While 34 food banks (40%) have not started ranking food in their inventories, 37 food banks (44%) have ranked over half of their inventory.



While it is typical for food banks to work internally within their operations and food sourcing teams to implement the HER Guidelines, there is tremendous room for growth to support agencies with the guidelines. For example, 38% of food banks currently communicate with their agencies about the HER Guidelines. About one third of food banks provide trainings on the HER Guidelines, and another third are planning to soon. A respondent said *“We are in conversation about how/if we will share HER information with our partners, neighbors, donors, and the larger community.”* Another respondent described *“Other ways to provide support is by sharing the percentage breakdown of the guidelines with every invoice order. The snapshot percentage of Choose Often (green), Choose Sometimes (yellow) and Choose Rarely (red) can really be eye opening and have agencies feel empowered about the foods they choose for their community members.”*



The vast majority of food banks currently do not provide discounts for green or yellow food or provide grant funding to agencies to adopt the HER Guidelines. These results highlight opportunities for growth. A respondent described how *“Education around the ‘why’ is a key component. Supporting agencies to understand: how food insecurity and poor health intersect, how our nutrition policy can inform the foods that come into our inventory and out to our communities, and how with the guidance of the HER guidelines, we can collectively work towards creating a nutrition secure community.”*

The results should be viewed with caution as the information is from 85 food banks in the network, and may not be representative of all food banks, especially those outside of the Feeding America network. We can use the results to understand how to better support food banks and provide resources to continue to implement the HER Guidelines. More Than Food Consulting is collaborating with FANO to help food banks implement the HER Guidelines.

