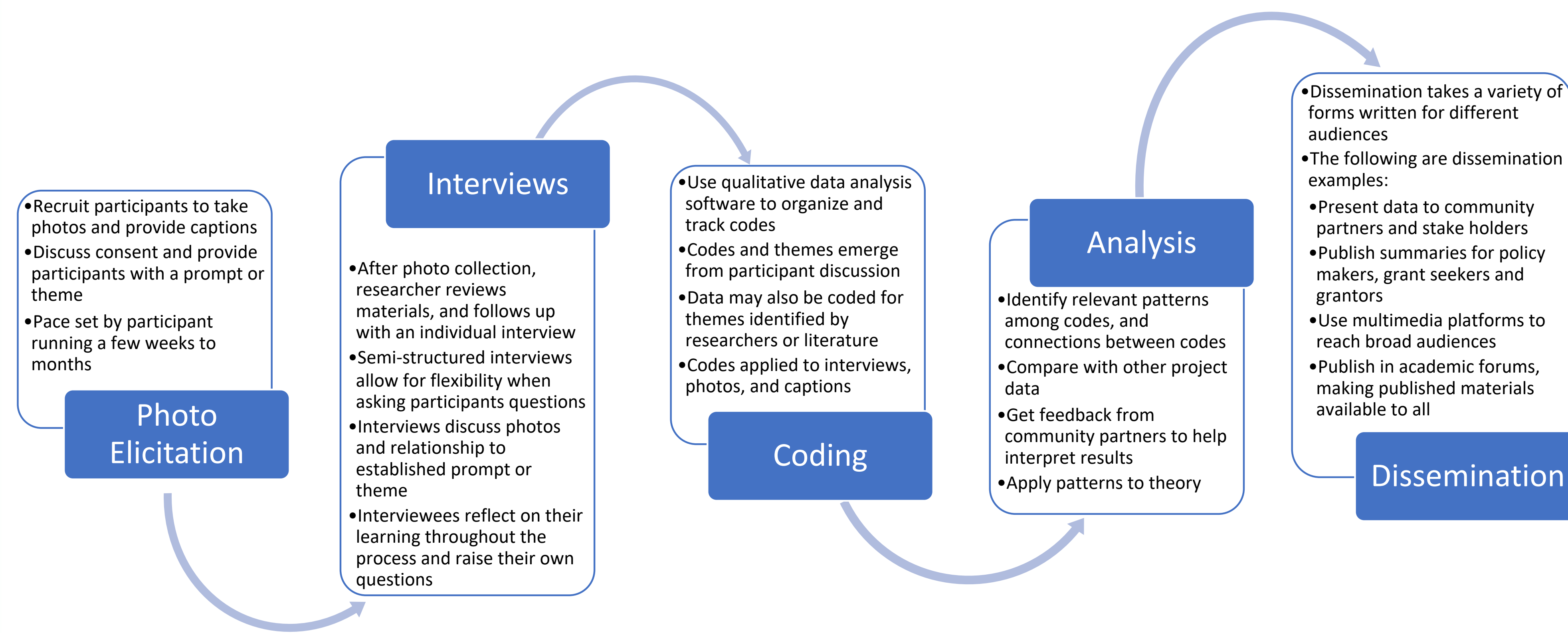


## Research Question and Process

Research question: How do Flint residents navigate the current food system and what barriers do they encounter when attempting to access healthy food?

Why? Understand *how* people navigate the food system and *why* they make the food choices they do for their households.



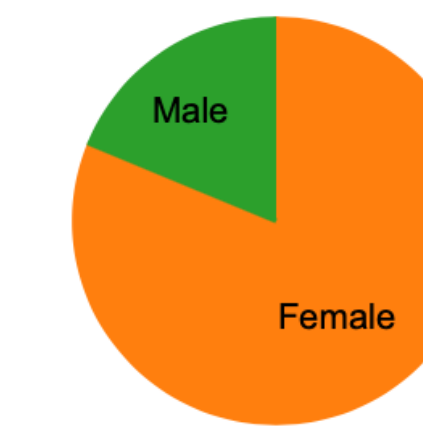
## Participants

Flint residents, non-food system experts, with diverse backgrounds, ages 26-66. Sixteen residents completed the project.

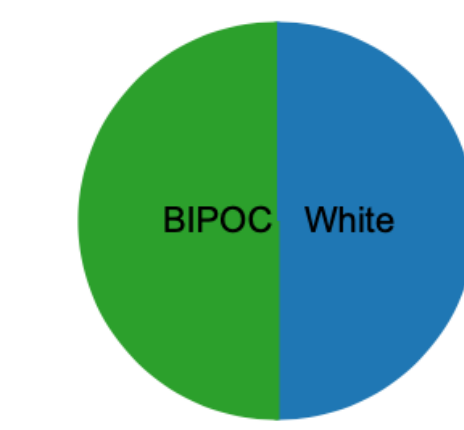
Photos		Interview Time	
Average per Participant	22	Average Interview	1 hour 15 minutes
<b>Total Photos</b>	<b>341</b>	<b>Time total</b>	<b>20 hours and 26 minutes</b>

Photos Also Have Corresponding Captions.

Participant Gender Makeup



Participant Racial Makeup



## FLPP Photo Project: Summary of What We Learned

- Participants reminded us that food and eating are social acts. The ways we care for one another with food and incorporate food into celebrations are just as important as meeting our biological and nutritional needs.
- These social factors are crucial when considering leverage points for future food system interventions because food decision making at the household level is influenced by family and community networks. These networks impact how people make decisions about food and health.
- The COVID-19 pandemic had both positive and negative effects on participants--including increased stress around shopping and job loss, while also providing people with increased EBT benefits and more opportunities to learn about cooking or spend time cooking with family.
- The photos revealed examples of how people navigate challenges and barriers in the current food system and emphasize the strength of community networks as a support system for achieving food security.

## Overview of Research Findings

Table 1: Dominant themes from photos, captions, and interviews

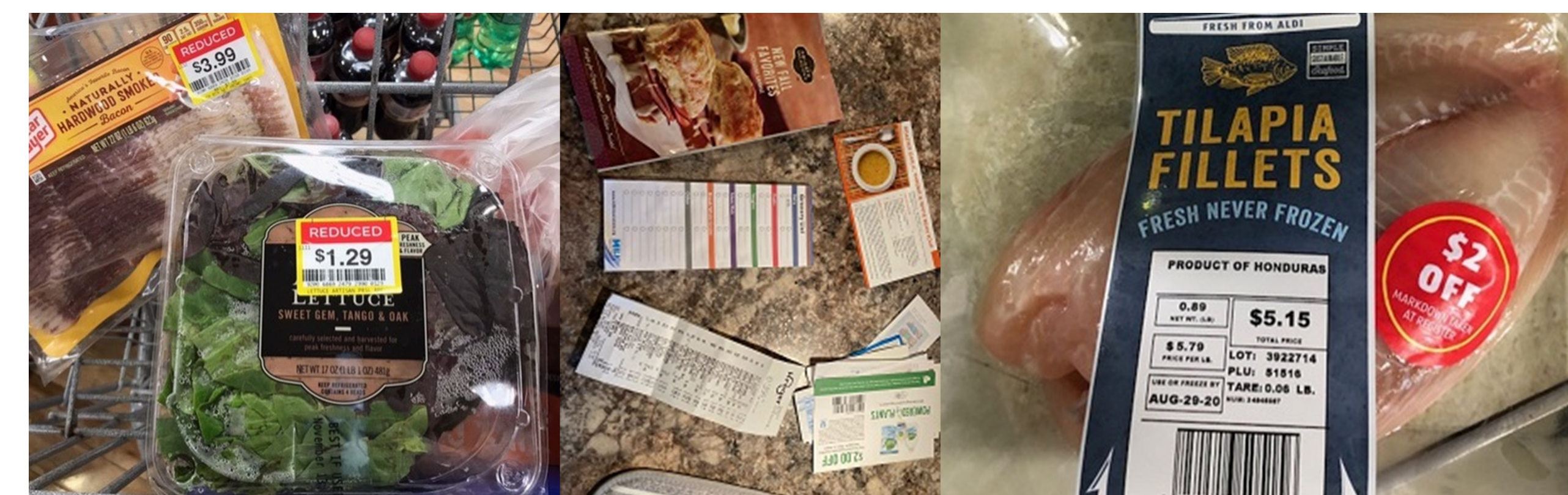
Theme	Number of Times Coded	Definition
Affordability	314	Being able to buy groceries, or all the groceries needed, with the money a customer has available
Grocery Stores	363	A store that mostly sells foodstuff and vital household items
Cooking	317	Knowing how to make food, or use ingredients to make meals
Family	261	People related through blood, marriage, or social relationships. Can include instances of social bonding, relationships, or different food activities involving community members.
Healthy	206	Knowing what food is good for the human body and knowing what foods to eat to manage specific health problems (for example, managing diabetes or mitigating lead exposure with food)
Community Connections	174	People who are connected because they belong to the same community. Can include instances of social bonding, relationships, or different food activities involving community members.
Transportation	158	Experience of people getting from one place to another to buy groceries
Gardening	160	Growing your own food
Restaurants	137	Businesses that make ready to eat food to sell to customers
Helping	96	Helping people take care of themselves by cooking, buying, or delivering food to them
Sharing	94	Giving food to people without expecting something in return
Shortages	88	Not being able to buy certain foods due to a lack of supply related to the pandemic
Social Bonding	68	Using food to personally connect with others

### Findings:

- Table 1 (left) describes the 13 themes that emerged, which were discussed by at least 75% of participants.
- Some example photographs and captions are outlined (right) for four of the themes.

### Affordability

Three examples of photos in this theme. Caption for center photo: "My strategy while going to the grocery store so I can get in and out quicker is to go early in the morning. I have a grocery list from recipes or something I NEED. I shop for what's on sale and usually what I have coupons for. I'm picky about my produce so I don't care for the online shopping. I'm usually in and out within 20-30mins. Before I COVID-19 it would take around 2 hours so I've cut it drastically."



### Sharing

Three examples of photos in this theme. Caption for center photo: "\$2 for stuffing mix and items from the pantry, I'm feeding a family with two loved ones in the hospital."



### Healthy

Two examples of photos in this theme. Caption for right photo: "During the 'Stay at Home Order' I got weekly Flint Fresh boxes. I recommended the service to many others. Especially people receiving benefits."



### Family

Two examples of photos in this theme. Caption for left photo: "Growing food was new to many people during the pandemic. I have always had a small garden but this year, because they [my grandkids] stayed with me I was able to introduce gardening to my 4, 5 & 6 year old grandchildren. We also spent a morning picking blueberries."



## More About the Flint Leverage Points Project

The Flint Leverage Points Project is a collaboration between researchers and community partners to find ways to change the food system in Flint so that it is more equitable, healthy, and sustainable. The Community Foundation of Greater Flint (CFGF) is partnering with Michigan State University (MSU) to conduct this research. We are advised by a Community Consultative Panel (CCP) comprised of representatives from the Flint community who work in the food space. We are looking at the whole food system involved in producing, distributing, preparing, eating and recycling food in Flint to find patterns that are keeping it in an undesirable state. We will also identify strengths and opportunities within the food system that could be built upon. This project will produce an analysis of how community partners can intervene in the Flint food system to create positive change. For more information about the project visit: [www.canr.msu.edu/FlintFood](http://www.canr.msu.edu/FlintFood)

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