

Vanessa Carranza

Social Welfare Policy and Services

Doctor Herrera

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First Hand Experience Groceries

Having first hand experience of the challenges and dilemmas low income families face has been stressful and time consuming. Being limited to a certain amount of money that could be spent for a family of four, led to thinking carefully about food that could be bought in the supermarket. Such food had to last for at least a week. While seeking for specials, I was reminded of the importance of using coupons and how SNAP is fundamental in the nutrition and health of families. Usually, without having a limit in spending one doesn't understand the difficult situations the head of household faces. Having to place myself in such shoes made me realize that individuals that support their families have to make calculations and think about what food would mostly sustain and last.

While searching and analyzing prices of goods, I had to choose brands that I could afford. As such brands provided the lowest prices compared to other well known. I realized that if I could buy fast food during the week, my family of four would eat everyday. Sadly, due to the high cost of food while creating the dinner menu I realized that such food was not enough. I realized that two to three days, my family of four would not eat or limit to eggs without sides or snacks. I have understood that low income households and those living under the poverty line cannot afford a healthy diet. Note that fruits and vegetables were very expensive, associating low income poor quality dietary

intakes. The article titled, “Nutrition quality of food purchases varies by household income: the Shopper Study”, stated that compared to those with higher income, lower income individuals consume fewer fruits and vegetables, more sugar-sweetened beverages and have lower overall diet quality (French, 2019). Food purchases are very important to improve the health of household members, but having a low income limits such food being consumed.

In conclusion, I have learned the challenges low income individuals are faced with on a daily basis. Those head of household are required to provide for their families, not only are they limited to consuming healthy food but as well impacts their mental health. Those responsible to provide for their families are going through high anxiety levels, stress, and the thought that maybe they will not be able to eat for certain days. Based on such experience with creating a menu for breakfast, lunch, and dinner I have understood the importance of programs such as SNAP in the lives of families. Additionally, with such limited income of \$162.00, money was not enough to provide for a household of four. I came to the conclusion that I needed another job, to provide a better life for my household members.

Reference:

French, S.A., Tangney, C.C., Crane, M.M. et al. Nutrition quality of food purchases varies by household income: the SHoPPER study. *BMC Public Health* 19, 231 (2019).
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-019-6546-2>