



HUNGER FREE

KANSAS

SUMMARY OF CROWDSOURCING ANALYSIS

282*
IDEAS

FROM **81**
KS ZIP CODES

72
IDEAS

related to food distribution (including 44 specifically related to the charitable food system)

55

IDEAS related to education (for community members or within schools)

62

IDEAS related to policy

TOP THREE AREAS OF THE FOOD SYSTEM REPRESENTED IN THE IDEAS



* 164 submissions were received. Submissions could include multiple ideas.

CAMPAIGN BACKGROUND

In February of 2024, the Kansas Health Foundation launched a four-week crowdsourcing campaign to compile innovative ideas to tackling food insecurity in the state. The goal of the campaign was to challenge organizational assumptions, consider new ideas and to listen to as many Kansans as possible. As a result, 164 submissions from 81 zip codes across the state were received, resulting in a total of 282 ideas.

Analysis of submissions is descriptive, assessing only the wording provided and does not assess the quality or feasibility.

IDEA THEMES FROM THE CROWDSOURCING DATA

IDEA THEME	COUNT
Improving Charitable Food Systems – Improving the funding, operation or infrastructure of charitable food systems, including pantries, food banks and communal meal settings. Some examples included increasing donations, amount of food available, refrigeration or connecting the charitable food system to other ideas such as food recovery and community garden or growing efforts.	44
Education for Community Members – Providing educational programs, resources or information campaigns for community members. Most ideas focused on education related to preparing and eating nutritious food. Other focus areas were education on how to grow your own food, budget for daily expenses, and make healthy food purchases and how to apply for or access existing benefit programs or community resources. A few ideas also focused on teaching food preservation methods such as canning.	32
Community Gardens – Building or maintaining community gardens. Gardens generally focused on vegetables, but some ideas also included fruit trees. Garden ideas ranged in scale and partnerships, including very localized to systems-level interventions. Community gardens were also regularly discussed in terms of where food surplus could be sold or donated.	25
Education Within Schools – Modifying curriculum or offering extracurricular activities for students, primarily in K-12. This most frequently focused on growing, through school gardens or partnerships with local growers. Additionally, cooking, nutrition and preservation courses and information about available safety net programs were mentioned in some ideas. Additionally, some discussed adding a greater nutrition focus to school meals and providing additional technical assistance to schools for implementing child nutrition programs. Ideas focused on populations such as older students, teens and college-age individuals. They described students also giving back to the community through applied learning or through their future careers.	23

IDEA THEME

Business-Led Economic Models of Food Security – Using a business model for funding solutions to address food system challenges. Generally, models focused on either growing food or distributing it, but several proposed simultaneous investments in multiple levels of a community food system. Growing models described options to increase local growers, provide jobs and partner with neighborhoods and developers to transition to edible landscaping options, such as fruit trees. Selling models included establishing new grocery stores or co-ops and collaboration or creation of farmers markets and restaurants. One model described funding the same distribution approach as a pharmacy, noting the value this would provide in rural areas.

Transportation – Improving transit infrastructure or services for delivering food to consumers. Two participants described this as similar to an “ice cream truck” but for food. Delivery of food mainly included groceries but also included prepared food delivery for those with limited access. How food was transported to consumers varied from charitable system-led to partnerships with businesses with existing delivery infrastructure like Walmart or UPS. Some ideas instead focused on transportation of people to food, generally referring to communal meal sites or pantries.

Modifying or Expanding Safety Net Programs – Increasing access to or use of safety net programs such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Medicaid, Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). Modifications to SNAP, WIC and TANF focused on improving accessibility for both consumers and food purchasing location with submitters referencing barriers to application process or a slow process. Additionally, an idea referenced ending components of SNAP restrictions such as categorical eligibility, work and child support requirements, and the ban for those convicted of drug-related felonies. Other SNAP-focused ideas referenced “double up food bucks” and “triple up food bucks” programs. Several ideas proposed opt-out instead of opt-in SNAP or WIC. Four ideas focused on expanding Medicaid in Kansas.

Producer Supports – Benefiting or supporting local producers through partnerships as well as policy and financial support. Five ideas described a farm to school partnership that focused on school meals or educational opportunities that financially benefited the local producer. Other ideas described options for assisting local producers with the selling or distribution of their food through farmers markets or food recovery efforts. Food recovery focused on buying unsold, unsellable or “ugly” produce for charitable distribution. Policy supports included subsidies for fruit and vegetable production, protecting agricultural land for local producers or a universal basic income specifically for local producers.

COUNT

21

15

15

14

IDEA THEME	COUNT
Advocacy Campaigns – Raising awareness and prompting action related to food security, food system needs or existing programs. The focus of these campaigns varied. For example, five ideas focused on campaigns addressing definitions and shifting the narratives related to food security and “healthy” nutrition. There were also ideas related to raising public awareness of the value of SNAP and what other states that restricted SNAP have seen happen. One idea was to leverage YouTube influencer Mr. Beast to showcase the work of neighborhood food systems to increase interest and support of the work. A separate but related purpose of these campaigns fell under a category of putting pressure on authority figures within the system to be accountable to this work, including, for example, calling out legislative actions to restrict SNAP, reducing EPA oversight of meat processors and pressuring producers to lower food prices.	13
Improved Coordination – Increasing and improving connections between all stakeholders within the food system. Ideas focused on the concept of breaking down ‘silos’ to address segmentation of resources and communication. Ideas also identified a need to re-envision or develop new food distribution hubs to assist with coordination.	12
Income or Wage Action – Addressing poverty to address food insecurity. Ideas ranged in approach. Six ideas focused specifically on universal basic income experiments. Other ideas included raising the minimum wage, passing “living wage” policies and pursuing wage equity. Two ideas specifically referenced the importance of taking this action with grocery store workers, noting the stores are not paying enough to live on.	12
Novel Growing Techniques – Implementing a year-round, low-resource growing technique to increase growing opportunities for community, school and producer growing efforts. These ideas referenced hydroponics, geothermal solar greenhouses, vertical gardens, and high tunnel and shipping container grow operations. One idea also described repurposing unused classrooms into greenhouses.	11
Child Nutrition Programs – Increasing utilization of child nutrition programs. Eight ideas suggested universal free school meals in Kansas. Four ideas described improving access or administration of the summer food service program or summer meals, with additional ideas suggesting providing free meals to adults, supporting public transit to Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) sites, or drive-thru meal sites. One idea described eliminating school meal debt.	11
Policy Partnered with Grocery Stores or Food Purchasing Locations – Improving organizational and governmental policy addressing grocery store operation, sales or placement. Three ideas described tax incentives with the goal of supporting the opening of new grocery stores or installing refrigeration for storage of fresh food. Additionally, there were efforts to increase affordability and availability of food, including eliminating food sales tax and stocking more SNAP, WIC and Double Up Food Bucks (DUFB) eligible products. Another idea was to use lottery profits to fund efforts, including a food voucher for families for exclusive food purchase at one grocery store chain.	8

IDEA THEME	COUNT
Leveraging the Health Care Workforce – Screening by health care workers, including physicians, community health workers, pharmacists and other medical personnel, to provide treatment and resources for people who are food insecure. Other ideas were to provide local “clinics” related to food or working with local hospitals to house community garden operations. Although all of these ideas relied upon the health care workforce to assist with food insecurity, only two ideas specifically described Food is Medicine approaches such as a Food Rx model.	6
Home Growing Techniques – Teaching community members to turn their own homes or yards into gardens. Two ideas specifically described providing at home kits and education to low-income community members to grow their own food.	4
Community Connection – Celebrating community gifts and fellowship. These ideas centered on the community coming together to share resources, collaborate and develop a “sense of shared responsibility.” One idea describes difficulty with their community’s past interventions not addressing food insecurity needs, but rather that the true need was to address loneliness and community connection because “we simply do not know what [their needs] are until we know our neighbors.”	4
Government-Led Economic Model – Supporting the food system through economic models led by government entities. This theme is distinct from the Policy Partnered with Grocery Stores or Food Purchasing Locations theme due to its management and distribution model. The Policy theme included budgetary policy or incentives to engage business. This economic model theme involves the state and local governments taking control of distribution of food and resources within a food system, including designating land or unused spaces like basements in public buildings for growing, funding and training of employees to work within the system, and allocation of food at no cost to consumers.	3
Additional Funding of Programs or People Doing Anti-Hunger Work – Expanding through funding or support the capacity of existing “people doing anti-poverty policy work” or programs such as those that provide free school meals.	3
Research or Data – Developing new data and research tools to track food insecurity in Kansas. One idea described a need to “figure out root causes of hunger.” Another idea suggested partnering with the Department of Motor Vehicles to screen for food security every year.	3

Note: Count is of idea submissions within each theme. Because ideas regularly included multiple components, the same submission may be reflected in multiple themes. Three ideas that did not rise to the level of a key theme but offered additional ideas included child care subsidies, sustainable energy generation and policy action focused on sugar-reduction.

TECHNICAL, ADAPTIVE OR BOTH

FRAMING	CHARACTERISTICS	COUNT
Technical	Clear problem, clear solution, relies on experts or authority figures action, change described as fixing the problem	127
Both	Both technical and adaptive characteristics	28
Adaptive	Problems and solutions that require learning, broad stakeholder base, experimental solutions and actions, change described as making progress	9

Note: Submissions were categorized as technical, adaptive or both based on the characteristics described in the submission. Submissions were assessed using only the wording provided in framing the ideas.

O’Malley, E. & Fabris McBride, J. (2023). *When Everyone Leads* (pp. 60). Bard Press.

LEVEL OF SOLUTIONS

The proposed ideas were evaluated based on their level — systems, organizational or individual. A key question in deciding the level of the solution was “at what level would someone interact with this idea?” Submissions often included multiple levels. For example, the overall concept of “community gardens” inspired ideas that spanned all three levels.

Individual-level garden ideas focused on skill building, education and “lifelong skills” for youth and adults at a single garden or location.

Organizational-level garden ideas focused more on interaction with other organizations within the system such as food banks, schools and community recreation centers.

Systems-level gardens ideas focused on the overall food system and land use and often discussed large stakeholder groups and cross-sector collaboration.

LEVEL	COUNT
Systems	79
Individual	54
Organizational	44

Note: Count is of idea submissions within each theme. Because ideas regularly included multiple components, the same submission may be reflected in multiple themes.

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POPULATIONS OF FOCUS LIFTED UP IN IDEAS

Children and families

People with low-income

Pantry clients

Those with limited access either due to geography or resources

Business and industry, such as local producers

People with housing instability or who are “homeless”

People with disabilities

Older adults

Non-English speakers

College students

“Vulnerable populations”

The “whole community”

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