

2023

PILOT PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Wichita Healthy Corner Store Initiative



CREATED BY:



The FOOD TRUST



CREATED FOR:



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WHO WE ARE:

New Venture Advisors LLC (NVA) is a strategy consulting firm specializing in food system planning and food enterprise development. Our team is committed to environmental sustainability, social impact, equity, diversity, and inclusion as we help our clients realize their vision for a more just and sustainable food system.



The Food Trust (TFT) works with neighborhoods, institutions, retailers, farmers, and policymakers across the country to ensure delicious, nutritious food for all. Backed by three decades of research and evaluation, our holistic community-centered approach to nutrition security weaves together three core programming elements — access, affordability and education — as well as a focus on advocating for public policy solutions.



01 Background

The impetus to create a Healthy Corner Store Initiative (HCSI) in Wichita builds upon a decade-long conversation in the City about the disparities experienced by Wichita residents when it comes to accessing healthy foods.

As early as 2013, the Health and Wellness Coalition raised alarms about the lack of access to healthy food in Wichita neighborhoods. The coalition commissioned a study to assess food environments in Wichita, and found that:

- In 2013, 44 square miles of Wichita were considered “food deserts.” These low-income census tracts were scattered throughout the city, providing challenges for residents to access healthy food. [1]
- There are wide price disparities, with the most affluent Wichita ZIP Codes enjoying the lowest food prices and some of the lowest-income ZIP Codes experiencing the highest food prices.[2]

Food System Master Plan 2020-2022

Throughout 2020, the Health & Wellness Coalition of Wichita, the City of Wichita, Sedgwick County and community partners created a [Food System Master Plan](#). The Food System Master Plan, which was adopted by both the City and County Board of Commissioners in early 2022, specifically stated that a key objective was to: “Address the 44 sq. miles of the city of Wichita that are considered “food deserts” and lack access to healthy food options.”

Under this objective, the top-ranked action step was to “*Work with existing small grocers and convenience stores to incentivize and enable them to stock fresh, healthy food options.*”

[1] “Wichita Food Deserts: Why We Should Care,” Health and Wellness Coalition of Wichita, winter 2013, <https://hwcwichita.org/content/upload/files/Wichita%20Food%20Deserts.pdf>.

[2] Ibid.

**"Key Objective:
Address the 44
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*-Wichita Food System
Master Plan,
adopted 2022*

Access to Grocery Report 2021

In the fall of 2021, spurred by recent grocery store closures, the City of Wichita contracted with New Venture Advisors (NVA) to provide analysis and information to equip city leaders in evaluating potential solutions to food access challenges facing Wichita's neighborhoods. The city contracted with NVA to provide a memo and presentation to the city council that would summarize the key food access challenges of residents currently facing the city, analyze two business plan proposals to address recent grocery closures, highlight best practices from peer cities, and make recommendations for city leaders to consider. The recommendations from the Access to Grocery report included:

- Adopt the recently presented City of Wichita/Sedgwick County Master Food Plan.
- Leverage the lessons learned from peer cities to create a Healthy Corner Store Initiative (HCSI) pilot program in one of the city's Low-income/Low-access neighborhoods.
- Utilize American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and in-state funding sources to support Food Plan implementation and the Healthy Corner Store Initiative Pilot Program.

Based upon these recommendations, in July of 2022, the City moved forward to create a Healthy Corner Store Initiative pilot program. Wichita City Council voted to allocate \$1,000,000 in ARPA funds to support the creation of a HCSI pilot program. The city then contracted with consultants from New Venture Advisors and The Food Trust to facilitate the creation of a community-driven and data informed HCSI pilot program. The Implementation Plan that follows is the result of these recent efforts.

02 How This Plan Was Created

The Healthy Corner Store Pilot Program Implementation Plan was supported by community input, staff insights, and consultant guidance throughout the process. This Implementation Plan also builds upon the previous work of the Health & Wellness Coalition, the community feedback gathered during the City of Wichita/Sedgwick County Food System Master Plan (2020-2022), and the best practices presented in the Access to Grocery Report (2021).

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Steering Committee

In September 2022, the City of Wichita convened a diverse group of community leaders to join the Wichita Healthy Corner Store Initiative Steering Committee. Members were identified and invited based on their knowledge and expertise in food retail, distribution, food access, or community development. The goal of the Committee was to guide the planning process for a Wichita Healthy Corner Store Initiative and to ensure the program was responsive to the needs of Wichita neighborhoods.

Members of the Steering Committee are listed on the following page.



Steering Committee Roster

Name	Business/ Organization:	Sector
Ashley Foust	*Future Community Grocery Store	Store Owner, small
Dr. Sandra Watie	Shakey Jake's Place Variety & Grocery Store	Store Owner, small
Candra Jones	The Mart	Store Owner, small
Sheila Regehr	KwikShop/Dillons	Store Owner, large chain
Max Kaniger	Kanbe's Market, KCMO	Peer HCSI Program
Donna Pearson-McLish	Common Ground Growers & Producers	Food Distributor
Brian Walker	Kansas Food Bank	Food Distributor
Mariem Martinez	Dear Neighbor Ministries, Hilltop Services	Community Representative
Becky Fields	Community Service Representative	Community Representative
Mary Hunt	Metropolitan Area Planning Department	City of Wichita
Andrew Tyree	Housing & Community Services	City of Wichita
Shelley Rich	Health & Wellness Coalition	Food Access Organization
Tajahnae Stocker	Kansas Appleseed	Food Access Organization
Valerie Black	Kansas Health Foundation	Charitable Foundation
Adrienne Byrne	Sedgwick Co Health Dept.	Health Department
Ricki Ellison	Wichita Chamber of Commerce	Small business representatives
Michelle DeHaven	Wichita State Environmental Finance Center: Food Access Program Manager	University
Sara Sawyer	K-State Research and Extension	Extension

City of Wichita Staff Support

In addition to the HCSI Steering Committee, staff from various City departments provided key insights that informed the creation of the pilot project. The departments involved included:

- City Manager's Office
- Office of Community Services
- Finance
- Housing and Community Services - Community Investments Division
- Information Technology - GIS
- Wichita-Sedgwick County Metropolitan Area Planning Department

PROCESS AND DEVELOPMENT

The Steering Committee met three times over the course of the project to define the goals for a Wichita-specific HCSI, review case studies, provide input on key model elements for a Wichita program, and to select potential HCSI sites for implementation.

09.29.2022

Meeting 1: Overview of HCSIs and Model City Case Studies

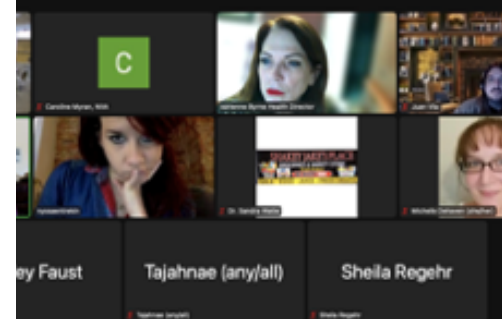
11.07.2022

Meeting 2: Wichita Program Goals and HCSI Program Components

01.11.2023

Meeting 3: HCSI Pilot Sites and Implementation Plan

In each meeting, key program elements were discussed and defined. NVA and TFT synthesized meeting feedback after each session and refined recommendations from the Committee, and then shared it back at the next meeting, in order to design the program and implementation plan.



Model Cities and Case Studies

NVA and TFT identified organizations implementing Healthy Corner Store Initiatives within four U.S. cities selected for their similarities to Wichita in population, demographics, and location. Four organizations were interviewed to understand key components of their healthy corner store initiative, size and format of the program, ownership and management models, funding and support and key takeaways for a Wichita initiative.

Program Name	Location
Kanbe's Markets	Kansas City, MO
DC Central Kitchen	Washington D.C.
UNL Healthy Neighborhood Stores	Lincoln, NE
Jump In for Healthy Kids: Healthy Food Retail Initiative	Indianapolis, IN

Interviews were compiled and synthesized into case studies to form recommendations on best practices for a Wichita program. The in-depth case studies can be found in the Appendix. Recommendations from the model case studies were presented to and reviewed by the Steering Committee in their first meeting in order to create a baseline of best practices for the Committee members and to help inform the Wichita program goals.

Program Goals

After these case studies were presented, committee members established 5 program goals:

- 1 **Increase access to and affordability** of healthy, fresh and culturally-appropriate foods in Wichita neighborhoods.
- 2 Increase the number of corner stores that accept **SNAP and WIC** in Wichita.
- 3 Improve **health outcomes** of Wichita residents.
- 4 Support the local food economy by **sourcing produce directly from local farms** and food businesses.
- 5 **Sustain and grow these efforts through partnerships** with neighborhood residents, community organizations and store owners.

In meeting two, TFT presented an overview of key HCSI program components utilized in programs across the country.

The Steering Committee then identified and prioritized the key components needed to make a Wichita program successful. They guided the consultant team to focus on providing distribution support (to ensure that the small stores could source local, fresh produce) and community outreach (to ensure that neighborhood residents are aware of and connected to store stocking/programming changes). “Providing marketing materials to stores”, “nutrition incentives” and “nutrition education & health screenings” for customers were also of interest to the steering committee.

Steering Committee members were asked to rank the level of investment needed in each category to make a Wichita program successful. The score range was "1" = less investment, and "3" = more investment. The scores presented are an average of the Steering Committee members' responses

HCSI Program Component Ranking by Steering Committee:



Pilot Location Recommendations

In meeting three, the steering committee reviewed the [Healthy Corner Store Initiative GIS map](#) created by the City of Wichita. This map illustrated the need - showing census tracts that are low-income, lack access to grocery, and have low vehicle access. The map also illustrated the opportunity - with locations and types of small format stores that could potentially participate in an HCSI program.

By reviewing the census tracts with both need and opportunity, the steering committee selected several census tracts to focus on for the initial HCSI pilot program. The Sedgwick County Health Department also reviewed the map and provided additional analysis to refine the priority census tracts. (See Appendix for County Health Dept. analysis).

Census Tracts to Prioritize:

- Tract 78
- Tract 75
- Tract 7
- Tract 8
- Tract 43.01
- Tract 43.02
- Tract 82
- Tract 65

See map, page 11.



Pilot Year 1: July- December 2023

Number of Stores: 6 stores recruited and converted



Pilot Year 2: January 2023-December 2024

Number of Stores: 12 new stores recruited and converted



Total Pilot Program Locations by Dec. 2024 = 18 stores

Healthy Corner Store Initiative

City of Wichita

Priority Census Tracts



Low Income Low Access 2019



US Census Tract No Access to Vehicle

5 - 10%

Greater than 10%

Council Districts



03 Pilot Program Design Recommendations

Successful Healthy Corner Store Initiatives across the country share some common elements that support small business owners, increase access to healthy food for neighborhood residents, and over time, create a food system that is equitable and resilient.

Through case study research and discussions with the Wichita HCSI Steering Committee, the following program elements were chosen for the Wichita HCSI program. The elements that follow are our recommendations, and will help ensure that a Wichita HCSI program meets the Goals set out by the Steering Committee and transforms food access in the city's neighborhoods.

Recommended HCSI program elements outlined in the following section:



01 Distribution Support



02 Marketing Materials



03 Store Owner Training



04 Equipment



05 Community Outreach



06 Nutrition Education & Health Screenings



07 Nutrition Incentives



Each section has a call-out for evaluation – a critical part of a project's success. There are many ways to evaluate healthy corner store projects and will vary widely based on what components are selected by the implementing agency. An evaluator should choose an evaluation framework that measures different types of the programming, like the SNAP-Ed evaluation framework which measures short, medium, and long-term changes in the individual, in the environment, and in sectors of influence. The SNAP-Ed framework can be found in the Appendix.



01 Distribution Support

Distribution support is a necessary component of an HCSI program because of the difficulties many corner store owners face when sourcing fresh produce and other healthy items. Produce distributors often have high minimum order requirements that store owners are not able to meet, as well as requiring that fresh produce be purchased in whole cases rather than individually or in partial cases. Providing distribution support to store owners and creating a system that allows them to purchase fresh produce at an affordable rate in quantities that they can sell before spoiling is one of the keys to a successful HCSI program.

Recommendations

- ➔ **Identify existing distributors:** During the initial program implementation period, work to identify existing distribution sources, such as produce wholesale or cash-and-carry warehouses and produce delivery services, that are currently available to small retailers in Wichita. Note any distributors that owners already use in order to source healthy products.
- ➔ **Understand distributor requirements:** Contact existing distributors and obtain information about product selection, minimum order requirements and how store owners can access these services. Compile this information into a document that can be shared with owners.
 - *This initial research and documentation can be conducted by The Food Trust and New Venture Advisors as technical assistance providers to the implementing organization in the first year of programming.*
- ➔ **Share resources and support with store owners:** Share existing distribution resources with store owners that are initially enrolled in the program in order to provide them with a variety of options for sourcing new healthy products. Whenever possible, work with store owners to help them place their initial orders.
 - *It is recommended that the initial orders placed by store owners be reimbursed directly using program funds, in order to provide an incentive for the store owner to participate and to mitigate loss during the initial product introduction phase.*





EVALUATION

Evaluating distribution improvements could include capturing product changes within the store environment, including quantity of healthy foods available, quality assessment of foods offered in the store, prices of healthy foods available, and increased sales of healthy foods. This can be captured through store-level inventory using a validated tool such as the MBAT or through using store point of sale systems. Evaluation could also assess the number of new distribution channels, increase in farm-to-community initiatives, and owner interviews about changes in food procurement practices.

- ➔ **Create produce re-distribution “Hub”:** Once distributors have been identified and store owners have begun to place orders, work to identify one or more store owners, or other local organizations such as food banks or existing distributors, that are interested in serving as a produce “hub” to redistribute wholesale produce for other store owners.
 - *It is recommended that program funds be used in order to purchase a refrigerated trailer, which can be placed either at a central site in order to serve as the aggregation and distribution point for fresh produce. Funding should also be allocated to pay for ongoing utility costs and maintenance of the refrigeration unit throughout the course of the program.*
- ➔ **Create an online ordering system:** Work with the “hub” organization to create a system other store owners can use for ordering produce. Identify order cutoff times, product pickup times and product pricing.
 - *It is recommended that program funds be used in order to create an online access point for this ordering system, such as an app or website.*
- ➔ **Assist store owners with order placement:** Work with other store owners in the program to help them place initial orders and track that product is being picked up and sold in these stores. Use store baseline data and store inventory tools in order to track increases in healthy product inventory over time.





02 Marketing Materials

Marketing materials are used in stores in order to educate customers about healthy eating, as well as highlighting the new healthier products being introduced in stores to make them more noticeable to customers. In some cases, marketing materials for unhealthy products such as alcohol, tobacco or sugar-sweetened beverages can be replaced in favor of materials that advertise the healthier offerings in stores. Exterior marketing materials, such as window wraps, can also be used in order to improve the facade of a storefront and advertise to new customers from the outside of the store.

Recommendations

- ➔ **Assess existing materials in the store:** Conduct a baseline assessment of participating stores in order to identify the marketing materials that are already in place at the stores, particularly noting marketing materials that advertise tobacco, alcohol or sugar-sweetened beverages. Take photos of the interior and exterior store prior to beginning programming in order to document the store at baseline and provide a comparison once the store conversions are complete.
- ➔ **Identify marketing for unhealthy items that can be removed:** Whenever possible, work with store owners to remove or replace signage for alcohol, tobacco or sugar-sweetened beverages in favor of materials that advertise the healthy offerings in the store, such as fresh produce or water.
 - In some cases, it may be difficult for a store owner to remove signage if they are being paid by the manufacturer to place the signage in their store. Work with the store owner to identify signage that is not necessary or not being funded and replace that signage with healthier images.
- ➔ **Create a plan for the placement of marketing materials:** Create a marketing material plan for the store in order to identify the types of signage that the store will need or that the store owner is interested in using to advertise the new healthier products that are being introduced.
 - Marketing material plans may include some customized signage made specifically for the store, as well as noting where general program signage will be placed throughout the store.



- ➔ **Provide stores with in-store signage:** Provide participating stores with in-store signage such as shelf tags, shelf talkers and shelf wobblers in order to identify the healthy products in stores.
 - Signage or increased refrigeration lighting and product placement can also be used in order to make the healthier products in the store more noticeable to customers.
- ➔ **Provide stores with “section highlight” materials:** Provide participating stores with larger marketing materials such as banners or hanging signs in order to help entire sections of the store stand out.
 - Signage that is visible from the entrance of the store can be used in order to direct customers to the sections of the store that contain healthy items.
- ➔ **Promote local produce through marketing:** Create signage to identify local produce and whenever possible to identify specific farmers or farms where the produce comes from.
 - Work with the store owner to identify the local produce being sold in the store and place signage highlighting these local products so that they are more noticeable to customers.
- ➔ **Provide stores with exterior signage:** Provide stores with window wraps or exterior banners in order to advertise some of the new healthy offerings available at the store.
 - Window wraps or exterior banners can be used in order to attract customers that are driving by the store and to advertise healthy products.



EVALUATION

Marketing may be tracked through before and after photographs of store improvements and new signage. In addition to tracking stores that receive materials, photographs can be useful in recruiting new stores into the program. Exit surveying of customers can also capture the effectiveness of marketing materials inside the store environment.



03 Store Owner Training

Store owner training provides owners with techniques and education on how to successfully introduce new products that they may not be familiar with selling. Store owner training can take many forms, but is generally best administered in direct, one-on-one training sessions with owners in the store. Training can cover a variety of corner store related topics ranging from the ideal temperatures for storing fresh produce to how to become a WIC or SNAP vendor and should be customized in order to meet the needs of each individual store owner.

Recommendations

- ➔ **Assess the training needs of participating stores:** Conduct a baseline assessment at each store that participates in the network in order to determine what types of training are most needed by the store owner in order to introduce and maintain new healthy products.
- ➔ **Conduct training sessions with store owners:** Provide direct, one-on-one training to store owners on a variety of topics related to selling new healthy items or improving their produce display.
 - [The Sell Healthy! Guide](#) is a free resource that is available for download on The Food Trust's website and can be used in order to conduct training related to corner stores.
 - If there is training that the store owner is interested in that is not covered by the training toolkit utilized by the implementing organization, it is recommended that the store owner be connected with an industry expert in order to receive customized training sessions.
- ➔ **Assist store owners with the SNAP vendor application:** If stores do not currently accept SNAP benefits, assist the store owner with the SNAP application process by researching the necessary requirements in order for the store to participate in SNAP. Compile this information and share it with the store owner in order to determine if their store is eligible for SNAP.
 - Conduct an assessment of the store to ensure they have enough eligible products to qualify. If the store does not have enough eligible products, work with them in order to bring those products into the store prior to the SNAP application process.
 - Measure the square footage of the store, as well as the number of aisles and cash registers to ensure the store qualifies for SNAP.
 - Work with the store owner in order to submit the SNAP vendor application and follow up with them in order to ensure they complete the process.



EVALUATION

Evaluating store owner training may be done through pre/post surveys with store owners on the topic covered in the training. Changes in knowledge and intention of store owners may be tracked over time.

- ➔ **Assist store owners with the WIC vendor application:** If stores do not accept WIC, assist the store owner with the WIC application process by researching the necessary requirements in order for the store to participate in WIC. Compile this information and share it with the store owner in order to determine if their store is eligible for WIC.
- Conduct an assessment of the store to ensure they have enough eligible products to qualify. If the store does not have enough eligible products, work with them in order to bring those products into the store prior to the WIC application process.
 - Measure the square footage of the store, as well as the number of aisles and cash registers to ensure the store qualifies for WIC.
 - Work with the store owner in order to submit the WIC vendor application and follow up with them in order to ensure they complete the process.





04 Equipment

Store equipment conversions are used in order to provide corner stores with the necessary equipment in order to successfully maintain and display fresh produce and other healthy items. In many cases, stores lack the equipment to maintain fresh produce at the proper temperatures needed to reduce spoilage and extend shelf-life. New conversion equipment also makes customers more likely to purchase healthy items because it allows these products to be displayed in an attractive manner. Conversion equipment is generally provided to stores on the condition that it can only be used for approved health items for a period of time.

Recommendations

- ➔ **Conduct a baseline equipment assessment:** Assess the equipment needs of each store participating in the program in order to determine what types of equipment are most appropriate for the store based on the types of healthy products they will introduce.
 - Work with the store owner to identify the new products they plan to introduce and the type of equipment that will be needed in order to properly store and display those products.
 - Take measurements in the store in order to determine the space that is available in the store for new equipment in order to determine the maximum size that refrigeration and shelving units should be.
 - Create a store conversion business plan, which outlines the types of equipment the store will receive, where it will be located in the store and what types of products will be introduced in order to fill the equipment.
- ➔ **Create an equipment agreement:** Create a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that outlines the responsibilities of the store owner and the implementing organization regarding the use of the equipment provided to stores. The MOU should clearly state the types of products that are eligible to be stored in the equipment, as well as the terms and conditions under which the refrigeration may be removed from the store if not used correctly.



EVALUATION

In addition to tracking equipment purchased through stores and before/after photographs, program implementers can also track subsequent store visits and owner compliance with stocking healthy items in the purchased equipment.

- ➔ **Provide stores with smaller display equipment:** It is recommended that all stores in the network be provided with smaller pieces of equipment, such as shelving and baskets, in order to improve their produce and healthy snack display.
 - Produce shelving units can be used at the cash register or point of sale area in order to store and display fresh produce that does not require refrigeration, such as apples, bananas, oranges, onions and potatoes.
 - Snack display units can be placed at the cash register or point of sale area in order to display healthy snacks, such as nuts, dried fruit and granola bars.
 - Shelving units range in price from \$100- \$500, depending on the size and material of the unit.

- ➔ **Provide stores with refrigeration, if needed:** For stores that require refrigeration in order to sell fresh produce, provide the store with refrigeration that meets the needs of the store owner and fits in the store. The following types of refrigeration are generally provided to stores as a part of their participation in the program:
 - Single-door merchandising refrigerator: Used in order to store and display smaller amounts of perishable fresh produce and grab-and-go healthy snacks. These units generally range in price from \$1500- \$3000, depending on the size and brand of the unit.
 - Single-door merchandising freezer: Used in order to store and display smaller amounts of frozen produce. These units generally range in price from \$3,000- \$5,000, depending on the size and brand of the unit.
 - Open air merchandising refrigerator: Used in order to store and display larger amounts of perishable fresh produce and grab-and-go healthy snacks. These units generally range in price from \$5,000- \$7,500, depending on the size and brand of the unit.





05 Community Outreach

Community outreach is used in order to promote the changes happening in stores and to generate community support and awareness of these changes. Community outreach can be accomplished through partnerships with local community organizations, as well as direct promotion in the neighborhoods surrounding stores by hiring community ambassadors. Community outreach makes it more likely that store owners introduce products that customers want to purchase because it provides owners with a direct line of communication with community members.

Recommendations

- ➔ **Assess existing community organizations:** Conduct an assessment of the local community based organizations, such as non-profit organizations, community development corporations and places of worship, that are located near the participating stores or that serve residents that shop at these stores.
 - Conduct outreach to organizations that may be interested in partnering with the implementing organization in order to promote the changes happening in stores and engage community members to visit the participating stores.
- ➔ **Organize community events at stores:** Once stores have received equipment and have begun programming, organize community events in the stores in order to celebrate the changes and to promote the new products the store has introduced.
 - Often, store conversions are celebrated with a launch event that includes prizes and giveaways in order to generate community support and awareness of the store.
 - Include partner organizations that were previously contacted in order to increase resident participation and customer turnout for events.



EVALUATION

Community outreach can be evaluated by tracking the number of promotional materials distributed within communities, such as flyers or handouts, as well as noting the number of participants at store celebration events. Partnerships with community organizations can also be tracked, as well as the anecdotes and notes captured by community ambassadors while conducting outreach.



Hire local community ambassadors: Hire community ambassadors directly from the neighborhoods where stores are located in order to work with store owners and residents to promote store changes and gather resident feedback.

- Community ambassadors can be hired as part-time contractors or full-time employees of the implementing organization. As hourly contractors, community ambassadors are often hired at a rate of at least \$18/ hour. As full-time employees, community ambassadors are often hired at a salary of at least \$35,000 per year.
- Often, community ambassadors are hired from the community located directly around participating stores or from the volunteer base of partnering organizations.
- Community ambassadors are responsible for conducting direct community outreach to the residents of the neighborhoods surrounding participating stores. Community ambassadors act as a direct link between the store owners and residents and assist with the introduction of products that are culturally relevant and that residents would like to purchase from the stores.
- In some cases, community ambassadors can be hired in place of program staff in order to conduct recruitment of stores or to teach nutrition classes in the participating stores.
- Community ambassadors should be provided with the type of training necessary in order to accomplish their job duties, such as training on corner store owner interaction or community outreach strategies.

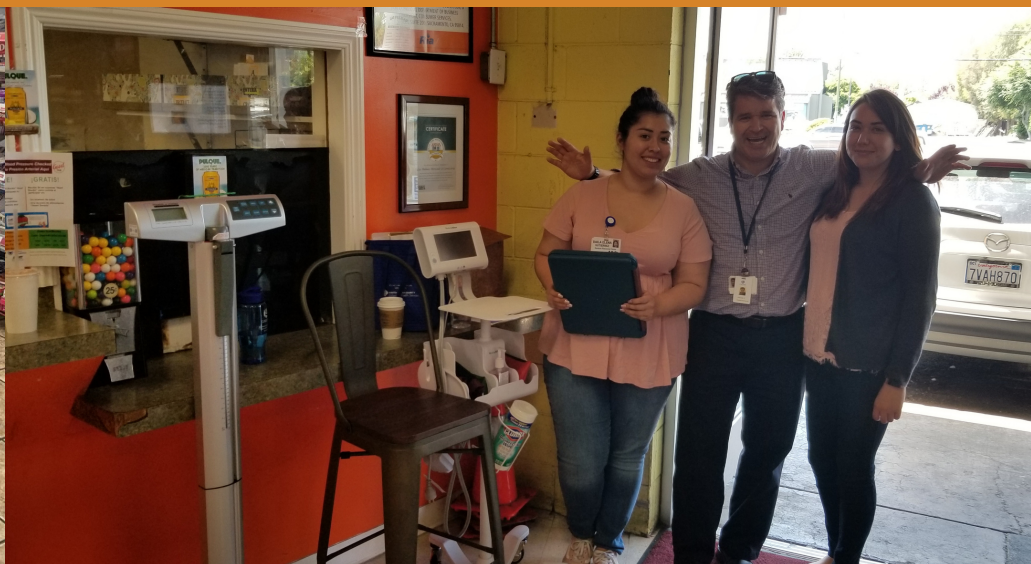


06 Nutrition Education & Health Screenings

Nutrition education and health screening are used in order to provide customers in corner stores with education on healthy eating, as well as a direct connection with healthcare providers in order to evaluate blood pressure or Body Mass Index (BMI). Nutrition education often occurs directly in participating stores as a way to educate and encourage customers to purchase the new healthy items being introduced while also providing customers with an incentive to purchase healthier products.

Recommendations

- ➔ **Create and distribute in-store education materials:** Provide stores with nutrition education materials, such as signage and brochures, that customers can use in order to learn more about healthy eating.
 - *Nutrition education signage and brochures can be placed at the entrance or cash register area of the stores in order for customers to take these materials as they are shopping.*
- ➔ **Provide in-store nutrition education classes:** Conduct nutrition education classes in participating stores in order to provide customers with information related to nutrition and to promote the new healthy products in the stores.
 - Nutrition education in corner stores is often conducted as a series of short, easily-communicated lessons that cover nutrition-related topics and that customers can quickly participate in as they are shopping at the store.
 - Nutrition education classes may include taste testing of healthy recipes and product giveaways in order to help inform customer purchasing habits.
 - Nutrition education classes may offer customers coupons or other incentives in order for customers to receive discounted or free healthy products from the store.
 - *It is recommended that program funding be used in order to supplement the cost of the incentives received by customers and to reimburse the participating stores for the cost of the product being incentivized.*
 - Nutrition education classes often provide an opportunity for surveys to be conducted with customers in order to measure the impact of programming on the customers that participate in lessons.



Partner with a healthcare provider: Identify a healthcare provider that is able to conduct health screening for customers that are participating in nutrition lessons.

- In some cases, healthcare providers are able to send doctors or nurses to stores in order to conduct blood pressure or Body Mass Index (BMI) screenings.
- Healthcare providers often set up a table next to where the nutrition lessons are being conducted in order to offer customers that participate in lessons with a free health screening.
- Healthcare partners will often collect data on the customers that they provide health screenings to. In some cases, these healthcare partners are able to provide aggregated data to show the impact of lessons on the heart health of customers that participate in lessons and health screenings over time.



EVALUATION

Individual behavior change related to nutrition education within stores (intention to change post-lesson and self-reported changes through follow-up). Health outcomes (if healthcare screenings are part of the program: weight, BMI, cholesterol, blood pressure, smoking cessation, and diabetes management can be tracked).

Tracking may include:

- Number of lessons completed in stores
- Number of participants in lessons
- Amount of nutrition incentives, like heart bucks, distributed and redeemed at the store



07 Nutrition Incentives

Nutrition incentives provide SNAP customers with a discount on the purchase of fresh produce and other healthy items. In many cases, nutrition incentives allow customers to double their purchasing power for fresh produce by providing them with a dollar-for-dollar match on these products. Nutrition incentives also help store owners sell the products they introduce at a faster rate because of the increase in customer purchasing power.

Recommendations

- ➔ **Provide customers with nutrition incentives:** Nutrition incentives should be provided to customers in order to help supplement the cost of healthy products and to encourage customers to continue purchasing these products from participating stores.
- ➔ **Determine the type of incentive to offer:** Nutrition incentives are often distributed in the form of coupons or vouchers that can be used towards the purchase of qualifying healthy products in stores.
 - Nutrition incentives are distributed to customers either directly in the store, or at an offsite location that has set up an agreement with the store to accept the incentives.
 - Nutrition incentives are only able to be used by customers for approved healthy items that have been pre-identified in participating stores as eligible to be used with the incentive.
 - In some cases, stores may have more advanced Point of Sale (POS) systems that may allow the store to distribute and redeem digital incentives rather than paper coupons or vouchers.
 - Stores that allow customers to redeem nutrition incentives are often reimbursed by the implementing organization for the cost of products that is given to customers.



EVALUATION

May include capturing behavior change in recipients along with tracking distribution and redemption of Food Bucks and F&Vrx at stores. Impact of incentive programs on store sales may be captured through store-level inventory using a validated tool such as the MBAT or through using store point of sale systems.

- ➔ **Enroll stores in a Double-Up Food Bucks program:** Provide SNAP customers with a dollar-for-dollar match on fresh produce purchased in stores by enrolling stores in a Double Up Food Bucks program.
- Programs such as Double Up Food Bucks provide additional funding for nutrition incentives in corner stores and are often funded by state or federal USDA grants.
 - Bringing Nutrition Incentives to Corner Stores is a guide that provides step-by-step guidance on how to create a corner store nutrition incentive program and is available to download for free on The Food Trust website.
 - Double Up Heartland is the current program for Kansas and it may be possible to expand this program to participating stores in Wichita: <https://www.doubleupheartland.org/>










04 Program Budget Categories

Successful HCSI programs across the country share some common elements in their program budgets. In particular, their budgets reflect their core program priorities.

The following budget categories are recommended for a Wichita HCSI program, and reflect the steering committee's prioritization of the specific elements needed to support a program that will succeed in Wichita: Providing distribution support (to ensure that small stores can source local, fresh produce) and community outreach (to ensure that neighborhood residents are aware of and connected to store stocking and programming changes).

In addition to these program-specific categories below, an HCSI program will also need to ensure that adequate support is provided for project management and implementation. This will include salaries and fringe for key staffing positions, along with any travel and technology staff will need to implement the program. Consultant support may be needed for program implementation and/or program evaluation.

Budget Category	Description
 Distribution Support	<p>Distribution support budgets should include support for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff time for aggregation support to coordinate orders, and assist with loading and unloading produce deliveries.• Equipment on-site such as a refrigerated semi-trailer (or other refrigeration set-up).• Lease/purchase costs for a refrigerated delivery van to distribute produce to participating stores.• Fuel costs for delivery vehicles.• An online ordering app to simplify produce order and fulfillment.
 Store Owner Training	<p>Training budgets should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff time for training to store owners and contacting WIC and SNAP offices• Stipends for “mentor” store owners to train new HCSI participating stores.

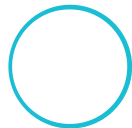
Budget Category	Description
 <p>Community Outreach</p>	<p>Community outreach budgets should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff time for conducting outreach to community organizations, planning launch events and coordinating community ambassadors • Hiring of community ambassador(s) to promote store changes and gather neighbor input. • Community launch events organized by community ambassadors to help promote and market the store changes with neighbors. • Materials such as flyers and promotional items for launch events.
 <p>Marketing Materials</p>	<p>Marketing budgets should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff time for marketing material placement and maintenance • In-store marketing materials to promote the healthy offerings such as banners and shelf tags. • Exterior marketing materials such as exterior signage, banners or window wraps.
 <p>Equipment</p>	<p>Equipment budgets should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One-time start-up cost to purchase equipment for store owners such as open-air refrigerators and shelving. • Initial purchases of local produce to help establish a full produce case at new HCSI participating stores.
 <p>Nutrition Education and Health Screening</p>	<p>Education budgets should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff time to provide in-store nutrition education programming. • Tabling supplies (table, apron, flyers, banners, etc.) • Food costs for healthy recipe samples.
 <p>Nutrition Incentives</p>	<p>Incentives budgets should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff time to partner with existing incentives programs (e.g. Double Up Food Bucks) and build out new programs (e.g. Heart Bucks). • Funding to supplement incentive coupons for participants in Heart Bucks programs.

05 Next Steps

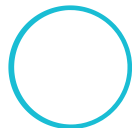


The City of Wichita commissioned this report to support the creation of a Healthy Corner Store Initiative that would serve Wichita residents, and has allocated ARPA funds to support its implementation. The City recognizes that there are many qualified and capable organizations within the city and region that have the skills and expertise to take this implementation plan and bring a HCSI program into fruition.

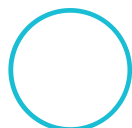
The consultants and the city have identified the following next steps to make an HCSI program in Wichita a reality:



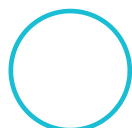
April 2023: The City will issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) seeking qualified organization(s) to implement the HCSI pilot program.



June-July 2023: The City will review proposals and determine the organization(s) that are the best fit to implement the HCSI pilot program.



July 2023: The City will contract with the selected organization(s) and present to City Council for approval.



August 2023: The implementing HCSI partner organization(s) will launch the pilot program in the identified census tracts in the city.



06 Appendix

Appendix 1: Case Studies

Appendix 2: Sedgwick County Analysis

Appendix 3: SNAP Evaluation Framework

CASE STUDY 1: KANBE'S MARKETS

Location: Kansas City, MO
Population: 517,740 
Median income: \$32,474 



Kanbe's Markets (Kanbe's) is a non-profit organization that has operated a Healthy Corner Store Initiative (HCSI) in Kansas City, MO for two years. Kanbe's began the project in 2020 with 12 stores and has since grown to 44 stores located primarily on the east side of Kansas City, a low-income area of the city impacted by low access to food.

Kanbe's operates their HCSI through a produce consignment model, which works with corner stores by delivering fresh produce directly to the store and stocking it in a refrigerator that was provided to the store by Kanbe's. The profit from the produce that is sold is then split between the store owner and Kanbe's Markets, and any produce that hasn't been sold before it begins to spoil is taken back by Kanbe's and donated or composted. This model allows the corner store owner to participate in the program with less risk of loss and allows Kanbe's to control the product quality and the price of the produce being sold in stores. **Some strengths of this program include** the ability to directly impact the distribution system for corner stores and provide them with quality produce at an affordable price, with less risk on the part of the store owner.

STORE STATS		KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR WICHITA	
<i>Years in operation:</i>	2	✓ Store owner engagement is one of the primary success factors in the program.	✓ Take the time to build out funding and capacity in order to scale the program from the beginning instead of gradually.
<i>Size and format:</i>	44 stores, produce delivery and consignment model, nutrition education	✓ Nutrition education and customer engagement are priorities that Kanbe's continues to focus on.	✓ Build trust with stores and the community.
<i>Ownership model:</i>	Operated by a non-profit organization		
<i>Funding and support:</i>	Funding through federal and foundation grants, philanthropic donations and revenue generated by store produce sales.		

CASE STUDY 2: DC CENTRAL KITCHEN

Location: Washington, D.C.
Population: 707,109 ↑
Median income: \$52,328 ↑



D.C. Central Kitchen (DCCK) is non-profit organization that has operated a HCSI in Washington, D.C. for 11 years. DCCK works with 53 stores that are located throughout the city, with a larger presence in low-income neighborhoods impacted by low food access. They operate their HCSI program through a delivery service that provides fresh produce directly to stores at a discounted price. DCCK aggregates produce from a larger wholesale distributor and local farms, then delivers the produce to stores using refrigerated trucks after the store owner places an order online. The organization provides store owners with refrigeration and direct training on a variety of topics related to produce ordering, display and maintenance.

Nutrition education programming is provided to customers in participating stores as well as the store owners themselves. A SNAP-match program is offered at 29 of the stores in the network, which provides SNAP customers with a \$5 coupon when they spend \$5 on fresh produce in stores. DCCK also hires local residents as Community Champions in order to promote the programming happening in stores. **Some strengths of this program include** the ability to provide fresh produce directly to store owners at a discounted price as well as a strong grassroots community presence through the Community Champions program.

STORE STATS		KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR WICHITA	
Years in operation:	11	✓ Building personal relationships with store owners to increase engagement is very important.	✓ Working directly with fresh produce is challenging for store owners and requires many technical skills.
Size and format:	53 stores, produce delivery, ongoing store owner training, SNAP-match, Community Ambassadors and nutrition education	✓ Produce quality and ensuring that the produce being sold in stores is fresh is a key to success.	✓ Delivering fresh produce requires a lot of infrastructure and staffing.
Ownership model:	Operated by a non-profit organization		
Funding and support:	Funding through grants by D.C. Health and the USDA GUSNIP program		

CASE STUDY 3: HEALTHY NEIGHBORHOOD STORES



Location: Lincoln, NE
Population: 501,469 ↑
Median income: \$33,931 ★

The University of Nebraska Lincoln Extension (UNL) is a university extension office that operated a Healthy Corner Store program from 2014 until 2020 throughout the state of Nebraska, with a primary focus in Lincoln and Grand Island, Nebraska. At the height of the program, UNL worked with up to 20 stores throughout the state in a model that included direct training with store owners in order to help them introduce and display new healthy products. UNL provided store owners with smaller pieces of equipment, such as shelving and baskets, along with marketing materials to help customers identify the healthier products in stores. UNL also conducted multi-lingual nutrition education and taste testing events in stores and provided customers with informational materials about healthy eating.

After the primary funding for the program ended in 2020, some of the stores in the network began to participate in Double Up Food Bucks, a SNAP-match program that is still in place in larger stores in Lincoln and Grand Island. **Some strengths of this program include** extensive nutrition education and resources provided for customers in multiple languages.

STORE STATS		KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR WICHITA	
Years in operation:	6 (primary funding ended in 2020)	✓ Helping stores accept WIC is one of the best ways to ensure they sell healthy past the end of a grant period, because WIC regulates store product selection.	✓ Providing customers with financial incentives to purchase healthy items is a key to success.
Size and format:	20 stores, store owner training, SNAP-match, and nutrition education	✓ The distribution system for small stores often does not allow store owners to purchase healthier products because of minimum order requirements.	✓ Providing owners with data showing them increased sales of healthy products keeps them motivated.
Ownership model:	Operated by a university extension		✓ Programming should be culturally competent and multilingual.
Funding and support:	Grants from federal sources such as SNAP-Ed, GUSNIP and DHHS, private grants from Community Health Endowment of Lincoln		

CASE STUDY 4: HEALTHY FOOD RETAIL INITIATIVE

Location: Indianapolis, IN
Population: 869,387 ↑
Median income: \$30,077 ★



The Indianapolis Healthy Corner Store Initiative was implemented through a partnership between JumpIn for Healthy Kids and Marion County Public Health Department, with technical assistance provided by The Food Trust throughout the project. The project collaborative worked with 5 stores on the Far Eastside of Indianapolis, a low-income neighborhood impacted by low access to food, in a model that included direct training with store owners to help them introduce and display healthy products. The program provided store owners with equipment, such as shelving and refrigeration, along with marketing materials to help customers identify the healthier products in stores.

Community Ambassadors were hired from within the Far Eastside community to work directly with store owners and to conduct community outreach promoting nutrition education programming in stores. Store owners were provided with distribution support through connections with local farmers and a local produce delivery service. Nutrition education programming was conducted in stores on a regular basis, along with nutrition incentives and health screenings that allowed customers to have their blood pressure checked by a healthcare provider in stores. **Some strengths of this program include** the strong grassroots community presence through Community Ambassadors as well as the connections that were made with local growers to help bring local produce into stores.

STORE STATS		KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR WICHITA	
<i>Years in operation:</i>	7 (primary funding ended in 2022)	✓ City and local organizational support should be in place to before beginning a HCSI program in order to help ensure long-term structure, ownership and success.	✓ Community Ambassador programming is incredibly important because it provides store owners with the perspective of a local resident who shops in the store.
<i>Size and format:</i>	5 stores, store owner training, Community Ambassadors, health screening and nutrition education	✓ Building strong relationships with store owners and community leaders is crucial.	✓ Identify a local organization with the proper staffing and capacity to implement the program.
<i>Ownership model:</i>	Operated through a partnership between non-profit organizations and the county health department		
<i>Funding and support:</i>	Grants from federal sources such as REACH, private grants from Glick Family and Anthem Foundations		

Appendix 2

Sedgwick County Health Department
Epidemiology Program
Data Branch
1/20/2023

Issue Brief: Wichita Healthy Corner Store Initiative Project

Overview:

Decisions are being made on where a corner store may be best used in Wichita. This analysis identifies Census tracts that may benefit from having a corner store based on need.

Background Information:

The City of Wichita Healthy Corner Store Initiative (HCSI) mapped census tracts by low income low access to food as well as households with no access to vehicles.¹ Looking at the map, Census tracts with low income, low access to food (mapped in red) as well as a high percentage of households with no access to a vehicle (mapped in blue) will appear purple. The Census tracts with the darkest shades of purple and thus higher concern were 78, 77.02, and 43.01. Census tracts with lighter shades of purple include 28, 29, 58, and 54.02. The lightest shades of purple include 75, 9, 7, 77.01, and 43.02. Census tract 8 was also included in the analysis by request.

Recommendations

Based on need and feasibility, the following Census tracts would be good candidates for a corner store:

- 78
- 75
- 7
- 8

About the Data

Table 1 shows the information presented in the map as well as information regarding poverty rates and household factors for census tracts identified by the Wichita Healthy Corner Store Initiative Project. Tracts with a high percentage of households that receive SNAP and a high percentage of children in households may benefit from the addition of a corner store, such as census tracts 78, 7, 8, and 75. Whereas Census tracts with a high percentage of households living alone and a low percentage of households receiving SNAP may not see as much benefit, such as Census tract 43.01. In 2013, the Health and Wellness Coalition of Wichita identified Census tracts that are food deserts, which was included in the table.

Table 2 shows information regarding food stores within the given census tracts and viable locations for a store within or near the Census tract. Since many Census tracts identified were residential neighborhoods, some identified intersections are adjacent to the Census tract rather than within the Census tract. Some locations were selected because of availability to place commercial property or use existing property. The SNAP store locations was published November 2019 by the USDA. It was noted during analysis that some locations are no longer in business. For example, in Census tract 8 the Save A Lot appears as a SNAP location, but it has closed. It is possible that other SNAP providers have opened or closed since 2019, but the table reflects the most recent publically available dataset. A store can have a grocery license as well as be an SNAP or WIC vendor.

¹ <https://cityofwichita.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=ca0278ab2167487e8fa32287add5434>

Table 1: Analysis and Ranking of Census Tracts based on Need

Census Tract	2020 Overall SVI	Households without a Vehicle	Percentage Living Below Poverty	Low Income Low Access	Identified as a food desert in 2013	Households Receiving SNAP	Households with Children under 18 years	Households with One or more people 65+	Households living alone
43.01	0.8243	13%	29.50%	Yes	No	18.80%	1.60%	5.10%	72.40%
77.02	0.8059	14%	15.30%	Yes	No	5%	12.40%	29.80%	39%
78	0.9803	13%	53.30%	Yes	Yes	39.10%	43.10%	27.10%	36.80%
28	0.8600	5%	26.60%	Yes	Yes	8.30%	26.20%	13.90%	35.90%
29	0.9238	7%	19%	Yes	Yes	19.10%	32.60%	30.60%	36.80%
54.02	0.9595	8%	30.10%	Yes	No	27.50%	36.40%	22.40%	41.50%
58	0.8968	6%	25.20%	Yes	Yes	20.70%	25.10%	29.50%	37.60%
7	0.9951	6%	32.10%	Yes	Yes	40.50%	40.50%	35.20%	39.80%
9	0.9447	8%	40.20%	Yes	Yes	35%	17.10%	30.50%	30.90%
75	0.8661	11%	35.80%	Yes	Yes	25.60%	52.20%	18.50%	26.10%
77.01	0.7568	7%	26.20%	Yes	No	4.70%	22.10%	26.80%	47.60%
43.02	0.5651	8%	46.40%	Yes	No	29.50%	13.70%	18.10%	50%
8	0.9975	20%	41.60%	No	No	49.80%	31.10%	26.40%	53.20%

Table 1 Sources: CDC/ATSDR Social Vulnerability Index (SVI), Wichita Healthy Corner Store Initiative Project, ACS 2021 5 Year Estimates, 2013 Health & Wellness Coalition of Wichita

Table 2: Analysis and Ranking of Census Tracts based on Geography and Viability

Census Tract	KS Dept. Ag Grocery Licenses	WIC Authorized Vendors	SNAP Authorized Vendors*	Total Vendors / Stores	Intersection 1	Intersection 2	Intersection 3
43.01	0	0	6	6	Broadway & English	3rd & Main	2nd & St. Francis
77.02	1	0	4	5	29th and Woodlawn	29th & Oliver	21st & Oliver
78	0	0	3	3	25th & Hillside	21st & Grove	27th & Hillside
28	0	0	0	0	Burton Ave & Meridian	N/A	N/A
29	0	0	0	0	Burton Ave & Meridian	Maple & Sheridan	N/A
54.02	0	0	2	2	47th & Seneca	Macarthur & Meridian	41st & Seneca
58	1	0	5	5	47th & Clifton	47th & Oliver	N/A
7	1	0	3	3	21st & Grove	21st & Prince	17th & Hydraulic
9	0	0	0	0	13th & Hillside	N/A	N/A
75	0	0	3	3	13th & Pershing	N/A	N/A
77.01	0	0	0	0	25th & Hillside	29th & Oliver	21st & Oliver
43.02	0	0	1	1	Douglas & Mc lean	Maple & Osage	N/A
8	1	1	2	2	9th & Grove	N/A	N/A

Sources: Wichita Healthy Corner Store Initiative Project, USDA Food and Nutrition Service, Google Maps, Sedgwick County Mobile Land Records

Note: Since many Census tracts identified were residential neighborhoods, some identified intersections are adjacent to the Census tract rather than within the Census tract. Some locations were selected because of availability to place commercial property or use existing property.

*USDA provided SNAP store locations was published on November 8, 2019. It was noted during analysis that some locations are no longer in business. For example, in Census tract 8 the Save A Lot appears as a SNAP location, but it has closed.

SNAP-ED EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity Prevention Indicators

