

Culturally Preferred Food Box Pilot Project

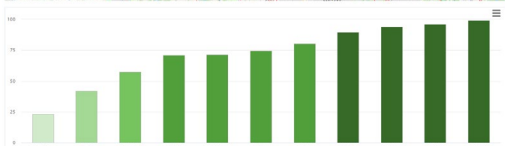
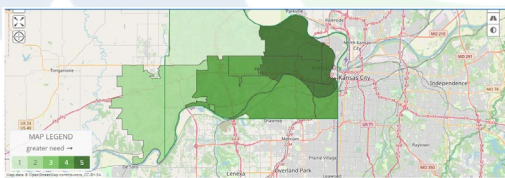
Unified Government Public Health Department (UGPHD), Wyandotte County Health Equity Task Force (HETF),
Aetna Better Health of Kansas (ABHKS), and Harvesters



Issue

Feeding America lists Kansas as being in the lower half of the United States for food security and recognizes that the Eastern portion of the state has the highest rates of food insecurity.

The map below from Kansas Health Matters demonstrates need based on zip code within Wyandotte County and according to the index values assigned more than half of the zip codes within Wyandotte County scored above 70. This scale ranges from 0-100 and the higher the score = the greater the need.



According to the United States Census Bureau 31.3% of the population in Wyandotte County identifies as Hispanic or Latino; further, 22.0% identify as black or African American.

The Health Equity team in Wyandotte County first reported concerns that people were attending events to obtain food but were leaving empty handed due to the types of foods being offered.

Aetna Better Health understands the value of nutrition when treating one's overall health and recognized an opportunity to fund foods for community events that would be resonate with the cultural preferences of Wyandotte County residents.

Project



Working together, Harvesters, Wyandotte County Health Equity Task Force, the Unified Government Public Health Department (UGPHD) in Wyandotte County, and Aetna Better Health of Kansas, a pilot project was developed and launched to place Culturally Preferred food boxes directly into the hands of those in need.

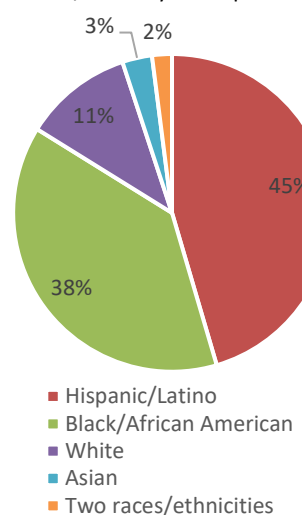
The overall process development included the following:

- The Health Equity Team developed the menu of food items that would be available within each box with many community organizations providing input. Two boxes were created, Box A for the Hispanic/Latino and Asian Community, and Box B for the Black Community.
- An electronic order form was developed for the Neighborhood Clinics (NBC) to use when ordering the boxes.
- Harvesters received the orders, developed the boxes, and delivered them to the NBC events.
- Health department staff was present during events to provide information about WIC and to offer an opportunity to take a survey regarding the culturally preferred boxes.
- Data was compiled by the Health Equity Task Force Administrator for the Unified Government Public Health Department and is distributed to Harvesters and Aetna for review.

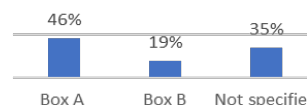
Results

- A total of 460 culturally preferred boxes were distributed in March, April, and May of 2023.
- The distributions were completed through 9 partner organizations at more than 23 community events.
- 53% of survey respondents indicated they ran out of food in the last 12 months before they had money to buy more.
- 92% of respondents lived in a household with 1-6 people and of those the most common household size reported was 4 people (20%).
- 86% of respondents indicated their box included culturally preferred foods they would purchase at the store.

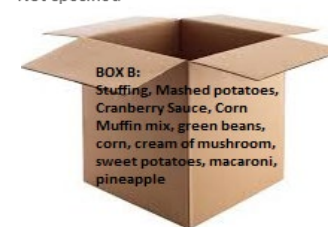
Race/Ethnicity of Respondents



Food Boxes Received



Hispanic/Latino & Asian Box



Black/African American Box

Due to local need, along with positive results and feedback related to this pilot project, ABHKS will continue funding for the Food Box project in coordination with local partners. ABHKS is also considering funding expansion of this project to other areas of the State in partnership with Kansas Food Bank.

Lessons Learned

- The results overall were very positive with 185 or just over 40% agreeing to take the survey and expressed a general appreciation for receiving food.
- Due to interest expressed, fresh fruits and vegetables will be added to future food boxes.
- After receiving some negative comments regarding the use of the phrase "culturally appropriate", we utilized the updated guidance from Feeding America, and now use "culturally preferred" to describe the food boxes.

Organization Information

Unified Government Public Health Department (UGPHD): We work to improve health in our community in many ways - from services like vaccines and family planning, to community initiatives that work to address the root causes affecting residents' health and quality of life. (913) 573-8855 or wypublichealth@wycokck.org

Wyandotte County Health Equity Task Force: We are a community-driven collaboration dedicated to improving health equity in Wyandotte County, Kansas. <https://www.wycohETF.org/>

Harvesters provides food and related household products to more than 760 nonprofit agencies including emergency food pantries, community kitchens, homeless shelters, children's homes and others. 877-353-6639 <https://www.harvesters.org/>

Aetna Better Health of Kansas (ABHKS) serves approximately 140,000 Medicaid members as part of the KanCare program. www.aetnabetterhealth.com/kansas

Contact

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