

# Wichita Food System Collective Impact Share Vision

January 2026

## 1. Coordination: Fund an entity to provide the “backbone” function for food systems

Creating a structure for ongoing system-level coordination was the most frequently discussed priority with strong consensus that it is the essential first step. Stakeholders emphasized that an effective backbone (key entity that mobilizes, coordinates, and facilitates the process of collaboration among various stakeholders) will drive progress across all other efforts by enabling shared understanding of needs and services, alignment on best practices and solutions and stronger collaboration in advocating for targeted policies. Stakeholders recognized that the Food and Farm Council could provide a natural umbrella organization for this backbone.

<b>Food System Master Plan</b>	<b>Goal 1, Objective 1:</b> Support coordination between food systems partners.
<b>Hunger Free Kansas Blueprint</b>	<b>Strategy #4:</b> Local Food Planning
<b>Key Stakeholders:</b> The City of Wichita, Sedgwick County, WSU Community Engagement Institute, K-State Research and Extension (KSRE), foundations	
<b>Recommended Next Steps:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identify how to fund a full-time food system backbone staff member and with which organization that person should be employed</li></ul>	
<b>Potential FFC Action Steps:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Advocate for a full-time role to coordinate the Food and Farm Council, among other food system coordination work (mobilizes, coordinates, and facilitates the process of collaboration among various stakeholders).</li></ul>	

**2. Get nutritious food to people where they are by increasing ways to get good food to people effectively in a low or no-cost way**

This approach focuses on working to expand multiple neighborhood-centered strategies to improve access to nutritious food, including mobile food distribution, low- or no-cost grocery delivery, and improved transportation options to food retailers. It emphasizes strengthening local infrastructure through additional distribution sites, community-based growing and markets, continued investment in existing initiatives, and incentives for small-scale neighborhood food businesses. Across all efforts, stakeholders stressed the importance of aligning investments with neighborhood-specific needs and cultural preferences to ensure solutions are effective and equitable.

<p><b>Food System Master Plan</b></p>	<p><b>Goal 2, Objective 1:</b> Address the 44 sq. miles of the city of Wichita that are considered “food deserts” and lack access to healthy food options.</p> <p><b>Goal 2, Objective 4:</b> Reduce transportation and built environment barriers that limit access to healthy food.</p> <p><b>Goal 3, Objective 2:</b> Facilitate markets for local producers and food businesses.</p> <p><b>Goal 3, Objective 4:</b> Support gardening- at home, in neighborhoods and schools.</p>
<p><b>Hunger Free Kansas Blueprint</b></p>	<p><b>Strategy #7: Nutrition and Meal Sites</b></p>
<p><b>Key Stakeholders:</b>          Kansas Food Bank, food pantries, Neighboring Movement, Common Ground, Mr. MC’s Market/ Wichita HCSI, Safe Streets/ ICT Treehuggers, ICT Farms, Urban League, grocery stores</p>	
<p><b>Recommended Next Steps:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicate to the public that the bus routes have been updated to make grocery locations more accessible</li> <li>• Research sustainable models to incorporate low-cost or free delivery to low-income, low-access (LILA) households</li> <li>• Convene stakeholders with mobile produce delivery already in place to identify barriers to expansion</li> <li>• Identify other organizations that are interested in mobile produce delivery and find ways to launch new programs</li> <li>• Identify sustained funding for Wichita HCSI</li> <li>• Explore freeze drying options for local entrepreneurs interested in selling nutritious, shelf-stable foods in neighborhood-based locations</li> <li>• Seek ways to bolster local community and backyard gardeners selling or donating produce in their neighborhoods</li> </ul>	

- Convene organizations who are interested in or working on micro-groceries or grocery cooperatives in LILA neighborhoods to identify ways to support them or identify potential points of collaboration. Engage KSRE for technical support.
- Provide technical assistance and/or funding to food pantries interested in expanding fresh produce offerings

**Potential FFC Action Steps:**

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### 3. Support Schools: Support nutritious food and hunger reduction in schools

This priority centers on partnering with school systems to strengthen nutritious food access and reduce hunger among students. This includes expanding universal free meals through the Community Eligibility Provision, supporting Farm-to-School efforts, and promoting school gardens as both a food source and educational tool, with collaboration used to align resources to identified school and student needs.

<b>Food System Master Plan</b>	<b>Goal 2, Objective 6:</b> Make healthy food choices more convenient at work and school. <b>Goal 3, Objective 4:</b> Support gardening- at home, in neighborhoods and schools.
<b>Hunger Free Kansas Blueprint</b>	
<b>Key Stakeholders:</b> USD 259, USD 266, Catholic Diocese (schools), Kansas Appleseed, Health & Wellness Coalition of Wichita, City of Wichita, KSRE, WSU Tech, American Heart Association, Working Well	
<b>Recommended Next Steps:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet with school districts’ Nutrition Services to learn about their goals and identify concrete ways other stakeholders can support</li> <li>• Identify internal district Farm-to-School, community gardening and CEP champions</li> <li>• Host a KSRE Farm-to-Plate pre-session in the Work Well Conference, encourage school district participation</li> <li>• Work on aggregation and distribution of locally-produced foods (see item 5) for possible Farm-to-School purchasing</li> <li>• Document all current school gardens and their point of contact</li> <li>• Identify interest in expanding those gardens and any support needed (financial, volunteer, etc.)</li> <li>• Identify potential partnerships with neighborhood schools and community organizations to create or expand school gardens</li> <li>• Work with school districts to identify potential opportunities to expand the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)</li> </ul>	
<b>Potential FFC Action Steps:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify ways to support school gardens in Sedgwick County public and private districts, potentially linking local community organizations and community gardeners with schools that have land and interest in a partnership</li> </ul>	

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**4. Resource Coordination and Navigation: Improve how residents access and receive information about food access resources**

This priority focuses on strengthening how residents find and navigate food access resources by creating a single, reliable, and consistently updated point of information. Potential approaches are consolidating existing directories, leveraging a user-friendly app to communicate food system resources, clearly outlining food pantry requirements, and implementing a coordinated food system communication plan to improve awareness and usability.

<b>Food System Master Plan</b>	<b>Goal 2, Objective 3:</b> Reduce barriers to emergency food assistance programs.
<b>Hunger Free Kansas Blueprint</b>	<b>Strategy #1: Food system mapping</b> <b>Strategy #5: Resource and referral tool</b>
<p><b>Key Stakeholders:</b>          Kansas Food Bank, United Way (2-1-1), WSU (Dr. Cure), Kansas Food Source website, Health &amp; Wellness Coalition of Wichita, ICT Food Circle, Hunger Free Kansas, Kansas Farm Bureau, Sedgwick County, City of Wichita, UniteUS</p>	
<p><b>Recommended Next Steps:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify the current resource directories and websites, including how often they are updated</li> <li>• Survey food pantry clients or others seeking services on where they would be most likely to access information (website, app, 2-1-1, etc).</li> <li>• Bring stakeholders together to identify organizational needs and interests in the communication of food access resources</li> <li>• Seek to identify a platform that organizations can partner on for implementation</li> <li>• Catalogue all current resources with updated information</li> <li>• Identify which organization/s will maintain that platform</li> <li>• Alert community members where to find the information</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Potential FFC Action Steps:</b></p>	

**5. Business support for local food system entrepreneurs, including support for regionally adapted production systems and local food production**

This priority emphasizes strengthening the local food economy by supporting farmers and food entrepreneurs across production, processing, and distribution. Potential ideas include financial and technical assistance for farmers and value-added producers, investments in shared facilities and infrastructure, support for long-term training farmer programs such as Growing Growers, and support for regenerative and climate-appropriate practices. This priority also highlights building aggregation and distribution systems—such as food hubs, shared cold storage, and group purchasing—to help local producers reliably access larger markets and scale their impact.

<p><b>Food System Master Plan</b></p>	<p><b>Goal 1, Objective 4: Support producer education to grow the supply of local food in the county</b></p> <p><b>Goal 3: Increase Local Food Production</b>  <b>Objective 1: Support local farm and food businesses</b>  <b>Objective 2: Facilitate markets for local food producers and food businesses</b></p>
<p><b>Hunger Free Kansas Blueprint</b></p>	<p><b>Strategy #9: Producers, Processors and Grocers</b></p>
<p><b>Key Stakeholders:</b>          K-State Research &amp; Extension (Local Foods, Sedg Co., Rural Grocery Initiative, John C. Pair Ag Research Station), Kansas Farm Bureau/ Shop KS Farms, Kansas Rural Center, ICT Farms, Common Ground Growers &amp; Producers, Mr. MC’s Market, KC Food Hub, Create Campaign, Empower Kitchen, The Shared Kitchen</p>	
<p><b>Recommended Next Steps:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Convene stakeholders interested in the aggregation and distribution of locally-produced food to identify opportunities for collaboration</li> <li>• Assess the feasibility of different food aggregation/ distribution business models in Wichita</li> <li>• Assess the feasibility of increased shared infrastructure for refrigerated warehouse use for local producers and distributors</li> <li>• Expand the Growing Growers program in Wichita (new farmer training program)</li> <li>• Identify farmer support needs through KSRE and the Kansas Farm Bureau, including training and education opportunities for regenerative farming practices</li> <li>• Identify commodities farmers who may want to transition to specialty crops such as vegetables and technical assistance and support they need to do so</li> <li>• Link local nutritious food product entrepreneurs with resources such as commercial kitchen access and Create Campaign’s business training program</li> </ul>	

- Bring the Giving Grove program to the area (fruit and nut production in LILA neighborhoods)
- Bring local food stakeholders to the KSRE John C. Pair Ag Research Station in Haysville to learn more about their work and potential collaboration

**Potential FFC Action Steps:**

- Host a field trip to KSRE John C. Pair Ag Research Station

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## 6. Address Policy Barriers

This priority focuses on removing policy and system barriers that limit access to nutritious food by aligning local regulations to better support community grocers, food entrepreneurs, and local producers. It also emphasizes advocacy at the state and federal levels to protect and expand nutrition assistance programs, while improving resident support for navigating applications and reducing administrative barriers to accessing benefits such as SNAP and WIC.

<b>Food System Master Plan</b>	<b>Goal 2, Objective 2:</b> Address affordability of food. <b>Goal 3, Objective 3:</b> Provide regulatory clarity and adopt policies supportive of urban agriculture
<b>Hunger Free Kansas Blueprint</b>	<b>Strategy #3:</b> Web-based applications
<b>Key Stakeholders:</b> City of Wichita, Sedgwick County, Food and Farm Council, Kansas Food Action Network, Health & Wellness Coalition of Wichita, Kansas Appleseed, American Heart Association, Hunger Free Kansas	
<p><b>Recommended Next Steps:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess barriers, gaps and supports of the food system in local policy in Wichita and Sedgwick County</li> <li>• Partner with Hunger Free Kansas to identify ways they are supporting web-based applications for SNAP and WIC</li> <li>• Identify stakeholders who help residents apply for SNAP and convene to identify barriers and opportunities to support or collaborate</li> <li>• Identify who conducts Federal-level advocacy for SNAP in Sedgwick County and identify needs</li> <li>• Provide training for FFC members on local food policy</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Potential FFC Action Steps:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocate for local policies to support the food system</li> </ul>	