

# FOOD CONSUMPTION IN SHAWNEE COUNTY



Across the nation, and in Kansas, studies have repeatedly found that consumers' diets are not well-aligned with current dietary recommendations. According to recent information from the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, about three-quarters of Americans consume too little fruits, vegetables, dairy products and oils, and more than half eat more than the recommended amounts of grains and protein foods.

Residents of Shawnee County have similarly unhealthy diets. Many factors can influence food decisions including:

- The physical availability to access food
- Where various stores and food outlets are located
- The pricing of healthy or local food offerings
- Product placement on store shelves
- Plate size in restaurants
- The words used to describe a menu offering
- Menu labeling of healthier items
- School and workplace food options

By supporting healthier, more accessible food options in the places where people make food decisions we can quickly and easily encourage healthier eating choices.

**45.6%** of adults in Shawnee County eat fruits less often than once a day

**23%** of adults eat vegetables less than once per day

## Facts & Trends

- ◆ Shawnee County residents spend an estimated \$492 million annually on food purchases.
- ◆ \$185 million of that is spent on foods prepared away from home.
- ◆ Of the foods purchased for home use, more than 40 percent of spending is on snacks and other processed food items; just 17 percent is spent on fruits and vegetables. Broken down, that amount calculates out to 89 cents per person per day spent on fruits and vegetables.
- ◆ In 2014, there were 96 full-service and 142 fast-food outlets located within the borders of Shawnee County. On a per person basis, the density of fast food outlets in Shawnee County is somewhat higher than the Kansas and U.S. averages.

## Strengths

- ◆ Farmers Markets and SNAP Double Up programs
- ◆ Harvesters' Mobile Food Distributions
- ◆ Community Gardens
- ◆ Summer meals programs
- ◆ Choosing Healthy Appetizing Meal Plan Solutions for Seniors (CHAMPSS) Program

## Challenges

- ◆ Affordability of healthy food
- ◆ Access to healthy food/ Food deserts
- ◆ Abundance of less healthy food options
- ◆ Insufficient production of fruits and vegetables
- ◆ Transportation to food retail outlets and food pantries not always convenient
- ◆ Seasonal shortages of local food at food pantries and Harvesters

## Policy Needs

- ◆ Establishment of a Food and Farm Council
- ◆ Establishment of healthy food guidelines in public places including vending, concessions, public food service, and institutions
- ◆ Zoning, tax, and incentives for food retail and processing
- ◆ Improved transportation infrastructure to food access points (bus, bike, and sidewalks)

## Community Needs

- ◆ Private sector buy-in for healthy guidelines and farm-to-fork food purchasing
- ◆ A system-wide approach to creating a healthy food environment
- ◆ Consumer education on healthy food options
- ◆ Labeling of healthy food and local food options in restaurants
- ◆ More robust, safe, and convenient transportation options to food retail outlets and food pantries
- ◆ Investigation and research on pricing variability and availability of healthy foods in underserved areas