COMMUNITY LISTENING SESSION REPORT: Barriers to Food Access

Over the course of two sessions taking place on October 2nd, 2017 and February 5th, 2018, community members joined the Food and Nutrition Commission (FNC) to collaborate on how the FNC can increase access to safe, affordable, and nutritious foods for everyone within the next 18 to 24 months. Between the two sessions, around 100 people participated, who varied in age, socio-economic status, and 15% identified as people of color or Native Americans. This is what we “heard” from the community as to what was felt to be the most significant barriers to food access. We now welcome input and comments to determine next steps for feasible ways the FNC can help to address the barriers below.

Getting healthy food within your community: Barriers

**PRIORITY THEMES**

- Location
- Cost
- Transportation
- Motivation
- Knowledge
- Time
- Other costs of living coming before food
- Racism
- System where we give leftovers to underserved
- Definition of “healthy” is not inclusive
- Land use
- No meals in employment settings
- Short shelf-life
- Un- or underemployment

**OTHER BARRIERS**

- Access
- Cultural familiarity
- Dense caloric food
- Distribution
- Drying
- Freezing
- Elders
- Emotional ties
- Environment
- Fear
- Gentrification
- Limited options
- Limited season
- Marginalized community

- No root cause
- Obesity-economics
- Organic = less
- Perceived cost of healthy eating
- Profit margin
- Stigma
- Subsidies
- Supply and demand
- Surplus
- Trade market
- Unavailability of healthy foods
- Variety
- Medical concerns

*Priority themes are barriers that were brought up more than once, or by different community members. Priority themes that are presented in **bold** text are the barriers that were the most frequently discussed and the most strongly emphasized.*
Being able to afford healthy food within your community: Barriers

**PRIORITY THEMES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education/knowledge</th>
<th>Kids underutilizing free meals: stigma &amp; institutional racism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cost</td>
<td>Racism in the food system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SNAP Application: immigration status/fear, resources to process, continued application work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Transportation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vulnerable community not having choices</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**OTHER BARRIERS**

- Decreased access to community gardens
- Employment issues
- Food skills
- Student/senior population
- Winter = less produce

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Finding healthy food where you prefer to get most of your food: Barriers

**BARRIERS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Gentrification</th>
<th>CSA is difficult</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transporation</td>
<td>Sugar</td>
<td>Locations carry less healthy options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Fat</td>
<td>Lower priced brands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Salt</td>
<td>Organic = expensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills</td>
<td>Not fun to eat alone</td>
<td>Taste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taste buds: addition</td>
<td>Food as a reward</td>
<td>Processed foods = faster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bad habits</td>
<td>Students</td>
<td>Lack of farms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profit above health</td>
<td>Short growing season</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stores promoting store brand</td>
<td>MN seasons change</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Hospital food isn’t healthy</td>
<td>Conditioned</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food allergies</td>
<td>Need subsidies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variety</td>
<td>Processed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack motivation</td>
<td>Special diets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education issues</td>
<td>Lactation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diabetes</td>
<td>Vending machines</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unequal food shelves</td>
<td>Heart disease</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health issues</td>
<td>US promotes bad foods</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Priority themes are barriers that were brought up more than once, or by different community members. Priority themes that are presented in **bold** text are the barriers that were the most frequently discussed and the most strongly emphasized.*
Being able to prepare healthy foods: Barriers

**PRIORITY THEMES**

- Knowledge of understanding differences
- Structural racism/unemployment in community
- Cultural associations with healthy foods from all kinds of ethnicities
- Knowledge – healthy foods
- Time: working multiple jobs or shifts
- Cost of tools to make food
- Definition of “healthy” is not inclusive
- Knowledge with limited time or resources
- Knowledge
- Concerns about soil
- Convenience
- Knowledge – food preparation
- Language barriers
- Time
- Cost
- Household gender roles
- Influence of fast food companies
- Short shelf-life

**OTHER BARRIERS**

- Availability
- Citizenship limitations
- Coding issues
- Comfort foods
- Compensation
- Elders
- Fees
- Field access
- Food packaging
- Habits
- Healthy eating
- Illnesses
- Poor assimilation
- Profits
- Spices, lack of availability in food shelves and lack of knowledge on how to use them
- Technology availability
- Winter

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Attracting healthy food businesses to your community: Barriers

**BARRIERS**

- Want to Garden
- Stereotypes
- Linked-To Housing
- Crime
- Racial Segregation
- Taxes
- Short-Business Life
- Exclusivity
- Junk food=Cheaper
- Gentrification
- Permits
- Storage
- Complicated
- Land-Access
- Transportation
- Short-Shelf-Life
- Health Insurance Costs
- Bureaucratic
- Time-Intensive
- Land-Taken-Away
- Less-Staff
- Small Business Issues
- Language Barriers
- Difficult
- Zoning
- Gardening Not a Priority
- ADA Friendly
- Tax Model Doesn’t Consider Food
- Co-Ops Are Expensive
- Time-Intensive
Appendix A:
COMMUNITY LISTENING SESSION REPORT: Community Proposed Solutions

During the two FNC Community Listening Sessions, community members shared their thoughts and ideas for potential solutions to the above listed food access barriers. The solutions proposed by the community in response to the identified barriers are presented below.

**Getting healthy food within your community: Community Proposed Solutions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRIORITY THEMES*</th>
<th>OTHER COMMUNITY PROPOSED SOLUTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Smaller pre-packaged for less waste</td>
<td>Local procurement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tax breaks</td>
<td>Mobile markets that are culturally sensitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to make local options cheaper?</td>
<td>Indoor gardening techniques</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsidize produce</td>
<td>Seasonality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community building activities</td>
<td>Market Bucks match program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free nutrition classes: healthy eating; preparing foods; how to grow food</td>
<td>More RDs in the stores: Give coupons, recipes, education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land</td>
<td>Partner with grocers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using abandoned lots for community gardens</td>
<td>Easier for large purchasers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Link subsidies with farmers markets and other healthy options, CSAs, etc.</td>
<td>Making language/system better</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenhouses to extend growing season</td>
<td>Bulk purchasing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interactive community maps</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Priority themes are community proposed solutions that were brought up more than once, or by different community members. Priority themes that are presented in bold text are the solutions that were the most frequently discussed and the most strongly emphasized.
Being able to afford healthy food within your community: Community Proposed Solutions

**PRIORITY THEMES***

- Affordable housing to allow income to go toward food
- Schools: Grab & go for students
- Financial education
- Start nutrition education early in life
- Living wage jobs in neighborhoods
- Building human/physical locations and partnerships
- Being able to repurpose land
- Reroute food distribution to areas of need
- Bridge rural and local farmers
- Community information sharing
- Increase green space

**OTHER COMMUNITY PROPOSED SOLUTIONS**

- Looking at the food value (process of food production) to see where policies could be implemented to cut costs
- Schools
- Help scale up the small groups that are working to learn/grow
- Scalability of community gardens and how to work through challenges
- Financial education: Create structure around service hours for business/financial majors – require service similar to nursing credit hours for work to get licensed
- Seed giveaways
- Incentivize making healthy choices
- Community gardens
- Subsidize healthy foods
- Decrease healthy foods costs
- Civic engagement – community voices in commission

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Finding healthy food where you prefer to get most of your food: Community Proposed Solutions

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<tr>
<td>Increase education in public schools</td>
<td>Cooking classes for youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile markets</td>
<td>Target wage increases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Map of healthy food options</td>
<td>Taxi vouchers for SNAP recipients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destigmatizing public assistance programs</td>
<td>Create an app to connect people who need food assistance help with resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach communities how to change policies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**OTHER COMMUNITY PROPOSED SOLUTIONS**

Teach people how to use local foods
Community meals
Meal kits for distribution

Being able to prepare healthy foods: Community Proposed Solutions

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<tr>
<td>Raise minimum wage to improve standard of living</td>
<td>Put healthy foods in vending machines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education in early schools (ECFE, preschool) to teach healthy daily lifestyle/food prep</td>
<td>Decrease processed food availability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutrition classes in school curriculum</td>
<td>Make instruction videos for cooking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social policies that require healthy grocery stores in all areas</td>
<td>Where to get cheaper food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase SNAP</td>
<td>Support local businesses selling food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seconds or “ugly” food</td>
<td>Giving gardens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs (United Way)</td>
<td>Education in community spaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education to be mandatory so healthy food/economic literacy: Life Skills</td>
<td>Subsidize healthy ingredients, fruits, and vegetables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using community to teach work/skill programs</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

**OTHER COMMUNITY PROPOSED SOLUTIONS**

Learn/borrow from WIC (recipes & education)
Prepped foods
Partially prepped foods
Understanding social cost
Credit unions → community
State → community food jobs/banking jobs

Taste testing with kids – at school, in programming
Mobile kitchen grants
Shift advertising for healthy foods rather than unhealthy
Local cooking classes
Create culturally appropriate recipes

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Attracting healthy food businesses to your community: Community Proposed Solutions

**PRIORITY THEMES***

- Seed money for small businesses
- Indoor farmers’ markets for all seasons
- Fund aquaponics
- **Entrepreneurial training for food business production owners**
- Expand mobile markets
- Utilize community spaces during off times
- Aggregate tables at neighborhood farmers market
- Land access: Community land trusts (like Rondo TC ACT)

**OTHER COMMUNITY PROPOSED SOLUTIONS**

- Grants
- Carb counts listed on packaging
- Small outlet stores on every corner with healthy foods
- Replicate Hmong village for other ethnicities
- Reseller market model at the local level
- Farmer grows it, Neighbor buys it, Neighbor sells it to community
- Land access
- Land access: Housing & business & agriculture

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