

# Seeking Solutions to Childhood Hunger CHAMPS Final Report

Summer 2018



## Executive Summary

Hunger is a reality. More than 4,000 children in Douglas County (about 1 in 5) are considered food insecure. In Lawrence, more than 14% of parents of children attending public schools experience food insecurity at least once a month. Lawrence participates in the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs to provide eligible children free or reduced-priced meals to address hunger and prevent obesity. However, in their current form, for children who are food insecure, these programs alone likely are not enough. During the school year, these children may have little or no food for an evening meal, and during the summer they may struggle even more to have enough food. At a time when use of emergency food assistance programs has grown, the number of summer meals served to area youth has declined.

*“ Could they do this on the weekends too? Or deliver to our houses? We are hungry. ”*

- Student at Kennedy Elementary about the Afterschool Meals Pilot Program

## Working Collaboratively

In 2016, Lawrence was one of 20 cities selected to participate in CHAMPS (Cities Combating Hunger through Afterschool and Meal Programs) by the National League of Cities. Participation allowed project partners to:

- Learn about successful approaches other communities use in summer/afterschool meal programs.
- Conduct local focus groups to understand how students, parents and educators perceive these programs.
- Pilot an afterschool meal program.

## Findings

Despite efforts of many partners, participation in the summer feeding program has declined in recent years.

There are many barriers to participation, including:

- Effective communication.
- Transportation and site locating.
- Supplemental programming, and
- Strategic planning and coordination.

Based on the collective learning of project partners, the following recommendations were proposed.

## Recommendations for our Community

- ✓ Create more systematic and sustained agency planning and coordination efforts.
- ✓ Enhance communications to create greater awareness.
- ✓ Study and address barriers to transportation.
- ✓ Consider developing a more comprehensive afterschool meal program, particularly in low-income neighborhoods where childhood hunger is a significant issue.

## Special Thanks

Many individuals and organizations help address childhood hunger in Douglas County. Without their passion and hard work, many more youth in our community would be without the nutrition they need to learn and grow. Each of these partners have demonstrated their dedication to feeding youth and working to improve summer and afterschool meal programs.

K-State Research and Extension-  
Douglas County

Lawrence Public Schools

Just Food

Boys and Girls Club of Lawrence

City of Lawrence Parks and  
Recreation

Lawrence Public Library

Harvesters

Kansas Appleseed

LiveWell Douglas County

Lawrence-Douglas County Housing Authority

City of Lawrence

Douglas County

Douglas County Food Policy Council

Lecompton United Methodist Church

City of Lecompton

City of Perry

Perry-Lecompton School District

Perry First State Bank & Trust

Other partners, volunteers & community

## About this report

This report was developed to summarize what was learned by CHAMPS project partners. The report was prepared by the Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department and the KU Center for Community Health and Development.

To access the full report online, please go to:  
[www.ldchealth.org](http://www.ldchealth.org)

For more information, please contact:  
[info@ldchealth.org](mailto:info@ldchealth.org)

Summer Food Service Program

Afterschool Meals Pilot Program

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## Summer Food Service Program

Without access to school meals, summer months can be a time of food insecurity for many children. The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) is a federally-funded, state-administered program that ensures that low-income children continue to receive nutritious meals when school is not in session. In Lawrence, there are multiple sites where free breakfasts and lunches are served to children 1 to 18 years through the summer food program.

Unfortunately, fewer lunches were served in 2017 than any of the previous four years. Figure 1 and Table 1 show the number of lunches served at open Lawrence SFSP lunch sites between 2013 and 2017.

Figure 1  
Summer lunches served 2013-2017

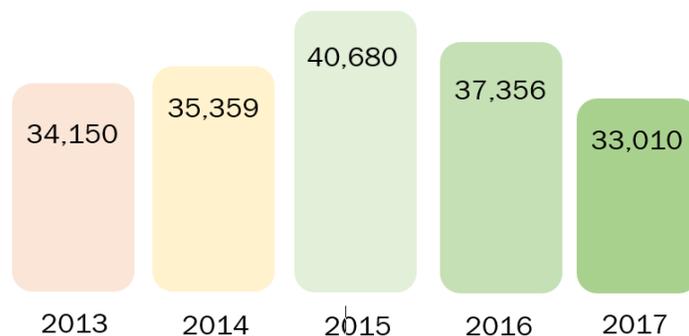


Table 1. Number of lunches served annually by site

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Hillcrest				5,967	
New York				6,318	3,474
Woodlawn		6,761		5,430	2,753
Pinckney	6,047	60	6,353		
Prairie Park		6,856	7,478		
Sunset					2,626
Kennedy	4,134				3,792
Holcom					1,937
South Park	6,232	7,259	4,783	4,005	3,209
East Rec Ctr	4,025	3,411	4,397	3,767	3,605
Broken Arrow	2,843	4,171	11,253	3,719	2,166
Library			6,416	7,627	9,448
Cordley	3,721				
East Heights	5,551				
West Jr High	1,597				
Schwegler		6,841			

## Notable Changes

Overall, the number of lunches served has decreased considerably.

Meals served at South Park have dropped off since 2013 and 2014.

Meals served at the Lawrence Public Library have increased substantially since it opened as a site in 2015.

Meals served at Broken Arrow Park increased from 2013-2015, followed by substantial decreases; likely a result of programming changes. In 2015, lunches were served to three different programs at this site (Broken Arrow Elementary School Boys and Girls Club, South Middle School Boys and Girls Club, and a Lawrence Parks and Recreation program). In 2016, there was no Boys and Girls Club program at Broken Arrow Elementary School. In 2017, there was also no middle school program at the site. The only program served by the site in 2017 was administered by Parks and Recreation.

The number of lunches served at the two elementary school sites (New York and Woodlawn) decreased in 2017.

Almost 2,000 lunches were served at a new Lawrence Parks and Recreation meal site at Holcom Recreation Center in 2017, primarily to adolescents, which are often an under-served population.

Rates of participation in the breakfast program mirrored rates of participation in the lunch program (Figure 2 and Table 2), with increases from 2013-2015 and subsequent decreases. Meal sites have changed significantly from year to year, so it can be hard to detect patterns by site. However, overall, numbers are significantly down. In the last two years, the number of breakfasts served at New York and Woodlawn Elementary Schools decreased by more than 1,000 meals at each site.

Figure 2  
Summer breakfasts served 2013-2017

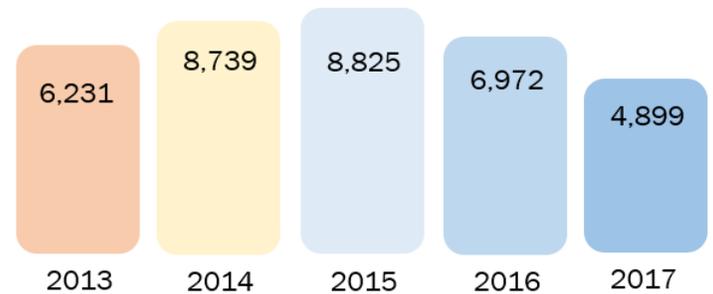


Table 2. Number of breakfasts served annually by site

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Hillcrest				2,297	
New York				2,864	1,462
Woodlawn		2,158		1,809	717
Pinckney	1,498		1,973		
Prairie Park		3,229	3,619		
Sunset					1,109
Kennedy	1,450				1,611
Broken Arrow		743	3,233		
Cordley	1,091				
East Heights	2,099				
West Jr. High	93				
Schwegler		2,609			

## Focus Group Findings

During the spring and summer of 2017, focus groups were conducted with local children, youth, and parents. These conversations helped identify barriers to participation and potential strategies for enhancing participation in the summer meal program.

Focus group participants included current program participants as well as unreached priority populations for the summer meal program. Focus groups were conducted at Edgewood Homes (a public housing site), Just Food (the food bank for Douglas County), Lawrence Public Library, and with youth at the Sunrise Project.

Additionally, anonymous and brief written surveys were distributed to parents attending focus groups to gather additional feedback.

Focus groups revealed appreciation for the SFSP, including the quality of food served and the activities offered at some summer meal sites. However, numerous barriers were also identified.

## Barriers to participation

### Transportation

One youth stated, “It is a matter of convenience. It takes a while to get to library even though it is the closest site [to my home]. There are no sites on the west side.” Another youth stated, “I would need to take a bus to get there, and I don’t have a bus pass.” A few students did note they had the \$10 all-summer bus pass. However, many adults and youth were unaware of the \$10 summer bus option for youth. Additionally, participants shared that more bus stop locations would be helpful, as would places to lock up bikes next to the stops. Others noted that more education for youth around using the bus and getting bus passes is needed.

### Lack of awareness about the program

There were concerns about insufficient communication about the program through schools and shortage of online information. One teacher from Central Middle School said she did not ever recall the school sending home information about summer meals. Middle school and high-school aged focus group participants reported they did not receive information from school.

*“My spouse and I do not eat because we have a tight budget. If the meal were free, we would gladly accept.”*

Lawrence parents about the Summer Food Service Program

*“We love this program! It helps us feed our daughter with lots of fresh fruit and vegetables.”*

*Having so many options is incredible. We have a 10-year old daughter who is a vegetarian. There is always so many items for her to choose from. Thank you!”*

-Lawrence parents about the Summer Food Service Program

### Limited serving times

There were some concerns about the amount time standing in line outside in the heat (especially at sites where children in large programs are served first), the requirement to eat lunch on site, and the limited window of time when meals are served.

### Prohibitive cost of meals for adults

While meals are free to youth, parents who wanted to eat had to pay \$3.50 for lunch. Of the 20 adults surveyed, only two were generally able to pay for a lunch for themselves. Many parents reported skipping the lunch meal due to lack of funds or not having cash on hand.

Other concerns cited were lack of activities to draw people (especially teens) to sites, and lack of information about options for those with dietary restrictions.

*The full Focus Group Report is included in Appendix 1.*

## Afterschool Meals Pilot Program

### *Kennedy Elementary School*



The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) is a federally funded, state administered program that provides meals and snacks for youth through age 18 in afterschool programs designed to target low income students at no cost to families. Meals/snacks are reimbursable to the sponsoring entity with cash payments and USDA foods. Schools, afterschool programs, camps, local government agencies and other community organizations can sponsor and administer these meals. Meals are nutritionally balanced, meeting USDA standards.

Snacks have been offered in some local afterschool programs, but prior to the CHAMPS pilot program, the only afterschool program that offered full meals was Edgewood Homes. The CHAMPS pilot was launched November 2017 at Kennedy Elementary School, where more than two out of three students qualify for free or reduced lunch. The goal was to effectively implement an expanded meal program, overcoming perceived operational barriers (such as transportation and storage of food and increased staff time), and gathering participant feedback. Initially, several partners worked cooperatively to take on different functions of the program's operation. Harvesters provided meals, Just Food provided space for meal storage, and K-State Research and Extension-Douglas County transported the meals between Just Food and the school. The Boys and Girls Club of Lawrence served the food, substituting their usual snack for a full meal beginning one day a week in November 2017. Initial popularity led to expansion of the program to three days a week in 2018.

“*This is the best snack we've had!*”

*“This snack is the best. We are real hungry.”*

*“I like it because it is a big amount of food.”* ”

Students at Kennedy Elementary about the Afterschool Meals Pilot Program

## Focus Group Findings

Staff and students expressed enthusiasm about the pilot program. When asked if they preferred the meal they received on Wednesdays to the snack they received the other days, youth unanimously and enthusiastically agreed. Numerous children suggested they would like to have the meals served more often; daily, if possible.

Some youth during the summer commented that there were “lots of latch-key kids,” and that “after school a lot of times people are very hungry.”

*The full Focus Group Report for the pilot Afterschool Meal Program is included in Appendix 2.*

## Conclusion and Recommendations

Youth participation in the Summer Food Service Program continues to decline despite collaborative work among program partners. Unfortunately, these declining numbers do not reflect decreased need. Focus group comments of children, parents, and educators corroborate other data showing there are hungry children and adults in our community.

The Summer Food Service Program and Afterschool Meal Programs can help alleviate hunger experienced by Lawrence youth if project partners can successfully address barriers to participation. Through the CHAMPS initiative, partners learned about successful practices in other communities. A series of recommendations and associated action steps follow:

Recommendations	Action Steps
<p>Enhance planning and coordination.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Engage in year-round planning to ensure adequate coordination and promotion of the summer meal program.</li> <li>✓ Select sites and begin promotions earlier.</li> <li>✓ Clarify roles and responsibilities of each partner, with central coordination.</li> <li>✓ Collect and analyze meal program data as an ongoing part of program planning to monitor and explain changes in meals served. This would give partners the opportunity for “course correction.”</li> <li>✓ Explore strategic selection of program sites to ensure areas of greatest need are served. Site selection must also be done earlier to ensure effective communication and promotion.</li> <li>✓ Implement supplemental programming and activities at meal sites to attract and retain participants of varying ages.</li> </ul>
<p>Enhance communications to create greater awareness.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Create and implement a strategic communications campaign.</li> <li>✓ Communicate program information early and often.</li> <li>✓ Target and tailor messaging to teens to increase participation.</li> </ul>
<p>Study and address barriers to transportation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Identify transportation barriers and seek solutions to address them.</li> <li>✓ Consider transportation barriers in site selection.</li> <li>✓ Work with public transportation to supply free summer bus passes to youth.</li> </ul>
<p>Develop a comprehensive afterschool meal program.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Expand the pilot program at Kennedy Elementary to 5 days a week.</li> <li>✓ Create a plan to replicate the model at other schools, starting with schools with highest need.</li> </ul>

## Appendix 1

### Summer Food Service Program Focus Group Report

#### Background

The KU Center for Community Health and Development was commissioned to conduct focus groups. This report details the methods used, responses received and provides analysis of barriers and opportunities for program improvement.

Photo credit: Lawrence Journal World. “Katy Townley, left, helps her 3-year-old daughter Livia pick out an apple Thursday, June 15, 2017, during lunchtime at the Lawrence Public Library's "Fuel Up 4 Summer" site. The library, 707 Vermont St., is one of several sites for Fuel Up 4 Summer, which offers free meals for kids between the ages of 1 and 18 during the summer months.”



#### Methods

During the spring and summer of 2017, qualitative and quantitative data were gathered from local children, youth, and parents via focus groups to learn about barriers to participation in the summer meal program and gather ideas to bolster promotion efforts and participation.

Anonymous, brief, written surveys were distributed to parents who attended focus groups to ask a few parent-specific questions that may be sensitive; for example, whether they eat lunch with their child at the meal site, and if not, why not. Focus groups were conducted at Edgewood Homes (a public housing site operated by the Lawrence-Douglas County Housing Authority), Just Food (the food bank for Douglas County), Lawrence Public Library, and at the Sunrise Project (a non-profit organization whose mission is to “empower people to live healthy, self-determined lives through engagement with food and the environment to build a socially just community”).

Focus group participants included target populations for the summer meal program, current participants in summer meal program sites, and youth change makers from area middle and high schools. Incentives for focus group participation included healthy snacks (donated by the Merc and Wal-Mart) and a free pool pass for participants during the summer focus groups (donated by Lawrence Parks and Recreation).

Focus Group Site	Number of Youth Attendees	Number of Adult Attendees
Edgewood Homes	7	6
Just Food	2	5
Lawrence Public Library	20 participated	8
Sunrise Project	11	1
Total Participants	40	20

## Focus Group Responses

When asked where they eat during the summer, participants reported that they eat lunch at the following locations: at the library, Woodlawn, East Lawrence Rec Center, Community Center at Edgewood, home, Broken Arrow Park, Boys and Girls Club sites, and local restaurants. Some focus group participants did not know about the summer food program and did not know where summer meal program sites were located. Only 3 of the 11 Sunrise Project youth had participated in the summer meal program; most were unaware of the program. Focus group participants who were recruited from food sites knew where at least some of the sites were located.

### Barriers-Distance and transportation

Modes of transportation to the library meal site included: car, ride from parent, walking, riding the bus, and biking. Distance and transportation were often reported as barriers. One youth stated, “It is a matter of convenience. It takes a while to get to library even though it is the closest site [to my home]. There are no sites on the west side.” Another youth stated, “I would need to take a bus to get there, and I don’t have a bus pass.” A few students noted they had the \$10 all-summer bus pass; a number of community adults and youth were unaware of the \$10 summer bus option for youth. Some participants shared that more bus stop locations would be helpful, as would places to lock up bikes next to the stops. Others noted that more education for youth around using the bus and getting the bus passes is needed. There was agreement with the suggestion to move one of the locations to West Lawrence—perhaps to a park (more west than Holcomb and the Lawrence Public Library). There was also a suggestion to look into a site in North Lawrence, and to make locations more evenly spaced out to be more accessible.

**Barriers: Time-** Some participants identified time as a constraint.

- “Kids don’t like standing in line. Stood in line a long time at South Park, ended up leaving.”
- “Sometimes, we have to wait a long time at BGC sites. It would be helpful if public times were staggered with the Boys and Girls Club participants. We’ve ended up waiting a long time.”
- “Sometimes we have a planned schedule, so we may have only 10 minutes for a quick lunch, instead of time to stand in line and eat on site.”
- “Extend the time. Some people can’t get there during that 1-hour timeframe. I saw one person get there at 1:30 and they had just packed up and the guy had a worried look on his face and walked away.”
- When asked about the timing of the meal, library focus group participants stated the current time works well. Some teens noted that time was a challenge and that they usually had things going on during the 12-1pm timeframe. The teenage participants from Sunrise agreed that an 11:30-1:30pm (broader) timeframe would be ideal. Some stated they wake up late and eat breakfast later, so 1:00 would be a better time for lunch. Some shared that having sites serve lunch at different times was confusing. They suggested if the timeframe for offering the meal were longer, people could see reminder posts on social media and come.
- “Low-income families often work 2 jobs, schedules aren’t always predictable. Times are really hard. We have to prioritize our job.”
- Participants agreed that the lunchtime meal is a good idea. “Lunch is a good time [to offer a meal] because many parents are working and aren’t home to cook a meal.”

### Barriers: Lack of awareness

Participants recalled meal sites at the Lawrence Public Library, East Lawrence Rec Center, South Park, Holcomb Rec Center, Broken Arrow Elementary, and Kennedy and Pinckney Elementary. Only three of the eleven youth participants at the Sunrise Project thought their friends knew about the summer meal program. Many Lawrence Public Library focus group participants stated they participate in the summer meal program (not surprising, given participants were recruited from the food line and inside the library).

### Other barriers

- “I wonder if some people think they don’t qualify for reduced lunch at school, or if they don’t think they desperately need it, they are taking away from other people. They might think there might not be enough food.”
- “There may be a misconception that if you participate, you are taking away food from people who may need it more than you. Not an official thing, but they feel like they don’t really, really, really need it.”
- “The menu isn’t easily available online to check and see what’s on the menu for the day.”
- “Might be embarrassed to bring a small child.”
- Some parents are worried about letting their child go to meal site unaccompanied. Discussed having a designated adult as a guide, having children go in groups, and idea of “walking carpool.”

### Food Quality: Summer Meal Sites

Overall, participants expressed satisfaction with the quality of the food. Suggestions for improvement included:

- Serving sizes are too small for older kids. Some kids’ parents shoo them out of the house and lock the door, so they need more food.
- Some people have food allergies and need more options.
- Some people with dietary restrictions who are vegetarian, vegan, or gluten-free don’t participate because they don’t think they can get anything [that they can eat] there.
- Teens noted sometimes the salad runs out.
- Sometimes the milk is too warm.
- PB&J gets hot and moist.
- Unfreeze the mangos.
- Requests for: cantaloupe, juice, sub sandwiches, more healthy options like fresh vegetables and fresh fruit
- Make the carrots softer so smaller children can eat them more easily
- I’ve heard youth wonder about the quality, whether it’s whole food, whether it will be tasty.
- More diversity of food offered.
- More foods popular with the kids, like pizza.
- Make the food fun and exciting. For example, you could have a themed week, or do fun things like “Cowboy Chili.”
- Involve kids in the food when possible; they eat more different things when they help.
- We say it is for children zero to 18, but there is no food for infants. If they can’t eat it, it’s not for them. Could we offer formula? Baby food?

### Adult Participation: Summer Meal Sites

When adults were asked if they eat a meal when they bring their children to the summer meal site, most reported inability to pay. Of the 20 adult participants, two stated that the lunch did not need to be free and that they were happy to support the program by paying. Two participants noted that having the ability to take debit/credit cards would be helpful, as they didn’t always have cash on hand. Many parents reported skipping the lunch meal due to lack of funds.

- “No, I don’t have the money to do it. A free one would be tremendously helpful for even just medical reasons.”
- “My spouse and I do not eat because we have a tight budget. If the meal were free we would gladly accept.”
- “Usually not. It would be helpful if I ate free too.”
- “No – we don’t have the extra money. Yes (it would be helpful if a free meal were provided).”

### On-site Activities: Summer Meal Sites

Participants expressed enthusiasm about supervised activities or games at the summer meal sites. Participants shared that they thought this would help raise awareness about the meals and draw more people.

Participants brainstormed potential activities, including: sports (indoor basketball, soccer, playing catch); arts and crafts; group games such as four square or giant lawn games or color chalk wars with chalk powder; a short bike safety course; bubbles; growing plants; learning about where food comes from; pool; foosball; ping pong; drawing with sidewalk chalk; having a carnival; water balloons. Participants also liked the idea of playing music “to raise awareness and draw people and also have a nice vibe.” One participant shared that music and games, “make it more of a community-building experience around food.” Participants also suggesting having local musicians and student groups volunteer to perform, and to post when concerts will happen. One 10-year-old girl shared, “I think maybe there should be a garden at the library.” One parent suggested, “Include young children. I can’t afford the neat classes – they are in the hundreds of dollars. It wouldn’t have to be anything elaborate. Group games would be great, for example.” Another participant shared that existing activities already help encourage her son to participate in summer meals. “Basketball at the East Lawrence Center is a draw. My son gets lunch and plays basketball.”



Photo credit: Just Food, BOOM Comics Fuel Up 4 Summer spike event to raise awareness about the summer meal program. July 14, 2017.

### Promotion of Summer Meal Sites

How participants reported learning the location of summer meal sites:

- By accident
- Walking by the library or South Park, saw the free meal site, and stopped
- Flyers in public places
- A poster at the doctor’s office
- A poster at the library
- Flyers displayed at the Housing Authority
- Flyers displayed at East Lawrence Center
- Handouts/flyers sent home through schools
- Info shared through Edgewood Resident Services

One youth shared, “It would be helpful to get the word out better. There are probably a lot of kids in Lawrence who would benefit but don’t know about it.”

## Suggestions to Increase Knowledge

- Posters and flyers around downtown, around school, in public places.
- Bigger on-site signage to draw attention to the meal program for people passing by.
- Online. It would be helpful if the information was on the library website.
- Via email.
- Public schools should do more to get the word out. There was nothing promoting it at my school. Found out about it through word of mouth. Not well promoted at the schools. Some schools do a better job about it than others. My son brought home info about it, and even a calendar with the menu for June, but I work at Central (as a teacher) and I don't think we had anything publicized at Central. Additionally, no Sunrise Project youth participants remembered getting any information from the schools and expressed a need to beef up communication efforts at the schools (South Middle School, Southwest). Suggested schools should send out information, give out and post information in the school lunchroom.
- A Facebook page would be helpful. Every day, you could shout out the menu for the day and provide other tips so that the program is on parents' and kids' minds.
- If there was a website, I would look at it.
- Have every speaker in town announce the lunch program starting. Make sure people at the pool know since the library is so nearby. Get the pool people to make an announcement, maybe make an announcement in Wal-Mart.
- Since people over 18 can pay and eat, maybe inform people who go to LINK that the lunch program is an option.
- Have a parent and student representative at each school who can help make sure the word gets out – volunteers to serve as liaisons at each school. They could put up posters at the school. Youth volunteer intern positions at each school could be established to help spread the word.

## Additional Suggestions

- Offer food at different times, for example add dinner. Free breakfast is also needed.
- Add a recycling bin, not just trash cans for waste.
- Do a share table for extra food or compost extra food.
- Is there a way we could get a location at a high school? That would draw more high school students in. You could hold the lunch after summer school each day.
- Provide tips about healthy eating. Kids don't really know what healthy eating is.
- I like the idea of having pop-up food program locations, like the one at the comic store. Could go to Prairie Park Nature Center with program and then food.
- It is hard to find the menu online. Could you make the menu easily available online? Add to library & school web.
- Destigmatizing free food. Framing it as “free food for everyone.” Taking the layer of “who eats free food” away and changing that (stigma). Some kids might feel ashamed to go there if they need the food.
- The food is served outside and you have to wait in line. Sometimes it is too hot. More opportunities to stand in line and eat the meals in air-conditioned areas when it's really hot.
- More tables to sit and eat.
- Free transit bus passes “would be amazing” (consensus among group)
- Allow parent to eat for free if accompanying a newborn (who can't come on their own) or if breastfeeding (Children's Mercy allows breastfeeding moms to eat in cafeteria for free).
- Let them take the food with them. Sometimes it is too hot to eat outside.
- Take possibility of food allergies into account (options).
- Youth suggested doing a survey to find out what foods the kids like the most (and offer those foods more).
- Offer an incentive for people to return multiple times.
- Expand pop-up locations...Prairie Park Nature Center, include short kids' program. KU's Natural History and Art Museums or film...something to draw more kids.

### Appreciation for the Summer Meals

Participants expressed a great appreciation for the free summer meals program.

“It’s great to break bread together. This is a really great program.” – Edgewood Home resident

“We’ve been doing this since they were little. We love this program. This one (at the library) feels more open. The ones at the schools, they serve the Boys and Girls Club participants first.”

“Appreciate it a whole lot. They used to give out the snack packs every Friday at Southwest Middle School and Cordley Elementary School. During the summer, they used to take home a BackSnack. We used to go to the one at East Lawrence. We live by Free State, so this (at the Lawrence Public Library) is way closer for us.”

“We love this program! It helps us feed our daughter with lots of fresh fruit and vegetables.”

“Having so many options is incredible. We have a 10-year-old daughter who is a vegetarian. There is always so many items for her to choose from. Thank you!”

“I think that the food is really good. I find it appetizing and filling and yummy!”

### Summer Meal Program Focus Group Questions for Youth and Parents

- Where do you eat lunch over the summer?
- Do you know where the summer food sites are?
- Where is the nearest summer site to you (either your house or where you spend your time)?
- How do you know where the summer meal sites are each year? Is there a better way to get that information to you?
- Do you participate in the summer meal program? If so, why? If not, why not? (Explore barriers to participation, such as transportation)
- If you participate, how do you get there?
- If you have participated, what did you think of the food? What feedback do you have for improvements?
- When would be a good time for the meal?
- What are things that make it hard to participate?
- What do you think are the rules for participating?
- Are people you know aware of these summer meals? Do you go with others to the meal site, such as family or friends?
- What kind of activities would be a draw?
- What things would you recommend be done to help spread the word about these free meals?
- Would you be interested in an afterschool dinner/ “super snack” during the school year?
- Do you have any other suggestions (for the summer food program or for addressing hunger among children and youth)?
- Is there anything else you’d like to share?

### Parent Survey

- What is the age of your child(ren)?
- If you bring your child(ren) to the summer meal site, do you eat? Why or why not?
- Would it be helpful if a free meal were provided?
- What kind of activities do your kids do during the summer?
- Are there additional activities you’d like them to do?
- Do you know about the summer bus pass program?
- Do or would you allow your child to use the bus pass program?

## Appendix 2

### Afterschool Meals Pilot Program Focus Group Report

#### Background

The KU Center for Community Health and Development conducted additional focus groups to evaluate the afterschool meals pilot at Kennedy Elementary School. This report details the methods used, responses received and captures the impressions of students and staff.



#### Methods

During the fall of 2017, qualitative data were gathered from local children and Boys and Girls Club staff via focus groups and interviews in order to obtain feedback on a pilot afterschool super snack program at Kennedy Elementary Boys and Girls Club. Twenty-six children who are participants in the afterschool super snack pilot program participated in focus groups, and three Boys and Girls Club staff members were interviewed to obtain their feedback. Additionally, during the spring and summer of 2017, qualitative and quantitative data were gathered from local children, youth, and parents via focus groups in order to learn about barriers to participation in the summer meal program. Focus groups were conducted at Edgewood Homes (a public housing site operated by the Lawrence-Douglas County Housing Authority), Just Food (the food bank for Douglas County), Kennedy Elementary School Boys and Girls Club Super-Snack Pilot, Lawrence Public Library, and at the Sunrise Project (a non-profit organization whose mission is to “empower people to live healthy, self-determined lives through engagement with food and the environment to build a socially just community”).

During these four focus groups, participants were asked whether they would be interested in an afterschool dinner/“super snack” during the school year.

The following table illustrates the focus group sites and number of participants.

Focus Group Site	Number of Youth Attendees	Number of Adult Attendees
Edgewood Homes	7	6
Just Food	2	5
Kennedy Elementary School Boys and Girls Club Super-Snack Pilot	26	3
Lawrence Public Library	20 participated (additional 5 young children were also present)	8
Sunrise Project	11	1
Total Participants	66	23

## Afterschool Dinner/ Super Snack Feedback

Participants at Edgewood Homes, Just Food, the Lawrence Public Library, and the Sunrise Project shared enthusiasm and agreement that there would be interest in an afterschool dinner/ “super snack” during the school year. Youth at Edgewood Homes shared that there are “lots of latch-key kids,” and that “after school a lot of times people are very hungry.” A teacher at Central Junior High shared, “We have a lot of kids who need extra food during the day. Many teachers bring things to school for certain kids [because we know they do not have dinner at home].” Participants shared potential locations for dinner might be the East Lawrence Rec Center, and close to the schools.

At the Kennedy Elementary School Boys and Girls Club afterschool super snack pilot site, staff and students expressed enthusiasm about the super snack program. When asked if they preferred the super snack they receive on Wednesdays to the snack they receive the other days, youth almost unanimously and enthusiastically agreed. Numerous children suggested they would like to have the super snack served more often, or every day. Comments included:

- “It is better.”
- “It is the best snack we’ve had!”
- “It is more yummy!”
- “I like the chocolate milk.”
- “This snack is the best. We are real hungry.”
- “I like it because it is a big amount of food.”
- “I like to feel full.”
- “This makes me feel full longer than other snacks.”
- “I would like it more if they would use things from the food groups.”
- “Add more fruit and healthy stuff.”
- “I feel more hungry on days there is no super snack.”
- “On Mondays, I don’t eat that much.”
- “Put limes in there and a bunch of other fruits.”
- “Put tiny surprises in there.”
- “I want these snacks every day.”
- “Could they do this [super snacks] on weekends too? Or deliver to our houses? We are hungry.”
- One staff member shared, “They hated it at first, but then they tried it. Everybody’s eating almost all of it.”

Some of the children participating reported they do not always eat dinner at home, or not eating until 8pm, 9pm, or 10pm, and so the super snack for them was very helpful. Children reported liking that they had choices available. One child mentioned having something available for children who are lactose intolerant or who can’t have gluten would be helpful. The children also requested that the “cold” crackers/chips and dip be replaced with a different type of chip. A number of children brought up that the dip was “yucky.” Several children did report liking the crackers with the sunflower seeds. They also requested having the straws with the juice packages. Student favorites included milk, applesauce, sunflower seeds, beef jerky, and juice. Some students requested they would like to have hot food, such as chicken nuggets and French fries. A number of children added that they would like to have fresh fruits and vegetables. Specific foods requested included carrots and ranch, cuties, oranges, strawberries, grapes, bananas, pears. Students also requested more sunflower seeds, pizza Lunchables, adding Cheez-Its and white cheddar Cheez-Its, Munchies snack mix, Goldfish crackers, Takis mini rolled corn tortilla chips, string cheese, freeze dried green bean snacks, Slim Jims, corn chips, and marinara sauce.

## Super Snack Focus Group Questions for Youth

- What do you think of the Wednesday afterschool “super snack”?
- What do you think about the afterschool super snack compared to the snacks on the other days of the week?
- What do you think of the food?
- Would it be helpful if the super snack was offered more than once per week?
- Do you have any other suggestions?
- Is there anything else you’d like to share about the afterschool dinner/ “super snack” program currently offered on Wednesday.