

# COMMUNITY FOOD SYSTEMS SAMPLE SURVEY



*This survey was adapted from the Wichita-Sedgwick Food System Master Plan Survey*

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The community food system sample survey provided below is intended for use by communities that want to learn more about residents' habits, barriers, beliefs, and aspirations related to healthy and local food. Such findings will enable a community to develop and prioritize locally appropriate policies and policy recommendations to enhance the community food system. Through public engagement in community food system policy development, locally specific visions, goals, and objectives will emerge to guide food system work.

The sample survey is intended for use by local planning commissions in the development of a master plan update focused on the community food system, or by any community organization working to advance the food system in a target community. With the community master plan in mind, practitioners using this sample survey should also explore the UP Food Exchange Policy Committee's Sample Master Plan Language for Community Food Systems available at [upfoodexchange.com/resources-2](http://upfoodexchange.com/resources-2).

The sample survey should be reviewed and tailored to local circumstances, purposes, and goals. Don't forget that the Michigan Right to Farm Act, PA 93 of 1981, preempts some local government regulations of commercial agriculture. For more information visit:

[https://www.canr.msu.edu/planning/zoning\\_ordinance\\_resources/agricultural-right-to-farm](https://www.canr.msu.edu/planning/zoning_ordinance_resources/agricultural-right-to-farm)

## Suggestions for survey introduction

*A strong local food system can:*

- Foster profitable agriculture and food businesses,
- Support entrepreneurs in agriculture and food,
- Create new jobs and opportunities,
- Increase access to healthy, nutritious foods for all,
- Support skills in gardening and food preparation,
- Protect soil, water, and air quality,
- Reduce food waste,
- Celebrate diversity of food and agriculture in our community, and
- Empower all to participate in the food system.

To build a strong local food system, the community needs a roadmap to guide the process. We need to know where and how to invest time, resources, and partnerships to best support a vibrant local food economy.

**First, the Food System Master Plan steering committee wants to better understand how you personally experience food in our community - from buying, to cooking, to gardening, to composting.**

**1. Please select the top three places you get food.**

- Cafeteria *(include school, workplace, hospital cafeterias)*
- Community Supported Agriculture program *(weekly vegetable boxes from a farm)*
- Dollar store *(Dollar General, Dollar Tree, etc.)*
- Farmers' market or farm stand
- Fast food restaurants *(McDonald's, Burger King, etc.)*
- Gas station or convenience store *(Holiday, Citgo, corner stores, etc.)*
- Food Cooperative or buying club
- Grocery store *(Econo, Super One, local grocery)*
- Grow your own
- Hunting/fishing
- Meal or grocery home delivery *(Grubhub, Doordash, Instacart etc.)*
- Meals on Wheels *(or related social service meal delivery)*
- Restaurant or diner
- Specialty food stores *(ethnic markets, bakeries, gourmet food stores, etc.)*
- Supercenter *(Meijer, Target, Walmart, etc.)*
- Warehouse club *(Costco, Sam's Club, etc.)*
- Other *(Please specify)* \_\_\_\_\_

**2. My nearest neighbor is (Select most appropriate response) ...**

- Across the hall
- Across the street
- Down the road
- Not visible from my front door

**3. In a typical month, how many trips do you make to buy food? (Select only one)**

- Once a month
- Four times a month (i.e. weekly)
- Five or more times a month

**4. Within the past 30 days I worried whether my food would run out before I was able to buy more.**

***(Select only one)***

- Often
- Sometimes
- Never

**5. Please select the option(s) that best describe(s) the reason(s) why you or your household don't always have the kinds of food you want to eat. (Select all that apply)**

- Not enough money for food, gas, or ride fare
- Healthy, culturally relevant, or traditional foods we want are not available in stores or pantries near us
- Not enough time for shopping or cooking
- Too difficult to get to the store
- On a special diet
- No kitchen equipment available to cook (*stove, pots, knives*)
- Not able to cook or eat because of health problems
- Not applicable
- Other (*Please specify*) \_\_\_\_\_

**6a. When you travel to obtain food, what is your PRIMARY way of getting there and back? (Select only one answer)**

- Bicycle
- Bus/Transit/Ride Share
- Personal Vehicle
- Catch a ride with friends or family
- Walk
- I do not travel to purchase food
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**6b. When you travel to obtain food, what is your SECONDARY way of getting there and back? (Select only one answer)**

- Bicycle
- Bus/Transit/Ride Share
- Personal Vehicle

- Catch a ride with friends or family
- Walk
- I do not travel to purchase food
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**7. How often do you face the following challenges when traveling to reach your primary food outlets?**

**I struggle because...**

	Always	Sometimes	Never
I can't pay for gas or ride fare.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I share rides with others, which limits when I can go.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It is costly to keep my car fixed up or to pay for needed repairs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public transportation is inadequate <i>(food stores not on route, length of ride too long, etc.)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**8. Check the box closest to your own answer for each statement below.**

	Agree	Disagree	Not applicable
I know how to cook	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have enough money to purchase the food I need to cook	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have the tools <i>(i.e. knives, pots, pans, stove etc.)</i> I need to cook	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I usually have enough time to cook	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I would like to learn more about how to cook healthy food	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**9. During the past 30 days, how many times did you cook food for dinner or supper at home?**

- Nearly every day
- A few times a week
- About once a week
- None

**10. Check the box closest to your own answer for each statement below.**

*Note: This is what we mean by “healthy” food: Healthy foods generally include fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean meat, beans or legumes, dairy, and water.*

	Agree	Disagree	I don't know
Overall, I eat healthy foods.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I believe people in my community value healthy eating.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I believe people I know can find healthy foods in their home.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I believe people I know can find healthy foods at the grocery store.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I believe people I know can find healthy foods in restaurants.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I believe people I know can find healthy foods at work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I believe people I know can find healthy foods at school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I'd like to learn more about how to eat healthier.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**11. Check the box closest to your own answer for each statement below.**

	Agree	Disagree	Not applicable
I currently garden and know how to grow food	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I currently utilize season extension structures	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I participate in a community garden	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I raise animals in my yard ( <i>e.g., chickens</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I know where some of the community gardens are in my community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I currently hunt or fish for food ( <i>deer, rabbit, fowl, walleye, etc.</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I would like to learn more about how to hunt or fish for my own food, and what regulations/rules I would need to follow.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**12. Within the past 30 days, I threw food away when I didn't/couldn't eat it.**

- Often
- Sometimes
- Never

**13. Select the reasons you threw food away. (Select all that apply)**

- I bought too much food and couldn't eat it before it spoiled.
- I didn't know how to prepare some of the food I purchased.
- I didn't have the space or equipment (*e.g. freezing, preserving*) to safely store it.
- Restaurant portions were too big, and I couldn't eat it all.
- It was past the "best if used by" date and I threw it away.
- The food quality was questionable (*i.e. the fruit was bruised*).
- Other (*Please specify*) \_\_\_\_\_

**14. I currently compost at home.**

- Yes
- No

**15. If my community were to offer a pick-up composting program in my community, I would participate:**

- No
- Yes, if the program was free
- Yes, even if there was a small fee

**16. Do you support use of public land for food production? (Select all that apply)**

- Yes, if used by a private business
- Yes, if used by a non-profit
- Yes, if used for community gardens
- Other (*Please specify*) \_\_\_\_\_

**17. Check the box closest to your own answer for each statement below.**

	Agree	Agree with reservations	Disagree
I am in favor of community residents having the option to raise small livestock animals (chickens, rabbits, bees, possibly others) on residential properties with limitations set by local ordinance.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am in favor of community residents having the option to locate season extension structures (e.g. raised beds, low tunnels, hoop houses, etc.) in residential yards for optimal food production.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Next, we want to understand your priorities for improving the food system. The Food System Master Plan steering committee has identified some preliminary goals to improve the local food system, but we need your help prioritizing what to work on first.**

**18. Which of the proposed food plan goals below do you think are most important to THE COMMUNITY?**

*(Pick your top 3)*

- Increase local food production *(more fruits, vegetables, meats, etc. produced by local farmers or in gardens)*
- Protect natural resources *(food production practices that protect soil, air, and water)*
- Increase access to healthy food *(making it easier for community members to find and afford healthy food they want to eat)*
- Reduce food waste *(composting, food recovery, and other means to avoid food being thrown out)*
- Foster social equity *(food system policies and programs that consider race, gender, economic status, sexual orientation, etc.).*
- Grow our regional economy *(support and build local food-related businesses - farms, restaurants, grocery stores, food manufacturers, etc.)*
- Build upon our community’s cultural food traditions *(celebrating and growing the diverse food cultures in our community)*
- Support community health and wellness *(providing healthy food, nutrition education, cooking classes, etc.)*
- Other *(Please specify)* \_\_\_\_\_