



Healthy Eating at a Glance

About this strategy

The Healthy Eating in Communities strategy is dedicated to creating a healthier food environment by increasing access to affordable, appealing, healthy food and beverage options. The healthy eating strategy aims to promote access to and consumption of fruits and vegetables, and diets low in sodium, saturated fats and added sugars. Current dietary patterns in the United States indicate these are areas of high need, with less than half of the population meeting the recommended guidelines for any these factors.¹ Diet has a major role to play in preventing chronic disease, and the overall food environment is a critical factor in promoting dietary behavior changes.

What does the evidence say?

Nearly one-third of all adults in the United States were obese in 2009-2010, and nearly 1 in 5 youth (age 2-19) were obese during the same time period. Medical costs linked to obesity were estimated to be \$147 billion in 2008.²

The evidence is overwhelming that our health is impacted by our diet. However, access to healthy foods is not equally distributed. The USDA estimates that 40 million people live in neighborhoods without access to healthy food options. Low-income neighborhoods have half as many supermarkets as the highest-income neighborhoods.³ In Minnesota, 30 percent of residents have low food retail access. Location is not the only marker of access: price and socioeconomic status are also key influences on food purchases.⁴

Due to the overwhelming contribution of health on our overall well-being and healthcare costs, and the inequitable distribution of healthy food in our society, SHIP aims to improve access to healthy food, focusing on areas with reduced access.

Activities

- Local or Regional Food Networks
- Farmers Markets
- Community-Based Agriculture
- Emergency Food Systems/Programs

¹ <https://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/guidelines/chapter-2/current-eating-patterns-in-the-united-states/>

² <https://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/overview/>

³ <https://www.healthyfoodaccess.org/access-101-making-the-case>

⁴ [Healthy Food Access - Landscape in Minnesota and Lessons Learned from Healthy Food Financing Initiatives](#)

- Food Retail- Convenience Stores, Vending, and Menus in Non-Chain Restaurants, Cafeterias, and Catering
- Comprehensive Plans

Priority populations

Priority populations include those who live in communities where there are high rates of heart disease, stroke, cancer and diabetes. Priority populations also include those who live in communities where there are significant barriers to accessing healthy food options due to factors such as low income, scarcity of food outlets or lack of adequate transportation.

Important dates

There are regularly scheduled webinars and other calls to connect and provide healthy eating technical assistance. These calls have included Healthy Food Retail and Farmers Market monthly calls, among others. Please see the Making it Better Log for the most up-to-date information.

Resources

- [Centers for Disease Control & Prevention: Healthy Food Environment \(https://www.cdc.gov/healthyplaces/healthtopics/healthyfood_environment.htm\)](https://www.cdc.gov/healthyplaces/healthtopics/healthyfood_environment.htm)
- [Public Health Law Center \(https://www.publichealthlawcenter.org/topics/healthy-eating\)](https://www.publichealthlawcenter.org/topics/healthy-eating)
- [Minnesota Food Charter \(http://mnfoodcharter.com/\)](http://mnfoodcharter.com/)
- [University of Minnesota Extension – Food Networks \(https://extension.umn.edu/food-networks/food-networks-minnesota\)](https://extension.umn.edu/food-networks/food-networks-minnesota)
- [USDA Food Access Mapping Tool \(https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-access-research-atlas/go-to-the-atlas/\)](https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-access-research-atlas/go-to-the-atlas/)
- [Change Lab Solutions – Creating Healthier Food Environments \(https://www.changelabsolutions.org/product/episode-3-food-systems\)](https://www.changelabsolutions.org/product/episode-3-food-systems)

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