

Healthy Food for Denver's Kids — Year 1

Supporting Access to Healthy Foods

The [Healthy Food for Denver's Kids \(HFDK\)](#) Initiative established a fund supporting healthy food and food-based education for Denver's youth (during August 1, 2020 - July 31, 2021). HFDK's long-term vision is that all Denver children and youth ages 18 and under have reliable access to healthy, nutritious food and food education that helps them grow, learn, and thrive for life.

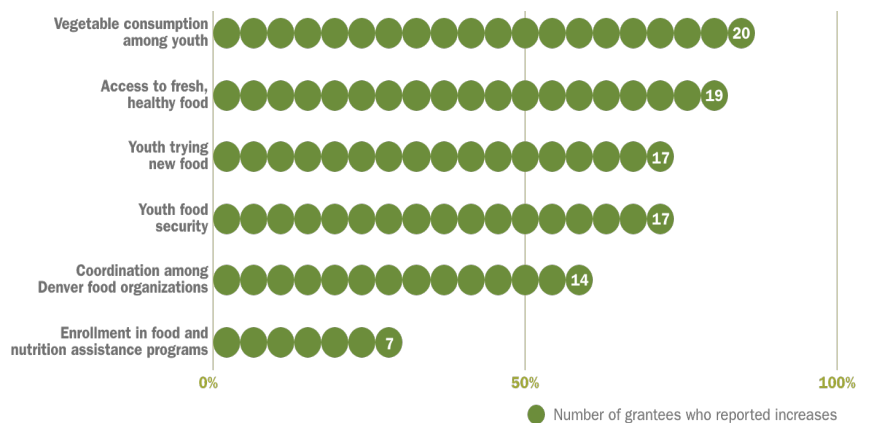
Healthy Food for Denver's Kids distributes thousands of meals, snacks, and food boxes to youth and families in the Denver community to increase vegetable consumption and food access.

Food Distribution and Meal Preparation

Over the course of the year, **14 grantees distributed over 150,000 food boxes and seven HFDK grantees served nearly 120,000 meals and snacks**, increasing access to healthy foods for youth and families in Denver. Specifically, HFDK grantees served 118,924 meals, consisting of 66,400 snacks, 21,566 grab-and-go meals, 15,399 breakfasts or lunches, and 15,559 dinners. 145,723 food boxes were distributed by grantees to youth and families.

HFDK also awarded 10 micro-grants in the amount of \$10,000 per organization with the goal of increasing the number of children and youth receiving healthy meals and snacks in the City and County of Denver. Five micro-grantees reported an average of \$22,642 spent on meals served and food distributed to youth and families as measured by meals (snacks, breakfast, lunch, and dinner), pounds of food, and food boxes.

Year 1 Grantees Reported Increases In



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Nearly 3,000,000 pounds of food were distributed with HFDK funds by four grantees to other partners in the Denver food system.

These four grantees rescued millions of pounds of food, thereby diverting food that would have ended up as waste in landfills and increasing food access for families and youth who needed it. The rescued food was distributed to 185 schools, 39 community centers, and 52 housing facilities.

Among grantees supporting access to healthy and nutritious foods, many reported increases in: vegetable consumption among children and youth; access to fresh, healthy food; the number of youth trying new foods; and youth food security. Additionally, grantees noted increases in coordination among food organizations in Denver, and enrollment in federal nutrition assistance programs such as SNAP, WIC, and free and reduced-price lunch.

Nutritional Quality of Food Distributed

In preparing menus and determining food box content, grantees most often mentioned using the [U.S. Department of Agriculture](#) (e.g., whole grain, fruits, and vegetables) to inform food selection.

Produce made up the largest percentage of the food distributed over the year (37%), followed by bread/grains (23%), meat (22%), and dairy (18%).

Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Denver worked with a nutritionist at Food Bank of the Rockies to advise on USDA standards for meal distribution.



Nutrition Information Provided by Grantees

Most grantees included nutrition information with meals and food distributed to youth and their families. Four of the seven grantees who served meals provided recipe cards, nutrition information, or a cooking demonstration with the meals at least some of the time. Thirteen of the 14 grantees who distributed food boxes provided recipe cards, nutritional information, or cooking demonstrations/nutrition classes with food at least some of the time.

A few grantees also distributed food boxes and meal kits with ingredients for families to prepare recipes featured in cooking classes. One of the grantees, We Don't Waste, provided recipe cards with a QR code that linked to a cooking tutorial video featuring a Johnson & Wales University culinary intern preparing the featured recipe.

Key Partnerships Formed

Grantees formed many key partnerships with local organizations to gather the healthiest food options for distribution and achieve maximum impact within the community. Heart & Hand Center (H&H), a nonprofit offering afterschool programming, shared that it worked with long-term partners Food Bank of the Rockies, Denver Food Rescue, and We Don't Waste to provide fresh, nutritious meals to students. Additionally, H&H described an emerging partnership with Metro Caring for gardening and food justice workshops.

HFDK micro-grants also helped to provide for basic needs for children and infants. WeeCycle purchased baby food and formula for over 400 infants and toddlers through micro-grant funding.

For questions, please contact: foodaccess@denvergov.org

