Healthy Food for Denver's Kids — Year 1

Supporting Food and Nutrition Education

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 provides nutrition education on healthy eating and cooking, food preparation, and food justice and advocacy through educational programming.

Nutrition Education

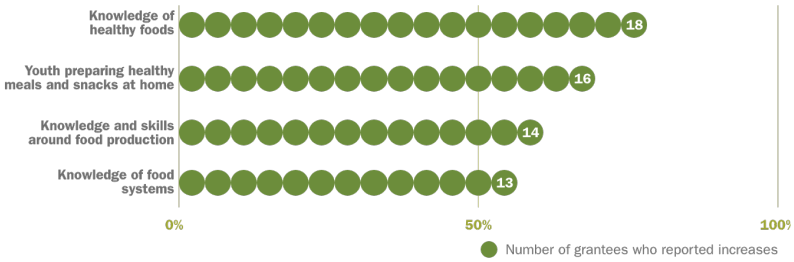
HFDK funded 15 grantees that provided education around healthy food and nutrition to over 25,000 youth and their family members in Denver. Of the food education classes held, 78% covered nutrition or healthy eating, 71% had a focus on cooking, 41% included education on food production — such as farming or gardening — and food justice and food advocacy topics showed up in about 25%. Some examples of topics offered by grantees included classes on preparing healthier versions of traditional recipes, permaculture, food safety guidelines, kitchen safety, and the connection between food and physical, emotional, and mental health.

Overall, among the grantees providing food education activities to youth, the majority noted positive changes in youth knowledge and skills that are likely to have lasting impact on their food security — both short- and long-term. **Specifically, they reported increases in youth knowledge of healthy foods, the number of youth preparing healthy meals and snacks at home, knowledge and skills around food production, and food systems knowledge.**

Nutrition Curricula

Grantees integrated curricula, such as Zero Waste and An Ounce of Nutrition, into their educational programs. The GrowHaus co-created a curriculum with past youth participants who led food education programming over the summer.

Year 1 Grantees Reported Increases In



Once COVID-19 vaccinations became available, grantees began to slowly transition back to in-person programming. Many grantees conducted food education around production, farming, or gardening that often took place at growing sites. Colorado Circles for Change reported that it started onsite programming again as youth were vaccinated and following CDC protocols. Re:Vision moved its educational programming outside — although at lower capacity to accommodate social distancing. Re:Vision also used food as a strategy to support children's healing from the trauma of the pandemic.

Culturally Responsive Practices

HFDK grantees understood the diverse needs of the young people they served and provided culturally relevant materials and educational programs.

All mentioned providing materials in both English and Spanish but, depending on the populations they serve, also provided materials in 13 additional languages: Karen, Arabic, French, Somali, Vietnamese, Swahili, Nepali, Amharic, Rohingya, Dari, Tigrinya, and Chinese (Mandarin, Cantonese). Grantees sought to provide interpreters or translated materials into the preferred languages of participants in their one-on-one interactions.

Montbello Organizing Committee shared that its cooking classes included education on the cultural history of recipes, the plant morphology of main ingredients, and the potential of food value relating to the benefits of consuming food that people grow themselves.

For questions, please contact: foodaccess@denvergov.org

CHANGEMATRIX

HEALTHY FOOD FOR DENVER'S KIDS

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