

Food Security

Eating a diet filled with plant-based foods, whole grains, and fiber is associated with a lower risk of colorectal, oropharyngeal, and other cancers.¹³ Many Utahns face barriers to find, purchase, and eat these healthy foods, however, which elevates their risk of developing cancer. These Utahns experience lower levels of food security, defined as the perceived or actual ability to physically access and financially afford enough healthy, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food.



Targets for Change

Decrease the proportion of Utah households with low or very low food security



10.7%

(2017–2019)¹



9.6%

(2023–2025)¹

STRATEGIES



Increase the availability of healthy and culturally appropriate foods that promote food choice for food-insecure populations



Connect food-insecure populations to financial assistance programs that make healthy foods more affordable



Support access to the emergency food system (e.g., food pantries) for food insecure Utahns experiencing urgent food needs



Promote opportunities to advance community stewardship of the local food system

Decrease the proportion of Utah cancer survivors with low or very low food security



17%

(2022)²



15%

(2025)²

References:

1. Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement, USDA

2. Food Insecurity Among People With Cancer: Nutritional Needs as an Essential Component of Care

Action Steps

- Establish food pantries on college campuses for food-insecure students
- Increase food choice in the emergency food system through offering fresh, healthy, allergy-friendly, and culturally appropriate foods
- Work with community health workers at healthcare clinics to screen cancer survivors and caregivers for food security and enroll food-insecure households into community programs and resources
- Expand access to and utilization of free- and reduced meals for lower-income students
- Leverage mobile produce markets and farm stands to supply fresh, culturally varied foods to communities with otherwise limited access
- Develop, support, or expand programs that reduce the cost of fresh foods for lower income households
- Work with grocery stores, farmers markets, and community-supported agriculture (CSA) programs to accept SNAP, WIC, Double Up Food Bucks, and other forms of financial assistance
- Connect healthcare systems with CSA programs, farmers markets, food boxes, or similar programs to serve cancer survivors, caregivers, and their families • Establish farm-to-institution agreements between local food producers and community organizations including workplaces, schools, and hospitals
- Cultivate community garden plots in Title I schools and socioeconomically disinvested communities
- Support seed distribution programs, traditional foods initiatives, and potable water access among culturally and geographically diverse Utah communities
- Preserve and promote access to land and start-up support for young and underrepresented farmers through land banks and financial credits that prioritize resident operators
- Launch local food policy councils that convene traditionally underrepresented groups from across the food system