

Pathways to a Healthy Kansas

2026 Application Packet

Deadline for application: **Oct. 2, 2026**



Our commitment

Invest in communities to create sustainable, healthy places where Kansans live, work and play in ways that improve the quality of their lives.



Introduction

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas (BCBSKS) is committed to a future where Kansans live in healthy communities that provide the highest possible quality of life and well-being. We know that healthy places make healthy people, and as the insurer that so many Kansans trust with their health, we want to partner with you to make our communities a place where we all can thrive.

Pathways to a Healthy Kansas is the largest community grant initiative ever funded by BCBSKS. It combines community-wide, evidence-based solutions and practices to help Kansas communities improve active living, healthy eating, behavioral health and commercial tobacco prevention.

Data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shows that increasing physical activity, eating healthy and avoiding commercial tobacco are among the best ways to lower risk for developing chronic diseases and

to live a healthier, longer life. Behavioral health, which includes both mental health and substance use, is deeply intertwined with these health behaviors. Maintaining physical health through active living, healthy eating and avoiding commercial tobacco can improve mental well-being, reduce stress, and may help prevent the onset or worsening of mental health conditions as well as improve overall mental well-being.

The Pathways initiative is structured around five pathways that require collaboration across many areas of a community. Within these pathways are packages, or projects, that represent evidence-supported strategies for improving community health. Pathways provides community coalitions with robust technical assistance, and tools and resources needed to remove barriers and engage their communities to implement these packages.

Pathways aims to contribute to a future where every Kansan can be healthy, reflecting our commitment to health equity. Coalitions are asked to identify a population of focus for each package to address health equity.

The World Health Organization defines health as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity."

Advancing health equity

Health equity means making sure everyone has a fair chance to become as healthy as possible – no matter who they are, where they live or how much money they make. The work of Pathways recognizes that inequities in communities lead to poorer health outcomes for some populations in our communities. To improve community health, the Pathways initiative seeks to incorporate a health equity lens as part of the development and implementation of this work.

Pathways equips grantees to identify existing health inequities in communities, understand the root causes, build relationships and consider how the Pathways efforts can be used to take corrective action and change the systems, structures and policies that created those conditions.

Embedding equity considerations in package could include the following. TA will be provided to help adapt these strategies to community specific setting:

- Engage diverse community members in planning and decision-making.
- Use data to identify and address health disparities.
- Use inclusive communication strategies engagement community members.
- Ensure cultural competency in all activities.
- Allocate resources equitably.
- Form partnerships with diverse local organizations.
- Address barriers to access.
- Educate and empower community members.
- Work towards equitable policies.
- Ensure sustainable practices for long-term impact.

Populations of focus

Populations of focus are those populations that are at a higher risk for poor health as a result of the barriers they experience to social, economic, political and environmental resources, as well as limitations due to illness or disability.

The list of populations provided below is not intended to be exhaustive, and local demographics should be considered to ensure that all population groups are identified that could experience barriers to health. This list serves as a starting point to ensure that populations experiencing barriers to health are not overlooked and are considered throughout the process. Projects with the greatest impact often focus on multiple, intersecting populations from the 'list of populations of focus.' For example, your project might focus on rural individuals who may also have disabilities and be uninsured. Populations may include racial and ethnic groups, including persons of Black, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander races and persons of Hispanic or Latino ethnicity; children; persons who are pregnant; persons who are LGBTQIA+; older adults; persons with chronic illnesses; persons with housing instability or who are unhoused; immigrants with any documentation status; displaced persons; persons with limited English proficiency; persons with low literacy; persons with low income; persons with disabilities; persons with dementia; persons with mental illness or substance use disorder; uninsured or underinsured; and others (HI-C and KSCSCG CAB & TAP).



What we aim to achieve

- Increase awareness and community engagement in leading healthy lifestyles.
- Make the healthy choice the default choice across sectors of the community through both policy and practice.
- Increase consumption of and access to healthy foods.
- Increase access to and use of safe environments for physical activity.
- Support commercial tobacco-free living.
- Improve behavioral health using a whole-person health approach to reduce stigma and increase community connections.
- Improve quality of life in participating communities starting now and continuing for generations to come.

28.2%

of Kansans live in rural areas that may face limited access to health care.

1 in 10

Kansas families live each day with food insecurity resulting in a lack of quality and variety of food that can lead to chronic diseases.

3 of 10

Kansas seniors live alone in social isolation that can increase the risk of dementia, depression and anxiety.

Pathways team

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas (BCBSKS) is a not-for-profit and local health plan, serving Kansans for more than 80 years. By designing and funding Pathways to a Healthy Kansas as a piece of our Blue Health Initiatives, BCBSKS is investing in community health throughout our service area to promote health and improve quality of life, not only for our members, but for all Kansans living in our 103-county service area.

Kansas Health Institute

The Kansas Health Institute (KHI) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, educational organization that is based in Topeka, Kansas. KHI's mission is to improve the health of all Kansans by supporting effective policymaking, engaging at the state and community levels, and providing nonpartisan, actionable and evidence-based information. As a part of the Pathways Team, KHI has provided input and expertise on the initiative design. KHI assists communities with a utilizing data and engaging populations of focus. KHI also conducts an evaluation of the overall Pathways to a Healthy Kansas initiative.

Community Engagement Institute

The Community Engagement Institute (CEI) at Wichita State University is dedicated to improving the health of Kansans through leadership development, organizational capacity building, research and evaluation, and community collaboration. With 40 years of experience and more than 75 staff, CEI works with community coalitions, non-profits, government entities, health and human services organizations, and support groups. As a part of the Pathways Team, CEI has provided input and expertise on the design of the initiative and provides coordination and technical assistance to the funded communities.

Seeds 2 Roots

Seed 2 Roots (S2R) is a legal and policy consulting enterprise led by attorneys Mary Marrow and Natasha Frost. As a part of the Pathways Team, they work in partnership with community members and coalitions, public health departments and other governmental entities and public and private organizations to provide legal technical assistance regarding community policy solutions at the state, local and organizational levels. Using a social determinants of health lens, they help frame a community vision in the context of existing policy and systems and identify seeds of change that will foster strong roots to grow just, equitable communities. When all people are healthier, the communities they live in are happier, safer, more vibrant places.

CML Collective, LLC

CML Collective is an award-winning company that strengthens marketing and communication strategies for brands that recognize inclusion as a business imperative. A proven partner with demonstrated performance on public, private, local, national and international projects, CML Collective engages a dynamic collaborative of talented partners to execute with excellence. As part of the Pathways Team, they will assist grantees with identifying marketing goals and key/target audiences, message distribution, media purchasing, marketing plans and community outreach. equitable communities. When all people are healthier, the communities they live in are happier, safer, more vibrant places.

Thrive Kansas

The mission of Thrive Kansas is to advance programs, policies, and resources to promote and strengthen community well-being in rural Kansas. Of Kansas' 105 counties, 98 are considered rural or frontier. There are 625 rural towns in Kansas. It is of critical importance that we identify and address the unique needs of rural Kansans. Their voices need to be heard and Thrive Kansas is here to amplify these voices. As a part of the Pathways Team, Thrive Kansas will provide real world experience and mentoring to help community coalitions accomplish the work in a way that meets the needs of their community.

Additional technical assistance providers will work with coalitions to accomplish the goals of specific selected packages. Examples of those partners include More Thank Food Consulting and Kansas State University.

Initiative components

Pathways to a Healthy Kansas is structured to provide a balance of funding, technical assistance and evaluation in a manner that allows communities to reach their full potential. This is a two-year opportunity for up to 20 communities. The initiative will run from Jan. 1, 2027–Dec. 31, 2028. Pathways represents the long-term commitment of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas to thriving Kansas communities. We plan to offer future Pathways funding opportunities on the same schedule of regular, two-year grant cycles.

Communities will coordinate with the Pathways Team to identify appropriate packages and the community partners they will work with. This will allow the coalition to engage multiple sectors for transformational impact. All packages will need to be approved by BCBSKS and the coalition will work closely with the Pathways Team to complete the package during the grant period. Additional descriptions of the pathways begin on “Pathways” on page 9. The addendum containing the packages begins on page 16.

Criteria for awards

Participating communities will be selected based on:

- The readiness of the coalition to coordinate with sectors from across the community.
- Demonstrated commitment to use a health equity lens for grant strategies.
- Demonstrated commitment of key stakeholders to work across all focus areas and sustain the progress in future years.
- Organizational ability to administer and support full implementation of the grant strategies.

Who should be involved?

Incorporating healthy living into community cultural norms requires strong, comprehensive community partnerships, including diverse groups of people that reflect the entire community. Stakeholders who will be impacted by the work of the grant should be engaged from planning to implementation and follow-up on the work. Specifically, applicants are expected to:

Carry out work through an existing, active community health coalition.

An active community health coalition is defined as a broad, multi-sector group that meets regularly to work to improve health and wellness outcomes in a defined community. This coalition engages its members and community in ongoing projects, allocates necessary resources, maintains clear leadership, and tracks measurable outcomes to ensure continuous progress. Coalitions have a written record of activities described above (e.g., meeting minutes, agenda, bylaws, fiscal oversight, charter or outlined roles and responsibilities).

To be eligible for this grant, a health coalition must be registered as a coalition through Elevate Kansas. Learn more at elevatekansas.org.

Work as a community.

For the purposes of this initiative, a community is a group of people living within a specific area such as a neighborhood, city, county, or region. This type of community shares a common location and often faces similar environmental and social conditions.



Engage partners across sectors.

Coalitions that will be the most successful in Pathways regularly engage key partners, such as city or county government, school leadership, businesses, public health, healthcare – including behavioral health providers – extension offices, farmers and producers, and faith-based and community organizations. Successful coalitions will also be those that regularly engage community members and create opportunities for participation and decision-making power for those that do not participate on behalf of an organization or an employer.

Identify a coordinator and leadership team.

The coalition leadership team is responsible for the overall direction of the grant, oversight of the budget and planning process, coordination of coalition efforts related to the grant, collaboration with other community stakeholders and accountability for making progress on agreed upon strategies and outcomes.

Intentionally include community members who are traditionally underserved or hard-to-reach.

Individuals who experience poor health outcomes or who may not be typically offered the opportunity to engage in community decision making are key stakeholders for this grant. For the purposes of this initiative, we will refer to these groups as “populations of focus.” Throughout the

initiative coalitions will be required to be clear about who they are aiming to serve, why this population of focus has been selected, and how this population has been engaged in shaping the work of the grant.

Coordination grants and additional support

There are four primary sources of support provided to communities selected for Pathways to a Healthy Kansas:

- 1 Coordination Grant
- 2 Implementation Grant
- 3 Technical Assistance
- 4 Coalition Support

Coordination Grant

This application packet is for Coordination Grant funding of up to \$100,000, or \$50,000 per year for two years. Communities must commit to partnering with the BCBSKS Pathways Team with a goal of implementing sustainable changes that will last beyond the funding period. The communities that are selected for the Coordination

Grant will receive technical assistance to help prepare organizations within that community to apply for non-competitive Implementation Grant funds.

Implementation Grant

Throughout the initiative, organizations within the community will work with technical assistance providers to achieve the minimum requirements for different package of work. Minimum requirements will be laid out in the form of a pledge at the start of the initiative, but an overview of packages can be found in the addendum beginning on page 16. As milestones – such as passing a policy – are met throughout the course of the grant period, communities will become eligible for non-competitive Implementation Grants.

These grants assist with the actions taken by an organization to complete a pathways goal. For example, in the Economic Stability pathway, when a food pantry has completed the minimum requirements, the pantry may apply for an Implementation Grant to support equipment costs or other updates needed to advance the goals of the grant. The process for moving from package pledge to Implementation Grant is listed in the on page 10.

Technical Assistance

Technical assistance for project coordination and implementation will be provided by Community Engagement Institute (CEI). Assistance with collecting and utilizing data will be provided by the Kansas Health Institute (KHI). Legal technical assistance will be provided from Seed 2 Roots (S2R) to support policy development. Inclusive marketing and communication assistance will be provided by CML Collective. Mentor community consultations will be provided by Thrive Kansas. Types of assistance include one-on-one support, mentor community consultations, face-to-face learning sessions, and online trainings. Additional technical assistance by other subject matter experts will be available to assist communities with work in specific packages.

Coalition Support

Elevate Kansas is a statewide initiative dedicated to equipping coalitions with the tools, training, and connections they need for success. Elevate believes that local coalitions are the backbone of thriving communities, and they deserve support, recognition, and a strong network to lean on. Elevate Kansas offers learning and capacity building opportunities for awarded coalitions, Pathways Coordinators, and their coalition members.

Coordination Grant requirements

Funded communities will be expected to work on strategies in all outlined pathways as follows:

Coordination Pathway

- Coordination and planning activities such as regular engagement with technical assistance providers, peer communities and in-person training sessions.
- Community engagement and leadership strategies.
- Evaluation reporting and data collection.

Community Pathways

- Economic Stability
- Education Access and Quality
- Health Care Access and Quality
- Neighborhoods and Built Environment
- Social and Community Context



Pathways

Coordination Pathway

The coordination pathway details the expectations for a funded coalition to execute the requirements of the Pathways grant.

1 Establish or assign a community Pathways coordinator.

To be successful in this initiative, a coordinator position is typically full-time. Funding in the coordination grant is intended to support no less than half of a full-time position with match by a local organization to support the Pathways work. Match may be provided as office space, benefits, equipment or other forms of support if coordination funds support more than half of the coordinator position.

The Pathways coordinator should live in the community they are serving, fostering a deeper understanding of local needs and facilitating more effective engagement with community members.

2 Commit to conducting the work through an equity lens.

Actively connect with key stakeholders and members of the community beyond the existing coalition to engage them in the decision-making for any work that they may be impacted by.

3 Garner commitment of key policymakers, business leaders, health and human service organizations, schools, and civic leaders when implementing Pathways packages.

4 Select one package from each pathway described in the addendum below to work on throughout the grant period.

5 Host at least one community event per year to support active engagement between the coalition and broader community.

6 Work closely with their community partners and the Pathways Team to complete the requirements and an implementation plan for each package.

7 Send a team (three to five people) of coalition members to a minimum of one annual grantee event each year.

Send the grant coordinator to a minimum of one regional grantee learning event per year.

8 Actively participate in technical assistance and learning opportunities associated with Pathways to a Healthy Kansas.

Technical assistance and learning opportunities will include, but are not limited to, conference calls, webinars and in-person opportunities.

9 Participate in all grant evaluation activities.

These include, but are not limited to, data collection and reporting, surveys, key informant interview and qualitative data collection.

Community Pathways

Pathways is designed to support coalitions as they take a holistic, community-wide approach to improving health outcomes by addressing the social determinants of health (SDOH) and advancing health equity. Social determinants are the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age that fundamentally affect a wide range of health outcomes and risk (CDC). Pathways is structured around five pathways that align with the Healthy People 2030 framework for the social determinants of health: Economic Stability, Education Access and Quality, Healthcare Access and Quality, Neighborhood and Built Environment, and Social and Community Context. By using this framework, the initiative will strive to improve conditions that are the drivers of health in a community.

Coalitions will select one package from each pathway below to work on throughout the grant period. Each package selected must be approved by BCBSKS. Pathways grantees will be required to engage partners to sign a Pathways pledge and meet the minimum requirements in each package to become eligible for an Implementation Grant. Coalitions may become eligible to add more packages as work is completed throughout the grant period.

Within each pathway, there are specific packages or projects. Packages describe a set of activities that address one or more of the four focus areas - physical



activity, commercial tobacco prevention, behavioral health, and healthy eating - that reduce risk for serious health conditions. While some of the packages are activities that could be used to address other risk factors, for the purpose of this grant communities must focus on the four focus areas. Additional packages may be added during the grant period as new research and resources become available. For additional details on each package, please see the addendum starting on page 16.

Process for Moving from Package Pledge to Implementation Grant



Economic Stability pathway



This social determinant represents an individual's ability to access essential resources such as food, housing or healthcare. It also involves creating a healthy business culture to help an employer attract and retain talent, reduce absenteeism and turnover, and improve productivity. Pathways grantees will be required to engage partners to sign a Pathways pledge. Packages under this pathway include:

- Food Pantry/Food Reclamation
- Healthier Food Retail
- Healthier Restaurants
- Social Entrepreneurship Supports

Education Access and Quality pathway



This social determinant creates connections between education and health and well-being by promoting healthy lifestyles, creating supportive infrastructure and environments that enable educational attainment, language and literacy skills, and early childhood education and development. Pathways grantees will partner with early childhood centers, school districts, and/or higher education organizations to sign a Pathways Pledge and meet the minimum requirements related to the following packages:

- Farm to School or Child Care
- Healthier Higher Education Food Environment
- Healthier Child Care Facilities
- Substance Use Prevention in Schools
- Youth Physical Activity

Health Care Access and Quality pathway



This social determinant focuses on connecting access to health care, both physical and behavioral health care, and people understanding how health services impacts their own health. It ensures that health care organizations work to address factors that impact community health. Pathways grantees will

be required to engage health care partners to sign a Pathways pledge and complete work related to the following packages:

- Community Health Needs Assessment/Health Improvement Plan Support
- Food is Medicine
- Health Related Social Needs
- Healthier Hospital Food Environment
- Physical Activity Prescription Program
- Placemaking in a Health Care Setting

Neighborhood and Built Environment pathway



This social determinant focuses on building connections between where a person lives (e.g., housing, neighborhood, and environment) and his or her health and well-being. Pathways grantees will be required to engage partners to sign a Pathways pledge. Potential packages under this pathway include:

- Community Planning
- Gardens and Community Farms
- Healthier Affordable Housing
- Multimodal Transportation and Recreational Trails

Social and Community Context pathway



This social determinant focuses on work at the community level to improve social integration, support systems, community engagement, and reduce stress and eliminate discrimination. Pathways grantees will be required to engage partners to sign a Pathways pledge. Potential packages under this pathway include:

- Community Resilience and Behavioral Health
- Healthier Communal Meals
- Health in All Policies
- Incubator Kitchen and Food Hub
- Placemaking

Package overview

Each package has a different set of required work, called minimum requirements. Minimum requirements are embedded process steps that support the transformational work necessary to propel community change. Below are minimum requirements that are generally in a package which a partner working with the coalition is expected to complete to be eligible for an implementation grant.

Identify Population of Focus

Populations of focus are those populations that are at a higher risk for poor health because of the barriers they experience to social, economic, political and environmental resources, as well as limitations due to illness or disability. Projects with the greatest impact often focus on multiple, intersecting populations of focus. To identify a population of focus, coalitions and their partners should rely on data and community information. The partner will work with the TA team to navigate existing data sources and identify a population of focus for their project.

Population of Focus Engagement

The partner will work with KHI TA Providers and the coalition to collect perspectives from the identified population of focus through approaches such as surveys, focus groups, interviews, or other outreach effort. Results will inform design and implementation of their proposed project and policies.

Developing Communication Strategies

The partner will develop external communication strategies or activities to share the effort with the community, which could include social media, radio or print, updating websites and other communication techniques.

Acknowledging Pathways

The partner will include specific acknowledgement of the financial contributions of Pathways and BCBSKS and agree to use the communication/branding guidance by BCBSKS for this acknowledgement.

Written Documents

In order to sustain the effort, package work will be memorialized in a variety of written policies. Every package requires a partnership agreement between the partner and coalition and a Package Timeline that outlines the workflow over the course of the package commitment. In addition, packages will require additional policies, such as governmental or non-profit resolutions, internal policies or other partnership agreements. The majority of the policy work will be done prior to the Implementation Grant, but in some cases there will be additional policies that are necessary to draft and share after the Implementation Grant.

Policy means any written plan or course of action designed to influence and determine decisions.

Metric Tracking

Each package has a few required metrics aligned with its minimum requirements. Metrics are intentionally designed to limit burden on partners. Partners will also receive TA support to develop a plan for tracking metrics. Once funding for a package is approved, the partner will submit baseline metrics through the BCBSKS grant management system. Partners will report metrics annually during the package commitment period.

Repeat Package Participation by the Same Partner

Some packages may be eligible for additional funds and/or additional technical assistance for a partner that has previously worked with the coalition on the same package if additional/expanded work is proposed. Each request is reviewed and approved by BCBSKS. A coalition may also choose to continue to work on an existing package with a current partner as one of their five pathways to receive continuing TA but not be eligible for additional funding.

Physical Space

Some package work impacts physical spaces that are open to the public, such as food pantries, placemaking efforts or physical infrastructure investments. Most of these packages will require commercial tobacco and vape-free environment policies. In addition, for efforts that include single-stall bathrooms, additional work may include signage or investments in creating family-friendly spaces with a unisex, ADA accessible bathroom with a baby changing station.

Additional Package Requirements

In addition to the package work detailed above, each package has required work that is unique to that package (listed below). Other work may be identified by the technical assistance providers based on the specific community context to ensure successful implementation of the package.

Duration

Each package includes a time commitment for the work, ranging from two to ten years, that is intended to help BCBSKS evaluate the overall success of the initiative. The community partner commits to implementing the minimum requirements during this timeframe, including metric tracking. Implementation grant budgets do not need to mirror the duration of the project. For example, all funds can be used at the beginning of a project or funds may take longer than the duration of the original project to fully spend.



Funding

Acceptable uses of funding

The following areas are acceptable uses of funding from the BCBSKS Pathways to a Healthy Kansas initiative. If a use is not listed here, or in the exclusion section below, a community must receive approval from BCBSKS before incurring the cost.

- Costs to convene meetings, including location, materials, technology, and healthy food or refreshments.
- Compensation of community members for participating in focus groups, interviews, and other ways to share their lived experiences.
- Contracting for assessment or analysis, such as a feasibility study.
- Contracting for technical assistance not provided directly by BCBSKS.
- Personnel working directly on the grant pathways (grant coordinator, communications manager, etc.).
- Marketing and communications materials to promote Pathways to a Healthy Kansas work in the community.
- In-state travel; limited out-of-state travel with approval by BCBSKS.
- Other needs such as equipment, pending approval by BCBSKS.
- Training directly related to the initiative's goals.

Funding exclusions

The following areas are not acceptable uses for funding from the BCBSKS Pathways to a Healthy Kansas initiative:

- Medical research
- Contributions to capital campaigns
- Operating deficits or retirement of debt
- Construction projects, real estate acquisition, or endowments not part of a Pathways-initiated program
- Lobbying
- Activities supporting political candidates or voter registration drives
- Grants to individuals
- Annual fund drives
- Fundraising events

Reporting and evaluation

Communities will be asked to provide a Midway Grant Progress Report due in January 2028 and a final report in January 2029. Reports will come from the grant management system and will include:

- Space to highlight successes, barriers/challenges and plans to address those in the coming year. For the final report, this will detail sustainability plans.
- Actuals for previous year's Coordination Grant budget.
- Tracking outputs and outcome measures identified during the initiative.

Additionally, communities will work with the Pathways Team to develop a structure for more regular communications on progress to ensure accountability. KHI will work closely with BCBSKS and each community partner to evaluate the effectiveness of the Pathways initiative. Additional information on the evaluation will be provided to funded communities at the kick-off event.

Award timeline

Aug. 21
Letter of Intent (LOI) due by 4 p.m. (CT)

Aug. 28
Application available.
Application link will only be sent
to coalitions that submitted an LOI.

Oct. 2
Application due by 4 p.m. (CT)

Nov. 2 to Nov. 20
Site visits
Communities will
be selected for a
site visit based on an
external review process.
All applicants will be
notified by Oct. 30.

Dec. 1
Award notification

Jan. 1, 2027
Community initiative starts

Spring 2027
Kick-off event

**Pathways to a Healthy
Kansas represents the
long-term commitment
of Blue Cross and
Blue Shield of Kansas
to thriving Kansas
communities. We expect
to offer additional cycles
of Pathways funding
at the end of this
two-year period.**

**Jan. 1, 2027
to Dec. 31, 2028**
Funding period

Addendum: Package details

This addendum highlights the packages of work to support each of the five pathways.

Packages describe activities that address the four areas communities must focus on: physical activity, commercial tobacco prevention, behavioral health and healthy eating.

Additional packages may be added to the Pathways initiative as partners and evidence emerge throughout the grant period.

Our five pathways



Economic Stability



Education Access and Quality



Health Care Access and Quality



Social and Community Context



Neighborhood and Built Environment



Economic Stability pathway

Food Pantry/Food Reclamation

Package Overview: According to the United States Department of Agriculture, nutrition security means consistent access, availability and affordability of foods and beverages that promote well-being, prevent disease, and if needed, treat disease particularly among populations of focus. Food banks, food pantries and food reclamation operations (often called the charitable food system) are critical to local nutrition security infrastructure. Food banks and pantries can create a healthy food environment by stocking foods such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy products and lean proteins in the pantry. Food reclamation sites recover food that would otherwise go into the food waste stream and distribute it to partners, such as food banks, food pantries or other organizations serving people in need. Food pantries may also do food reclamation, distributing directly to neighbors/clients. Food reclamation sites can prioritize healthier options and partner with distribution sites to expand access. One of the goals is to encourage healthy food availability, selection and nutrition education. Healthy Eating Research (HER) created guidelines for the charitable food system that provide a guide for prioritizing food purchases and assessing donations and reclaimed food. HER Nutrition Guidelines can be found here: healthyeatingresearch.org/research/healthy-eating-research-nutrition-guidelines-for-the-charitable-food-system.

Additional Package Requirements:

- Track donations, food purchases and food reclamation items in poundage.
- Categorize all incoming food using Healthy Eating Research Nutrition Guidelines and by food source.
- Outline how to accomplish specified nutrition goals and improving the neighbor/client experience, including how that work involves donors, staff, volunteers and neighbors/clients.
- Commit to annual neighbor/client surveys.
- Ensure a comprehensive commercial tobacco and vape-free environment.
- Explore family-friendly spaces with a unisex, ADA accessible bathroom with a baby changing station.
- Explore the client-choice model, language access, accessibility, and culturally relevant foods based on improving the neighbor/client experience.
- Explore partnerships with other local efforts, such as local grocery stores, non-profit, and governmental entities supporting the neighbors/clients.

Repeat Package Participation

by the Same Partner: Yes

Grant Range: \$5,000 – \$25,000

Match Required: No

Duration of Package: Five years

2026 RFA Example: Chase County Care and Compassion, Inc. (C4) is a non-profit food pantry that allows clients to shop in a grocery-type setting with complete autonomy. The population of focus is people who are food insecure. C4 is implementing an assessment for all foods using the Healthy Eating Research Nutrition Guidelines and yearly client surveys. C4 will prioritize purchasing, ordering and donations of that are healthy (choose often) and limit unhealthy items (choose rarely). C4 will be focusing on improving healthy donations. Pathways funds were used to complete capital improvements to the food pantry building.

Healthier Food Retail

The partner must choose to work on one of the following tracks in this package (choose one):

Track 1: Supermarkets and small stores

Track 2: Farmers' markets

Track 3: Produce boxes

Package Overview: Food retailers are an integral piece of the local food system by providing communities with opportunities to purchase healthy, affordable food conveniently. Food retailers can include supermarkets, small stores, gas stations, farmers' markets, and produce bundle initiatives. Each food retail setting provides different opportunities to increase access to healthy foods. In May 2026, nearly 164,500 Kansans relied on federal food assistance via the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Providing access to SNAP/EBT and other food benefits is an important part of healthier food retail efforts to ensure that low-income customers have opportunities to purchase nutritious foods. Consumption of nutritious food can also be an important component in improving community members' behavioral and mental health. Food retailers owned or operated by a population of focus are particularly poised to play important roles in community connection and should be prioritized as part of this package work.



Track 1: Supermarkets and small stores

Additional Package Requirements:

- Explore becoming a SNAP/EBT and WIC authorized retailer.
- Consider potential connections to double up food bucks, linkage with multimodal and transit, such as bike share programs, sidewalk and trail development and rural transit efforts.
- Increase access to healthy food options.
- Show how work is connected to improving access to a population of focus, such as expanded language access, innovative partnerships or providing food reclamation for local food pantries.
- Assess and make alterations to the store environment to increase stocking of healthier foods, maximizing shelf space and in-store marketing of healthier foods and beverages, supporting nutrition education and energy efficiency upgrades, organizing community events and outreach and supporting store owners around nutrition assistance benefit programs.
- Ensure a comprehensive commercial tobacco and vape-free environment.
- Explore family-friendly spaces with a unisex, ADA accessible bathroom with a baby changing station.

Repeat Package Participation by the Same Partner: Yes

Grant Range: \$5,000 – \$25,000

Match Required: No

Duration of Package: Two years

Track 2: Farmers' markets

Additional Package Requirements:

- Explore becoming a SNAP/EBT and WIC authorized retailer.
- Consider potential connections to double up food bucks, linkage with multimodal and transit, such as bike share programs, sidewalk and trail development and rural transit efforts.
- Increase access to healthy food options.
- Show how work is connected to improving access to a population of focus, such as expanded language access, innovative partnerships or providing food reclamation for local food pantries.
- Start or expand a farmers' market, and support farmers' market vendors to accept EBT and other food benefits.
- Have at least half of the vendors sell fresh produce including fruit and/or produce seedlings, OR half of the sales are from fresh produce including fruit and/or produce seedlings, OR a specific plan to work towards either of these goals.
- Ensure a comprehensive commercial tobacco and vape-free environment.
- Explore family-friendly spaces with a unisex, ADA accessible bathroom with a baby changing station.

**Repeat Package Participation
by the Same Partner:** Yes

Grant Range: \$5,000 – \$25,000

Match Required: No

Duration of Package: Two years

2026 RFA Example: The City of Eudora Parks & Recreation Department (EPRD) expanded the Eudora Farmers' Market in the "Village Green" area, just north of the Eudora Community Center. The population of focus is people who are food insecure and Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE) households. Pathways funding was used to allow the market to accept SNAP/ EBT benefits.

Track 3: Produce boxes

Additional Package Requirements:

- Increase access to healthy food options.
- Show how work is connected to improving access to a population of focus, such as expanded language access, innovative partnerships or providing food reclamation for local food pantries.
- Create or expand a Produce Box initiative, with a specific partner entity identified to coordinate the effort.

**Repeat Package Participation
by the Same Partner:** Yes

Grant Range: \$5,000 – \$25,000

Match Required: No

Duration of Package: Two years





Healthier Restaurants

Package Overview: Restaurants, food stands and food trucks are an integral piece of the local food system and are in a unique position to assist members of the community in leading healthier lives. Busy people with limited time to prepare food at home often rely on restaurant meals to feed themselves and their children. Research shows that meals prepared outside of the home have become a major source of food for children and adults. Restaurants are community and economic partners and can be leaders in promoting healthy eating and social connection as well as encouraging physical activity opportunities and commercial tobacco free/vape-free spaces. Businesses owned or operated by a population of focus are particularly poised to play important roles in community connection and should be prioritized as part of this package work.

Additional Package Requirements:

- Expand access to healthy food options using evidence-based nutrition standards. Expanding access could include menu updates, product reformulation or pricing and promotion strategies for healthy options.
- Connect the work to improving access to a population of focus, such as expanded language access, innovative partnerships or providing food reclamation for local food pantries.

- Explore community events to improve social connection and promotion of physical activity.
- Ensure a comprehensive commercial tobacco and vape-free environment.
- Explore family-friendly spaces with a unisex, ADA accessible bathroom with a baby changing station.

Repeat Package Participation by the Same Partner: No

Grant Range: \$5,000 – \$20,000

Match Required: No

Duration of Package: Two years

2024 RFA Example: Downtown Grill in Wilson County worked with a registered dietician to review their menu and to designate items as a “healthy choice.” Downtown Grill was subsequently able to use Pathways grant funds to purchase a commercial refrigerator to allow them to safely store more fruits and vegetables for use on their menu. They were also able to use grant funds to get a commercial steamer to allow for another healthy option for preparing and serving produce.



Social Entrepreneurship Supports

Package Overview: Social entrepreneurship applies the principles and guidance used by start-up founders and entrepreneurs to a business that directly generates social change or impacts a social cause. A social entrepreneur is primarily motivated by a desire to alleviate some kind of systemic social or cultural problem. The main goal is to create lasting social change through entrepreneurial initiatives. This package is designed to focus on projects that increase health equity and community vibrancy that increase resource flow specifically for projects that align with the focus areas of Pathways. Examples of social entrepreneurship opportunities would include expanding healthy food access or production, providing greater access to health care or health services in the community, or entrepreneurial projects that align or support one of the other Pathways packages.

Additional Package Requirements:

- Create a social entrepreneurial program that will impact the population of focus and Pathways focus area.
- Work with the TA Team that includes business consulting, structuring support, certification support, strategic planning and financial coaching.

Repeat Package Participation by the Same Partner: No

Grant Range: \$5,000 – \$25,000

Match Required: No

Duration of Package: Two years

2026 RFA Example: StartUp Hutch partnered with the Reno County Community Wellness Coalition, United Way of Reno County, Circles of Reno County and Interfaith Housing to reach out to entrepreneurs living at or below the ALICE threshold to help create change through entrepreneurial activity. Grant funds are being used to facilitate Who Owns the Ice House over an 8-week period each year for two years and offer coaching and hands-on support for small business owners participating in the program.



Education Access and Quality pathway

Farm to School or Child Care

The partner must choose to work on one of the following tracks in this package (choose one):

Track 1: Farm to School or Farm to Child Care

Track 2: School Garden or Child Care Garden

Package Overview: Farm to school or farm to child care initiatives create connections between local schools or child care facilities and local producers to provide healthy, local food to children and an opportunity for children to learn about where their food comes from. Farm to school and child care efforts also support the local economy by providing local producers with a steady customer base. School garden and child care garden efforts may include opportunities for children to garden at their school or child care facilities, depending on how the initiative is organized. This effort can include creating/expanding a farm to school or farm to child care initiative or developing and implementing school garden or child care gardens where children can participate in growing food.

2026 RFA Example: Coffeyville Unified School District improved the operations of its hydroponic container farm and on-site greenhouse to increase production of produce for school meals, support hands-on learning, and improve student engagement and community wellness. The population of focus is students in the district experiencing economic disparities. Pathways funding was used to refurbish and repair the greenhouse; purchase equipment, improve water service to the hydroponic container farm and garden, and enhance student access to the hydroponic container farm and greenhouse.

Track 1: Farm to School and Farm to Child Care

Additional Package Requirements:

- Create or expand a farm to school and/or farm to child care program.
- Assess the capacity of local producers to provide produce, minimally processed lean proteins or whole grains to schools or child care facilities.

Repeat Package Participation by the Same Partner: Yes

Grant Range: \$5,000 – \$25,000

Match Required: No

Duration of Package: Five years



Track 2: School Garden or Child Care Garden

Additional Package Requirements:

- Assess the property of the school and/or child care facility and identify gardening site(s).
- Develop a plan for garden upkeep during the summer and other times when the school is not in session or child care is not open. At least 50% of the garden area must be used to grow produce.
- Include garden efforts in curriculum, when possible.
- Outline specifics on who will have access to the garden and how any produce grown will be allocated (e.g., for personal or institutional use, donation, sale, taste testing, food demonstrations, etc.).
- Provide water access for the garden.
- Ensure a comprehensive commercial tobacco and vape-free environment.
- Explore family-friendly spaces with a unisex, ADA accessible bathroom with a baby changing station.

Repeat Package Participation by the Same Partner: Yes

Grant Range: \$5,000 – \$25,000

Match Required: No

Duration of Package: Five years

Healthier Higher Education Food Environment

The partner must choose to work on one of the following tracks in this package (choose one):

Track 1: Purchased Foods

Track 2: Food Pantry

Package Overview: Higher education campuses provide various food opportunities to students, staff and visitors and are important parts of the local food system. Schools can be health-supporting employers and community

role models by providing healthy food for students, staff and visitors at the various food venues (e.g. events, cafeterias, vending machines, snack carts, gift shops, food pantries). One of the goals is to encourage healthy food availability, selection, and nutrition education. Healthy Eating Research (HER) created guidelines for the charitable food system that provide a guide for prioritizing food purchases and assessing donations and reclaimed food. HER Nutrition Guidelines can be found here: healthyeatingresearch.org/research/healthy-eating-research-nutrition-guidelines-for-the-charitable-food-system.

Track 1: Purchased Foods

Additional Package Requirements:

- Commit to implementing evidence-based nutrition standards as approved by the technical assistance providers.
- Outline how the nutrition standards will be implemented, with specific attention on pricing, placement and promotion efforts and how the population of focus feedback is incorporated.
- Ensure a comprehensive commercial tobacco and vape-free environment.
- Explore family-friendly spaces with a unisex, ADA accessible bathroom with a baby changing station.

Repeat Package Participation by the Same Partner: Yes

Grant Range: \$5,000 – \$25,000

Match Required: No

Duration of Package: Five years

Track 2: Food Pantry

Additional Package Requirements:

- Track donations, food purchases and food reclamation items in poundage.
- Categorize all incoming food using Healthy Eating Research Nutrition Guidelines and by food source.
- Outline how to accomplish specified nutrition goals and improving the neighbor/client experience, including how that work involves donors, staff, volunteers and neighbors/clients.
- Commit to annual neighbor/client surveys.
- Explore the client-choice model, language access, accessibility, and culturally relevant foods based on improving the neighbor/client experience.
- Explore partnerships with other local efforts, such as local grocery stores, non-profit and governmental entities supporting the neighbors/clients.
- Ensure a comprehensive commercial tobacco and vape-free environment.
- Explore family-friendly spaces with a unisex, ADA accessible bathroom with a baby changing station.

Repeat Package Participation by the Same Partner: Yes

Grant Range: \$5,000 – \$25,000

Match Required: No

Duration of Package: Five years

2026 RFA Example: Cloud County Community College – Geary County Campus (CCCC) has a food pantry that aims to distribute food that is nutritious, safe, and culturally relevant, while respecting and balancing the preferences and food needs of those it serves. The population of focus is college students who are experiencing food or nutrition insecurity as well as students who report at least one chronic health issue (e.g., diabetes, kidney disease). The food pantry will implement an assessment for all foods using the Healthy Eating Research Nutrition Guidelines and yearly student surveys. CCCC will prioritize purchasing, ordering and donations of that are healthy (choose often) and limit unhealthy items (choose rarely). Specifically, CCCC focused on healthy purchased items, with the goal of moving from 20% to 70% health food items in their pantry inventory in the first year. Pathways funds were used to purchase a freezer and other food pantry infrastructure. In addition, the funds will be used to support operations over the course of the five years, including promotional items and food for demonstration workshops for healthy meals.



Healthier Child Care Facilities Package

Package Overview: Child care facilities are important partners in the support of healthy child development. Kansas requires licensure of certain child care providers, and the licensing requirements include regulations about various quality measures (e.g., food, active play). Child care facilities are uniquely positioned to help children cultivate healthy eating, strong social emotional skills and positive regular physical activity early in life. In addition, facilities can support parents feeding their infant or child breastmilk by creating a welcoming space for nursing mothers to breastfeed on site and ensuring that staff are trained in the proper way to store, handle and feed breastmilk when provided by the parents. Facilities can establish nutrition standards that match the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) standards, create active play policies, use evidence-based practices for behavioral interventions and enact breastfeeding friendly policies.

Additional Package Requirements:

- Have a business model that is either licensed as a child care center or as a group day care home, in a commercial space (not a residential space) and operated by a business or a governmental entity with the license in that entity's name.
- Implement new work in at least three of the four areas: CACFP-aligned nutrition standards, active play for 60-90 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity per day, no screen time for children under two and no more than 30 minutes per week of non-educational screen time for children two or older and specific language outlining a trauma-informed behavior response plan with staff trainings.
- Implement a comprehensive commercial tobacco free/vape-free and third hand smoke.
- Explore implementing the Kansas Breastfeeding Friendly Child Care standards.

**Repeat Package Participation
by the Same Partner:** No

Grant Range: \$5,000 – \$15,000

Match Required: No

Duration of Package: Two years

Substance Use Prevention in Schools

The partner must complete Track 1 before moving to Track 2 for this package (choose one):

Track 1: Prevention and Cessation Programming

Track 2: Restorative Justice Policy Change

Package Overview: Schools are important resources to address substance use prevention efforts. This includes both tobacco and vaping products. Vaping data indicates an alarming amount of vaping-related lung injuries. This crisis coincides with an unprecedented increase in youth e-cigarette use in the school setting. School districts can pass comprehensive policies that incorporate evidence-based vaping prevention and cessation programming with other substance use prevention programs in schools. Systems that incorporate practices that are restorative instead of punitive are linked directly to breaking the cycle of misuse and eventual dependence on nicotine among youth. Disciplinary measures must exclude suspension, expulsion or law enforcement referrals as the first response.

Track 1: Prevention and Cessation Programming

Additional Package Requirements:

- Use existing secondary data such as statewide survey data, or school specific reports.
- Remove suspension, expulsion or law enforcement referrals as the first response to use or possession of tobacco or vape product.
- Create a comprehensive program that includes evidence-based cessation services, peer-led supports and evidence-based prevention approaches.
- Show access to mental health support and how it is included in the work.
- Implement the program through promotion, signage and staff training.

**Repeat Package Participation
by the Same Partner:** Yes

Grant Range: \$5,000 – \$7,500

Match Required: No

Duration of Package: Two years

Track 2: Restorative Justice Policy Change

Additional Package Requirements:

- Complete and continue all requirements in Track 1.
- Remove suspension, expulsion or law enforcement referrals as the first response to use or possession of tobacco or vape product in the student handbook.
- Update the student handbook with prevention and cessation program options.

Repeat Package Participation

by the Same Partner: Yes

Grant Range: \$5,000 – \$7,500

Match Required: No

Duration of Package: Two years

Youth Physical Activity

Package Overview: Studies show that regular physical activity is a protective factor for positive physical and mental health outcomes for youth. Physical activity is also associated with a decrease in depressive symptoms for youth already experiencing depression. Youth physical activity also builds positive social opportunities and community connection. Many youth do not have access to regular physical activity opportunities. The goal is to expand access to physical activity opportunities for youth,



with a specific focus on populations that are at risk for adverse health outcomes and/or have gaps in access to physical activity programs.

Additional Package Requirements:

- Form a new or support an existing structured, youth-focused physical activity program with a partner entity identified to coordinate the structured youth activities.
- Explore staff or student intern training on evidence-based physical activity leadership with K-State.
- Identify and commit to implementing an evidence-based program.
- Require background checks for any adults working with the children.
- Outline specific details on implementation of the program, coordination between partners, a comprehensive commercial tobacco-free/vape-free policy and specifics on how programming supports youth mental health and/or substance use prevention.

Repeat Package Participation

by the Same Partner: Yes

Grant Range: \$5,000 – \$25,000

Match Required: No

Duration of Package: Two years

2026 RFA Example: The Ottawa Recreation Commission developed and implemented a “Summer Sampler Youth Program” initiative providing an expanded range of activities for children, highlighting new activities every week over the course of a 6-week period. The population of focus is youth living in Franklin County who are experiencing barriers to physical activity, such as cost burden or transportation access. Pathways funding was used to purchase equipment, supplies, and other materials needed for the Summer Sampler Youth Program.



Health Care pathway

Community Health Needs Assessment/ Health Improvement Plan Support

Package Overview: The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act requires tax-exempt hospitals to conduct a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) every three years. Many local health departments also conduct a CHNA (also referred to as a Community Health Assessment or CHA). A CHNA supports a community in identifying key health needs and issues through a process of comprehensive data collection and community engagement. A Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) is the long-term community plan, that takes a systematic approach to addressing target focus areas based on the results of the CHNA and CHIP processes. Both entities are encouraged to work collaboratively, implementing strategies to address identified needs and track measures. By working together, a community can benefit from the alignment of resources, expertise and community participation. Though this package will not support the full cost of conducting and implementing a CHNA or CHIP, it may be used to supplement existing efforts, particularly to engage populations of focus in participating in the assessment and improvement planning process.

Additional Package Requirements:

- Develop clear written plan to engage populations of focus in participating in the assessment and improvement planning process.
- Commit to facilitating productive conversations with populations of focus (including engaging new voices) and facilitate a thriving, collaborative environment between health care entities.
- Incorporate CHNA/CHIP process that is collaborative and inclusive for package duration.
- Include all relevant organizations with a stake in this work, with a written plan to engage those organizations. For example, hospitals, the health

department, and community mental health centers should all be leading and contributing participants, when applicable.

- Provide incentives for participating in the process or resources to remove barriers to participating in community leadership for populations of focus.

Repeat Package Participation by the Same Partner: Yes

Grant Range: \$5,000 – \$50,000

Match Required: Yes

Duration of Package: Five years

2026 RFA Example: CommonSpirit Kansas, Inc. is a Kansas nonprofit corporation that is doing business as St. Catherine Hospital (SCH) in Finney County. Finney County Community Health Coalition, Inc., also known as LiveWell Finney County (LiveWell) is working directly with SCH. Both organizations jointly develop and implement the Community Health Needs Assessment and Community Health Improvement Plan ("CHIP"), using these tools to guide local health priorities. The population of focus is residents with limited English proficiency. LiveWell conducted interviews with residents with limited English proficiency and SCH incorporated those results to inform the CHIP. Pathways funds will be used to mobilize community partners and disseminate the CHNA/CHIP findings to the populations of focus, which could include community events, videos and other materials that will be provided in multiple languages.

Food is Medicine

The partner must choose to work on one of the following tracks in this package (choose one):

Track 1: Subsidizing Healthy Food for Patients

Track 2: Food Pantry

Package Overview: Food is Medicine efforts seek to integrate nutrition into the health care system, enabling health care professionals to help prevent, manage and treat diet-related diseases. Food is Medicine (FIM), also known as Food as Medicine (FAM), includes a referral from a health care provider for a produce prescriptions and food packages, medically tailored meals or medically tailored groceries. FIM programs also include nutrition education and often include referrals to community resources. The goal is to increase health for patients while reducing the need for repeated health services thereby reducing health care costs. FIM efforts range from providing food pantries at health clinics to produce prescriptions at medical offices to medically-tailored meal packages for chronically ill patients. As it relates to on-site food pantries, one of the goals is to encourage healthy food availability, selection, and nutrition education. Healthy Eating Research (HER) created guidelines for the charitable food system that provide a guide for prioritizing food purchases and assessing donations and reclaimed food. HER Nutrition Guidelines can be found here: healthyeatingresearch.org/research/healthy-eating-research-nutrition-guidelines-for-the-charitable-food-system.

Track 1: Subsidizing Healthy Food for Patients

Additional Package Requirements:

- Create or expand a Food is Medicine program, with a specific focus on financially subsidizing healthy food for patients.
- Develop specific details on the program, including how it will be implemented and sustained.

- Explore including a community health worker or community navigator to provide nutrition education and social referrals to patients enrolled in the program.
- Develop specific details on how the food will be paid for, details on partnerships with food providers (such as retailers, food banks/pantry, farmers' markets) and identified evidence-based nutrition standards for the food.

Repeat Package Participation by the Same Partner: Yes.

Grant Range: \$5,000 – \$50,000

Match Required: No

Duration of Package: Five years

2024 RFA Example: Live Well Geary County and Konza Prairie Community Health Center worked together to implement a community-centered food is medicine program providing produce prescriptions to be redeemed at the local farmers' market. In addition to connecting patients with fresh produce, the program also connected patients with nutrition counseling to address any health literacy or education barriers to eating healthier food. Live Well Geary County, as the coordinating entity for the program, received Pathways dollars to purchase the produce and fund other necessary infrastructure items to support launching the effort. Live Well Geary County passed several policies to support the program for five years. Policies included an internal policy, contracts with food vendors and a contract with Konza Prairie Community Health Center.

Track 2: Food Pantry

Additional Package Requirements:

- Track donations, food purchases and food reclamation items in poundage.
- Categorize all incoming food using Healthy Eating Research Nutrition Guidelines and by food source.
- Outline how to accomplish specified nutrition goals and improving the neighbor/client experience, including how that work involves donors, staff, volunteers and neighbors/clients.
- Commit to annual neighbor/client surveys.
- Ensure a comprehensive commercial tobacco and vape-free environment.
- Explore family-friendly spaces with a unisex, ADA accessible bathroom with a baby changing station.
- Explore the client-choice model, language access, accessibility and culturally relevant foods based on improving the neighbor/client experience.
- Explore partnerships with other local efforts, such as local grocery stores, non-profit and governmental entities supporting the neighbors/clients.

Repeat Package Participation

by the Same Partner: Yes

Grant Range: \$5,000 – \$25,000

Match Required: No

Duration of Package: Five years

Health Related Social Needs

Package Overview: Health Related Social Needs (HRSN) are defined as an interest in value-based care that has driven the health care sector to invest more in social and economic factors that impact health, such as food insecurity, transportation or lack of child care. A coordinated referral network builds the infrastructure and relationships to identify a patient's social needs and coordinate care between health care providers and community-based organizations. A network enables participating partners to assess patient risks for adverse health outcomes (e.g., poor nutrition), refer the patient to a community service to address their need (e.g., food pantry) and provide data to drive upstream solutions (e.g., new grocery store). This package will establish a HRSN User Group. This package supports creating the structure to facilitate collaboration and coordination across these partners, with one lead organization and at least 2 anchor organizations.

The HRSN User Group exists to launch and sustain a HRSN Network. HRSN User Group will focus on a specific population, identify and develop a network of community partners, identify integration needs (such as for a platform), catalog existing tools to avoid duplication, decide on risk assessment tool(s), establish workflow and referral protocols between network partners, review network data and evaluate network success. The HRSN User Group will be made up of five to 20 individuals or organizations. Of that group, there will be up to five



Anchor Organizations, including the partner organization, that will commit to forming the backbone of the HRSN User Group. Any decision made by the HRSN User Group requires a majority of the Anchor Organizations, with the Lead Organization having veto power over decisions.

Additional Package Requirements:

- Create a new group or create a subgroup of an existing group that is specifically dedicated to the HRSN User Group that will focus on a specific population, identify and develop a network of community partners, identify integration needs (such as for a platform), catalog existing tools to avoid duplication, decide on risk assessment tool(s), establish workflow and referral protocols between network partners, review network data and evaluate network success.
- Identify a Lead Organization and two Anchor Organization that will commit to being part of the HRSN User Group for the duration of the package.
- Outline specifics about the HRSN User Group, including meetings and engaging other members of the group.

Repeat Package Participation

by the Same Partner: Yes. Consider the Community Resilience and Behavioral Health package if continuing work with an existing partner.

Grant Range: \$5,000 – \$25,000

Match Required: No

Duration of Package: Five years

Healthier Health Care Food Environment

Package Overview: Health care sites are often community hubs and can create a vision of health for the larger community. Health care sites can include hospitals, health clinics, behavioral and mental health facilities, residential substance use treatment facilities, and long-term care facilities. For those health care entities that provide food on-site, ensuring that food options are healthy can go a long way to setting the tone and creating demand for healthy food options. Health care facilities impact a wide range of the community, including patients, staff, and visitors. Health care entities are in various stages of retooling food venues (e.g., cafeterias, vending machines, snack carts, gift shops), often in collaboration with statewide entities like the Kansas Hospital Association. This package requires identifying and applying nutrition standards to food offerings to align with Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services guidelines from March 2026, limiting ultra-processed foods, sugar-sweetened beverages, refined carbohydrates, and added sugars, while prioritizing whole and minimally processed foods (cms.gov/files/document/qssam-26-03-hospital-cah-original-release-2026-03-30.pdf).

Additional Package Requirements:

- Create balanced menus, purchasing or upgrading approved equipment, increasing local and sustainable food procurement, increasing purchases of healthy beverages, and including culturally appropriate food options.
- Commit to specific language on nutrition requirements.
-]Develop strategies for pricing, placement, and promotion.
- Ensure a comprehensive commercial tobacco and vape-free environment.
- Explore family-friendly spaces with a unisex, ADA accessible bathroom with a baby changing station.

Repeat Package Participation

by the Same Partner: Yes

Grant Range: \$5,000 – \$25,000

Match Required: Yes

Duration of Package: Five years



Physical Activity Prescription Program

Package Overview: The Physical Activity Prescription Program is focused on encouraging health care providers to include physical activity when designing treatment plans for patients. Health care sites can include hospitals, health clinics, behavioral and mental health facilities, residential substance use treatment facilities, and long-term care facilities. Due to the specific and unique needs and interests of the client/patient, the goal of Physical Activity Prescription Programs should be successful integration of physical activity principles, social connection, and behavioral techniques that motivate the participant. All work must specify a physical activity partner and be based on the results of population of focus engagement. The physical activity prescribed must be paid for by the prescription program and be available for free for the patient.

Additional Package Requirements:

- Pay for the prescribed physical activity through the prescription program and make the opportunity available for free for the patient.
- Plan to solve identified issues, such as transportation, availability of services and other barriers to participation.
- Outline implementation details about the prescription program, with specifics about how the opportunities will be paid for and provided for free to participants.

Repeat Package Participation

by the Same Partner: Yes

Grant Range: \$10,000 – \$25,000

Match Required: No

Duration of Package: Five years



Placemaking in a Health Care Setting

Package Overview: Placemaking in a health care setting applies arts, culture, and social context to reimagine health care settings and create an environment that is calming, engaging, and filled with the elements of discovery through painting, sculpture, educational games and light installations. Health care settings could include pediatric, hospice, behavioral health or cancer care centers, amongst others. The health care entity engages populations of focus to identify opportunities to enhance the health care facility to transform the experience of patients and families to help alleviate health care anxiety.

As part of this work, health care entities work with artists to activate the minds and bodies of waiting families, turning the waiting room into an enjoyable and educational experience. Artists work with the population of focus to infuse interactive elements and artwork inspired by local flora, fauna, historical context and landscapes celebrating art, science and the beauty of Kansas. All imagery will be inspired by conversations and interactions with patients and community residents to get an understanding of the stories, people, nature and locations of importance to the community.

Additional Package Requirements:

- Outline project planning, maintenance and public access to the location in addition to continued engagement with the population(s) of focus about the placemaking effort.
- Coordinate with a team of established artists, including John Sebelius, Angie Pickman and Jeromy Morris and a selection of local artists from that community, who will be paid to collaborate.
- Ensure a comprehensive commercial tobacco and vape-free environment.
- Explore family-friendly spaces with a unisex, ADA accessible bathroom with a baby changing station.

Repeat Package Participation

by the Same Partner: No

Consider the Health Related Social Needs or Healthier Health Care Food Environment if continuing to work with an existing partner.

Grant Range: \$5,000 – \$50,000

Match Required: No

Duration of Package: Five years

2026 RFA Example: The Rooks County Health Center (RCH) created a welcoming environment for a new facility serving the behavioral and mental health needs of the community at the renovated Mill Street Building in the City of Plainville. The population of focus is patients with behavioral or mental health diagnoses. RCH utilized Pathways funds to pay for the services of Artistic Expressions Healing Arts Initiative LLC to develop and implement an art installation and provide a family friendly, unisex, ADA accessible bathroom with a baby changing station.



Neighborhood and Built Environment pathway

Community Planning

Package Overview: Local government planning is an important tool used to establish long-term goals, priorities and recommendations to guide the growth and development of a local community. By centering health priorities, community planning ensures that these local plans include and improve community health. This package work should be informed by health priorities identified in a local Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA), if applicable. Healthy community planning efforts may include a community's comprehensive plan; subdivision plans; bicycle and pedestrian plans; food systems plans; Safe Routes to School or Safe Routes to Food plans; greenway and greenspace plans; transit plans; and recreation, trail and park plans. This package requires local city or county government to develop a process for using data and ongoing population of focus engagement to inform how the community's design, resource allocation and priorities address gaps in access to infrastructure, programs and services for these populations.

Additional Package Requirements:

- Develop a new or update an existing written local plan that addresses community health priorities.
- Involve the local city or county government and include a governmental policy.
- Complete the plan within two years of the implementation grant and implement the plan must last at least 10 years.
- Prioritize resources to improve identified gaps experienced by population(s) of focus.
- Engage representatives from each sector of the social determinants of health model, including health, food systems, housing, transportation, education and community spaces.

- Align the plan with other local and regional written plans, such as food system assessments, CHNA and transportation plans.
- Indicate a department, entity or committee responsible for coordinating the local planning work.
- Convene group quarterly to discuss drafting progress and plan implementation.
- Include commercial tobacco free/vape-free goals for indoor and outdoor public spaces covered by the plan.
- Identify opportunities to increase community connectivity between key community destinations supporting health, such as connectivity between low-income housing, parks and recreational areas, public transit and healthy food outlets.

Repeat Package Participation by the Same Partner: Yes

Grant Range: \$5,000 to \$50,000

Match Required: Yes

Duration of Package: Ten years

2026 RFA Example: The City of Hutchinson updated its 2014 Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan to address changes in development patterns, transportation needs, infrastructure conditions and funding opportunities. The population of focus is low-to-moderate income residents in Hutchinson's older neighborhoods. Pathways funds were used to hire a consultant to work with the City of Hutchinson to update the plan to address the needs of the population of focus.

Gardens and Community Farms

Package Overview: Local gardens and community farms involve community members collectively gardening or farming on a shared piece of land or structure (e.g., greenhouse, hoop house, hydroponics) where plants are grown and maintained by a group of individuals from the community. These gardens and farms can be located on public or private land and can include gardens where gardeners and farmers have individually assigned plots to grow food for themselves or their families, gardens or farms that are gardened collectively with the produce shared amongst the community, gardens and farms where produce is raised to be donated to certain groups or organizations in the community and gardens and farms where produce is raised to sell locally. Local gardens and farms provide opportunities for community members to be physically active, have increased access to healthy food, be engaged in social and community activities and have increased access to nature and green spaces. Local garden and farming efforts may involve gardens or farms in public parks or recreational spaces, gardens or farms



at a local business or health care providers, or gardens or farms at a local school, higher education institution or child care provider. Activities could include creating a local garden or farm or expanding an existing local garden or farm

Additional Package Requirements:

- Commit to growing fresh produce on at least 50% of the property.
- Include a written agreement with the landowner regarding water access and the use of the land as a garden or farm for the duration of the project.
- Determine whether or not produce grown at the site can be sold and an agreement that the property will be available as a garden or farm for the duration of the effort if the property is sold.
- Include details on how the entity responsible for the garden sustain the work, including how population(s) of focus will be part of the work, operating procedures and structure for the entity, how the plots or land will be allocated, with a preference for those who do not have access to land when allocating plots, specifics on how produce can be used, a commitment that produce will be grown on at least 50% of the garden or farm, specifics on who is responsible for maintenance and upkeep, how water will be provided for the garden or farm, fee waiver for population(s) of focus, development of a system to track metrics for reporting purposes, commitment for the garden or farm to be commercial tobacco free/vape-free and a commitment to continue the garden or farm for duration of the project.
- Develop written guidelines for individual gardeners/farmers to sign including a commitment that the gardener/farmer will grow fresh produce on at least 50% of the space, that commercial tobacco free/vape-free, will be used on the property, maintenance and upkeep requirements, income and/or fee waiver considerations for individual farmers/gardeners, specifics on how produce can be used (personal use, donation, sale, other) and an agreement to share data as needed for reporting purposes.

- Ensure a comprehensive commercial tobacco and vape-free environment.
- Explore family-friendly spaces with a unisex, ADA accessible bathroom with a baby changing station.

Repeat Package Participation by the Same Partner: Yes

Grant Range: \$5,000 – \$25,000

Match Required: No

Duration of Package: Five years

2026 RFA Example: The Emporia Senior Center (ESC) developed a new community garden to increase access to fresh, healthy foods; create a welcoming and beautiful growing environment; encourage physical activity; and foster meaningful social connections for seniors. The population of focus is seniors experiencing social isolation and loneliness. Pathways funding was used to purchase supplies needed to develop, install and operate the ESC Community Garden and purchase tools and other supplies for use by gardeners.

Healthier Affordable Housing

Package Overview: People who are living in multi-unit housing, transitional housing, emergency housing and homeless shelters should have the opportunity to make healthy choices, including opportunities for their housing to promote health. Affordable multi-unit housing, emergency housing, transitional housing and homeless shelters can promote healthy activities like smoke-free spaces, healthy food access, physical activity opportunities and social connectedness, especially for transitional and rapid-rehousing for specific populations of focus. Partnerships with other community organizations can help reduce these barriers. Landlords or service providers engage populations of focus to identify opportunities to improve smoke-free spaces, healthy food choices, physical activity opportunities and social connectedness.

Additional Package Requirements:

- Work in this package includes focusing on an affordable multi-unit housing facility, emergency housing, transitional housing and/or homeless shelter and working with the landowners, property management or social service agency to build healthy environments.
- Include smoke-free leases to be phased in for all units or smoke-free facilities.
- Be open to exploring feedback on those two options and working with residents to implement at least one idea from residents through Pathways funding. The four focus areas are: smoke-free communal spaces (like where to put smoking areas or making outside entries smoke-free), healthy food access (like on-site pantries, connection with food outlets through bus routes, partnerships with mobile food providers, on-site gardening or cooking classes), physical activity opportunities (like outdoor or indoor exercise equipment or walking paths) and social connectedness (like free laundry services, communal gathering spaces, walking groups or events).

Repeat Package Participation**by the Same Partner:** No

Consider the Placemaking, Gardening or Food Pantry packages if looking to continue the work with an existing partner.

Grant Range: \$5,000 – \$25,000

Match Required: No

Duration of Package: Five years

2026 RFA Example: The Housing Authority of the City of Fredonia made improvements to Parkview Village, a multi-housing complex which provides affordable housing to low-income tenants. The population of focus is low-income tenants. Pathways funding was used to improve outdoor and indoor communal areas at Parkview Village. Outdoor improvements included the installation of benches and two gazebos. Indoor improvements included upgrades to the Community Recreation Room through the installation of an automatic door; new flooring, tables and chairs; and two air conditioners to improve the air quality and temperature control for tenants.

Multimodal Transportation and Recreational Trails

Package Overview: Multimodal transportation and recreational trail work creates opportunities to spend time outside in nature with family and neighbors and be physically active. Multimodal and recreational trail infrastructure improves pedestrian and bicycle transportation systems, provides recreational opportunities, creates access to green space, enhances connectivity within a community, and increases safety of walkers and bicyclists. Multimodal and recreational trail infrastructure efforts focus on trails and multimodal facilities open to the public. All work must be focused on access to multimodal transportation and/or recreational trail infrastructure in a community and addressing gaps in the multimodal infrastructure or recreational trail system experienced by population(s) of focus. Activities can include engineering assessments for multimodal transportation and recreational trail infrastructure projects; constructing, maintaining or improving existing sidewalks and trails; implementing ADA accessibility; installation of trees and other green infrastructure along a route; wayfinding signage in multiple languages; providing educational markers and information about the historical significance of a trail or multimodal infrastructure to populations of focus; and mapping sidewalk and trail infrastructure. Activities can also include cost sharing efforts.

Additional Package Requirements:

- Commit to using data and results from engagement with population(s) of focus to identify and implement priorities for improvement in the multimodal transportation and recreational trail infrastructure, including resource allocation.
- Engage with the Kansas Department of Transportation pedestrian and bicycle coordinator and/or the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks to identify opportunities to align local priorities with state activities and leverage state resources to support community priorities.

- Include links to transportation, recreation, healthy food retail outlet and other community facilities where possible, plans to promote multimodal transportation or trail usage, and signage to increase visibility and use of multimodal infrastructure and connection to community facilities.
- Include written public justification if a proposed project or policy, or portion thereof, is not ADA accessible or does not include access to bicyclists or pedestrians due to cost, environmental consideration or other reasons.
- Identify a department or committee to coordinate the multimodal transportation or recreational trail work.
- Indicate what gap in the multimodal transportation and/or recreational trail infrastructure will be filled through the specific project.
- Explore a comprehensive commercial tobacco and vape-free environment.
- Explore family-friendly spaces with a unisex, ADA accessible bathroom with a baby changing station.

2026 RFA Example: The City of Mapleton improved the city's public park to create additional opportunities for community members to spend time outside in nature with family and neighbors and be physically active. The populations of focus are Mapleton community members over the age of 65 experiencing social isolation and low-income households. Pathways funding was used to both provide \$25,000 matching funds for a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and make improvements to the park's baseball park and surrounding area.

**Repeat Package Participation
by the Same Partner:** Yes

Grant Range: \$5,000 to \$50,000

Match Required: Yes

Duration of Package: 10 years





Social and Community Context pathway

Community Resilience and Behavioral Health

Package Overview: Community resilience is the capacity of a community to adapt, recover, and thrive despite stressors and adverse events. Cross-sector collaboration is critical to community resilience. Collaboration could include coordination amongst health care, mental health and/or substance use organizations, community groups, law enforcement and social services, schools and community residents with lived experience. This package supports creating the structure to facilitate collaboration and coordination across these partners, with one Lead Organization and at least two Anchor Organizations.

The Cross-sector Behavioral Health Group exists to work on an identified local behavioral health issue and population of focus. The work will include one or more specific activities that could include providing evidence-based training for organizations and community members (coordinating with local subject matter experts and/or state and national trainers), creating stigma reduction campaigns, exploring integrated care models, supporting community support networks or advocating for and creating policies that promote behavioral health funding, research and access to care.

The Cross-sector Behavioral Health Group will be five to 20 individuals or organizations. Of that group, there will be up to five Anchor Organizations, including the partner organization, that will commit to forming the backbone of the Cross-sector Behavioral Health Group. Any decision made by the Cross-sector Behavioral Health Group requires a majority of the Anchor Organizations, with the Lead Organization having veto power over decisions.

Additional Package Requirements:

- Create a new group or create a subgroup of an existing group that is specifically dedicated to the Cross-sector Behavioral Health Group, including work on one or more specific activities that could include providing evidence-based training for organizations and community members (coordinating with local subject matter experts and/or state and national trainers), creating stigma reduction campaigns, exploring integrated care models, supporting community support networks or advocating for and creating policies that promote behavioral health funding, research and access to care.
- Identify a Lead Organization and two Anchor Organization that will commit to being part of the Cross-sector Behavioral Health Group for the duration of the package.
- Outline specifics about the Cross-sector Behavioral Health Group, including meetings and engaging other members of the group.

Repeat Package Participation

by the Same Partner: Yes

Consider connecting HRSN package if working with existing partner.

Grant Range: \$5,000 –\$25,000

Match Required: No

Duration of Package: Five years

2026 RFA Example: Lighthouse Therapeutic Community Outreach Foundation (Lighthouse TCOF) is located in Shawnee County and is a community-based nonprofit organization providing trauma-responsive behavioral health education, prevention, and support services to underserved individuals and families across Kansas. Lighthouse TCOF will lead the a subcommittee of the LiveWell Shawnee County Healthy Babies Impact Team, to support and strengthen existing cross-sector collaborations with community health organizations, social service providers, faith-based partners and maternal health advocates.

Lighthouse TCOF will work with three other anchor organizations, which are Topeka Doula, Stormont Vail and Shawnee County Health Department. Together, the group will implement a maternal mental health support group using an evidence-based curriculum to address perinatal mood and anxiety disorders, stress and trauma-related symptoms among underserved birthing persons.

The population of focus is pregnant and postpartum individuals (up to one year postpartum), with emphasis on Black and

Brown parents, low-income households and individuals residing in low-access or underserved communities. The group will address the identified behavioral health issue of perinatal mood and anxiety disorders (PMADs), including depression, anxiety, trauma-related stress and emotional dysregulation, compounded by social isolation and systemic barriers to care.

The funds will be used for administrative costs, providing childcare to the mothers participating in the program, facilitator fees, incentives for participation, access to transportation services, scholarships for postpartum doula services through Topeka Doula Project and food for children in care during the groups. Funding will offset participation barriers commonly experienced by priority populations, including limited access to care, transportation challenges meals and snacks for children, scholarships for postpartum doula services from Topeka Doula Project and caregiving responsibilities.



Health in All Policies

The organization is choosing to work on one of the following tracks in this package (choose one):

Track 1: Health Impact Checklist (HI-C)

Track 2: Health Lens Analysis

Track 3: HiAP Task Force

Track 4: HiAP Train-the-Trainer model

Track 5: HiAP Educational Curriculum

Package Overview: Health in All Policies (HiAP) is a collaborative approach that involves working together across different sectors—like business and housing—to ensure that overall health is taken into account in all types of decisions, not just those related to health care and/or therapeutic care. Our health isn't solely determined by visits to the doctor; it's shaped by everything around us, including our living conditions and lifestyle choices.

Decisions made by various groups, whether they are businesses, governments or community organizations, have significant impacts on our physical and mental health. This package involves incorporating a HiAP approach into decision-making processes, document review or existing curriculum to consider health implications when making decisions. Additional activities under this package could include creating the structure for a HiAP task force or building capacity to become a HiAP trainer and train others to incorporate HiAP into decision-making processes.

This leads to better, fairer and more sustainable outcomes for everyone in the community. For more information, check out this article: khi.org/articles/the-ripple-effect-ways-to-make-health-in-all-policies-stick-in-kansas-and-beyond-to-enhance-health-and-equity.

Track 1: Health Impact Checklist (HI-C)

Additional Package Requirements:

- Host a HiAP workshop delivered by KHI (unless conducted within the past three years).
- Commit to conducting at least one Health Impact Checklist (HI-C) annually. The HI-C tool facilitates the identification of potential health impacts of policies/decisions and suggests practical strategies to address them.
- Develop a protocol and a process for integrating HI-C into internal or external workflows.
- Commit to incorporating the HI-C and resulting recommendations into these existing processes.

Repeat Package Participation by the Same Partner: Yes

Grant Range: \$5,000 – \$15,000

Match Required: No

Duration of Package: Five years

2026 RFA Example: RISE Cowley County partnered with the City-Cowley County Health Department to implement a HiAP Train-the-Trainer Model. The City-Cowley County Health Department imbedded HiAP training for all current staff and during new staff onboarding. Together, the City-Cowley County Health Department and RISE Cowley received funding for staff time, training and community education to create a local network of trainers with expertise in HiAP. These trainers will promote holistic views of health as community champions, build collaborative cross-sectoral partnerships, engage populations of focus and explore ways to imbed evidence and health considerations into decision-making. This builds on their previously funded HiAP work in Cowley County.

Track 2: Health Lens Analysis

Additional Package Requirements:

- Host a HiAP workshop delivered by KHI (unless conducted within the past three years).
- Identify a document (e.g., Master Plan, Recreational Commission Strategic Plan) to review and edit through a health lens to enhance consideration of health and equity.
- Commit to conducting at least one Health Lens Analysis annually during the implementation period.
- Commit to developing a protocol for integrating the Health Lens Analysis and resulting recommendations in internal processes.

Repeat Package Participation

by the Same Partner: Yes

Grant Range: \$5,000 – \$15,000

Match Required: No

Duration of Package: Five years

Track 3: HiAP Task Force

Additional Package Requirements:

- Host a HiAP workshop delivered by KHI (unless conducted within the past three years).
- Create a new group or create a subgroup of an existing group that is specifically dedicated to implementing HiAP. A HiAP Task Force, composed of multiple governmental agencies, seeks to improve county and city policy and decision-making by fostering collaborative work towards health and sustainability goals and incorporating health considerations into non-health policy areas.
- Identify a Lead Organization and two Anchor Organization that will commit to being part of the HiAP Task Force for five years.
- Develop a plan for HiAP Task Force implementation.
- Commit to convening and supporting the task force functions, including developing foundational documents and launching at least one project or initiative.

Repeat Package Participation

by the Same Partner: Yes

Grant Range: \$5,000 – \$15,000

Match Required: No

Duration of Package: Five years



Track 4: HiAP Train-the-Trainer Model

Additional Package Requirements:

- Host a HiAP workshop delivered by KHI (unless conducted within the past three years).
- Commit to building internal capacity in HiAP and working with organizations in the community to embed HiAP (e.g., HI-C), health lens analysis) into their work.
- Develop an action plan and protocol for ongoing HiAP Training efforts.
- Commit to offering HiAP trainings and embedding Health in All Policies (HiAP) into organizations' operations.

Repeat Package Participation

by the Same Partner: Yes

Grant Range: \$5,000 – \$15,000

Match Required: No

Duration of Package: Five years

Track 5: HiAP Educational Curriculum

Additional Package Requirements:

- Host a HiAP workshop delivered by KHI (unless conducted within the past three years).
- Create a plan for incorporating HiAP into existing class curriculum or developing a HiAP course, with a commitment to provide this curriculum for five years.
- Develop a process for integrating HiAP into the selected course offering.

Repeat Package Participation

by the Same Partner: Yes

Grant Range: \$5,000 – \$15,000

Match Required: No

Duration of Package: Five years

Healthier Communal Meals

Package Overview: According to the CDC, people with strong connections live longer and healthier lives. Social connections are critical to mental and physical health and can help protect against serious disease and social isolation. One of the ways to increase social connections for community members is to support communal meal programs. A communal meal is a recurring and frequent meal that is eaten by a group of people to increase social connection and build community. The focus of this package is on healthy meals to meet nutritional needs in meals in congregate care, emergency housing or shelters, residential facilities, senior services or other specific populations of focus. Through this work it will be important to address both physical health, nutritional health, mental health and overall well-being of individuals and community alike.

Additional Package Requirements:

- Focus on a communal meal program that is specifically geared towards a population of focus.
- Expand access to healthy foods, healthy food programming or expand access to a population of focus.
- Commit to an evidence-based nutrition standard.
- Ensure a comprehensive commercial tobacco and vape-free environment.
- Explore family-friendly spaces with a unisex, ADA accessible bathroom with a baby changing station.

Repeat Package Participation

by the Same Partner: No

Consider Incubator Kitchen to extend work with an existing partner.

Grant Range: \$5,000 – \$15,000

Match Required: No

Duration of Package: Two years

2026 RFA Example: Peace Connections hosts several relationship-based poverty reduction programs with a mission to inspire transformation and hope by building resources, relationships and resilience. Through the Harvey County Circle of Hope initiative, weekly programming and budgeting classes are provided in tandem with a communal meal.

The population of focus is low-income, single parents, adults with disabilities, families with young children, people working on mental health and addiction issues and seniors.

Peace Connections will make concrete program changes within Circle of Hope to expand access to healthy foods and healthy food programming for households experiencing poverty in Harvey County.

Peace Connections will align nutrition standards for the meal with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2025–2030 (DGA), emphasizing eating vegetables and fruits throughout the day, prioritizing lean protein foods, focusing on whole grains, incorporating healthy fats and limiting highly processed foods, added sugars, refined carbohydrates, and saturated fat.

Pathways funding will be used for expanded freezer access and sturdy shelving.

Incubator Kitchen and Food Hub

Package Overview: Healthy food producers and entrepreneurs often lack the food system infrastructure to provide access to local community members. Incubator kitchens (also known as community commercial kitchens or shared kitchens) and food hubs can support the resiliency and sustainability of local food systems (e.g., food processors, farmers, caterers) by supporting new licensed, commercial food production distribution, processing and retail enterprises; creating new jobs; bringing money into a community and becoming cornerstones of a resilient local economy. Incubator kitchens are food facilities that can be rented for short periods of time to allow individuals starting a food business access to commercial kitchen equipment in a cost-effective manner. A food hub is an aggregator of products, providing a link between farmers and growers and institutional buyers, such as restaurants, hospitals, schools and child care facilities. Incubator kitchens and food hubs may be run by non-profits, for-profit businesses, educational institutions, governments, faith-based organizations and other entities.

Additional Package Requirements:

- Create a community food prep or distribution space that is available for free for certain population of focus community members.
- Include specific links to improving access to healthy food or expanding healthy food entrepreneurs' access to space to make or process their product.
- Host at least one healthy food or nutrition education event per year.

Repeat Package Participation

by the Same Partner: Yes

Consider Healthier Communal Meals if continuing work with an existing partner.

Grant Range: \$5,000 – \$50,000

Match Required: Yes

Duration of Package: Five years

2026 RFA Example: The City of Clay Center is a rural community located in North, Central Kansas. The City of Clay Center is opening the Clay Center Multi-Generational Life Center (the Community Center), a community-driven project that will serve residents of all ages by providing education, wellness, recreation and connection space. The City of Clay Center will own and operate the Community Center containing the Incubator Kitchen and will handle lease, rental and reservations of the Community Center's kitchen. The populations of focus are households living at or below the ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) threshold. The Community Center will implement the fee waiver program for the population of focus. The Pathways grant will help fund the purchase of the required equipment for the kitchen. The Community Center also received grants for Youth Physical Activity and Multimodal Transportation and Recreational Trails to support this comprehensive community effort.

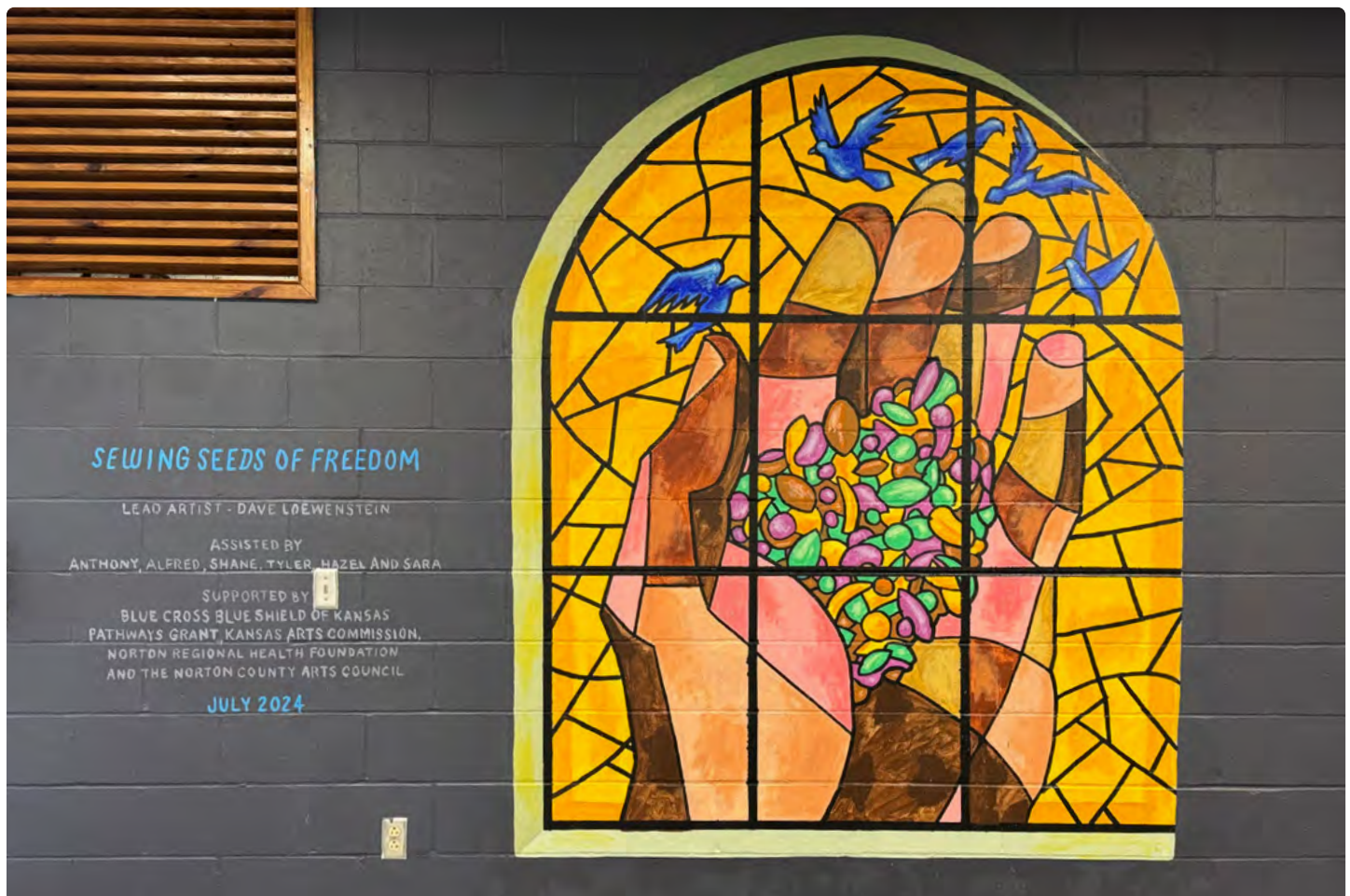
Placemaking

Package Overview: Placemaking is the shaping of a place by creatively applying arts, culture and social context. This package requires engaging with populations of focus in a community to identify opportunities to enhance a location used by the population of focus to promote community pride and morale, provide opportunities for social gatherings, elevate the historical significance of an area and encourage community members to be physically active in a commercial tobacco free/vape-free space. Placemaking starts with a physical place to improve — a building, a lot, a block, a neighborhood a district, or a town.

Placemaking can be a pop-up or temporary event, or a permanent improvement to the space (e.g., planting trees or enhancing green space, lighting features, art installations, construction of benches). Placemaking locations can be public property or in an organizational or institutional setting, depending on the population of focus and identified project.

Additional Package Requirements:

- Work with the property owner/ management of the identified placemaking location to ensure the viability of the placemaking effort, including ensuring public access to the location.
- Outline details of project oversight, including project planning, implementation and maintenance of the placemaking effort; collection of evaluation metrics; and ongoing engagement with the population(s) of focus.
- Ensure commitment by the property owner to include provisions regarding the continuation of the placemaking effort for the entire five-year period if the land is sold.
- Ensure a comprehensive commercial tobacco and vape-free environment.
- Explore family-friendly spaces with a unisex, ADA accessible bathroom with a baby changing station.



Repeat Package Participation

by the Same Partner: Yes

Grant Range: \$5,000 – \$50,000

Match Required: Yes, funding or in-kind donation

Duration of Package: Five years

2024 RFA Example: Live Well Norton County, the Norton Arts Council, The Haven, Norton Regional Hospital Foundation and Norton Correctional Facility worked together on a dual community mural project at both Norton Correctional Facility and The Haven, which is a home for families of loved ones at the correctional facility. The Pathways funds, combined with other state funding, supported an artist who worked with correctional facility residents and the community to develop the design and create the murals at both locations.

More information can be found at:
bcbsks.com/pathways

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