Food insecurity is just one indicator of the broader problem – food justice. Although Kansas produces a vast amount of food, 1 in 6 Kansans are food insecure. “Hunger is not just an individual issue. It’s wrapped up in everything else – especially economic justice,” Says Haley Kottler from Kansas Appleseed. She adds, “Hungry people are not just struggling to put food on the table, they’re also struggling with rent and utilities.” For Kottler, food justice in Kansas looks like expanding SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) and repealing harmful policies, increasing food access for Kansas schoolchildren, elevating conversations about hunger and food insecurity stigma, and supporting people’s autonomy to choose the food they want.

Including the community as a partner in research can help identify additional barriers and support networks to address food systems. Kottler explained her position at Kansas Appleseed highlighted how the community can provide insight that traditional data collection may not capture, “We know that SNAP is one of the best ways to put food on the table for families. What we hear in many communities is that SNAP is an extremely helpful resource, but for many families who live in food deserts - food apartheid areas - even accessing food is a huge barrier. Fighting food insecurity must be a multifaceted approach to ensure all Kansans have what they need to thrive.”

Food justice is deeply entwined with the other social determinants of health. As connectors to care, Community Health Workers are uniquely situated to address and advocate for the needs of their communities that otherwise might be invisible. See page 2 for more.
IN THE NEWS
CHWS: WALKING IN THE SHOES OF THOSE THEY SERVE

Recently, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation highlighted the critical work of CHWs. This article explores the role of CHWs during COVID-19 and hopes moving forward. Read more here.

RESOURCES
CDC SUPPORT RESOURCES

Have you seen the CDC’s webpage focusing on CHWs, CHR, and Promotores de la Salud? The site includes resources for your self-care and mental health, communication tools and training and support.

LEARNING OPPORTUNITY
WHAT IS FOOD JUSTICE?

Are you curious to learn more about food justice and ways you can support? You can find more helpful information here:

- What is Food Justice?
- Advancing Food Justice Webinar
- Gather, The Film (2020)
COMMITTEE UPDATES

The Executive Committee met, reviewed bylaws and discussed navigating diversity in leadership. Updates include Southwest Kansas: Promotoras are returning to work after COVID-19 limited their work; Community of Practice: Dr. Sandy Procter spoke on nutrition and dietary guidelines. The Executive Committee will meet again Wednesday, April 7, 2021.

The Joint Advocacy and Sustainability Committee met and discussed developing a video series from CHWs stating why they were vaccinated and encouraging the community to test and vaccinate. Tuesday, April 20 at 1:30 PM.

The Symposium Committee met and selected the theme for the 2021 Symposium: "Everything Connects - Unification in Uncertain Times." The committee is currently discussing additional keynote speakers and session topics. The Symposium Committee will meet again on Monday, April 19, 2021.

The Education Committee discussed the opportunity to integrate oral health into CHW learning and develop a service-learning opportunity through the extension office. Additionally, the Healing Your Almond class (funded by HRSA) is full and there is interest in continuing to partner with Franchon Francees. The second cohort will occur from May 17 through August 23. The next meeting will be Tuesday, April 20 at 3:00 PM.

For more information about KS CHW Coalition meeting dates, please contact alissa.rankin@wichita.edu.

KC REGIONAL CHW COLLABORATIVE

Have you participated in the Kansas City Regional CHW Collaborative meetings? The mission of this collaborative is to integrate CHWs into the health and human services systems through capacity building, advocacy, and sustainability. You find more information here or contact Hannayd Ruiz at hruij@marc.org.

CAPACITY BUILDING SUBCOMMITTEE
Monday, April 19, 9:00 am

KC REGIONAL CHW FORUM
Thursday, April 22, 9:00 am

ADVOCACY SUBCOMMITTEE
Thursday, April 22, 8:00 am

KC REGIONAL CHW COLLABORATIVE
Thursday, May 27, 10:30 am