

Plan4Health

Vista Neighborhood

Food Assessment

Boise's Idaho Plan4Health Coalition is committed to improving Vista neighborhood residents' access to healthy food options as well as revitalizing the community.

The Idaho Plan4Health Coalition used a mix of data collection approaches to build a truer picture of the neighborhood than might typically be possible. The results of this neighborhood food assessment on the following pages are based on key informant interviews, a neighborhood survey, demographic analysis, and on the ground first hand observations. Using data and resident feedback, a strategic action plan was created to promote healthy lifestyles through healthy eating.

What does Vista look like now?

Recent research by the University of Idaho indicates that nearly 80 percent of Idaho adults eat less than the recommended five servings of fruits and vegetables per day, and adolescents eat fruit and vegetables two or fewer times per day. In the target neighborhood of Vista, one of Boise's more racially and ethnically diverse areas, a higher proportion of households had earnings below \$15,000, with almost twice as many residents under age 18 living below the federal poverty level when compared to Boise as a whole. Approximately 65 percent of students in both elementary schools in Vista are eligible for free or reduced lunches.

Vista neighborhood



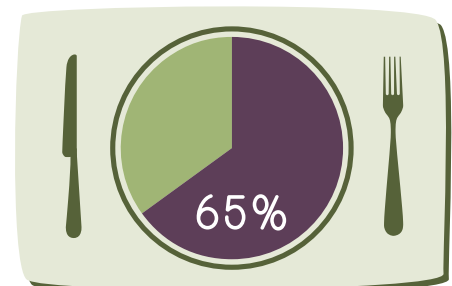
All of
Boise



Residents under age 18 living below the federal poverty level.



Vista neighborhood boundaries.



Percent of students in Whitney and Hawthorn Elementary in Vista eligible for free or reduced lunches.

Strategies for Improvement

Our number one priority is ensuring that all Vista neighborhood residents have opportunities to eat a healthy and balanced diet. Based on the results of the Vista neighborhood food assessment, the top eight strategies listed below are the most likely to have positive impacts on a large number of Vista residents and on food-related issues of highest importance to the neighborhood.

- High priority
- Medium priority
- Low priority

Consider reform to Idaho's state sales tax to eliminate or decrease the taxes on all groceries, excluding candy and sugary drinks. ••

Reform should consider (1) lowering the cost of healthful groceries by decreasing or eliminating the sales tax on grocery items, excluding candy and sugary drinks; (2) increasing the amount of the grocery credit refund; (3) removing the adjustment for those receiving food stamps, incarcerated and/or residing in the U.S. illegally.

Develop additional pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure that allows and encourages active transportation. •••

Focus particularly on food distribution locations (e.g. grocery stores, corner stores, product stands), many of which lie outside the Vista neighborhood.

Implement a "healthy corner store" program in Vista. ••

These programs, which work with existing retailers, aim to increase and incentivize marketing and sales of more healthful snacks, particularly to young children, and often in coordination with local schools.

Continue to track neighborhood health data over time with an annual community survey. ••

Add questions on healthy foods and nutrition to regular City of Boise or Health Assessment surveys.

Pilot a program serving whole food and majority plant-based school lunches at Whitney and Hawthorn Elementary once a week. •••

The program would allow for a different healthy dietary approach to school lunches that can help build long term healthy eating habits and preferences.

Ensure that neighborhood-based employers are aware and taking advantage of workplace wellness programs. ••

These programs can reduce employer healthcare- and absenteeism-related costs while improving the health and quality of life of employees.

Offer additional classes focused on cooking, shopping and budgeting, and incentivize participation. ••

Pilot a program to link enrollment and completion of these courses with SNAP benefits to double funding. Advertise family-focused classes at times convenient for working families.

Work with food pantries to expand store hours so that patrons can shop more consistently and conveniently. •••

One or two extra hours in the morning or evening can expand program participation to individuals working a typical work day.

These strategies are designed to increase healthy food consumption in the Vista neighborhood through improved access, affordability and education.

▶ Goal: Move toward increased food security ▶

Severely Food Insecure

- Individuals who:
- have neither funds nor resources to regularly attain enough food for themselves or their families.
 - need crisis level interventions.
 - are likely facing a nutrient deficiency.

Low-Moderately Food Insecure

- Individuals who:
- occasionally experience food insecurity, but are able to utilize currently available programs and services to meet most of their needs.
 - could be experiencing a nutrient deficiency.

Food Secure but Nutrient Deficient

- Individuals who:
- almost never experience symptoms of food insecurity.
 - consume a diet that is nutrient poor.

Healthy Food

- Individuals who:
- almost never experience symptoms of food insecurity.
 - meet or exceed the recommended 2015-2020 USDA dietary guidelines.

Health Conscious and Super Food

- Individuals who:
- almost never experience symptoms of food insecurity.
 - exceed the dietary guidelines of the USDA and actively seeks to consume only truly healthy foods.

Logos/contact info?

read more about these strategies at www...

join us!

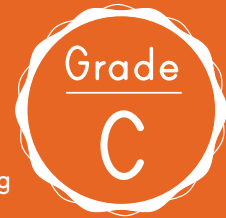
Food Assessment Results



The Idaho Plan4Health team has identified four categories to help assess the overall health of a local food environment. The categories are Security, Access, Quality, and Literacy & Culture. This approach allows for an in-depth review of the current neighborhood conditions and can help identify the needs of the community. These categories help guide strategic interventions, plan creation and help to allocate often limited resources into the areas of the community that can have the biggest impact on improving the health of community residents.

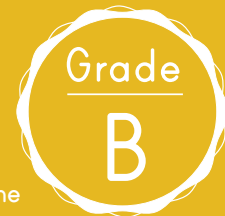
Security

Despite having a robust food network in the Boise community, there exists a significant problem with food insecurity in the Vista neighborhood. Higher than average unemployment, poverty, and low median household incomes put many Vista residents at risk for food insecurity. Additionally, survey results show a striking 32% of respondents felt they had ran out of money to buy food at least once in the last three months.



Access

Food access is widely available to Vista area residents. The neighborhood has an Albertsons Foods located within the neighborhood boundary and the Boise Bench market, which sells local goods and produce, is just outside of the neighborhood boundary. Additionally, there are numerous grocery stores within a 5-mile radius of the neighborhood. Food access for vista residents is mostly limited by transportation barriers.



Quality

Vista neighborhood residents have access to high quality and healthy foods from local grocery stores, restaurants, corner markets, and specialty stores. The food available at these locations is typically high quality and is regularly restocked to ensure produce and healthy foods are fresh and appealing. Vista is also home to two school-led community garden projects; this significant number of backyard gardens can impact overall access to healthy foods in the community.



Literacy & Culture

Initial findings show that there is a culture of relatively unhealthy food consumption and a gap in knowledge of the effects of healthy eating on overall physical and emotional health. This category has received the grade of incomplete to show the need for additional primary source data collection. Despite receiving an incomplete grade, the Idaho Plan4Health Coalition believes that the areas of culture and literacy offer the largest area for improvement in the Vista neighborhood.

