



Sunflower Foundation



*** MEDIA ADVISORY ***

Aspen Institute bringing Food is Medicine Convening to Topeka, Sunflower Nonprofit Center Jan. 25-26 event will focus on advancing knowledge of food and nutrition interventions in rural communities.

TOPEKA, Kan. – Food & Society at the Aspen Institute, a leader in initiatives to expand access to food and nutrition interventions that aid in preventing, managing and even reversing chronic disease, will be hosting its Food is Medicine Midwest Convening Jan. 25 and 26 at the Sunflower Nonprofit Center in Topeka. The event is set for 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Jan. 25, and 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Jan. 26, at the Powerhouse Conference Center, 5820 SW Sixth Ave.

WHAT: Food is Medicine Midwest Convening

WHEN: 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 26, and 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Friday, Jan. 26

WHERE: [Sunflower Nonprofit Center](#), 5820 SW Sixth Ave., Topeka, KS 66606

WHY: Food is Medicine is an initiative that in close coordination with the health care sector, involves the provision of healthy food to aid in the prevention, treatment and management of chronic disease. Aspen Institute is a leader in initiatives to expand access to food and nutrition interventions, while Sunflower Foundation supports emerging Food is Medicine work across Kansas. Seeking to provide shared learning opportunities and advance the knowledge of Food is Medicine in rural communities, Aspen Institute, in partnership with Sunflower Foundation, is hosting the Food is Medicine Midwest Convening.

Those attending the event will include thought leaders and emerging and established scholars in fields connected to Food is Medicine. While the event is not open to the public, [Sunflower Foundation](#) and [Food & Society at the Aspen Institute](#) invite your organization to attend the event and consider sharing post-event coverage with your audience.

Food & Society at the Aspen Institute's Food is Medicine initiative seeks to share knowledge about food and nutrition interventions, identify strategic priorities for the initiative and facilitate new collaborations in places where access to such interventions has been limited or non-existent. The institute recently released its [Food is Medicine Research Action Plan](#) to serve as both a catalyst and framework for investments in this area of work. In its continued efforts to provide shared learning opportunities and advance the knowledge in Food is Medicine, the institute has hosted regional convenings in Boston and Sacramento, Calif.

The institute chose Topeka as the site for a third convening to highlight Kansas' emerging work in food and nutrition interventions, including Sunflower Foundation's Food is Medicine initiative involving some of the state's federally qualified health centers (FQHCs).

Through a partnership with Sunflower Foundation, Kansas Food Bank, Harvesters – The Community Food Network, and six FQHCs across the state, the initiative provides patients living with chronic disease with such items as medically tailored groceries, nutritious food and meal ingredients, and cooking educational opportunities – all with the purpose of helping them better manage their conditions. Go to [Sunflower Foundation Our Work](#) and scroll down to Food is Medicine to learn more.

The gathering in Topeka will focus on Food is Medicine in rural communities. Topics will include:

- Generational poverty in urban and rural communities;
- The role charitable food systems and the health care safety net play in Food is Medicine;

- Food and nutrition interventions in tribal communities;
- An overview and evaluation of federally funded produce prescription projects, provided by the Gretchen Swanson Center on Nutrition;
- Diet-related health disparities in rural America;
- The paradox of having food deserts in farm country;
- An overview and evaluation of the Sunflower Foundation Food is Medicine pilot project, provided by the foundation's Food is Medicine evaluation team;
- The impact Food is Medicine can have when funding and policy come together.

On Thursday, Topeka Chef Ambroja Watson will take on the challenge of using food pantry staple items to create a delicious and nutritious lunch for those participating in the convening.

The teams at both Food & Society at the Aspen Institute and Sunflower Foundation are hopeful that the Food is Medicine initiative in Kansas, as well as the convening in Topeka, will help advance knowledge on food and nutrition interventions in rural areas, where access to both healthy food and health care services can be limited or non-existent.

Corby Kummer, executive director of the institute's Food & Society program and senior editor of *The Atlantic*, will be available for interviews. Others who will be available to the media include:

- Dr. Elizabeth Burger, Sunflower Foundation vice president of Healthy Communities
- Dr. Amy Yaroch, executive director of the Gretchen Swanson Center on Nutrition
- Dr. Kristina Bridges, of the University of Kansas Medical Center and member of Sunflower Foundation's Food is Medicine evaluation team

About Aspen Institute

The [Aspen Institute](#) is a global nonprofit organization committed to realizing a free, just and equitable society. Founded in 1949, the institute drives change through dialogue, leadership and action to help solve the most important challenges facing the United States and the world.

About Sunflower Foundation

[Sunflower Foundation](#) was established in 2000 as a statewide health philanthropy with a mission to serve as a catalyst for improving the health of all Kansans. The foundation believes that a thriving, sustainable nonprofit sector contributes to healthy communities, and we are committed to investing in mission-aligned nonprofits through grants, education, advocacy, collaborative learning, and capacity building.

If you have questions or are interested in covering the event, contact:

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