



# HUNGER FREE

K A N S A S

**ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN OF SECONDARY DATA**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

For more information,  
and to view the full report,  
visit [HungerFreeKansas.org](https://HungerFreeKansas.org).



**THE PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT** is to inform stakeholders of the Hunger Free Kansas Initiative. The initiative seeks to harness the existing and extensive Kansas food system leadership infrastructure and empower communities to address the systemic causes of food insecurity. This initiative involves subject matter experts, leaders and stakeholders across Kansas who are collaboratively designing the initiative. The report looks at data across four domains: 1) demographics, 2) hunger, nutrition and food insecurity, 3) food access infrastructure, and 4) wealth development. This report centers equity in data analysis by describing community members' identities and providing disaggregated data when possible. By focusing on equity in data analysis and describing community members' identities, the report helps in understanding the unique and varied needs of different demographic groups. This nuanced understanding is essential for developing programs and policies that are truly inclusive and effective. The report also explores the concept of hunger through various definitions, including:

**Food Sufficiency** – Having enough food to eat;

**Food Security** – Having access to enough food to support an active, healthy life; and

**Nutritional Security** – Having equitable and stable access, availability and affordability to eat nutritious foods that support well-being.

These areas are examined by assessing data related to the programs, policies, systems and physical environments in which Kansans live and work, as well as the social determinants of health that contribute to wealth building within a community.

## REPORT KEY FINDINGS:

- **Food Insufficiency:** About 1 in 10 (12.5 percent) Kansas adults with children reported food insufficiency, which means sometimes or often not having enough to eat. *Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023.*
- **Food Insecurity:** More than 1 in 10 (13.4 percent) Kansas children experience food insecurity. Twelve of the 16 counties in the Southeast Region\* have food insecurity rates greater than 15.1 percent. The food insecurity rate among Latino or Hispanic Kansans is 15.0 percent. Nearly 1 in 4 (24.0 percent) Black Kansans experience food insecurity. *Source: Feeding America, 2021.*
- **Breastfeeding:** Both Kansas (22.2 percent) and the United States (25.4 percent) fall short of the Healthy People 2030 goal of 42.4 percent of infants exclusively breastfed during the first six months. Additionally, the rates for any breastfeeding at 12 months are below the Healthy People 2030 goal of 54.1 percent, with Kansas at 36.4 percent and the United States at 37.6 percent. *Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 2020.*
- **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Online Purchasing:** Kansas ranks sixth in the U.S. for percent of SNAP households shopping online (28.8 percent). Of Kansas SNAP redemptions, 7.5 percent use online purchasing. *Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Fiscal Year 2022.*
- **Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Participation and Eligibility\* \*:** More than half (57.4 percent) of all sites assessed for eligibility in Kansas are eligible or potentially eligible for CEP. However, just 6.9 percent of eligible sites are participating in CEP. *Source: KSDE, 2022–2023.*
- **Low-Income, Low-Access Census Tracts:** Almost 2 in 5 census tracts in the South Central (38.0 percent) and Southeast (39.2 percent) Regions of Kansas are classified as low-income census tracts where a significant number or portion of residents live more than a half mile (urban) or 10 miles (rural) from the nearest supermarket. *Source: USDA, 2019.*
- **Safe Drinking Water Access:** There were 109 boil water advisories in Kansas in 2022. The North Central Region experienced nearly six months (172 cumulative days) in which water distribution systems in one or more counties issued boil water advisories. Water distribution systems in the Northwest Region issued fewer boil water advisories (45 cumulative days) in one or more counties than other regions (80–172 cumulative days). *Source: KDHE, 2022.*
- **Housing Affordability:** About 2 in 5 (43.0 percent) renter-occupied households lack affordable housing in Kansas. *Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2017–2021 5-Year Estimate.*

### ABOUT 1 IN 5 (21.7 percent)

Kansas adults who have less than a high school degree reported food insufficiency. Only 5.0 percent of Kansas adults with a bachelor's degree or higher reported food insufficiency. *Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023.*

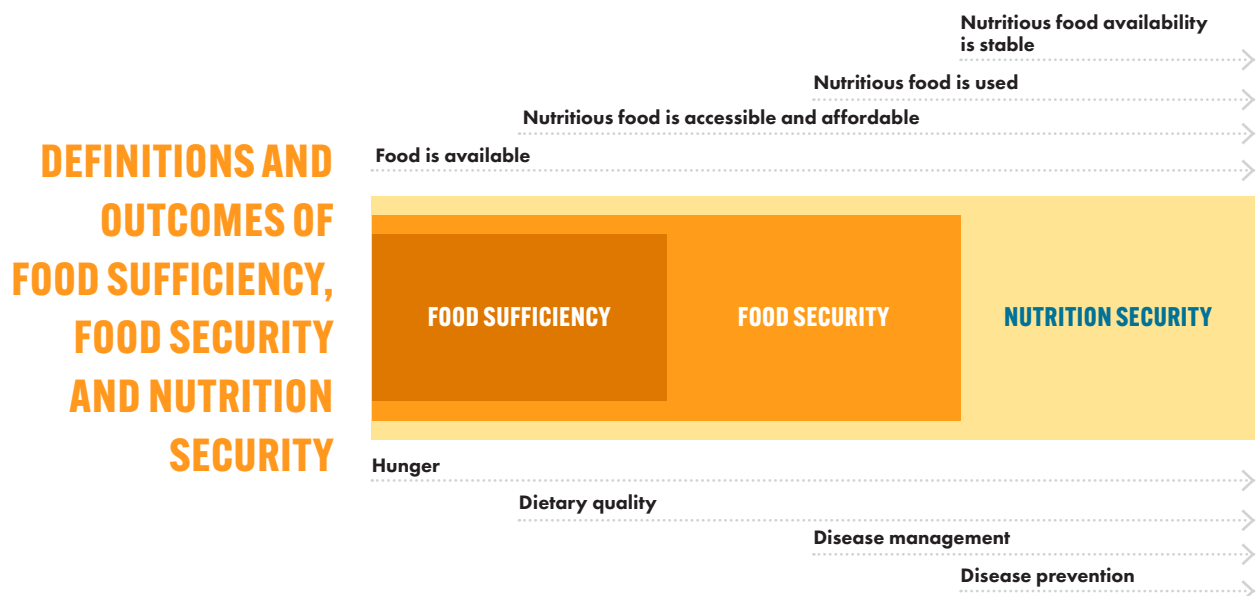
\* A map depicting regions can be found on page 8 of this report.

\*The Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) is available for schools and school district sites in low-income areas. Sites participating in CEP can provide all enrolled students free breakfast and lunch without requiring students to apply.

## ADDITIONAL REPORT FINDINGS:

- **Food Insufficiency:**

- More than 1 in 10 (14.4 percent) Kansas adults age 18–24 reported food insufficiency. *Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023.*
- Nearly 1 in 3 (29.6 percent) Kansas adults identifying as transgender reported food insufficiency. *Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023.*
- About 1 in 10 (13.1 percent) Kansas adults who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender reported food insufficiency. *Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023.*
- About 1 in 5 Kansas adults who identify as Hispanic or Latino, any race (19.9 percent), Asian, not Hispanic (19.0 percent) and Black, not Hispanic (18.2 percent) reported food insufficiency. *Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023.*
- About 1 in 3 (35.0 percent) Kansas adults who have a lot of difficulty walking or climbing stairs reported food insufficiency. *Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023.*
- About 1 in 4 (26.5 percent) Kansas adults who have a lot of difficulty seeing reported food insufficiency. *Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023.*
- About 1 in 4 (26.4 percent) Kansas adults who have a lot of difficulty hearing reported food insufficiency. *Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023.*



*Source: Mozaffarian (2023). Measuring and Addressing Nutrition Security to Achieve Health and Health Equity, Health Affairs Health Policy Brief. Adapted from Thorndike, et al. (2022). Strengthening US Food Policies and Programs to Promote Equity in Nutrition Security: A Policy Statement from the American Heart Association, Circulation 145(24).*



## FOOD INSUFFICIENCY FOR KANSAS ADULTS IN THE LAST SEVEN DAYS BY AGE, 2023

**Key Finding:** More than 1 in 10 (14.4 percent) Kansas adults age 18–24 reported food insufficiency, which means sometimes or often not having enough to eat.

| AGE          | POPULATION ESTIMATION (Age 18+) | SOMETIMES NOT ENOUGH TO EAT | OFTEN NOT ENOUGH TO EAT | SOMETIMES OR OFTEN NOT ENOUGH TO EAT |
|--------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 18-24        | 204,237                         | 10.1%                       | 4.3%                    | 14.4%                                |
| 25-39        | 617,054                         | 7.7%                        | 2.1%                    | 9.7%                                 |
| 40-54        | 493,049                         | 10.4%                       | 3.0%                    | 13.5%                                |
| 55-64        | 362,456                         | 11.7%                       | 1.9%                    | 13.6%                                |
| 65 and Above | 494,709                         | 4.1%                        | 4.2%                    | 8.3%                                 |

**Note:** Respondents were surveyed on the household level and modeling was used to weight population estimates for adult population age 18 or older. On the Household Pulse Survey, respondents were asked, “In the last 7 days, which of these statements best describes the food eaten in your household?” Other response options included, “Enough of the kinds of food wanted”, “Enough food, but not always the kinds wanted” and the option to not provide a response. For age, respondents were asked, “What year were you born?”

Source: Kansas Health Institute analysis of U.S. Census Bureau Household Pulse Survey Data, Sept. 20–Oct. 2, 2023.



**FOOD INSUFFICIENCY FOR KANSAS ADULTS IN THE LAST SEVEN DAYS  
BY RACE AND ETHNICITY, 2023**

**Key Finding** About 1 in 5 Kansas adults who identify as Hispanic or Latino, any race (19.9 percent), Asian, not Hispanic (19.0 percent) and Black, not Hispanic (18.2 percent) reported food insufficiency.

| RACE AND ETHNICITY                            | POPULATION ESTIMATION (Age 18+) | SOMETIMES NOT ENOUGH TO EAT | OFTEN NOT ENOUGH TO EAT | SOMETIMES OR OFTEN NOT ENOUGH TO EAT |
|---|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Hispanic or Latino, Any Race                  | 249,921                         | 19.1%                       | 0.9%                    | 19.9%                                |
| White, Not Hispanic                           | 1,671,339                       | 6.4%                        | 2.9%                    | 9.3%                                 |
| Black, Not Hispanic                           | 85,777                          | 16.2%                       | 2.0%                    | 18.2%                                |
| Asian, Not Hispanic                           | 65,461                          | 15.8%                       | 3.2%                    | 19.0%                                |
| Two or More Races + Other Races, Not Hispanic | 99,008                          | 3.5%                        | 9.5%                    | 13.0%                                |

**Note:** Respondents were surveyed on the household level and modeling was used to weight population estimates for adult population age 18 or older. On the Household Pulse Survey, respondents were asked, “In the last 7 days, which of these statements best describes the food eaten in your household?” Other response options included, “Enough of the kinds of food wanted,” “Enough food, but not always the kinds wanted” and the option to not provide a response. Respondents were also asked, “Are you of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?” and, “What is your race? Please select all that apply.”

Source: Kansas Health Institute analysis of U.S. Census Bureau Household Pulse Survey Data, Sept. 20–Oct. 2, 2023.

# FOOD INSUFFICIENCY FOR KANSAS ADULTS IN THE LAST SEVEN DAYS BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT, 2023

**Key Finding:** About 1 in 5 (21.7 percent) Kansas adults who have less than a high school degree reported food insufficiency. Only 5.0 percent of Kansas adults with a bachelor’s degree or higher reported food insufficiency.

| EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT           | POPULATION ESTIMATION (Age 18+) | SOMETIMES NOT ENOUGH TO EAT | OFTEN NOT ENOUGH TO EAT | SOMETIMES OR OFTEN NOT ENOUGH TO EAT |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Less Than High School Degree     | 92,523                          | 18.3%                       | 3.4%                    | 21.7%                                |
| High School Degree or GED        | 662,403                         | 11.9%                       | 3.0%                    | 15.0%                                |
| Some College/ Associate’s Degree | 707,927                         | 8.1%                        | 4.8%                    | 12.9%                                |
| Bachelor’s Degree or Higher      | 708,653                         | 4.1%                        | 0.9%                    | 5.0%                                 |

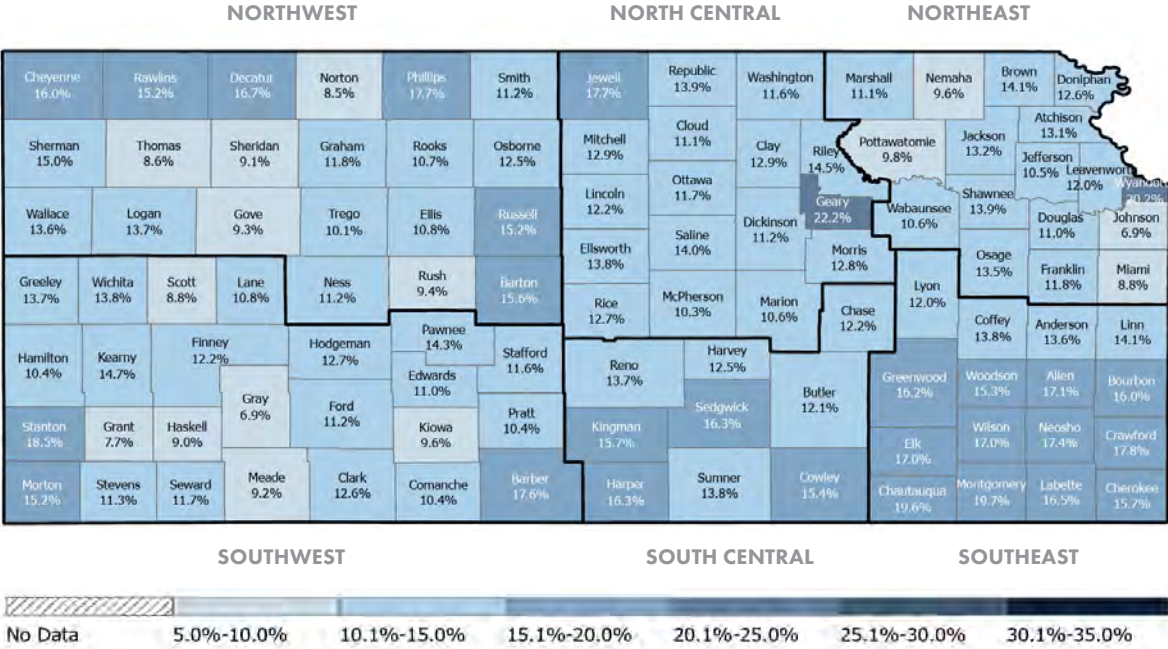
**Note:** Respondents were surveyed on the household level and modeling was used to weight population estimates for adult population age 18 or older. On the Household Pulse Survey respondents were asked, “In the last 7 days, which of these statements best describes the food eaten in your household?” Other response options included, “Enough of the kinds of food wanted,” “Enough food, but not always the kinds wanted” and the option to not provide a response. Respondents were also asked, “What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed? Select only one answer.”

Source: Kansas Health Institute analysis of U.S. Census Bureau Household Pulse Survey Data, Sept. 20–Oct. 2, 2023.



# FOOD INSECURITY AMONG CHILDREN AGE <18 IN KANSAS BY COUNTY, 2021

**Key Finding:** More than 1 in 10 (13.4 percent) Kansas children experience food insecurity. Twelve of the 16 counties in the Southeast Region have food insecurity rates greater than 15.1 percent.



**Note:** Food insecurity rate for children age <18 in Kansas overall is 13.4 percent. For the legend, bin breaks are determined using equal intervals based on the full range of food insecurity estimates at the county level across child, Latino or Hispanic and Black populations in Kansas.

Source: Feeding America, 2021.





## PERCENT OF LOW-INCOME, LOW-ACCESS (LILA) CENSUS TRACTS BY DISTANCE FROM THE NEAREST SUPERMARKET, IN KANSAS AND KDHE DISTRICT OFFICE REGIONS, 2019

**Key Finding:** Almost 2 in 5 census tracts in the South Central (38.0 percent) and Southeast (39.2 percent) Regions of Kansas are classified as low-income census tracts where a significant number or portion of residents live more than a half mile (urban) or 10 miles (rural) from the nearest supermarket.

| DISTANCE TO NEAREST SUPERMARKET | KANSAS | NORTH CENTRAL | NORTH-EAST | NORTH-WEST | SOUTH CENTRAL | SOUTH-EAST | SOUTH-WEST |
|---------------------------------|--------|---------------|------------|------------|---------------|------------|------------|
| At 1/2 and 10 Miles             | 12.7%  | 30.7%         | 29.1%      | 23.9%      | 38.0%         | 39.2%      | 25.0%      |
| At 1 and 10 Miles               | 18.1%  | 22.7%         | 15.3%      | 19.6%      | 18.5%         | 24.1%      | 17.9%      |
| At 1 and 20 Miles               | 15.0%  | 12.0%         | 15.3%      | 6.5%       | 17.4%         | 16.5%      | 14.3%      |
| Vehicle Access                  | 10.4%  | 12.0%         | 9.5%       | 4.3%       | 15.8%         | 10.1%      | 1.8%       |

**Note:** LILA census tracts define low-income areas as “a tract with either a poverty rate of 20 percent or more, or a median family income less than 80 percent of the statewide median family income.” One (urban) or 10 (rural) miles, 1/2 (urban) or 10 (rural) miles, and one (urban) or 20 (rural) miles are defined as, “Low-income census tracts where a significant number or share of residents is more than x mile (urban) or x miles (rural) from the nearest supermarket.” Vehicle access is defined as “low-income census tract where more than 100 housing units do not have a vehicle and are more than 1/2 mile (urban) from the nearest supermarket, or a significant number or share of residents are more than 20 miles (rural) from the nearest supermarket.”

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service, Food Access Research Atlas, 2019.

**LOW-INCOME,  
LOW-ACCESS (LILA)  
CENSUS TRACTS  
ARE SOMETIMES  
REFERRED TO AS  
“FOOD DESERTS.”**

## PERCENT OF ALL ANNUAL AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SPENDING ON FOOD, HEALTH CARE, TRANSPORTATION AND HOUSING, 2023

**Key Finding:** Average household spending on food and housing is nearly half (43.8 percent in Kansas and 44.7 percent nationally) of annual household median income.

| POPULATION GROUP | FOOD  | HEALTH CARE | TRANSPORTATION | HOUSING |
|------------------|-------|-------------|----------------|---------|
| Kansas           | 12.7% | 8.6%        | 18.1%          | 31.1%   |
| United States    | 12.6% | 8.0%        | 17.4%          | 32.1%   |

**Note:** Percentages are average household spending in Kansas within the category divided by median household income in Kansas. All data is from Claritas' proprietary database, Consumer Spending Dynamix, developed using the Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Expenditure Survey. Caution for interpretation is recommended as their exact methodology for the data estimates is not available. Food includes spending on food at home (e.g., groceries) and away from home (e.g., meals at a restaurant). Health care includes spending on health insurance, medical services, medication, vitamins and medical supplies. Transportation includes spending on out-of-town transportation, local transportation and vehicle expenses. Housing includes spending on owned housing, rented housing, other lodging, utilities, fuels, public services and other housing expenses.

Source: Claritas Consumer Index Estimates, 2023, accessed through Kansas Health Matters.

## COST BURDEN OF CHILD CARE IN KANSAS, 2023

**Key Finding:** Households with one child under age 3 spend \$10,843 on average each year on child care, which is 16.8 percent of the median household income in Kansas.

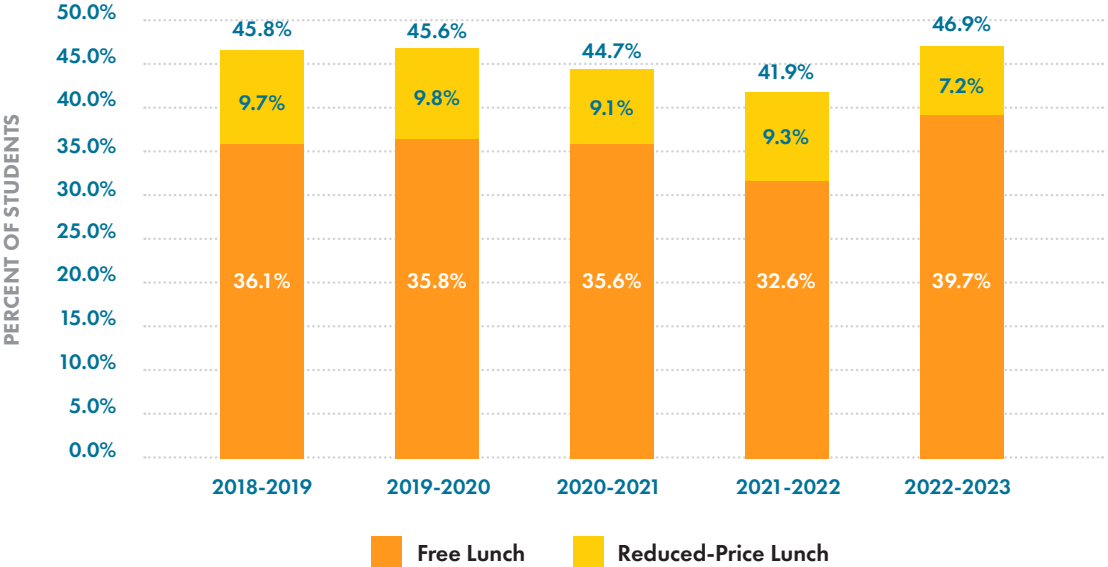
| CHILD CARE CAPACITY AND COST BURDEN  | KANSAS   |
|--|----------|
| Number of Children Under Age 6 With Parents in the Workforce                               | 152,435  |
| Number of Children that Child Care Facilities Are Willing to Accept                        | 67,290   |
| Percent of Children Under Age 6 With Parents in the Workforce Without a Child Care Opening | 55.9%    |
| Average Child Care Cost Burden for One Child Under Age 3                                   | \$10,843 |
| Percent of Child Care Cost Burden for One Child Under Age 3 Using Median Household Income  | 16.8%    |

**Note:** Total population in Kansas for children under age 6 is 217,915. Total number of children under age 6 with all parents in family in labor force = 152,435. Median household income in Kansas used in calculating cost burden is \$64,521.

Source: Kansas Health Institute analysis of 2023 data from Childcare Aware of Kansas.

# PERCENT OF KANSAS STUDENTS APPROVED FOR FREE OR REDUCED-PRICE LUNCH, 2018–2023 SCHOOL YEARS

**Key Finding:** Two in 5 (39.7 percent) Kansas students were approved to receive free lunch for the 2022–2023 school year. In the Southwest Region, more than 3 in 5 students (64.2 percent) were approved to participate in free- or reduced-price lunch during the 2022–2023 school year.

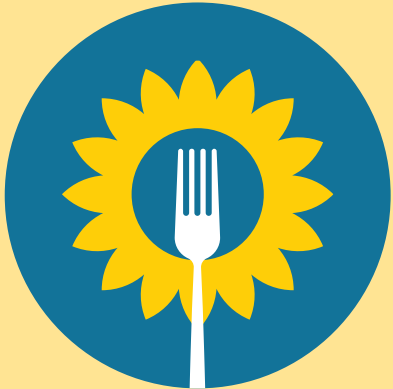


**Note:** Data includes students approved for free- or reduced-price lunches using headcount enrollment data across all Kansas schools (public, private and state schools). Number of students in Kansas = 518,836 in 2018–2019, 518,889 in 2019–2020, 502,492 in 2020–2021, 506,371 in 2021–2022, and 510,771 in 2022–2023. Percentages are rounded to the nearest tenth.

Source: Kansas Health Institute analysis of Kansas State Department of Education Students Approved for Free- or Reduced-Price Lunches – Headcount Enrollment, 2018–2023

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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