



Department of
Health

Success Stories, 2023-24

- Creating Healthy Communities
- Healthy Eating Active Living Capacity Building





Dear Colleagues and Public Health Partners,

It is our pleasure to share the 2023-2024 Health Promotion Success Stories. Over the last two years, the Health Promotion Section has intentionally grown its reach across the state so that more Ohioans have increased opportunities for physical activity and improved access to healthy foods. In addition to the Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) program, Health Promotion launched a new capacity building mini-grant titled Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL), in July of 2022. Both the CHC and HEAL programs fund local public health departments at the city or county level to implement sustainable policy, systems and environmental changes through community engagement and community-led solutions.

CHC is funded by the Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), while HEAL and Health Promotion's state level work is funded by CDC's State Physical Activity and Nutrition (SPAN) cooperative agreement. ODH has been able to braid these two funding sources to effectively and efficiently reach more communities across Ohio, increasing from 22 CHC Communities in 2022 to 38 CHC and HEAL communities in 2024.

This booklet highlights the key successes from our funded CHC and HEAL communities over the past two years. Our work would not be possible without the ongoing support of community-led coalitions around the state. We would also like to express our gratitude and appreciation for two of our primary partners, Professional Data Analysts (PDA) and Toole Design, who support the work of Health Promotion through funded contracts. As you read these success stories, please be mindful that these named partners and many more unnamed partners helped to make this work possible.

Program Managers:

Julia Hansel, RDN, LD
Health Promotion Manager

Sarah Ginnetti, RDN, LD
CHC Program Manager

CHC Program Consultants:

Kelly DeBrosse, MS, RD, LD
Alaina Parrish
Michael Sieminski, RDN, LD

HEAL Program Consultant

Danielle Dillon, MPH

Food Access Coordinator

Casey Slive, MPH

For more information, please visit:

<https://odh.ohio.gov/know-our-programs/health-promotion/welcome-to>

Table of Contents:

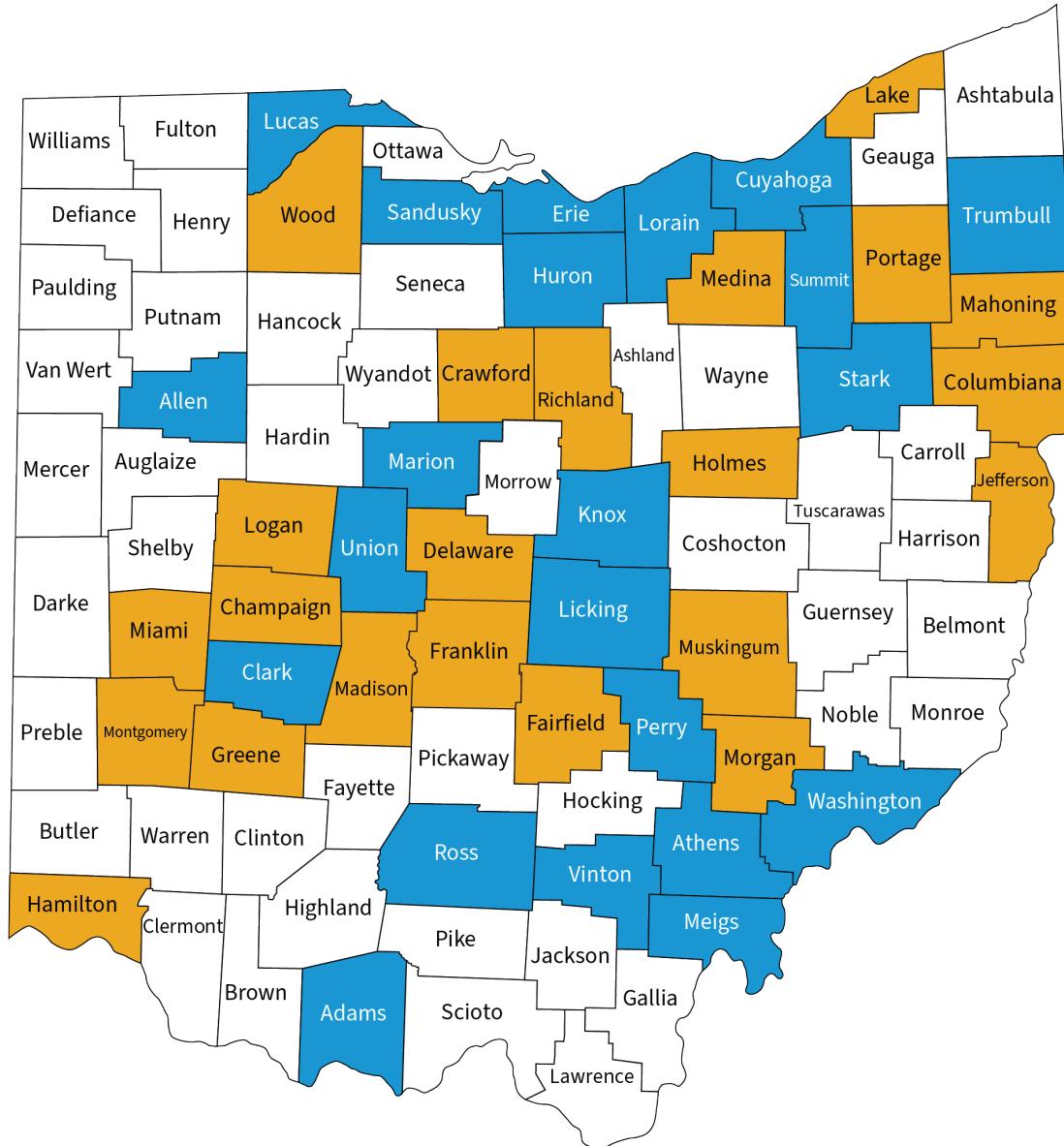
Map, Mission, and Vision	04
Creating Healthy Communities (CHC)	
2023-24 Success Stories	05
2023-24 Additional Highlights	15
2023-24 Local Impact	18
2023-24 Leveraged Funds	19
Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL)	
2023 Local Impact	21
2024 Success Stories	22
2024 Additional Highlights	28
2024 and Beyond	29



CHC and HEAL Funded Communities, 2023-2024

Creating Healthy Communities (CHC)

Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) Capacity Building



Vision:

Vibrant Ohio communities where everyone has access to healthy food and opportunities for active living.

Mission:

Activating community-led solutions
to create sustainable change in
policies, places, and population
health.



Creating Healthy Communities

Athens County

Transit Improvement Grows Ridership and Provides Shelter

Challenge

The Village of Chauncey (population 949) was without any permanent bus shelters--even though its most popular stop gets comparatively more riders per capita than the most popular stop in the nearby City of Athens. Without signage or a dedicated bus shelter, many riders chose to wait for Athens Public Transit (APT) inside the village's small post office, located along the bus route. However, this tiny rural post office was not set up to handle bus stop traffic in addition to postal customers. The village's Community Improvement Team had applied for multiple grants to install a shelter next to the post office but was not successful in securing funding.

Approach

Athens County's Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) coordinator collaborated with HAPCAP's Athens County mobility coordinator to identify a site for the shelter and the resources to construct it. After Chauncey village staff secured permission to use land next to the post office, estimates for pouring a concrete pad and purchasing bus shelter equipment were higher than anticipated. CHC covered the installation of an accessible concrete pad, and a generous donation of lightly used bus shelter components from the nearby City of Athens, an APT partner, helped the project stay within budget. APT staff installed the shelter and route signage in the shelter. CHC partnered with HAPCAP to plan and host a grand opening event.

Results

A bus shelter grand opening event featured a free-fare day on APT, bus pass giveaways, refreshments, and an open house at the bus shelter. In the first seven months since installing the shelter, ridership at the "post office stop" on APT Line 6 in the Village of Chauncey has increased by 8%. APT staff attribute some of that increase to the physical shelter generating attention along a bus route that still could use more signage and visibility. Post office staff say that the new shelter has alleviated the problem of too many people hanging out in the post office to wait for the bus. There are other benefits, too. APT staff report that passengers are much more comfortable having a dry place to wait for the bus. "It saves them from standing out in the weather, and that's important," says driver Val Grain.



Contact

Name: Meredith Erlewine

Email: merlewine@athenspublichealth.org

Agency: Athens City-County Health Department

Website: athenspublichealth.org



**Department of
Health**

Creating Healthy
Communities (CHC)

Cuyahoga County

Farmer Jones Market Helps Prevent Food Insecurity in Maple Heights

Challenge

According to Feeding America's Map the Meal Gap 2022 report, 15% of Cuyahoga County's residents experience food insecurity, translating to 189,390 people who don't know where their next meal will come from. Further, in the city of Maple Heights, 21.1% live in poverty and according to 2020 Healthy Northeast Ohio data, Maple Heights has a Food Insecurity Index of 91.5 out of 100--indicating that residents are struggling every day to get enough food. Addressing these issues demands local and collaborative efforts to help foster community well-being and ensure everyone has access to basic needs.



Approach

Rid-All Green Partnership (Rid-All), known for its urban farm and youth training programs, was approached in 2020 by the mayor of Maple Heights to assume operations at Farmer Jones Market, which had been providing food for residents for over 60 years but closed due to the pandemic. Rid-All agreed, and through partnership with a local attorney and investor, Farmer Jones Market was purchased. Cuyahoga County Board of Health's Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) coordinator met with Rid-All Farmers' Market staff to conduct a walk-around and identify potential upgrades and enhancements. It was determined that the refrigeration systems required significant upgrades, and the market was in need of an advertising campaign to bring awareness back into the community.

Results

Farmer Jones Market, Northeast Ohio's first Black-owned farmers' market, is now operating seven days a week. CHC provided funds for refrigeration upgrades at the market to ensure continuous fresh produce availability every day for Maple Heights' residents. And with support from CHC, Rid-All also launched an advertising campaign that included radio broadcasts, billboards, flyers, and social media posts, helping to increase sales by \$4,000 from the previous year resulting in \$16,000 in gross monthly revenue. Moving forward, the Rid-All Green Partnership along with city leadership and community partners are committed to helping address food insecurity and foster a healthier, vibrant Maple Heights.

Contact

Name: Alexa Geiger

Email: ageiger@ccbh.net

Agency: Cuyahoga Board of Health

Website: wwwccbh.net



**Department of
Health**

Creating Healthy
Communities (CHC)

Lorain County

Partners Growing Together: Combating Food Insecurity

Challenge

Lorain, Ohio, the largest city in Lorain County, has 27.5% of its residents living below the poverty line. In addition to economic challenges, residents face health barriers due to factors beyond control, such as education, healthcare access, neighborhood, and social context. These factors, known as the Social Determinants of Health, contribute to challenges in acquiring healthy food, which leads to disparities in health outcomes and increases the risk of chronic diseases. Lorain contains at least four census tracts that are considered food deserts, or areas where there is limited availability of healthy foods in stores. 14,000+ residents live in these areas and are impacted daily.



Approach

To address food insecurity, Lorain County Public Health (LCPH), Solidarity Urban Farms (SUF) and Lorain Public Library System (LPLS) partnered to develop an urban farm at Lorain's main library. The community was engaged in the process by participating in the garden's installation and harvest. Partners played a crucial role as well; LCPH served as a healthy eating subject matter expert and provided Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) funding for supplies. LPLS managed logistics for the installation of the garden and took the lead on culinary literacy programming. Solidarity Urban Farms contributed knowledge in gardening and produce cultivation and will assume ongoing responsibility after the CHC grant year ends.

Results

The garden symbolizes the power of collaboration across different sectors; public health, libraries, urban agriculture, and residents. At year end, the garden yielded over 2,586 pounds of produce made up of 38 varieties of crops that directly supported 207 culinary literacy events at LPLS. Additionally, by utilizing garden produce instead of store-bought food for these events, an estimated \$6,982 was saved. Over 65 community volunteers were dedicated to the project, assisting with installation, planting, harvesting, and more. This effort increased access to fresh, nutritious food in Lorain and fostered community involvement and education in sustainable gardening practices.

Contact

Name: Catherine Mavrich, MPH, CHES
Email: cmavrich@loraincountyhealth.com
Agency: Lorain County Public Health
Website: LorainCountyHealth.com



**Department of
Health**

Creating Healthy
Communities (CHC)

Meigs County

Paving The Way to Increased Walkability for a Rural Community

Challenge

When residents of Meigs County were asked "How accessible are areas to be physically active in your community?" during the 2020-23 Meigs County Community Health Assessment, almost half (47%) reported areas were only somewhat accessible or not accessible at all. A sedentary lifestyle can put a person at risk for many negative health consequences, all leading to poorer health outcomes. However, finding a safe, affordable, and accessible place for physical activity in a rural community can be a real challenge. People that don't live in the downtown or "main street" areas of rural Appalachian counties often have no access to paved sidewalks, and roads are usually curvy, narrow, or otherwise unsafe for walking.



Approach

Shared use occurs when organizations agree to open or broaden access to their property or facilities for community use, such as for recreation and physical activity. These shared use agreements bring together resources and funding to make things more efficient for all involved. The Meigs County Health Department's Creating Healthy Communities Program teamed up with the Eastern Local School District to write and adopt a shared use agreement for the restoration of the district's walking and running track. It was commonly understood that the community could utilize this rural district's track for physical activity, however, no policy was in place to lay out the terms of the community's use. Additionally, the track had been in disrepair for several years.

Results

The newly paved track was completed in the summer of 2023 and now provides a smooth, even walking and running surface away from road traffic. Based on the terms in the adopted shared use agreement, the track is open for anyone in the community to use (not just the school's students and staff) from dawn until dusk, unless school or sport activity is present. The community immediately began use of the new surface. A community resident stated "I have walked on the Eastern track off and on for many years and I have to say this is the best shape it has been in for a long time! The absence of potholes and crumbling asphalt is a welcome change and much appreciated. It is so nice to have a place to walk especially when there are not many areas around us that are conducive to walking!"

Contact

Name: Juli Simpson

Email: juli.simpson@meigshealth.com

Agency: Meigs County Health Department

Website: <https://meigs-health.com/>



**Department of
Health**

Creating Healthy
Communities (CHC)

Marion County

New Community Gardens and Walking Path Spark Connections for Seniors

Challenge

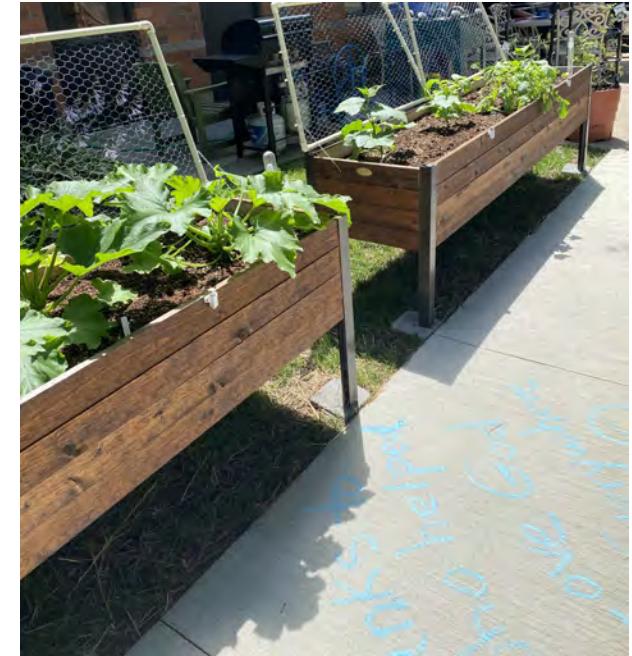
The COVID-19 pandemic was a devastating period for Marion seniors. Not only were seniors vulnerable to a novel and deadly virus, but also to nutrition insecurity, lack of access to opportunities for physical activity, and social isolation. For one senior-living subsidized housing community, this was especially true. Brownstone Terrace is a low-income community where residents have traditionally lacked access to affordable and nutritious foods, as well as opportunities for physical activity, and these problems were exacerbated by the pandemic. Pre-intervention surveying found that 24% of residents faced a lack of access to produce, 33% could not afford produce, and about half of residents were not physically active. Additionally, about 60% of residents were feeling socially isolated.

Approach

Work with Brownstone Terrace began with the Building Resilient Inclusive Communities (BRIC) grant in 2022 and was supplemented by Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) in 2023. Following the initial survey, BRIC and CHC coordinators met with Brownstone managers and Marion County's food access and built environment action teams to discuss potential solutions for the residents. It was decided through intensive deliberation that a multi-faceted approach was needed to address the issues at hand, including construction of new community gardens and a walking path for residents to utilize and lead healthier lifestyles. Additionally, health education classes were offered to reinforce these environmental changes. Construction was completed in the summer of 2023 and a kick-off event was held in August.

Results

Post-intervention surveys found that 25% of residents increased their fruit and vegetable intake, 42% increased their daily physical activity, and an impressive 83% increased overall social interactions. Other community partners have also taken notice of the improvements made and joined in. The Marion County Council on Aging now provides monthly produce distributions at the facility and facilitates a community meal serviced by River Valley Local School's students and staff. Health education classes are ongoing to this day. Brownstone residents have repeatedly expressed their delight and appreciation of the investment in their community, and have responded with consistent attendance with all programming.



Contact

Name: Cory Pierce

Email: cpierce@marionpublichealth.org

Agency: Marion Public Health

Website: www.marionpublichealth.org



**Department of
Health**

Creating Healthy
Communities (CHC)

Perry County Health Department

Nourishing New Straitsville Families

Challenge

Once a bustling coal mining town of over 4,000 people, New Straitsville, located in Southern Perry County, was left isolated with the demise of the mining industry. There are no grocery stores, medical facilities, or major employers within the New Straitsville census tract. The 650 residents who live within the village must travel 12 miles to access resources located within the county seat. With 27% of the residents living below the poverty level, many residents have limited funds for transportation and food and rely on the local dollar store for groceries. With no food pantry in New Straitsville and with residents being ineligible for the pantry in nearby Corning, there has been a lack of access to fresh, healthy foods.

Approach

Creating Healthy Communities (CHC), in partnership with OSU Extension, began cooking classes in New Straitsville in the fall of 2023. During the class time, residents shared their challenges of accessing healthy choices when most did not have enough money to purchase adequate amounts of food. The need to provide food assistance inside the village limits was apparent. The CHC grant coordinator reached out to the regional food bank for information on establishing a new food pantry. A location was identified by the village council. A team of volunteers cleaned the facility while businesses donated services, appliances and food. A 501(C)3 application was completed in January 2024 registering the pantry as a charitable organization, making it easier to receive donations and apply for grants.

Results

The New Straitsville Food Pantry opened on Feb. 8, 2024. Residents of the community began accessing the pantry immediately upon opening. In May of 2024, the food pantry served 504 individuals and on June 20, 2024, served 58 individuals. Community support has been strong with nine entities providing assistance including food donations, equipment, and volunteer hours. A fundraiser held in April raised \$3,645.00 with additional fundraisers planned for the fall of 2024 and the spring of 2025. A grant application was submitted to United Way of Muskingum, Morgan, and Perry Counties. Funds will support food, supplies, and equipment for operations.



Contact

Name: Jenny LaRue

Email: jlarue@perrcountyohio.net

Agency: Perry County Health Department

Website: perrycountyhealth.info



**Department of
Health**

Creating Healthy
Communities (CHC)

Sandusky County

Cycle Sandusky Co. Bike Share Provides Access to Free Bikes

Challenge

Health-related challenges exist in Sandusky County. According to the 2022-23 Sandusky County Community Health Assessment, 41% of the adult population and 23% of the youth population in grades 7-12 have obesity. Rates for both age groups are higher than the national and state averages. Further, over one-fifth (21%) of adults reported they did not participate in any physical activity in the past week. A lack of physical activity is a major risk factor in the development of obesity and chronic diseases like diabetes. Lack of transportation is also a concern in Sandusky County, with 6.2% of households in the City of Fremont having no vehicle for transportation.

Approach

The Creating Healthy Communities Coalition members, community stakeholders, and residents partnered together to implement a free bike share program for community members and visitors. Planning efforts included conducting a community bicycling behaviors survey where results supported the desire for a bike share program and identified education needs. The YMCA of Sandusky County offered to manage the free program for any community member during their open hours. The Sandusky County Visitors Bureau created an interactive map of points of interest in the county for bicyclists and a local bicycle shop and bike club offered expertise on bicycle maintenance and equipment. A fleet of six bicycles and five bike racks were purchased in 2023 with CHC funds to start the program.

Results

The program provided residents with a new opportunity to be physically active and a resource for active transportation. In September 2023, a soft launch took place at the YMCA. Ten individuals borrowed the bikes fourteen times over four weeks. An official launch with a ribbon cutting ceremony was done in May 2024 with support from multiple city and county officials, bicycling advocates, and representatives from businesses and organizations. From this time, the number of individuals who borrowed a bike has doubled and the number of times bikes have been borrowed almost tripled. Residents reported the reasons they borrowed bikes as fitness, fun, family time, and transportation.



Contact

Name: Laura Bogard BSN, RN
Email: lbogard@scpublichealth.com
Agency: Sandusky County Public Health
Website: www.scpublichealth.com



Department of Health

Creating Healthy
Communities (CHC)

Stark County

How a Community Garden Cultivated Success for Those in Need

Challenge

According to the 2020 County Health Rankings and Roadmaps, over 13% of Stark County's population experiences food insecurity and doesn't know where their next meal will come from. With barriers such as lack of transportation, high cost of food, and proximity to a grocery store, many residents rely on food pantries and supplemental food programs to nourish themselves and their families. The Akron Canton Regional Food Bank (ACRFB) and many food pantries across Stark County are seeing huge increases in the number of individuals and families served. These facilities can help influence eating habits and provide patrons with greater access to a variety of healthier foods and reduce rates of food and nutrition insecurity.

Approach

The ACRFB supplies food to nearly 600 partners in eight counties and aims to provide healthier options like fresh produce to their pantries, but it's not always guaranteed. In North Canton, the Zion Food Pantry located at the Zion Lutheran Evangelical Church sought out alternative ways to provide fresh produce to their patrons by implementing the North Canton Community Garden on their property. In 2023, Stark County's Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) worked with the garden to expand from 12 beds to 24 beds and dedicate five plots to the food pantry. CHC then surveyed pantry patrons to determine what produce they wanted to be grown and donated to the pantry.

Results

Green beans, peppers, and a dozen other different types of produce along with herbs like oregano and thyme were grown in the pantry-dedicated plots at the North Canton Community Garden. Additional surplus produce from other plot owners was also donated. From May through October, approximately 160 pounds of fresh, organic herbs and produce were distributed to the Zion Food Pantry, reaching nearly 1,750 patrons. CHC personnel created and distributed recipe cards with preservation tips for each item grown. In 2024, the five dedicated plots will continue to provide fresh produce to the Zion Food Pantry and CHC will provide additional education to help patrons make healthier food choices. Additionally, CHC will be assisting more food pantries with implementing on-site gardens to further reduce food and nutrition insecurity in Stark County.



Contact

Name: Amanda Kelly

Email: kellya@starkhealth.org

Agency: Stark County Health Department

Website: <https://starkcountyohio.gov/public-health>



**Department of
Health**

Creating Healthy
Communities (CHC)

Washington County

Small Village, Big Heart: Economic and Outdoor Recreation Developments Boost Health

Challenge

The Village of Beverly is nestled in southeastern Ohio along the Muskingum River, and neighbored by the small town of Waterford. While strong in community spirit, economic stability is a challenge for some of Beverly's residents. The median household income of \$39,148 lags behind the state average of \$56,602. Furthermore, a 19.5% poverty rate leaves many at a disadvantage in health outcomes. For example, residents experience higher rates of heart disease, lung disease, obesity, and physical inactivity than the state or nation. Beverly leaders recognized the need to boost the local economy through tourism and further develop outdoor recreation opportunities to support the health and well-being of residents. The river became a key focus of untapped opportunity.

Approach

The Beverly & Waterford Growth and Revitalization Organization sought and received grant funding from the Recreation Economy for Rural Communities (RERC) program for planning assistance. RERC worked with locals to figure out how to best use Beverly's natural resources and historic charm to boost the economy and health. This assistance, coupled with the ongoing support of the Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) program, led to the development of a community action plan with remarkable engagement from local partners and residents. Active living strategies implemented with CHC in preceding years, helped set the foundation for even larger scale planning.

Results

The master plan had three guiding goals. First, build a trail community and culture in Beverly-Waterford that is open to all and connected to other outdoor recreation networks. Second, make Beverly's Main Street a model of visitor appeal, specifically to river and trail users. Third, highlight Beverly-Waterford as an outdoor water recreation destination. Woven into these goals was development of a multi-use path, storybook trail, family-friendly kayak, hiking, and biking infrastructure, park development, tree planting, sidewalk redesign, and signage updates. Implementation is underway, and the community has secured \$1.2M in funding through the Appalachian Community Grant Program to ensure the full vision is a reality.



Contact

Name: Sherry Ellem

Email: sellem@wcgov.org

Agency: Washington County Health Department

Website: <https://www.washingtongov.org/137/>
Health-Department



**Department of
Health**

Creating Healthy
Communities (CHC)

Additional Highlights: CHC Healthy Eating

Strategy	County (Community)	Local Impact
Food Service Guidelines	Adams (Peebles)	A nutrition policy for the weekend backpack program for elementary school children was adopted, ensuring 50% of items in the backpacks met Good Food Here standards. This program provided 107 children access to healthier foods each weekend.
Food Pantry	Erie (Countywide)	Erie County CHC partnered with Erie County Jobs and Family Services (ECJFS) and OHgo, a local non-profit, to host a monthly pop-up pantry at ECJFS. Each month, the pantry served an average of 197 individuals and 69 families that are at or below 200% of the federal poverty line. Erie County CHC secured outside grant funding to continue the pantry in future years.
	Summit (Middlebury and West Akron)	The New Exodus Food Pantry partnered with the Stadelman Community Garden in Middlebury and the Gennesaret Inc. food pantry partnered with the Lover's Lane Community garden in West Akron to increase the amount of fresh, local produce donations to the pantries. More than 23,000 residents gained access to over 1,400 lbs. of fresh, healthy foods. Healthy Eating Research nutrition standards were also implemented at each pantry.
Community Garden	Knox (Mount Vernon)	Knox County CHC helped to expanded the Arch Park Community Garden in Mount Vernon and implemented the Green Teens Gardening Program. Teen gardeners learned how to prepare, grow, and preserve fresh fruits and vegetables. Their involvement also built excitement for gardening in the community and provided 1,390 residents with access to nutritious food.

Additional Highlights: CHC Active Living

Strategy	County (Community)	Local Impact
Bike Infrastructure	Allen (Delphos)	Twenty-eight bike racks were installed at seven different locations in Delphos. Businesses with bike racks installed could also apply for a bike friendly-business designation by offering amenities to bikers, such as access to water to refill bottles and trail maps.
Ped Infrastructure	Licking (Hebron)	Working with the local Historical Society and Toole Design, CHC created a walking map of the Village of Hebron with designated points of interest along several different walking routes. A community event promoted the map with guided tours of one of the routes.
	Union (Richwood)	The local active transportation steering committee was awarded \$200,000 in Transportation Alternative Program dollars to fund the Rosette Way to Healthy Food Project, which will connect Richwood residents to sources of food in the village. An additional \$2.6 million was awarded to fund ODOT sidewalk infrastructure improvements.
Multi-Use Trail	Ross (Chillicothe)	Amenities to improve accessibility were implemented at the Kinnikinnic Fen Nature Preserve, including a crushed stone accessible path, ADA-compliant parking spaces, and a shelter house with rails and safeguards.
	Trumbull (Niles)	Outdoor fitness equipment was installed at the trailhead of a City of Niles bike trail, increasing access to opportunities for active living for 3389 citizens. The trailhead is near a local senior-serving facility, providing a convenient location for physical activity for this population.

Additional Highlights: CHC Active Living

Strategy	County (Community)	Local Impact
Park/ Playground	Clark (Springfield)	Clark county CHC partnered with the National Trail, Park, and Recreation District on the Davey Moore Park renovation by providing sunshades for the new skate park and playground. The park is located on the southwest side of Springfield and provides a safe, accessible space for kids to be active.
	Huron (Greenwich)	Huron county CHC helped to install an ADA-compliant playground structure, borders, and fiber surfacing at the Grand Slam Playground in Greenwich, providing additional access to physical activity for 1,361 residents.
	Lucas (Toledo)	More than 350 residents were engaged through conversations, dot voting, and surveys in the Uptown Neighborhood. This resulted in the installation of three new pieces of outdoor exercise equipment and a water bottle filling station at Uptown Green Park.
	Vinton (McArthur)	New outdoor fitness equipment was installed along the walking path at Wyman Park, providing adults a way to stay active while enjoying the rest of the park. These are the only publicly accessible pieces of equipment for the 3,500 residents of McArthur and Elk Township.

2023-2024 Local Impact:

Funded CHC communities have worked with local coalitions, partners, and community members to implement the following policy, system, and environmental changes.

Healthy Eating

- 8 Community Gardens
- 8 Food and Beverage Guideline Policies
- 7 Farm to Institution
- 6 Farmers' Markets
- 5 Food Access Policy and Planning
- 4 Food Pantries
- 3 Healthy Food Retail Improvements
- 3 Produce Prescription Programs
- 1 Mobile Produce Distribution

780,000 Ohioans Impacted

Active Living

- 19 Parks or Playgrounds
- 12 Bike Infrastructure Improvements
- 10 Pedestrian Infrastructure Improvements
- 10 Multi Use Trails
- 6 Complete Streets Policies
- 4 Active Transportation Plans
- 3 Public Transit Improvements
- 1 Shared Use Policy
- 1 Active Commute Support

1,470,000 Ohioans Impacted

Total Impact: 2.25M Ohioans

CHC Leveraged Funds

In 2023-2024, \$4.21M was awarded to the 22 funded CHC communities, who leveraged nearly \$50M in return from additional grants and donations.

Healthy Eating	\$1,698,380
Active Living (Parks)	\$2,538,658
Active Living (Bike/Ped)	\$45,187,551
In-Kind Labor	\$318,304
Workshops/Training	\$6,775
Other	\$99,397
	\$49,849,065



Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) Capacity Building

HEAL 2023 (Year 1) Results

Strategy	Number Completed	Local Impact/Location
Policy System Environmental (PSE) Change Assessment	19 assessments	116 partners engaged in 16 counties
Community Engagement Template	19 templates	19 engagement activities organized
Food Service Guidelines (FSG)	15 policies adopted	15 work, play, and pray sites are implementing FSG within 9 counties
Active Transportation Planning	5 steering committees formed	Franklin Township, Lancaster, Lincoln Heights, Mt. Healthy, and Steubenville.
Complete Streets Policies	1 policy adopted	Reynoldsburg

Funded Agencies (all county level local health department unless otherwise stated):

Champaign, Crawford, Delaware, Fairfield, Franklin, Greene, Hamilton, Holmes, Jefferson, Kent City, Lake, Logan, Miami, Montgomery, Morgan, Muskingum, Richland, Salem City.

Delaware County

Food Pantry Takes Steps to Encourage Healthier Eating

Challenge

In the 2021 Delaware County Community Health Assessment (CHA), 83% of adults with incomes under \$50,000 had overweight or obesity. Poor diet contributes to obesity and limited budgets and access to healthy food options often impact food choices. The CDC's Population Level Analysis and Community Estimates dataset reveals that 15.7% of adults living in the 105.30 census tract in the City of Delaware experienced food insecurity in 2022. Additionally, multiple food pantry organizations in the county have reported a steady increase in the amount of new, unduplicated clients using their services each year since 2020. Fortunately, the "Healthy Eating Research Guidelines for the Charitable Food System" indicates that food pantries play a crucial role in helping those facing food insecurity make healthier choices through prioritizing and offering nutritious foods.

Approach

The Delaware Public Health District (DPHD) and the United Way of Delaware County's Family Resource Center (FRC) collaborated on a Healthy Food Pantry project, beginning with a pre-assessment using the Healthy Food Pantry Assessment Tool (HFPAT). This tool provides a score from 1 to 100, highlighting areas to modify, like new policies and changes to the physical environment. The FRC's initial score was 49/100. Then, young people who frequently visit the Willis Education Center where the FRC Pantry is located participated in a taste test event to provide feedback on lower or higher sugar fruits and other food items that would be desired in the pantry. After the pre-assessment and youth engagement activities, key strategies were identified to boost the HFPAT score and diversify the food offerings.

Results

Strategies selected included enhancing pantry visibility with new welcome signs, providing information displaying nutritional benefits of food items, new shelving, can organizers to ensure food beyond expiration is distributed first, and acquiring a glass door refrigerator for being able to keep a wider variety of food and perishables like produce, dairy, and proteins. The FRC staff were trained on using the Supporting Wellness At Pantries (SWAP) toolkit to categorize foods items and use of related "nudges" encouraging them to be chosen often, sometimes, or rarely. A policy aimed to ensure 75% of purchased items will meet the choose often or sometimes guidelines was also adopted. The HFPAT was conducted again after the changes, and found the score increased 17 points for a final score of 66/100.



Contact

Name: Josie Bonnette, MPH

Email: JBonnette@DelawareHealth.org

Agency: Delaware Public Health District

Website: www.delawarehealth.org



**Department of
Health**

Healthy Eating Active
Living (HEAL)

Franklin County

Walk, Bike, or Roll using School Pathways

Challenge

Safe, accessible infrastructure for active transportation is limited for students that reside and attend schools within Franklin Township. A Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission study from 2017-2021 highlighted 383 pedestrian crashes throughout the township, resulting in 24 fatalities and 59 serious injuries. Notably, 29% of these incidents occurred at intersections, often when pedestrians were crossing streets. On June 27, 2023, a follow-up walk audit revealed significant gaps in sidewalks around Finland Elementary and Middle Schools and an overgrown pathway linking nearby neighborhoods to the campus. Poor sidewalk conditions and overgrown paths make it difficult for children to safely travel to school and limit their physical activity opportunities.



Approach

To address these community challenges related to safe school travel, Franklin County Public Health (FCPH) partnered with South-Western City School District staff and students to plan a pathway beautification event. Families were largely unaware of these pathways, so the cleanup aimed to enhance visibility and promote them as safe travel options. During the event on May 9, 2024, FCPH provided a traffic safety lesson, educating students on pedestrian safety and the benefits of active transportation. This initiative aimed to increase the number of students walking and biking to school, improve accessibility, raise attendance, and improve overall health outcomes.

Results

The beautification event raised awareness and usage of the school pathways. Before the intervention, only 5% of the 35 surveyed students reported using the pathways, with even less who walk or bike to school. After the event, 64% of parents surveyed said they would allow their children to use the improved pathways. All participating students received Traffic Safety handouts, activities, and jump ropes, while 20 additional students received helmets and safety materials during FCPH's Safety Day at the school's open house in August 2024. This initiative raised awareness of safe routes to school and encouraged students to utilize these options, promoting a culture of physical activity and safe travel.

Contact

Name: Natalie Martin

Email: nataliemartin@franklincountyohio.gov

Agency: Franklin County Public Health

Website: <https://myfcph.org/>



**Department of
Health**

Healthy Eating Active
Living (HEAL)

Hamilton County

Taking the Ankle Express: Walk Audits and Planning

Challenge

The Village of Lincoln Heights and the City of Mt. Healthy both decided that creating a culture of health, safety, and vitality for all of their residents necessitated focusing on active transportation. This decision came from noticing the percentage of motor vehicle crashes happening within .25 miles of a school, 13% and 18% respectively, as well as the percentage of households without a vehicle, 18% and 16% respectively (US Census). Each community utilized their existing WeTHRIVE! teams, made up of residents and elected officials or administrators, to create steering committees focused on increasing active-friendly routes to everyday destinations within their jurisdictions.

Approach

Both teams partnered with Hamilton County Planning & Development and TriState Trails, a local nonprofit, to organize walk audits. Community voice data gathered the previous summer was used to identify everyday destinations and community gathering points such as schools, parks, and grocery stores. Utilizing the AARP Walk Audit Toolkit and the WeTHRIVE! Landscape Review, teams documented sidewalk conditions and tactile pads, crosswalks, the timing at crosswalks, ADA compliance, the existence of bike lines, etc. Audits were completed the second week of June, and teams took a stroller with them to help contextualize what the experience might look like for those who get around rolling rather than walking.

Results

These walk audits gave participants a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of those who use active transportation to get around. The findings were also incorporated into their respective Active Transportation Plans (ATP), which are currently under review for adoption by local governmental bodies. Upon completion of the ATPs, both communities were also eligible for grant dollars that allowed them to create pop-up demonstrations to test out traffic calming measures increasing pedestrian comfort and safety. Rather than creating the plans and letting them sit on the shelf, teams have committed to continuing their work around active transportation.



Contact

Name: Alex Gonzales

Email: alexandra.gonzales@hamilton-co.org

Agency: Hamilton County Public Health

Website: <https://hamiltoncountyhealth.org/>



**Department of
Health**

Healthy Eating Active
Living (HEAL)

Innovative Produce Prescription Program Addresses Food Insecurity

Challenge

Residents of Kent City, Ohio experience high rates of food insecurity. The City of Kent has a food insecurity index of 63.2 (with 0 being low need and 100 being high need), per the 2023 Portage County Community Health Assessment. The City of Kent has several food pantry options for those experiencing food insecurity, however most pantries lack the ability to provide fresh fruits and vegetables on a consistent basis. These food pantries also do not typically collaborate with local farmers, which provides an opportunity to connect residents struggling with food insecurity to fresh fruits and vegetables from local growers.

Approach

To address the need for increasing access to fresh fruits and vegetables, Kent City Health Department (KCHD) developed a new Produce Prescription (PRx) program. KCHD partnered with Axess Family Services, a Federally Qualified Health Center, and Haymakers Farmers Market to implement the program, which was available to 100 eligible patients. Community Health Workers implemented a food insecurity screening and eligible patients referred to the program received \$120 of vouchers for fresh fruits and vegetables that they could redeem at the Haymakers Farmers' Market. In addition, a local Registered Dietitian developed four educational videos that were shared with participants on topics such as goal setting, healthy eating on a budget, nutrition time saving tips, and tips for picky eaters.

Results

Participant data showed a 35% increase in fruit consumption and a 116% increase in vegetable consumption (n = 10). 90% reported they will continue to shop for fresh produce. Axess Family Services Administrator Cowan Stevens shared: "It was a pleasure working collaboratively with KCHD and Haymakers Farmers Market on the PRx Program which allowed our patients, many of whom lack access to fresh produce due to various socioeconomic factors, the chance to acquire these foods from our local farmers market. The gratitude expressed and the feedback has been inspiring. This program will have a lasting impact on our patients and will be a steppingstone to improved nutrition moving forward."



Contact

Name: Jalessa Caples
Email: jalessa.caples@kentohio.gov
Agency: Kent City Health Department
Website: www.kentohio.gov



**Department of
Health**

Healthy Eating Active
Living (HEAL)

Lake County

Everyone Swings at State Street Park

Challenge

While the City of Painesville has several neighborhood parks that are within walking distance for most residents, most of the parks have limited amenities and few opportunities for active play. State Street Park, located in a neighborhood identified as an Ohio Health Improvement Zone with an overall score of .9857, is one of those parks. With 35.7% of neighborhood residents being physically inactive, (Community Wellbeing: Social Determinants of Health Dashboard), the team at Lake County General Health District and the City of Painesville sought to provide an additional opportunity for physical activity that would meet the needs of all neighborhood families.

Approach

To gain insight on what type of park improvement residents desired, the team partnered with Heritage Middle School, Harvey High School, Lake-Geauga WIC, the Painesville YMCA, and the Painesville Farmers' Market to conduct surveys and targeted interviews with both youth and adult residents. Through those interviews, it became evident that a swing set was desired for State Street Park. The team solicited vendor quotes for options for accessible structures, then engaged children participating in the neighborhood Salvation Army's Learning Zone program, as well as students from Maple Elementary, in a dot-voting activity to select their preference between two swing set structures.

Results

As a result of community resident interviews and the children's vote, a new swing set structure was purchased and installed at State Street Park in September 2024. The selected structure included two belt swings, a bird's nest swing, and an accessible swing, which was a priority for all involved in the project. This new addition is now the second active play structure in the park, and there remains room to add additional features and amenities. Both the city and community stakeholders are invested in leveraging additional resources to build out this neighborhood park, all while promoting family-friendly physical activity that makes residents healthier and helps communities thrive.



Contact

Name: Christine Margalis

Email: cmargalis@lchgd.org

Agency: Lake County General Health District

Website: www.lchgd.org



**Department of
Health**

Healthy Eating Active
Living (HEAL)

Richland County

New Public Transit Policy Paves the Way for Transit Stop Upgrades

Challenge

In 2023, Richland Public Health (RPH) conducted a Policy, Systems, and Environmental Change (PSEC) Assessment that revealed many gaps in Richland County's public transit system. Residents have been under-utilizing the system due to challenges of reliability, perceived safety, and lack of awareness, and connectivity (including discontinued service to the City of Shelby, the second largest city in Richland County). The PSEC Assessment revealed the community's desire to fix these gaps and improve RCT's service and infrastructure. To advance the health of Richland County citizens, having a connected and accessible transit system that reliably delivers residents to parks, stores, and other points of food access and physical activity is critical.

Approach

Richland County Transit (RCT) and RPH created an advisory group of Richland County citizens, RCT bus drivers, and transit users to discuss and review items related to a future RCT transit policy and transitioning from a flag stop system, where riders flag a bus to board, to a fixed route system, where riders board at bus stops. The group reviewed the current best practices, existing RCT policy, and policies from other outside transit agencies to help inform a new policy. The advisory group also conducted walk audits of select transit stops to inform policy verbiage. Once the policy was drafted, the advisory group completed a functional test of the policy by participating in a riding audit along Route 7.

Results

A new Transit Stop Design and Installation Guideline was approved by the RCT board in September 2024. The policy will establish standards and provide recommendations for the design, installation, and review of all existing and future public transit infrastructure in the RCT system. It will also include considerations to convert to a fixed-route system in the next five years. Already in development are new prototype bus stop signs, which will be tested in four locations. The new policy will impact approximately 65,000 people living in the service area. A resident and member of the advisory group noted, "It's nice to see changes happening, and that we're being heard."



Contact

Name: Shane Myers
Email: smyers@richlandhealth.org
Agency: Richland Public Health
Website: www.richlandhealth.org



**Department of
Health**

Healthy Eating Active
Living (HEAL)

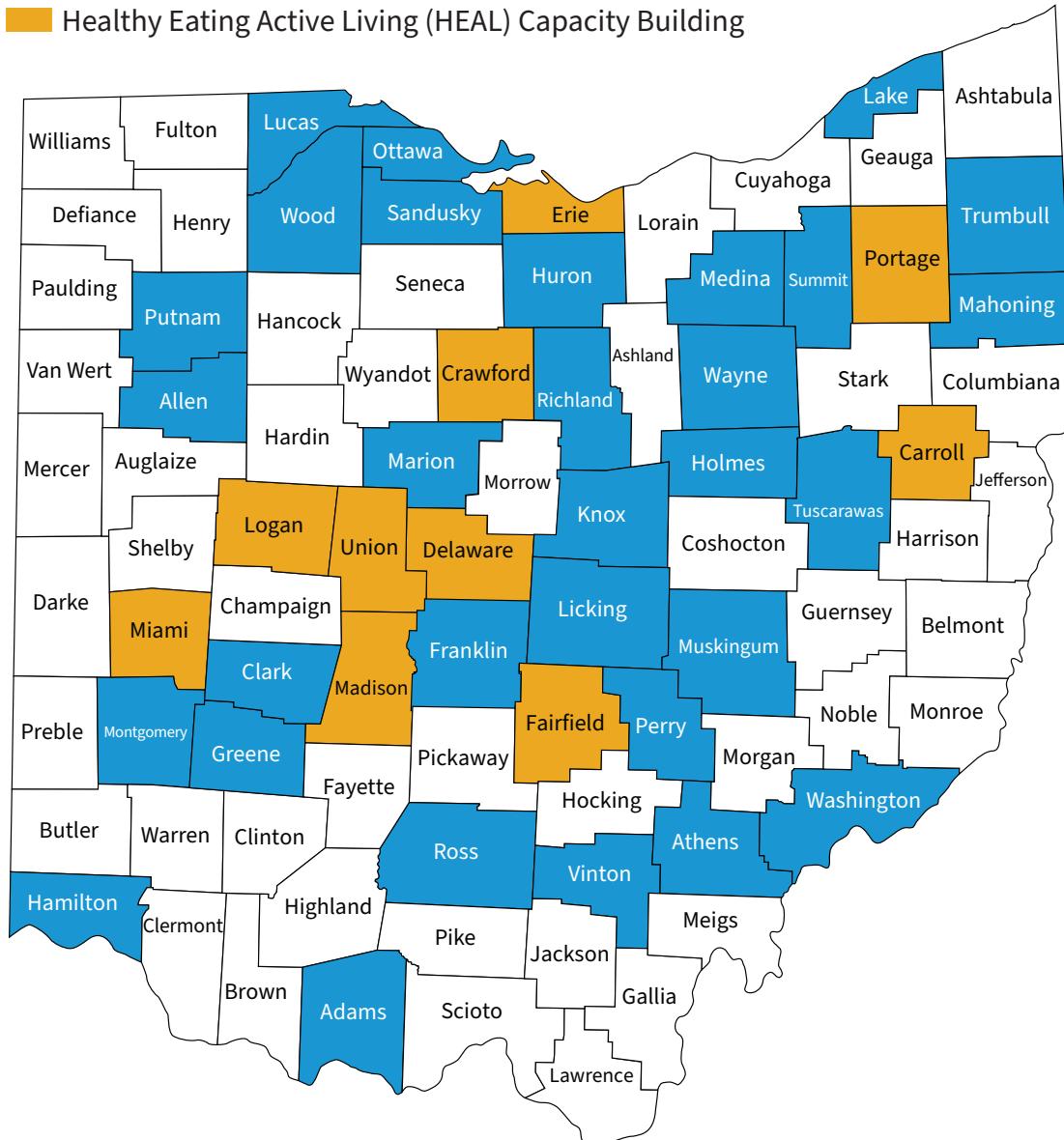
Additional 2024 HEAL Highlights

Strategy	City/County (Community)	Local Impact
PSE Assessment + Community Engagement	Cincinnati (Carthage) Madison (London) Mahoning (Sebring) Medina (Lodi) Wood (North Baltimore)	Five PSE Assessments completed. Sixty-seven partners engaged across five communities. Five community engagement activities. Nearly 700 residents participated across five communities.
Community Garden	Fairfield (Lancaster)	Seven garden beds were created at the newly established Lancaster Community Garden.
	Muskingum (Zanesville)	Safety Policies and Procedures were updated at the Foodworks Alliance kitchen incubator in Zanesville.
Farmers Market	Miami (Piqua and Troy)	Ninety-five WIC eligible families participated in local farmers markets due to increased availability and promotion of farmers market coupons.
Playscapes	Crawford (Bucyrus)	Playscapes were created for children at Bucyrus YMCA, Crawford County WIC, and Fairway Preschool.
Safe Routes to Healthy Food	Greene (Fairborn)	Resident walk audits were completed, and a transit flag stop was established near a local food pantry. A public bench and trash can were added for rider convenience.
Wayfinding/Signage	Jefferson (Steubenville)	Building off active transportation work in 2023, the City of Steubenville was engaged through a professional development bike ride, Cycle the City events, and other community events to establish new signage and a map for the Heritage Trail, which runs through the city.

2024 and Beyond: Expanding CHC and HEAL program reach

Creating Healthy Communities (CHC)

Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) Capacity Building



2024-2029 31 CHC funded communities.

2024-2025 11 HEAL funded communities.





**Department of
Health**

For more information, please visit:
<https://odh.ohio.gov/know-our-programs/health-promotion/welcome-to>