

# Plan4Health: Kenton County Coalition

## Kenton County, KY

### SUMMARY

Plan4Health connects communities across the country, funding work at the intersection of planning and public health. Anchored by American Planning Association (APA) Chapters and American Public Health Association (APHA) Affiliates, Plan4Health supports creative partnerships to build sustainable, cross-sector coalitions. The Kenton County Plan4Health Coalition (KCP4H) is working to provide access to nutritious food across the county. Efforts include a county-wide assessment of underserved neighborhoods in addition to a series of actions addressing affordability of and access to healthy food.



### CHALLENGE

Kenton County, Kentucky is just south of the City of Cincinnati, at the confluence of the Ohio and Licking Rivers. Covington is the largest city in Kenton County representing nearly 30 percent of the county with a population of 40,640. Of the 22,331 individuals in the county with incomes below the federal poverty line, 48 percent live in Covington. According to the 2013 Greater Cincinnati Community Health Status Survey, only 45 percent of Covington

residents report having excellent or very good health status. Only 17 percent of residents in Kenton County and Covington meet the daily nutritional requirement of fruits and vegetables—and people with limited access to healthy food spend significantly more time traveling to a grocery store than the national average of 15 minutes. The six areas of the county which are identified as underserved are located within the urban areas of the county, including portions of Covington.

### YOUR INVOLVEMENT IS KEY

Kenton County Plan4Health is excited to connect with community members and wants to hear from you.

Reach out to your local food policy council or planning department to find out more about what's happening in your area.

To learn more about Kenton County and all coalitions participating in Plan4Health, check out the project website ([www.plan4health.us](http://www.plan4health.us)) and join the national conversation at the intersection of planning and public health on social media by using and following #plan4health.

*"The Kenton County Plan4Health initiative is already having a positive impact on the City of Covington by strengthening partnerships among various public agencies, our schools, neighborhood groups, and corner store operators. We are very excited to see the results of this collaboration in our corner stores benefiting us all."*

*- Sherry Carran, Mayor  
City of Covington, Kenton County*

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## SOLUTION

For the first time in the county's planning history, Kenton County was able to address public health within the official county-wide planning efforts. The inclusion of the topics of health and access to healthy foods in the county-wide comprehensive planning efforts was completed with significant community support. Building on the momentum of these initial efforts, the KCP4H coalition is increasing the availability of healthy food and beverages in underserved neighborhoods in Covington. With the overarching goal of strengthening connections between rural producers and urban markets—and plans to develop a food policy council framework—the coalition is targeting key corner store retailers to increase healthy food options in underserved neighborhoods.

## RESULTS

The initial months of the project period have focused on an assessment of local retail outlets in Covington. Combining store locations in key neighborhoods with additional walkability analysis, the coalition is committed to layering multiple sources of data—and ensuring that the lived experiences of residents resonate with coalition findings. Determining the right corner store can't be left up to a simple formula or reducing access to a half-mile bubble around a potential retailer. Is public transportation near the store? How would residents walk to the store? Is the store near a school and likely to receive students looking for an after-school snack? As the coalition moves to engage corner store owners, the work remains rooted in supporting retailers to make healthier changes. By developing a phased application process and incorporating the concerns of owners, the coalition is not imposing change from the outside—but partnering with residents to make their communities healthier.

## SUSTAINING SUCCESS

Kenton County Plan4Health will continue to engage community members, raising awareness about local food system issues and initiatives. Working with youth, in particular, the coalition is considering creative ways to make eating healthy food fun and cool—not just something a parent or teacher tells you to do. Incorporating the food system work into a local food policy council framework ensures that the initiative started with Plan4Health will continue beyond the project period, strengthening access to fresh, local food across the region.

Plan4Health is made possible with funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The views expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the official policies of the CDC or imply endorsement by the U.S. Government. Learn more about Plan4Health and the National Implementation and Dissemination for Chronic Disease Prevention project at [www.cdc.gov/communityhealth](http://www.cdc.gov/communityhealth).