

# Plan4Health: Mount Hope Coalition to Increase Food Security

## Mount Hope, RI

### 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 Mount Hope Coalition to Increase Food Security aims to educate the residents of Providence on the health and economic benefits of producing locally grown food and options for securing fresh, healthy food.

### Challenge

Of the 152,000 food insecure individuals within Rhode Island, nearly 100,000 live in Providence County. Within the City of Providence, Mount Hope is a diverse neighborhood that faces many issues and concerns that affect impoverished communities. Data from 2012 found that the residents identified health and the affordability and accessibility of healthcare as major concerns. Grocery stores are available throughout Providence, but prices are high and healthy food is inaccessible for those with limited income. Nearly 44 percent of Mount Hope residents live below the 200 percent Federal Poverty Line and 23 percent live below the 100 percent Federal Poverty Line. Food insecure people are especially vulnerable to obesity. Obesity and overweight data found that between 62 percent and 72 percent of residents were classified as either obese or overweight.

### Solution

The Mount Hope Coalition to Increase Food Security will work to build capacity, expand the coalition and increase access to healthy food throughout the community. The coalition will identify existing resources, including gardens, and evaluate the potential feasibility and establishment of additional gardens, greenhouses and urban farms. Through this expansion and development of new food sources, the coalition can help to manage produce production and allow for community members to get involved through hands-on experience while increasing access to healthy food.



### Your Involvement is Key

To learn more about the Mount Hope Coalition to Increase Food Security and all coalitions participating in Plan4Health, check out the project website ([www.plan4health.us](http://www.plan4health.us)).

Join the national conversation at the intersection of planning and public health on social media by using and following #plan4health.

## Results

The project has an active coalition helping to connect, define and create gardens, curriculum and training programs for children and adults to be more involved and in control of the of having access to fresh produce. The coalition has identified and partnered with the city to create a teaching garden in a central park in the community - and the coalition is well on its way in the development of *Culinary Arts for Change Youth Program*.

### Contact

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*"Our increasing food security work is dependent on our building community capacity to address the challenge. This starts with developing community health worker food access advocates for the Mount Hope neighborhood. Our recent food system workshop helped to raise awareness around the extent and gravity of the issue of food insecurity, in general, and in our community specifically and the need to act now."*

**- Dannie Ritchie, MD, MPH, Founder, Community Health Innovations of Rhode Island**

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