

# Plan4Health: Greater Helena Area Active Living Wayfinding System

## Greater Helena Area in Lewis & Clark County, MT

### 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 Healthy Communities Coalition seeks to develop an Active Living Wayfinding System, especially for parks and along urban trails in the greater Helena, Montana area, to increase participation in physical activity and improve access to nutritious food programs.

### Challenge

In Lewis and Clark County, MT approximately 80 percent of residents live in the greater Helena area. In recent years, this area has seen a five percent growth, which is larger than both the state and the U.S. Nearly 13 percent of residents live in poverty, however, and 26 percent have disabilities. In 2011, 60 percent of adults in Helena reported being overweight or obese; 28 percent of high schoolers and 25 percent of middle schoolers reported being overweight as well. Data revealed that only 4.3 percent and 1.6 percent of workers in greater Helena walk or bike to work, respectively. If the infrastructure for biking were available, upwards of 60 percent of workers indicated they would bike to work.

### Solution

The Healthy Communities Coalition will increase health equity by guiding people to physical activity opportunities and increasing access to nutritious food. The coalition will implement an Active Living Wayfinding System and comprehensive communications plan for the greater Helena area to help align the recently revised Greater Helena Area Transportation Plan, the City of Helena Growth Policy, the Lewis and Clark County Growth Policy, and the Downtown Helena Master Plan. Focus groups will be conducted throughout the project to ensure that resident needs are being heard.



### Your Involvement is Key

To learn more about the Healthy Communities Coalition 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](https://twitter.com/plan4health).

## Results

In December 2015, the community was awarded a \$22,800 grant by the National Chronic Disease Directors Association. The *Reaching People with Disabilities Through Healthy Communities* grant is a partnership between the Montana State Health and Disabilities Program and two local communities, Helena and Butte. Both the Plan4Health project lead and a member of the Healthy Communities Coalition attended a training where they learned about two assessment tools. The tools measure how well people with disabilities are able to fully participate in organizations and the community overall - or whether policies, procedures or environments may be creating barriers. The results of twelve assessments in worksite, health care, physical activity, and nutrition-related organizations will inform the wayfinding system and communication plan. The coalition is thoughtfully leveraging two funding opportunities to increase trail access for all residents.

### Contact

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*"The timing for this grant couldn't be better. Our community is ready to create a community-wide wayfinding system and this will help us move forward in a thoughtful way."*

**- Member, Healthy Communities Coalition**

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).