

Plan4Health: Shawano and Menominee Counties Health in Planning Coalition Shawano and Menominee Counties, WI

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 Menominee and Shawano Counties Health in Planning Coalition aims to work with Native American Tribes and jurisdictions in Wisconsin to improve access to local, fresh food.

Challenge

The Menominee and Shawano area has a combined population of 46,000, with mostly Caucasian and Native American residents. These communities rank poorly in health outcomes, with Menominee and Shawano Counties ranking 72nd and 47th out of 72 counties, respectively. Unemployment is high and median incomes are below the state average; 11.5 percent to 31.4 percent of residents are living in poverty. Menominee County's childhood poverty rate is 59 percent. Diabetes and coronary heart disease rates are elevated, and the obesity rates in both counties are higher than state and national averages. Significant portions of both counties are considered food deserts. Only two Shawano County municipalities have full service grocery stores and Menominee County has only one. Agriculture accounts for a large percentage of economic activity, but only 95 of the 1,200 farms in the area sell local products directly to customers.

Solution

The Menominee and Shawano area Plan4Health project will build capacity to improve access to healthy food by convening a team of planning and public health professionals to identify barriers to healthy diets. Data will be gathered through surveys and focus groups to analyze barriers to access, understand consumer behaviors, and inform future decisions. Ultimately, this project will lead to an enhanced local food system where fresh produce is more readily accessible throughout these communities, making healthier food choices easier and improving overall health outcomes.



Your Involvement is Key

To learn more about the Shawano and Menominee Counties Health in Planning coalition, and all coalitions participating in Plan4Health, check out the project website (www.plan4health.us).

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

Results

During the early months of the project, two coalition meetings were held with various community members. These meetings offered a platform to discuss both the project and the coalition the residents hope to establish. These meetings resulted in lively discussions around the local food system and the importance of local, fresh food, as well as what could be done to benefit not only the vendors but the consumers and community as well. These meetings were the first step in the process to forming the coalition. Attendees were enthusiastic in their response to these meetings and many expressed interest in being involved in future grant and coalition activities.

Contact

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"The community has emphasized the importance of food security and having access to healthy foods and food education. During our two coalition meetings, attendees have discussed utilizing farmers markets, community gardens and gardening education as part of the plan to address these issues."

- Dan Robinson, Plan4Health Program Coordinator, Shawano County Planning and Development

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.