

Plan4Health: Healthy Communities Coalition of Eagle County

Eagle County, CO

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 will examine the impact of healthy eating and active living (HEAL) policies on a county-wide scale. In addition, the coalition will explore successes and challenges with municipal community engagement in planning efforts and provide resources to support future engagement to assure more diverse community participation.

Challenge

The Eagle River Valley of Eagle County is a rural resort community with a population of approximately 48,000; one-third of the residents are Hispanic. Nearly 55 percent of households are affected by chronic disease, with Hispanic residents disproportionately affected. Recent Eagle County data shows that Hispanic residents have a prevalence of diabetes nearly three times that of Caucasian residents and an overweight and obesity rate of more than 60 percent. Transportation, infrastructure and safety factors contribute to existing health disparities and limit opportunities for physical activity. Municipalities have identified challenges connecting with the Hispanic community for planning efforts. Assuring an authentic community voice from diverse populations is critical to truly meet the needs of the community and to work toward health equity.

Solution

The Healthy Communities Coalition will conduct a policy scan of local comprehensive plans to increase understanding of existing healthy eating and active living policies and inform future recommendations to support healthy community design. The coalition will support messaging that prioritizes collaboration throughout the Eagle River Valley. Additionally, the coalition will leverage existing relationships to encourage engagement and participation in community planning processes by developing resources to support community engagement efforts.



Your Involvement is Key

Residents of Eagle County can visit the coalition's website for up-to-date news and events and information on ways to get involved (<https://sites.google.com/a/eaglecounty.us/healthy-communities-coalition/>).

To learn more about the Healthy Communities 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

There are seven major community planning jurisdictions in the Eagle River Valley of Eagle County – six towns and one county. The Healthy Communities Coalition has gained support from the staff and elected officials of all seven jurisdictions for the Plan4Health project through public presentations at Town Council meetings. These presentations led to the execution of an intergovernmental agreement with each of the towns, solidifying their commitment to the Plan4Health project. These presentations also allowed the coalition the opportunity to share publically the importance of healthy community design, demonstrating the link between the built-environment and the well-being of community residents, as well as healthy community designs' impact on the economic vitality of the community.

Contact

Katie Haas

Healthy Communities Coalition
Eagle County Public Health and Environment
P.O. Box 660, 550 Broadway
Eagle County, CO 81631
970-328-8855 phone

"This grant award enables our Eagle County planning jurisdictions to take a step back and assess how community planning and design impacts the health of our workforce, which is a crucial differentiator in maintaining a competitive local economy."

- Jeremy Reitman, Business Development Director, Vail Valley Partnership

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