

# Plan4Health: Community Building in Boise

"The Plan4Health Coalition has spurred conversation throughout that community and really encouraged people to consider ways to tackle tough issues like food insecurity and unhealthy eating habits. Our goal in Energize Our Neighborhoods is to work with residents to energize and increase livability in their neighborhoods – and health is a key factor in many aspects of livability. I'm really excited to hear the recommendations Plan4Health brings forward, and to see how the community puts those ideas into action."

*Melinda McGoldrick  
City of Boise  
Energize Our Neighborhoods  
Program Coordinator*

*A strong connection with Boise State University's School of Nursing enabled the coalition to engage graduate students in community-based work.*



## SUMMARY

Plan4Health connects communities across the country, funding work at the intersection of planning and public health. Anchored by the American Planning Association (APA) and the American Public Health Association (APHA), Plan4Health supports creative partnerships to build sustainable, cross-sector coalitions. Boise's Idaho Plan4Health Coalition is committed to improving the Vista neighborhood residents' access to healthy food options as well as revitalizing the community. Using data and resident feedback, a strategic action plan was created to promote healthy lifestyles through healthy eating.

## CHALLENGE

Recent research by the University of Idaho indicates that nearly 80 percent of Idaho adults eat less than the recommended five servings of fruits and vegetables per day, and adolescents eat fruit and vegetables two or fewer times per day. In the target neighborhood of Vista, one of Boise's more racially and ethnically diverse areas, a higher proportion of households had earnings below \$15,000, with almost twice as many residents under age 18 living below the

federal poverty level when compared to Boise as a whole. Approximately 65 percent of students in both elementary schools in Vista are eligible for free or reduced lunches. The coalition convened stakeholders already working in the neighborhood on related nutrition issues to reduce duplication and align goals. The Idaho Plan4Health Coalition used a mix of data collection approaches to build a truer picture of the neighborhood than might typically be possible.

## SOLUTION

Idaho Plan4Health conducted an analysis of the Vista neighborhood, identifying current resources, strengths, gaps, and challenges in the local food and nutrition landscape. The coalition has been able to leverage work already underway through a broader initiative called Energize Our Neighborhoods. With input from the community, the coalition developed a neighborhood food assessment looking at the categories of food security, food quality, food literacy, food access and infrastructure, and food culture. The assessment provided the coalition with a better understanding of the challenges to accessing healthy, affordable food for residents and shaped the interventions best poised to the neighborhood's needs. This assessment process has spurred innovative solutions to the community challenges which can be championed by the city, local organizations, or even citizens.

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## SUSTAINABLE SUCCESS

Boise's Idaho Plan4Health Coalition is committed to improving the Vista neighborhood residents' access to healthy food options as well as revitalizing the community. Using data and resident feedback, a strategic action plan was created to promote healthy lifestyles through healthy eating.

For more information about all of the coalitions participating in Plan4Health, check out [www.plan4health.us](http://www.plan4health.us) and join the conversation on social media with #plan4health.

## RESULTS

The coalition partnerd with Boise State University to conduct the door-to-door survey and was able to collect 136 responses, a turnout higher than anticipated. The survey, designed to assess neighborhood residents along the five pillars of food access, formed the basis for the report released in April 2016. The content outlined in the report is a template that can be applied to other neighborhoods across the city. The coalition is working with the Urban Land Institute, Let's move Boise and others to incorporate Plan4Health recommendations into future efforts.

In partnership with Energize Our Neighborhoods, the coalition is in the process of testing interventions outlined in the toolkit. Addressing both programmatic needs and policy, systems, and environmental changes are important to residents; the coalition's comprehensive understanding of the community has integrated both of these perspectives and provided a balanced approach to strengthening the community.

Plan4Health is made possible with funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The views expressed in this success story 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 of Chronic Disease Prevention project at [www.cdc.gov/communityhealth](http://www.cdc.gov/communityhealth).