

Plan4Health: Food Hub Feasibility in Kane County, IL

"This Food Hub Feasibility Study will allow Northern Illinois Food Bank to more acutely assess and ascertain its role in the local food system, with a primary goal of determining the best means to access the available products to benefit the agencies and people we serve. The Study will also enable the Food Bank to evaluate and consider potential opportunities for accommodating and supporting various segments of any eventual food hub's function."

*Steve Ericson
Director of Food Procurement
Northern Illinois Food Bank*

The Kane County Leaders' Summit engaged 177 community members, including high-level elected officials, to discuss integrated planning efforts.



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. The Kane County Planning Cooperative seeks to expand and build partnerships to address inactivity and unhealthy diets by integrating health, transportation and land use planning efforts. Strategies include advancing leadership, conducting a food feasibility study, implementing the Fit Kids plan, and assisting local governments with walkability studies in at-risk neighborhoods.

CHALLENGE

Data from the 2011-2012 Kane County Community Health Assessment shows that Kane County has high rates of overweight and obese residents, with an average obesity rate of nearly 30 percent across the county. One in five children in the county is overweight and in some communities it is an alarming one in three.

Only 14 percent of adults report eating five servings of fruit and vegetables a day. Additionally, federally-qualified health centers serving low-income patient populations report health outcomes data that differ significantly from county-level outcomes data, reflecting underlying health disparities by vulnerable populations in Kane County.

Contact

Matthew Tansley

Kane County Planning Cooperative
719 S. Batavia Avenue
Geneva, IL 60134
630-232-3493 phone
<http://www.countyofkane.org/Pages/Kane-County-Planning-Cooperative>

SOLUTION

The Kane County Planning Cooperative was established to implement the Kane County 2040 comprehensive plan. The plan integrates transportation, health, and land use goals and objectives. It is staffed by professionals from the transportation, health, and development and community services departments. The Cooperative seeks to engage elected and appointed officials, planning commission members, staff, and private sector representatives. The group hosts an annual leaders summit, bringing together leaders from state, regional and local levels for discussions around the benefits of planning for residents.

SUSTAINABLE SUCCESS

The work in Kane County, IL is an example for other communities of how to change environments to make healthy living easier where people live, learn, work, and play.

If you are a resident of Kane County, look for the mobile farmers market in Aurora or connect with the Planning Cooperative online to view the 2015 Leaders' Summit. For more information about Kane County, IL and all of the coalitions participating in Plan4Health, check out www.plan4health.us and join the conversation on social media with #plan4health.

RESULTS

The Kane County Planning Cooperative Plan4Health team supported phase two of a food hub feasibility study to identify mechanisms for improving access to fresh foods. The coalition worked closely with farmers, buyers, and community members to identify and vet possible models and sites for a food hub as well as to provide Good Agriculture Practice (GAP) training resources. Phase two of the study intentionally incorporated a lens of health equity, ensuring that potential strategies identified for implementation also supported vulnerable communities and advanced access to healthy food for all residents.

A complementary strategy for the coalition was a mobile food demonstration program. The coalition leveraged the reach of existing farmers markets by setting up a booth at three different farmers' markets across Aurora in 2015, bringing information about the program to approximately 80,000 residents.

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.

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