



Outagamie County Community Health Improvement Plan

2025 Annual Update

2023-2025



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.
Outagamie County
Health and Human Services



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Introduction

The Outagamie County Public Health (OCPH) team has had many successes to celebrate this year. At the same time, the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) is an experimental endeavor that will inevitably involve setbacks and change. It is important for us to share the learnings with the community that has made this work possible.

2025 marks the end of this CHIP cycle, as we have collectively decided to do a three-year cycle. This decision was made to move us towards alignment with our local health care systems and their CHIP cycles.

We can be proud of all the collaborative work that our community has done. So many stakeholders have made this process possible, and this update is an opportunity to celebrate how far we have come.

Stay tuned as we continue our work in supporting ONE regional community health assessment and community health improvement plan through the Tri-County Community Health Improvement Coalition!

Workgroup Members

Housing and Homelessness

- Amy McGowen, Fox Cities Habitat for Humanity
- Breanna McKuly, City of Appleton Public Health
- Brother Ray, St. Joseph's Parish
- Debra Dillenberg, Appleton Housing Authority
- Emily Murphy, Aging and Long Term Support OC
- Jennie Moore, Pillars
- Joe Van Roy, Salvation Army Fox Cities
- JP Heim, OCPH
- Kari Kuiper, Outagamie County Housing Authority
- Katie Olsen, ESTHER
- Kelly Hanink, Grand Chute Fire
- Kevin Grondahl, American Red Cross
- Kim Esselman, Appleton Housing Authority
- Kim Luke, Mental Health OC
- Kim Mehlberg, OCPH
- Kris Mielke, OCPH
- Kristi Clover, Habitat for Humanity
- Lisa Smith, United Way 211
- Liz Croley, Housing Coordinated Entry with City of Appleton
- Lori Hartz, OCPH
- Lucas Holt, Catholic Charities
- Mike Patza, Grand Chute Community Development
- Nadine Dukan, St. Mary's Parish
- Olivia Galyon, City of Appleton
- Paula VanDeLeygraaf, OC Emergency Management
- Susan Garcia Franz, Winnebago County Public Health
- Sydney Garavalia, OCPH
- Wendy Krueger, United Way Fox Cities
- William (Bill) Van Lopik, ESTHER

Workgroup Members

Mental Health

- Amanda Hildeman, OCPH
- Beth Clay, United Way Fox Cities
- Brian Bezier, Mental Health OC
- Brianna Olson, OCPH
- Brynn Baker, Pillars
- Chris Wardlow, Catalpa Health
- Chuck Sepers, City of Appleton Public Health
- Cindy Czarnik-Neimeyer, Catalpa Health and Appleton Area School District
- Clarence Crane, Appleton Area School District
- Crystal Ludwig, Hortonville Area School District
- David DeGrood, OCPH
- Dimeji “OT” Tomori, Pointters
- Emma Kane, Community Action for Health Living
- Gereon Methner, Freedom Area School District
- Jason Schulist, Fox Valley Data Exchange & Gen Local Institute
- Kristen Kelly, People of Progression
- Laura Jackson, Appleton Area School District
- Lisa Cruz, Multicultural Coalition Inc.
- Lisa Severson, United Way Fox Cities
- Maren Peterson, NAMI Fox Valley
- Nick Ross, Diverse & Resilient
- Samantha Busko, Little Chute School District
- Sarah Schneider, Valley Transit Authority
- Tenley Koehler, Community Alliance for Trauma-Informed Care
- Tracy Guiou, Catalpa Health
- Vicki Kamp, OCPH
- Vicki Rivera, NAMI Fox Valley

**A special thank you to these
Outagamie County CHIP community partners
for their time, insights, and continued
collaboration.**

Housing and Homelessness

Housing and Homelessness is a complex topic, and we continue to learn as we go through this priority area. After reconvening the workgroup last year to refocus our efforts, we were able to start and complete the exploration of shelter options during severe cold weather. With assistance from key stakeholders and the faith-based community, we had open communication to understand a process for agencies who are exploring shelter options during inclement cold weather. We are pleased to have had that work wrap up in November 2024. We are eager to continue working on housing in an alternative capacity with organizations and agencies that are focused on this priority area. As an example, we continue to collaborate with Outagamie County Development & Land Services to support the housing strategy in the Fox Cities/Greater Outagamie County region. Emerging from this regional housing strategy was establishing a back-bone entity, Housing Alliance, to lead through coordinated and combined efforts surrounding housing challenges.

Another concern that arose last year after the Housing and Homelessness workgroup reestablished was affordable housing and resources in the community. Various discussions were had with essential workers in the respective field, and it was made clear that the community may not see the complexity of this issue. The community is also limited in knowing what currently exists to help those unable to afford housing. This led to creating the Outagamie County Housing and Resource Guide. We took inspiration from a guide that Winnebago County Public Health created and had great success with. The guide includes information for those who are unable to afford their current housing, those who may have a parent unable to afford their housing, those seeking property managers who accept Section 8 Vouchers, as well as updated lists of shelters and food pantries or meal sites. The guide features two additional sections on homelessness prevention and housing advocacy. The homelessness prevention section aims to guide readers to pre-existing local resources and organizations to help with rental, eviction, and utility assistance, legal help, job placement and case management organizations, plus additional supportive services. The advocacy pages aim to empower community members to better learn how to advocate for their rights as renters, or for those who can afford housing, but are wishing to do more and advocate on behalf of those struggling.

To accompany this guide, we created a list of local shelters in Brown and Winnebago counties. We understand that barriers exist due to Outagamie County only having one general overnight shelter and one shelter for those experiencing domestic violence. Thankfully, our close neighbors in Brown and Winnebago counties have additional options if someone has available transportation. Providing regional resources across Brown, Outagamie and Winnebago counties will address any potential gaps within one county. We want these shelters to be options for Outagamie County residents as well. The guide is available to any community partner within the county. An electronic version is linked on our website and on the Fox Cities Housing Coalition website. Flyers were also created and are available with a QR code that will take a person directly to an electronic version of the guide.

We are continuing to work on educating the public around the issues in affordable housing and homelessness. We are hoping to continue to promote more advocacy and connect with more individuals around the community.

Mental Health

The Mental Health priority area continues to move forward. We have seen major successes like the completion of the Support Others Support Yourself mural in downtown Kaukauna, continued support for the While You Wait resource guide through the NEW Mental Health Connection, and the completion of a conversation map to engage local employers about mental health promotion in employee policies.

The While You Wait resource guide remains available and up to date on the NEW Mental Health Connection website. This webpage provides warm lines and help lines, support groups, community connection resources, and walk-in clinic information. In the past year, with no advertising campaign, the page has served over 300 clients. The NEW Mental Health Connection remains the critical leader in mental health advancement in northeast Wisconsin, and we are all so fortunate for the work they do to improve our communities.

NEW Mental Health Connection has continued to be a community leader in expanding the diversity of community health workers and peer supports. With the DRIVE Health Project, the Connection has hired community health workers (CHWs) to meet mental health needs in the Black and Hmong communities, and these CHWs are finishing their training this month. The Connection is also working with local organizations like People of Progression, Partnership Community Health Center, NEW Hmong Professionals, and Multicultural Coalition, Inc., to create a local CHW training hub to offer local education and support for CHWs. The goals of this work include building a culturally responsive resource network in our area, institutionalizing safe and culturally specific referral pathways for care, and supporting self-determination in our communities.

While we made fast progress in the school policies strategy in 2023, progress slowed significantly in 2024. Because of a lack of engagement, as well as contentious opinions on certain issues, we are currently working to figure out how best to continue to advance this work.

The team met with the Fox Cities Chamber to learn more about their Employee Friendly Workplace certification, as well as the Community Alliance for Trauma-Informed Care to learn about their roadmap for employers. The team also met with a human resources leader at Boldt Company to learn more about their Gatekeepers program, which helps destigmatize mental health conversations at the workplace and get employees the resources they need. The team evaluated existing literature to determine which critical employment sectors are most in need of mental health-friendly policies. The team identified a shared values framework for constructing a conversation map to guide engagement with local employees. The team finalized the conversation map and is now working to identify specific employers in our critical employment sectors to engage in conversation.

Mental Health

As a strategy to increase availability and awareness of timely, appropriate mental health supports, “Support Others, Support Yourself” is an initiative aimed at promoting the power we each have to offer a helping hand when someone is struggling.

At the heart of the initiative is SupportOthersSupportYourself.com, a website dedicated to fostering mental health awareness and providing individuals with tools and resources to support both themselves and those around them.

To generate awareness about the initiative, local artist Irineo (Neo) Medina was commissioned to create a mural that captures the spirit of person-to-person support. In a social media post, Neo describes the artwork’s symbolism: “From being in depths where you’re protecting what little bit of light you have left to being able to share your light with others, we are all on different parts of our journey.”

The mural pictured on the cover of this report and below is located in Downtown Kaukauna. In 2025, a similar mural will be painted inside the Community First Champion Center, a sports complex in Grand Chute that draws hundreds of athletes, coaches and spectators each year. Accompanying each mural is a QR code taking people to SupportOthersSupportYourself.com.

The mural artwork and QR code also adorn other marketing materials that are made available to community partners to distribute.



Tri-County Community Health Improvement Coalition

As the Tri-County Community Health Improvement Coalition enters its second year, we celebrate the alignment we and our partners have achieved so far. These collaborative initiatives have a much better chance of impacting some of our communities' most pressing health concerns.

The coalition was expanded to not only include Public Health and Healthcare Systems, but also United Way Fox Cities, NEW Mental Health Connection, Partnership Community Health Center, and the Fox Cities YMCA. Additionally, our coalition includes various community organizations that represent a variety of underserved populations in our community to ensure that diverse racial, ethnic, and LGBTQ+ voices are heard.

We have been actively working together to complete our first cycle utilizing a modified MAPP 2.0 process where Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) standards are incorporated. The goal of the coalition is to combine efforts and resources so that we can have a broader and more collective impact across the Tri-County area. Plus, this collaboration will allow community partner and stakeholder engagement to be efficient in ONE regional Community Health Assessment (CHA) and CHIP process.

We are using this community health improvement cycle as a steppingstone to prepare for a full MAPP 2.0 process. During this process, we will be documenting things that went well and things that need to be improved. We want to understand what activities, methods, and approaches we want to keep for the next time around. This is a learning process – we haven't done a community health improvement process with everyone (multiple local public health agencies, healthcare systems and community organizations) before and in this way. We are recognizing that we will identify, adjust, and learn from this first cycle and develop a plan for our next cycle in 2026.

Important aspects of this collaboration include:

- Collective decision making that includes our community
- Emphasis of health priorities that we all prioritize together
- Moving in one direction to improve the health of our community, with the voice of our community
- Identifying where we have the potential to make the greatest impact
- Encouragement of cross-sector collaboration, where various organizations are seeing themselves in this regional work

By working together in a single Tri-County CHA/CHIP, the ownership is shared across the community and will result in a framework for our region's community health improvement initiatives.

CHIP Timeline



Notes

