



2023-2026 YELLOWSTONE COUNTY

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# COMMUNITY HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PLAN

# 18-MONTH PROGRESS REPORT

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The Yellowstone County Community Health Needs Assessment, Community Health Improvement Plan, and Healthy By Design Coalition are sponsored by Billings Clinic, RiverStone Health, and Intermountain Health St. Vincent Regional Hospital. These initiatives are intended as a resource for residents, organizations, and leaders. Learn more at [www.hbdyc.org](http://www.hbdyc.org).

All photos in this document are from Healthy By Design archives unless otherwise noted.  
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## Our Current Partners

Adult Resource Alliance  
Alzheimer's Association  
America First Response  
AWARE Early Head Start  
Big Sky Economic Development  
Big Sky Senior Services  
Billings Arts Association  
Billings Chamber of Commerce  
Billings City Council  
Billings Clinic & Billings Clinic Foundation  
Billings Family YMCA  
Billings Industrial Revitalization District  
Billings Community Foundation  
Billings TrailNet  
Billings Urban Indian Health and Wellness  
Chamber of Commerce  
City of Billings  
Community Crisis Center  
Community Leadership & Development, Inc.  
Continuum of Care  
Dog Tag Buddies  
DOWL

Head Start, Inc.  
HomeFront  
HRDC  
Intermountain Health St. Vincent Regional Hospital  
Living Independently For Today and Tomorrow  
MET Transit  
MSU Billings  
National Endowment for the Arts  
Native American Development Corporation  
Rimrock Foundation  
Riverstone Health  
Rocky Mountain College  
Rocky Mountain Health Network  
Rocky Mountain Tribal Leaders Council  
South Side Neighborhood Task Force  
Suicide Prevention Coalition of Yellowstone  
County  
St. John's United  
Triia  
Substance Abuse Connect  
Superior Concrete Construction  
United Way of Yellowstone County

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## 2023 – 2026 Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) Strategies



Healthy Neighborhoods







Healthy Connections



Healthy Investments

Strengthening Partnerships

# Past 18 Months at a Glance

 <p><b>Healthy Neighborhoods</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Celebrated the 14<sup>th</sup> season of the Gardeners’ Market</li> <li>• Collaborated with Mobilize the MAGIC City partners to complete the installation of 3 creative placemaking hubs, develop the placemaking playbook, and finalize the platform for mapping local art in Billings</li> <li>• The Complete Neighborhoods workgroup reviewed initial mapping parameters for South Side Triangle, and North Park, and combined Lower Rimrock and Midtown, refined parameters for mapping access to amenities, and narrowed down additional parameters to access to key quality-of-life resources</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Healthy Connections</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Age-Friendly Billings leadership committee refined and published fact sheets for the five Domains of Livability</li> <li>• The Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) workgroup finalized its train-the-trainer study materials, updated the testing and peer review process, and connected past TIC 101 recipients with the trainer workgroup to become TIC trainers</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Healthy Investments</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resilient Yellowstone continued into its fourth year with a focus on Community Health Worker (CHW) workforce sustainability</li> <li>• Phase 2 of community plans to be converted into fact sheets was identified and drafting began in the fall</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Strengthening Partnerships</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Held the inaugural Collective Impact training for local coalitions in coordination with Best Beginnings, Level Up Yellowstone, Substance Abuse Connect, Suicide Prevention Coalition of Yellowstone County, and United Way</li> <li>• Participated in Grown in Billings, an emerging community effort that aims to ensure families are connected to resources to raise their children in a stable, safe, supportive, and caring environment</li> </ul>

## Presentations & Media Coverage

### Presentations & Posters

- Healthy By Design Community Planning Meeting
- Montana Family Medicine Residency
- Resilient Yellowstone Sustainability Mini-Summit
- 2024 AERO Expo Community Tour

### Media Coverage

- Public Art Promotes Community Health
- Gardeners' Market Open 4-6 p.m. Thursdays in South Park
- Area Farmers Markets Can Accept WIC Vouchers
- Billings Gazette Health Matters Article



# 2023-2026 Yellowstone County Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) Overview

<b>Vision</b>	A vibrant Yellowstone County where the healthy choice is the easy choice.	
<b>Overall Goal</b>	By 2026, increase proportion of Yellowstone County residents who self-report good or better overall health from 84.7% to 88.9%	
<b>Priorities</b>	Mental Health Substance Use (Misuse) and Safety	Access to Healthcare Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Weight

## Priority Specific Objectives

Increase the proportion of Yellowstone County residents who self-report good or better <b>mental health</b> from 79.3% to 83.3%	Decrease the proportion of Yellowstone County residents who find it very/somewhat difficult to buy <b>fresh produce</b> from 27.4% to 26.0%
Decrease the proportion of Yellowstone County residents whose lives have been negatively affected by <b>substance abuse</b> (their own or someone else's) from 43.4% to 41.2%	Increase the proportion of Yellowstone County residents who are meeting <b>physical activity</b> guidelines from 29.3% to 30.8%
Decrease the proportion of Yellowstone County residents who experience difficulty <b>accessing health care</b> from 45.4% to 43.1%	Increase the proportion of Yellowstone County residents who are at a <b>healthy weight</b> from 26.7% to 28.0%

## Initiative Assessment Criteria

Health Equity • Policy, Systems, Environment • Collective Impact  
Evidence-Based • Community-Informed



## Strategy I. Healthy Neighborhoods: 18-Month Update

**Vision:** All Yellowstone County residents have access to vibrant neighborhoods that are welcoming, accessible, and foster health.

**Overview:** Healthy neighborhoods support and promote the physical, mental, and social well-being among residents. Such neighborhoods are structured in a way that provides easy access to essential resources and services, fosters social connectedness, and facilitates healthy choices.

### Initiative Updates

**Mobilize the MAGIC City**, a partnership between the City of Billings, Billings Arts Association, Triia, and Healthy By Design, and funded by the National Endowment for the Arts, achieved notable progress in the past year. This included the installation of two placemaking hubs along the neighborhood bikeway aimed to enhance safety and walkability.

In October, the Mobilize the MAGIC City Playbook was developed to inspire and mobilize the Billings community to expand public art. This playbook documents the pilot Artist in Residence (AIR) program, shares best practices, and outlines lessons learned from using creative placemaking to improve quality of life. It also provides a community framework to continue promoting and creating public art. The initiative continues to emphasize the value of public art, community pride, neighborhood safety, and beautification. The group is finalizing a platform for mapping local art in Billings. Throughout the fall, Mobilize the MAGIC City continued to work with city departments of Billings to review a proposed public art policy.

During this reporting period, the **Complete Neighborhoods** workgroup continued their efforts to establish baseline mapping of quality-of-life resources in Yellowstone County. This effort aims to ensure livable and accessible urban life across all neighborhoods and focuses on creating equitable, healthy, and vibrant neighborhoods by identifying areas of improvement and supporting community needs.

Criteria for mapping was finalized in May. By September, initial heat mapping for the South Side triangle was reviewed and mapping parameters for the Access to Amenities criteria were discussed and selected to include proximity to amenities, accessibility and infrastructure, demographic/socioeconomic data, and safety and crime parameters. Then, the neighborhoods of South Side Triangle, North Park, and a combined lower Rimrock and Midtown were selected to create initial maps. In November parameters for remaining criteria were refined for criteria to start mapping key quality-of-life resources.

**Health needs addressed:** mental health, access to healthcare, nutrition, physical activity and weight.



*Installation of Terri Porta's and McKinley Elementary students' sculpture at the intersection of 10<sup>th</sup> Ave. N and Ave C.*



## Strategy 2. Healthy Connections: 18-Month Update

**Vision:** All Yellowstone County residents have the social or emotional support to integrate into the community in a way that is relevant, accessible, and fulfilling across all life stages.

**Overview:** Healthy Connections refer to the social interactions or positive and beneficial ways in which individuals engage with others in various social settings. These connections contribute to the overall health and quality of life of individuals and communities.

### Initiative Updates

The **Age Friendly Billings** workgroup focused on enhancing the quality of life for older adults by prioritizing strategies around 5 of the 8 American Association of Retired Persons' (AARP) Age Friendly Domains of Livability. These efforts align with fostering age-friendly practices, emphasizing outdoor spaces, transportation, housing, civic participation and employment, and respect and social inclusion.

In October, the leadership committee refined drafts for 5 Domains of Livability fact sheets. During the following month, workgroup members reviewed Domain of Livability fact sheets. Age Friendly leadership committee members reviewed proposed initiatives, explored engagement and collaboration strategies, and aligned activities among Age Friendly leadership participants.

Committee members created two workgroups focusing on developing a social marketing campaign and an age friendly designated outdoor spaces and resources. The targeted age friendly social marketing campaign aims to counteract institutional, interpersonal, and internalized ageism in Yellowstone County by reshaping public perceptions, promoting inclusivity, and fostering a more age-friendly community environment.

**Health needs addressed:** access to healthcare, mental health, nutrition, physical activity, and weight.



*Community members enjoying a nice sunny day and active transportation on bikes.*



## Strategy 3. Healthy Investments: 18-Month Update

**Vision:** Enhance Yellowstone County’s ability to respond to the demand for livability through investments in community development, policies, systems, and infrastructure that directly impact the health and wellbeing of area residents.

**Overview:** Investing in quality of life has become crucial for communities seeking to not only sustain their existing workforce and population, but also attract and retain new residents. The livability and desirability of a community is intrinsically connected to the availability of certain life necessities, including trails, parks, walkability, safety measures, access to healthy foods, family-friendly destinations, quality schools, and employment opportunities.

### Initiative Updates

**Resilient Yellowstone** partner organizations continue to address health disparities exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Sub-recipients continued to implement CHIP strategies to meet the sub-populations served by respective community health workers (CHWs). Throughout the year, CHWs have enhanced volunteer engagement, transportation, mental health training, and social connections. A detailed description of these site-specific CHIPs is available in Appendix A.

In August, Resilient Yellowstone CHWs and site leaders strategized how to effectively communicate CHW impact and foster sustainable CHW systems within Yellowstone County, focusing on non-clinical CHW roles and workforce development. During this meeting, HBD staff and CHWs brainstormed creative sustainability approaches to ensure CHW programs can continue and expand.

By the end of August and year 3 of Resilient Yellowstone, CHWs made over 25,000 referrals to local services and had identified and established 38 total partnerships with traditional and nontraditional partners to better support the health of community members.

During a 4<sup>th</sup>, and final year of the project, CHWs and staff are working together to further develop a skilled CHW workforce in Yellowstone County, identify health needs among the most vulnerable populations, empower individuals and communities to address these needs, and ensure the sustainability of CHW initiatives. With the approved no-cost extension, program impact and overall findings can continue to be evaluated and disseminated to inform and guide sustainability and longevity in the CHW workforce in Montana and Yellowstone County.



*Yellowstone Family Park from Parks, Recreation, and Public Lands  
Master Plan*

Phase two of the **Community Plan Fact Sheets** has begun, with the selection of two city master plans to be condensed into concise, 2-page summaries highlighting key aspects of the City of Billings’ initiatives. Each

fact sheet includes an overview of the purpose and goals, a summary of findings, methodology, and strategies, and the impact on community health. The fact sheets aim to enhance civic literacy and understanding of these essential community plans among Yellowstone County residents by offering accessible summaries.

**Health needs addressed:** access to healthcare, mental health, substance misuse, nutrition, physical activity, weight.



## Strategy 4. Strengthening Partnerships: 18-Month Update

**Vision:** Advance collective action to make Yellowstone County a healthier, more vibrant community.

**Overview:** Yellowstone County is confronted with a number of intricate and long-standing health challenges, including mental health concerns, substance misuse, public safety, health conditions related to poor diet or inactivity, and limited access to affordable, healthy foods. By strengthening partnerships, the community can leverage collective expertise, resources, and shared responsibility to improve health outcomes for residents. In doing so, these partnerships will enhance the effectiveness of interventions, foster innovation, and promote a comprehensive approach to addressing community health needs.

### Initiative Updates

The **Impact Coordinators**, comprising backbone staff from various coalitions met monthly to enhance collective impact practices. They focused on stakeholder mapping and reviewed best practices, aiming to foster collaboration and resource sharing. This group's efforts emphasize the importance of coordinated initiatives in strengthening community well-being through comprehensive strategies. In August, the group hosted the inaugural Collective Impact training for Yellowstone County coalitions, aimed at strengthening their collective leadership and better equipping them to move knowledge into action. In November, they held their first Coffee Connect session, where participants explored one of the five conditions of Collective Impact in greater depth.



*The first Collective Impact Training held at United Way.*

The relaunch of **Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) 101** training in the spring aimed to build a trauma-informed community. TIC 101 fosters an understanding of traumatic experiences and promotes practices that empower individuals affected by trauma. To enhance the community's capacity to support those living with trauma, the TIC workgroup met throughout the last six months to review the train-the-trainer materials in preparation for hosting a training for individuals to become a TIC trainer. The workgroup updated testing materials and finalized a peer review process for individuals to become TIC 101 trainers.



The TIC train-the-trainer course launched in November. This effort aligns with fostering inclusive, supportive environments that respect diverse lived experiences.

**Health needs addressed:** access to healthcare, substance misuse, and mental health.

## Key

- ★ Initiative completed or target met
- ★ In progress, improvement over baseline, but target not yet met
- ★ Stopped/not started

A detailed description of completed metrics in past 2023 – 2026 CHIP progress reports can be found in Appendix B.

## Healthy Neighborhoods

Metric	Status
By June 2025, foster equitable opportunities for residents to live and thrive by using workgroup-defined Complete Neighborhoods criteria to evaluate 3 neighborhoods to inform the next steps	★
By June 2025, an inventory of public art and community gardens in Yellowstone County will be completed	★
By June 2025, a marketing plan to increase attendance to the Gardeners' Market will be identified and finalized	★
By June 2025, a marketing plan to increase Gardeners' Market vendor recruitment and retention will be identified and finalized	★

Yellowstone County Indicator	2023 CHNA	2026 Goal
% of residents who are meeting physical activity guidelines	29.3%	30.8%
% residents who feel they can help make their community a better place to live	89.4%	93.9%
% adults who feel safe walking alone in neighborhood	84.6%	88.8%
% of children who are physically active 1+ hours daily	58.7%	61.6%

## Healthy Connections

Metric	Status
By June 2025, expand awareness of and access to social opportunities for older adults by engaging Age Friendly Billings members in the completion of three domain work plan initiatives	★

By June 2024, improve access to healthy worksite resources by publishing an updated Healthy Worksite Toolkit using evidence-based strategies and local Healthy Worksite recipient examples	★
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By June 2025, the Healthy Worksite Toolkit will be updated to share updated evidence-based strategies and healthy worksite initiatives	★
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Yellowstone County Indicator	2023 CHNA	2026 Goal
% adults 65+ who spend three or more hours on screen time for entertainment on an average day	38.5%	36.6%
% adults who feel isolated from others (sometimes or always)	43.7%	41.5%
% adults who get the social and emotional support needed	91.8%	96.3%

## Healthy Investments

Metric	Status
By June 2024, advance civic engagement to support an equitable, thriving community by engaging at least three partners in sharing community plan fact sheets	★
By June 2025, support reimbursement opportunities for CHWs by finalizing a local employer toolkit for organizations focusing on non-clinical CHW work	★
By June 2025, advance civic engagement to support an equitable, thriving community by engaging at least two partners in sharing community plan fact sheets	★

Yellowstone County Indicator	2023 CHNA	2026 Goal
% of residents who feel they can help make their community a better place	89.4%	93.9%
% of residents who get the social and emotional support needed	91.8%	96.3%
% of women who experience difficulty accessing health care	54.4%	51.7%

## Strengthening Partnerships

Metric	Status
By June 2025, build community capacity to lead systems change by establishing 3 collective impact-based learning structures and opportunities	★
By June 2025, ensure 100% of active HBD workgroups include, at a minimum, at least 2 individuals with lived experience relevant to the workgroup's focus	★
By June 2025, hold a TIC 101 community training in partnership with the TIC trainer workgroup	★

Yellowstone County Indicator	2023 CHNA	2026 Goal
% of residents who feel they can help make their community a better place	89.4%	93.9%
% of people of color who have experienced symptoms of chronic depression	61.0%	58.0%
% of low-income residents who report having “no impact” on improving life in the community	15.7%	14.9%

# Looking to get involved with Healthy By Design?

**We have a variety of engagement opportunities, including:**

- ✓ Join a strategy working group
- ✓ Share your feedback and experiences
- ✓ Advocate for policies or programs that improve health
- ✓ Connect with us (@HBDYellowstone on Facebook and Instagram or receive our monthly newsletter!)
- ✓ Make the healthy choice, the easy choice where you live, work, learn and play



*Gardeners' Market Managers, Amanda Zimmerman, Ellie Lanz, and Jenna Solomon smiling after a successful 14<sup>th</sup> season.*



*Community Coalition held at Billings Public Library discussing the importance of collaborating in community efforts.*



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[HBDYellowstone](https://www.facebook.com/HBDYellowstone)



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## Appendix A: Resilient Yellowstone Population-Specific CHIPs

Resilient Yellowstone member organizations and community health workers (CHWs) developed and implemented population-tailored CHIP strategies to address disparities among target populations most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. CHWs continue to promote and evaluate their CHIPs. These strategies, adopting a policy, systems, or environmental change approach, target one or more of the top four 2023 – 2026 CHIP priority areas. Initiatives include enhancing volunteer engagement, improving transportation options, providing mental health trainings in the workplace, refining referral systems, expanding outreach and education, and fostering social connections.

CHWs recognize a need for expanded organizational, workforce, funding, and systems capacity within Yellowstone County to meet the identified and evolving needs of at-risk populations.

### Community Health Worker Population-Specific CHIP Overview

Health Need Addressed	Organization(s)	Strategies
Mental health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adult Resource Alliance</li> <li>• Billings Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>• Big Sky Senior Services</li> <li>• Native American Development Corporation</li> <li>• Intermountain Health St. Vincent Regional Hospital</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhancing volunteer engagement</li> <li>• Providing mental health trainings in the workplace or community groups</li> <li>• Integrating mental health education and trainings into existing and future programs</li> <li>• Fostering social connections, support, and trust within the community and health service organizations</li> <li>• Leading the efforts to change systems within their organization to help improve resources, reduce the stigma of mental health, and improve mental health provider capacity</li> </ul>
Access to healthcare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Billings Clinic</li> <li>• Big Sky Senior Services</li> <li>• Native American Development Corporation</li> <li>• RiverStone Health</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Streamlining referral systems</li> <li>• Expanding outreach and educational opportunities</li> <li>• Improving systems and providing educational opportunities within the organization to increasing healthcare provider capacity</li> <li>• Engaging systems and environmental factors by partnering with organizations to conduct outreach and education together</li> <li>• Improving volunteer engagement, enhancing relationships with travel assistance providers, and strengthening partnership to support travel assistance to healthcare appointments</li> <li>• Encouraging and utilizing organizational transportation policies</li> </ul>

Substance misuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RiverStone Health</li> <li>• Native American Development Corporation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Streamlining referral systems</li> <li>• Expanding outreach and education</li> <li>• Establishing and strengthening partnerships with external organizations</li> </ul>
Nutrition, physical activity, and weight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adult Resource Alliance</li> <li>• Billings Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>• Big Sky Senior Services</li> <li>• Living Independently For Today and Tomorrow</li> <li>• Intermountain Health St. Vincent Regional Hospital</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building trust and strengthening relationships between health services and community members</li> <li>• Expanding outreach and education efforts</li> <li>• Creating pathways to encourage social connection by hosting educational opportunities on priority topics identified by the community such as nutritious eating and physical activity</li> </ul>

## Appendix B: Completed Metrics

Completed metrics from past 2023 – 2026 CHIP progress reports are listed below.

### HEALTHY NEIGHBORHOODS

Metric	Status
By June 2024, enhance neighborhood safety, strengthen community identity and foster health by completing 90% of Mobilize the MAGIC City workgroup deliverables	★

### Healthy Investments

Metric	Status
By June 2024, support 100% of Resilient Yellowstone CHW sites in developing sustainability action plans to retain CHW practices that address health disparities among populations hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic	★