## 2023-2026 YELLOWSTONE COUNTY

# COMMUNITY HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PLAN

# FINAL PROGRESS REPORT

July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2026 | Published July 31, 2026

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

*All photos in this document are from Healthy By Design archives unless otherwise noted.*
*Icon graphics are from flaticon.com.*

# Our Current Partners

Allies in Aging
AWARE Early Head Start
Best Beginnings Yellowstone County
Big Sky Economic Development
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 Center
CASA of Yellowstone County
Chamber of Commerce
City of Billings
Community Crisis Center
Community Leadership & Development, Inc.
Continuum of Care
Dog Tag Buddies
DOWL
Grown in Billings
Head Start, Inc.
HomeFront
HRDC
Intermountain Health St. Vincent Regional Hospital
Living Independently For Today and Tomorrow
MET Transit
Montana Office of Rural Health and Area Health Education Center
Montana Public Health Institute
Montana State University Billings
National Endowment for the Arts
North Park Neighborhood Task Force
Native American Development Corporation
Rimrock Foundation
Rimrock Neighborhood Task Force
RiverStone Health
Rocky Mountain College
Rocky Mountain Health Network
Rocky Mountain Tribal Leaders Council
South Side Neighborhood Task Force
Suicide Prevention Coalition of Yellowstone Valley
St. John's United
Triia
United Way of Yellowstone County
University of Montana Center for Children, Families and Workforce Development
Yellowstone County Behavioral Health Coalition

## 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 on Facebook and Instagram or receive our monthly e-newsletter
- ✓ Make the healthy choice, the easy choice where you live, work, learn, and play

 www.hbdyc.org  HBDYellowstone  HBDYellowstone  info@hbdyc.org

# July 2023 – June 2026 Highlights

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|---|---|
|  **Healthy Neighborhoods** | • Kicked off the 16th season of Gardeners' Market<br>• Collaborated with Mobilize the MAGIC City partners to launch a platform for mapping local art, successfully led the adoption of the City of Billings Public Art Policy in 2025, followed by the establishment of a public art committee<br>• The Complete Neighborhoods workgroup reviewed mapping efforts of key-quality-of-life resources for the South Side Triangle neighborhood, the North Park, and a combined Lower Rimrock and Midtown neighborhoods |
|  **Healthy Connections** | • Healthy By Design, in partnership with Age Friendly Billings, hosted a community meeting to help shape a social marketing campaign to address negative stereotypes and perceptions around aging<br>• Developed the Good Neighbor toolkit and campaign in partnership with Grown in Billings and the Billings Public Library to support family-friendly neighborhood connections across Yellowstone County |
|  **Healthy Investments** | • Developed a community health worker (CHW) employer toolkit in partnership with Montana Public Health Institute and University of Montana Centers for Children, Families, and Workforce Development<br>• Launched a monthly meeting for local CHWs, peers, navigators, and similar positions to support connection, collaboration, and partnership building<br>• Developed and disseminated community plan fact sheets to support civic literacy and understanding of community plans |
|  **Strengthening Partnerships** | • Hosted a Collective Impact Series called Coffee Connect in coordination with Best Beginnings, Level Up Yellowstone, Suicide Prevention Coalition of Yellowstone County, and United Way<br>• The Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) workgroup hosted the annual TIC 101 community training<br>• Participated in Grown in Billings, a community effort that aims to ensure families are connected to resources to raise their children in a stable, safe, supportive, and caring environment |

# Presentations & Media Coverage

**Presentations & Posters**

- Leadership Billings
- Confluence Annual Conference
- Trauma-Informed Care 101
- Community Health Needs Assessment Press Conference

**Media Coverage**

- Gardeners' Market open 4 – 6 p.m. Thursdays at South Park promotion through radio advertisement, interviews, and television advertisement
- Billings Gazette
- Yellowstone Public Radio

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

## Overview

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

**Priority-Specific Objectives**

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

**Strategies**




| | |
|---|---|
| **Approach** | Health Equity • Policy, Systems, Built Environment • Collective Impact<br>Evidence-Based • Community-Informed |

# Strategy 1. Healthy Neighborhoods:

**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, continued to emphasize the value of public art, community pride, neighborhood safety, and beautification.




*A vendor at the Gardeners' Market shares local, fresh produce with community members.*

The group launched a public art campaign to map local public art using Ushahidi. With the successful adoption of the Public Art Policy with the City of Billings in September 2025, Mobilize leadership continued to make progress in supporting public art in the community. This policy established a clear, concise process for public art in public spaces. With the public art committee formed in spring 2026, the committee successfully received and provided recommendations for approval to the City on the installment of two new public art pieces. Mobilize the MAGIC City continued to work together to brainstorm next steps including planning a meeting to gather community and stakeholder input on how to enhance initiatives that support a welcoming, vibrant, and safe community where people want to live through public art and the associated process in Billings.

The 16th season of the **Gardeners' Market** kicked off this summer. With a second year of funding from the United States Department of Agriculture, the Gardeners' Market Vendor Committee continued working together to implement marketing strategies aimed at increasing vendor recruitment and retention while expanding customer reach for the weekly market. Expanded marketing efforts first launched in spring 2025 through targeted advertisements and community outreach and have continued into the 2026 market season. This project aims to strengthen local food systems while enhancing economic and health outcomes across Yellowstone County.

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

# Strategy 2. Healthy Connections:

**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** group continued to work with Healthy By Design to develop a social marketing campaign and 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. The workgroup launched a survey for community members and shared this with the larger leadership group. The results of the survey helped guide the beginning development of social marketing campaign topics and activities. In April 2026, the group held a community meeting to gather input on stereotypes and perceptions on aging in the community.



*Healthy By Design, in partnership with Age Friendly Billings, gather community feedback for an ageism awareness social marketing campaign.*

The **Good Neighbor Toolkit** and campaign was developed and launched in partnership with Grown in Billings and Billings Public Library. The toolkit is designed to encourage family-friendly neighborhood connections and foster meaningful relationships that promote health and well-being across Yellowstone County through neighborhood gatherings and block parties. Family-friendly neighborhood connections, such as a block party, can help promote safer communities, healthy eating, and active lifestyles, while also connecting children with caring adults outside of their immediate family who can serve as positive role models and mentors.

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

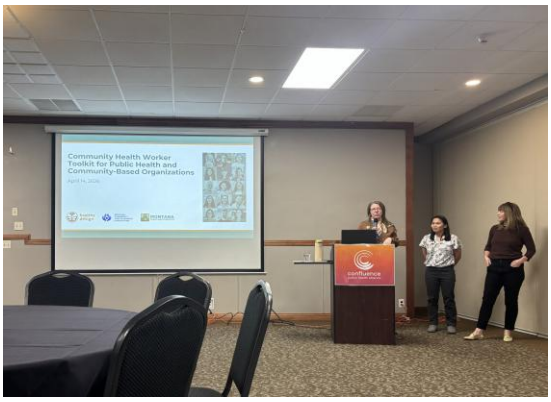
# Strategy 3. Healthy Investments:

**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 well-being 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

Healthy By Design continued to collaborate with partners locally and across the state to determine how to better communicate the value of **community health workers** (CHWs), their work in the non-clinical setting, and better understand and support similar positions in the CHW workforce. An environmental scan of CHWs, care coordinators, peer support specialists and similar positions continued with the aim of identifying local positions in Yellowstone County and better understanding their roles in addressing social drivers of health.




*Healthy By Design, Montana Public Health Institute and University of Montana present the Community Health Worker Employer Toolkit at Confluence.*

Healthy By Design hosted a local office hour meeting for CHWs and similar positions. The purpose of this meeting was to provide a dedicated space for partnership building, collaboration, and networking.

As part of sustainability efforts, Healthy By Design partnered with Montana Public Health Institute and University of Montana Center for Children, Families and Workforce Development to develop an employer toolkit to help educate others in the state about their roles, value, and impact of CHWs in public health and community-based organizations.

The **Healthy Worksite Toolkit** underwent a third relaunch to better reflect the evolving needs of workplaces across the region. This updated version moved away from recognition-based efforts and instead took a broader, more inclusive approach that supports small, medium, large, and remote employers across a variety of industries. The toolkit serves as a practical and adaptable resource, highlighting real-world examples of policies, systems, and built environment (PSE) changes that promote employee well-being and positive workplace culture. By emphasizing locally informed, evidence-based strategies related to healthy eating, physical activity, mental health, and organizational culture, the toolkit provides actionable guidance to help employers create healthier, more supportive work environments.

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

# Strategy 4. Strengthening Partnerships:

**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 **Trauma-Informed Care (TIC)** workgroup continued to strengthen community capacity by hosting the third annual TIC 101 community training at United Way in June 2026. In collaboration with the TIC workgroup, the training brought together community members and professionals to expand understanding of trauma-informed principles and practices. The event focused on creating supportive and inclusive environments, increasing awareness of diverse lived experiences, and providing practical tools participants can apply within their organizations and communities. Through continued partnership and shared learning opportunities, the workgroup is helping advance trauma-informed approaches across the community.



*TIC Trainer, Michelle Lamberson of United Way, presents at a TIC 101 training in 2025.*

In addition to convening, supporting, and sitting on various groups, committees, and workgroups to provide community health guidance and support, the following partnerships represent opportunities that HBD has taken to support a culture of community health and **health in all policies** across Yellowstone County over the past 36 months:

- Participated in an advisory committee to help write the upcoming Billings Complete Streets Policy Progress Report
- Participated in advisory committees to guide and inform proposed state policy and legislative efforts for the community health worker profession
- Guided and informed the now adopted public art policy to enhance placemaking efforts and the activation of spaces
- Participated in several community efforts including but not limited to:
    - Billings 2045 Land Use Plan
    - Community-Wide Trails Committee
    - MET Transit Human Services Transportation Coordination Committee

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

# 2023 – 2026 CHIP Progress to Date

**Key**

★ Initiative completed or target met

★ In progress, improvement over baseline, but target has not yet been met

★ Stopped/not started

## Healthy Neighborhoods

| Metric | Status |
|---|---|
| By June 2024, enhance neighborhood safety, strengthen community identify, and foster health by completing 90% of Mobilize the MAGIC City workgroup deliverables | ★ |
| By June 2024, enhance neighborhood safety, strengthen community identity, and foster health by completing 90% of Mobilize the MAGIC City workgroup deliverables | ★ |
| 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 | ★ |
| By December 2025, strategic marketing opportunities to increase attendance are evaluated to inform recommendations for the 2026 Gardeners' Market season | ★ |
| By December 2025, strategic marketing opportunities to increase vendor recruitment and retention are evaluated to inform recommendations for the 2026 Gardeners' Market season | ★ |
| 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 2026, strategic marketing opportunities to increase attendance are developed and launched for the 2026 Gardeners' Market season | ★ |
| By June 2026, strategic marketing opportunities to increase vendor recruitment and retention are developed and launched for the 2026 Gardeners' Market season | ★ |

| Yellowstone County Indicator | 2023 CHNA | 2026 Goal | 2026 CHNA |
|---|---|---|---|
| % of residents who are meeting physical activity guidelines | 29.3% | 30.8% | 32.3% |
| % residents who feel they can help make their community a better place to live | 89.4% | 93.9% | 88.4% |
| % adults who feel safe walking alone in neighborhood | 84.6% | 88.8% | 81.3% |
| % of children who are physically active 1+ hours daily | 58.7% | 61.6% | 48.5% |

## Healthy Connections

| Metric | Status |
|---|---|
| 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 | ★ |
| By December 2025, develop a Good Neighbor Toolkit to enhance education and opportunities around social connection and community engagement | ★ |
| By June 2025, expand awareness of and access to social opportunities for older adults by engaging Age Friendly Billings members in the completion of two domain work plan initiatives | ★ |
| By December 2025, a social marketing campaign, educational materials, and handouts to address stereotypes and perception around ageism is developed | ★ |

| Yellowstone County Indicator | 2023 CHNA | 2026 Goal | 2026 CHNA |
|---|---|---|---|
| % adults 65+ who spend three or more hours on screen time for entertainment on an average day | 63.9% | 60.7% | 66.3% |
| % adults who feel isolated from others (sometimes or always) | 43.7% | 41.5% | 50.4% |
| % adults who get the social and emotional support needed | 91.8% | 96.3% | 88.7% |

## 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 | ★ |

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|---|---|
| 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, advance civic engagement to support an equitable, thriving community by engaging at least two 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 December 2025, an environmental scan of local community health workers (CHWs), care coordinators, peers, and like professions is completed | ★ |
| By June 2025, update the Healthy Worksite Toolkit and share updated evidence-based strategies and healthy worksite initiatives | ★ |

| Yellowstone County Indicator | 2023 CHNA | 2026 Goal | 2026 CHNA |
|---|---|---|---|
| % of residents who feel they can help make their community a better place | 89.4% | 93.9% | 88.4% |
| % of residents who get the social and emotional support needed | 91.8% | 96.3% | 88.7% |
| % of women who experience difficulty accessing health care | 54.4% | 51.7% | 55.5% |

## 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, hold a TIC 101 community training in partnership with the TIC trainer workgroup | ★ |
| By December 2025, spring TIC 101 attendees from the spring will have the opportunity to become a community TIC super trainer in partnership with the TIC workgroup | ★ |
| By December 2025, launch a local community of practice with opportunities to collaborate, network, and establish partnerships for local care coordinators, CHWs, peers, and like professions from various local organizations | ★ |

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| 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 2026, plan the third annual TIC 101 community training in partnership with the TIC trainer workgroup | ★ |

| Yellowstone County Indicator | 2023 CHNA | 2026 Goal | 2026 CHNA |
|---|---|---|---|
| % of residents who feel they can help make their community a better place | 89.4% | 93.9% | 88.4% |
| % of people of color who have experienced symptoms of chronic depression | 61.0% | 58.0% | 61.7% |
| % of low-income residents who report having "no impact" on improving life in the community | 15.7% | 14.9% | 18.4% (very low income)<br>16.5% (low income) |

# 2023 – 2026 CHIP Overview and 2026 CHNA Scorecard

| **Vision** – A vibrant Yellowstone County where the healthy choice is the easy choice | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Overall Approach** – Health Equity \| Policy, Systems, Built Environment \| Collective Impact \| Evidence-Based \| Community-Informed | | |
| **Long Term Measurement Goal** – Increase proportion of Yellowstone County residents who self-report good or better overall health from 84.7% to 88.9% | | **2026: 85.7%** |
| **CHIP Objectives** (in no particular order) | | |
| Increase the proportion of Yellowstone County residents who self-report good or better mental health from 79.3% to 83.3% | Decrease the proportion of Yellowstone County residents who find it very/somewhat difficult to buy fresh produce from 27.4% to 26.0% | Decrease the proportion of Yellowstone County residents whose lives have been negatively affected by substance abuse (their own or someone else's) from 43.4% to 41.2% |
| 2005: 93.1%<br>2010: 89.9%<br>2014: 89.4%<br>2017: 86.6%<br>2020: 79.8%<br>2023: 79.3%<br>**2026: 74.4%** | 2005: N/A<br>2010: N/A<br>2014: 23.5%<br>2017: 23.3%<br>2020: 17.1%<br>2023: 27.4%<br>**2026: 23.8%** | 2005: N/A<br>2010: N/A<br>2014: N/A<br>2017: 45.5%<br>2020: 53.8%<br>2023: 43.4%<br>**2026: 54.9%** |
| Increase the proportion of Yellowstone County residents who are meeting physical activity guidelines from 29.3% to 30.8% | Decrease the proportion of Yellowstone County residents who experience difficulty accessing health care from 45.4% to 43.1% | Increase the proportion of Yellowstone County residents who are at a healthy weight from 26.7% to 28.0% |
| 2005: N/A<br>2010: N/A<br>2014: N/A<br>2017: 24.3%<br>2020: 23.3%<br>2023: 29.3%<br>**2026: 32.3%** | 2005: 33.9%<br>2010: N/A<br>2014: 35.3%<br>2017: 42.0%<br>2020: 32.1%<br>2023: 45.4%<br>**2026: 49.2%** | 2005: 35.8%<br>2010: 25.4%<br>2014: 31.9%<br>2017: 32.1%<br>2020: 26.9%<br>2023: 26.7%<br>**2026: 32.8%** |