



2023-2026 YELLOWSTONE COUNTY

COMMUNITY HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PLAN

24-MONTH PROGRESS REPORT

January 1 – June 30, 2025 | Published July 31, 2025



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.

*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
Montana State University 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

2023 – 2026 Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) Strategies



Healthy Neighborhoods







Healthy Connections



Healthy Investments

Strengthening Partnerships

Past 24 Months at a Glance

 Healthy Neighborhoods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kicked off the 15th season of the Gardeners' Market • Collaborated with Mobilize the MAGIC City partners and finalized the platform for mapping local art, presented a proposed public art policy to the Legislative and Local Affairs Committee, and scheduled a time to present the proposed public art policy at a future City Council work session • The Complete Neighborhoods workgroup reviewed mapping efforts of key-quality-of-life resources for the South Side Triangle neighborhood and provided feedback for future mapping of the North Park and a combined Lower Rimrock and Midtown neighborhoods
 Healthy Connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age Friendly Billings celebrated the installation of age-friendly park equipment at Lillis Park, supporting the efforts of a more accessible outdoor environment for older adults • The development of an age-friendly social media marketing campaign began to help address stereotypes and stigma around ageism in Yellowstone County
 Healthy Investments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resilient Yellowstone focused on Community Health Worker (CHW) workforce sustainability, and the no-cost extension period ended in March 2025 • Phase 2 of the community plans to be converted into fact sheets was completed with the addition of two new fact sheets
 Strengthening Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Held the second Collective Impact Series called Coffee Connect in coordination with Best Beginnings, Level Up Yellowstone, Suicide Prevention Coalition of Yellowstone County, and United Way • The Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) workgroup hosted a community-wide TIC 101 training • 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

Presentations & Media Coverage

Presentations & Posters

- Resilient Yellowstone Community Health Worker Program Share Out
- MSUB Master of Health Administration Class
- Montana Family Medicine Residency
- Leadership Billings
- MSUB TRIO Immersion Day

Media Coverage

- Gardeners' Market open 4-6 p.m. Thursdays at South Park
- Billings Gazette Health Matters articles
- Gardeners' Market promotion through Desert Mountain radio advertisement, interviews, and television advertisement



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

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 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 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%	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%

Initiative Assessment Criteria

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



Strategy I. Healthy Neighborhoods: 24-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, has achieved notable progress in the past year. The initiative continued to emphasize the value of public art, community pride, neighborhood safety, and beautification.

The group finalized a platform for mapping local public art in Billings using Ushahidi. A social media campaign has been rolled out to spread awareness to the community about the importance of public art in Yellowstone County. In the winter, Mobilize the MAGIC City continued to work with city departments of Billings to finalize a proposed public art policy. In January, the proposed public art policy was presented to the Legislative and Local Affairs Committee. The Mobilize the MAGIC City leadership members scheduled a time to present the proposed policy at a future City Council work session.

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

Healthy By Design and the City of Billings worked together to create maps of the South Side Triangle neighborhood. The Complete Neighborhood workgroup reviewed the complete set of maps for the South Side Triangle and provided feedback for future maps of North Park and a combined lower Rimrock and Midtown.

The City of Billings convened a committee to develop an updated progress report for the City of Billings **Complete Streets** ordinance. This committee includes Healthy By Design staff and several Healthy By Design Coalition members, such as the City, LIFTT, MET Transit, and Big Sky Economic Development. This progress report seeks to evaluate progress and outcomes associated with the implementation of the 2011 policy, which Healthy By Design helped to develop. The 2025 progress report is planned to be published



A vendor at the Gardeners' Market shares his organic radish pods with customers

later this year and shares the importance of a healthy built environment, which can help promote safety, walkability, decreased isolation, overall health and well-being, and a sense of community.

With funding from the United States Department of Agriculture, Healthy By Design and the **Gardeners' Market** Vendor Committee worked together this spring to develop a marketing campaign plan to increase vendor recruitment, vendor retention, and expand customer reach for the weekly market. Implementation of this marketing plan began in late spring with the launch of specific marketing advertisements and outreach. This project aims to enhance the economic and health outcomes of the broader community and promote resilient food systems in Yellowstone County.

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



Strategy 2. Healthy Connections: 24-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** group continued to focus 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, employment, and respect and social inclusion.

Committee members continued to meet as two groups and focused on developing 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 created a survey for community members and shared this with the larger leadership group. The aim of the survey is to inform and guide the development of social marketing campaign topics and activities.

In May, Age Friendly Billings celebrated the installation of age-friendly park equipment at Lillis Park. This equipment was funded through an AARP grant and supports



*Mayor Bill Cole trying out the new
age-friendly park equipment at Lillis
Park*

more accessible outdoor environments for older adults. The equipment installed includes a balance board along the park's sidewalk trail. Age Friendly Billings is committed to supporting parks, trails, green spaces, safe streets, and accessible buildings that accommodate residents of all ages and abilities. This new park equipment helps foster positive social interaction and outdoor recreation, which can help improve the overall health and well-being of individuals across all life stages.



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

Strategy 3. Healthy Investments: 24-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 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

Through March, **Resilient Yellowstone** partner organizations continued 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 enhanced volunteer engagement, transportation, mental health training, and social connections. A detailed description of these site-specific CHIPs is available in Appendix A. The Resilient Yellowstone no-cost extension ended in March 2025.

As part of sustainability efforts, CHWs in Yellowstone County continued to pursue opportunities to streamline communication with others about the roles of CHWs and their impact in the community. In February, Resilient Yellowstone CHWs hosted a community event to highlight CHW programs, impact, and share how CHWs identify and respond to the changing health needs and knowledge among individuals, clients, and partners. CHWs shared how they have built a strong network of CHWs through partnerships, networking, and collaboration, which has led to an increase in organizational and community capacity.



Resilient Yellowstone CHWs host a community share-out held at the library

Throughout 2024 and leading up to the 2025 Montana legislative session, this past spring, Resilient Yellowstone CHWs and Healthy By Design staff provided input and policy recommendations to the Montana CHW Association and the Montana CHW Committee on a proposed, optional certification pathway for CHWs in the state. Resilient Yellowstone CHWs and Healthy By Design staff provided policy recommendations to the state association and committee regarding a proposed CHW definition, roles and responsibilities, code of ethics, and training requirements for the optional CHW certification through the state. The bill was presented at the Montana legislative session.

Healthy By Design continued to work with partners locally and across the state to determine how to better communicate the value of CHWs, their work in the non-clinical setting, and better understand similar positions in the workforce. An environmental scan of CHWs, care coordinators, peer support specialists and similar positions began to identify local positions in Yellowstone County and to better understand their roles in addressing the many different social drivers of health.

Phase two of the **Community Plan Fact Sheets** included the selection and completion of two city master plans that were 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, 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, and weight.



Strategy 4. Strengthening Partnerships: 24-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** group, comprising of backbone staff from various coalitions, met monthly to enhance collective impact practices. They focused on reviewing best practices, fostering collaboration, and resource sharing. This group's efforts emphasize the importance of coordinated initiatives in strengthening

community well-being through comprehensive strategies. In 2024, 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. Attendees requested more opportunities to learn about collective impact. In April 2025, the group held their second Coffee Connect session. Participants explored one of the five conditions of Collective Impact in greater depth.

This past spring, the **Trauma-Informed Care (TIC)** workgroup held their second TIC 101 training. This training aims 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 created train-the-trainer materials in preparation for hosting the training for individuals to become a TIC trainer. The TIC train-the-trainer course launched last November, and attendees from the spring TIC 101 training will be eligible to take the train-the-trainer course. This effort aligns with fostering supportive environments that respect diverse lived experiences.

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



The Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) workgroup holds a community-wide TIC 101 training at United Way

2023 – 2026 CHIP Metrics

Key

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

In-Progress 2023 – 2026 CHIP Metrics

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 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	★

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 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	★

By June 2025, update the Healthy Worksite Toolkit and share updated evidence-based strategies and healthy worksite initiatives	★
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By December 2025, develop a Good Neighbor Toolkit to enhance education and opportunities around social connection and community engagement	★
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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 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	★

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, ensure 100% of active HBD workgroups include, at a minimum, at least 2 individuals with lived experience relevant to the workgroup's focus	★
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



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%

Completed 2023 – 2026 CHIP Metrics

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



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



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



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	★

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	★

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 Staff gear up for the 15th season at South Park



A community member enjoys public outdoor spaces



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

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