

Culture of Health for Delaware County Indiana

Delaware County Indiana is home to 115,603 Hoosiers. Muncie, the county seat, has 69,010 residents with a median household income of \$39,449 and an unemployment rate of 5.7%. With the second highest poverty rate in Indiana (23%), 1 in 5 children live below poverty level, many children and families face food insecurity. Infant mortality rates in Indiana are 25% higher than the national rate. Our obesity rate (36%) and adult sedentary lifestyle rate (30%) are also higher than national figures. The two largest employers in the county are Ball State University (BSU) and IU Health Ball Memorial Hospital. After decades of decline, the manufacturing industries contributing to Delaware County's thriving economic climate during the automotive peak have all left Delaware County in the same situation as many rust belt communities. We continue to recover from the impact of lost jobs and lost identity. High rates of citizen engagement and philanthropy have allowed us to make great strides toward establishing a Culture of Health. A recent study by the Sagamore Institute, an Indianapolis-based think-tank, showed that out of the ten largest cities in the state, Muncie ranked 2nd in civic involvement. We have a rich heritage of giving back to the community, which is heavily influenced by the Ball Brothers Foundation, as well as other local and regional foundations. Two key initiatives currently driving improved health and wellbeing are the Muncie Action Plan (MAP) and the Muncie-Delaware County Economic Development Alliance's strategic plan. MAP, which held its first community meetings in 2009, originated as a grassroots effort to "express values and aspirations of our community and create a compelling agenda for our future". The Muncie-Delaware County Economic Development Alliance has created strategic plans since its start in 1983. The last two cycles of their 5-year plans (Vision 2016 and Vision 2021) included goals and objectives around both quality of place and quality of life.

More recent efforts include:

- Building Better Neighborhoods – connecting Muncie neighborhoods and community stakeholders.
- The Healthy Community Alliance of Delaware and Blackford Counties – addressing issues of physical inactivity, poor nutrition, and tobacco use through a collective impact model.
- Purdue Extension Community Wellness Coordinators – using the CDC Change Tool to work with Action Teams to address physical inactivity, nutrition, and food equity.
- Delaware County Wellness Professionals – supporting local workplaces in their employee health and wellness efforts.

The four accomplishments important in establishing a Culture of Health in Delaware County that will be highlighted in this application include: (1) A commitment to active transportation, (2) innovative approaches to learning, (3) forward thinking food strategies, and (4) enhancing and strengthening healthy beginnings for our youngest citizens. These accomplishments are being achieved through the implementation of systems changes and policy-oriented long-term solutions.

Commitment to active transportation is evident many ways. In 2015, we hosted an "Active Living Workshop" to help us move toward "complete streets" policies, and our Cardinal and White River Greenways provide 60+ miles of paved walking and biking trails. These trails offer infrastructure for recreational activities and practical, everyday transportation. Our local BY5 initiative continuously reminds us that early childhood education is key to successes later in life. This innovative approach emerged as a result of the MAP process. BY5 works closely with community agencies to create systemic changes for long-term outcomes and is striving to ensure children under five are prepared to enter kindergarten. Making quality and nutritious food available to those who have limited access has also been a top priority in Delaware County. Several organizations are working on policy and systems changes needed to make fresh, healthy food more accessible, and in October of 2017, we hosted our second annual food summit. Opioid abuse is being addressed on several fronts as well. The Maternal Treatment Program (MTP), hosted by Meridian Health Services, provides a holistic treatment model specifically serving mothers and expectant mothers battling opioid addiction to reduce the impact opioids are having on families and children. This effort reaches an even higher level of relevance and importance since it occurs in a state with no reimbursement structure for residential opioid treatment.

Accomplishment 1: Commitment to Active Transportation

A commitment to active transportation has been a community focus for over 24 years. It started when Cardinal Greenway, Inc. purchased 26 miles of trail located in Delaware County. They obtained additional 11 miles of trail for biking, walking, and riding horses, and began adding paved mileage to their portfolio. Today, the Cardinal Greenway provides free trails and free bike rentals for individuals and families. It also offers free learning activities/fitness equipment for families to participate with while they are enjoying the trails. The trail is a huge asset for health, wellness and recreation, and it is a resource to connect neighborhoods and provide active transportation to multiple locations around Delaware County. The Cardinal Greenway has been a driving force for tourism and economics. People from all over the state and country will travel to Delaware County to use the trail. Businesses have established themselves in Delaware County because of the trail access for their employees.

In addition to the Cardinal Greenway, Muncie Action Plan (MAP) began instituting bike and walk friendly programs. Work overseen by this taskforce has created policies and initiated systems changes that impact health in the daily lives of individuals and families. Two years ago, Muncie hosted an Active Living Workshop. This birthed a Safe Routes to School program that started with one elementary school (56 participants) in the local Whitely Neighborhood (which is an identified low-income and food desert area). It has grown to two bike & walk to school events (spring and fall) per year with six schools participating (420 participants). The program continues to increase with growing numbers of students, school staff, and community participation. In fall 2017, the City of Muncie had more schools participating than any other district in Indiana (per schools registered on the National Walk to School database). The volunteers that help students walk and bike to school during the program highlight community involvement in this effort. Upon arrival to school, community partners celebrate with students on their physical activity accomplishments with local mascots, sports teams, music, dancing, and more. Through the program, the community has also worked together to re-distribute and provide additional bike racks to ensure each school has one available for students. Bike racks are a simple environmental change that make a positive impact when encouraging physical activity within our community. The Safe Routes to School program continues to build upon the community's infrastructure to support active living and create sustainable environmental change.

The Muncie Bicycle-Pedestrian Advisory Committee was established three years ago. It has steadily moved forward by creating bike and pedestrian policies to create infrastructure and advocacy programs. BikeMuncie is a city-wide outreach and education program that helps increase cycling as a means of transportation, recreation, and avenue for addressing safety while riding. It also highlights an emphasis on using biking as a mode of transportation to help decrease negative impacts on the environment. To date, BikeMuncie has been able to provide citizens with bike route maps with safety procedures and an interactive online map for recreational biking that includes trails, pathways, greenways, public rest stops, and more. An online help tool allows the input of information to ask Muncie biking commuter experts the best ways to use bikes as work transportation. They also have worked with the Metropolitan Planning Department and GIS Department to identify and provide bike racks to areas of need. This effort has resulted in Muncie being recognized as a bronze-level, Bike Friendly Community.

As Muncie continues to move forward to create policy and systems structure, they are developing a Bike/ Pedestrian Master Plan. The mission is to encourage more biking and walking within its cities and towns by providing a plan to increase the safety and mobility of residents who bike and walk within the community. Currently, they are encouraging public participation in putting together the plan by hosting public forums, meeting with individuals and committees, and implementing a community based survey and data set. The plan's recommendations will focus on infrastructure improvements, and reviewing existing conditions and documents. It will also address policy and program updates to support and encourage pedestrian and bicycle travel.

Accomplishment 2: Innovative Learning

Delaware County is home to a number of community initiatives that have made marked progress in the area of Innovative Learning. A number of key groups in Muncie, including the Muncie-Delaware County Economic Development Alliance, the Ball Brothers Foundation and the Muncie Action Plan, have adopted early childhood development as a primary economic development strategy.

One example of this accomplishment is the Muncie and Delaware County BY5 Early Childhood Initiative (BY5). The vision of BY5 is to focus on early childhood development as a means of driving later success in education, earning and health. The BY5 initiative was developed with a goal in mind that states by 2020 all children in Delaware County, IN would be kindergarten ready by the age of five. With this goal in mind, leaders immediately began to comprehensively assess the barriers for kindergarten readiness in Delaware County. They identified that there are many reasons children may not be ready for kindergarten that are community-wide issues including—prenatal health, poverty, drug abuse, parent education, food access, transportation, and more. As a result, BY5 embarked on a robust plan to address those barriers by convening a coalition of community supporters, known as Family Navigators, to develop and implement programs that would create a positive and progressive impact for the community. Over the past 3 years, BY5 strategic efforts have made progress in the following areas:

- Increasing kindergarten readiness scores
- Increasing the number of programs servicing prenatal to five-year olds
- Pre-kindergarten registration increases
- Increasing the number of children enrolled in high quality programming
- Increasing the number of children receiving developmental screenings before the age of 5
- Increasing the number of people/partners joining the BY5 Network.

The BY5 initiative utilizes multiple avenues to achieve success such as facilitating increased access to high quality childcare in Delaware County, recruitment of the Nurse Family Partnership, and providing funding for a 3-week “Kickoff to Kindergarten” program based at five elementary schools designed to prepare children to be successful in Kindergarten. BY5 accomplished the development of a Family Navigators network with over 200-trained navigators. Thanks to active recruitment, the BY5 Network has expanded to include the participation of over 90 organizations. Some of these organizations include Open Door Health Services, TRC Head Start, Delaware County Purdue Extension, Meridian Health Services, Second Harvest Food Bank, and many more. In looking at the future, BY5 also just received funding and has started working with a new program called “On My Way Pre-K”. Targeting four year olds, the program provides funding for limited resource families to increase access to high quality pre-k programs around Delaware County in preparation to start kindergarten the following year. First session slots are currently filled to start in 2018, while they prepare to have open enrollment for additional students.

Other innovative community early learning initiatives stand out in Delaware County as well. The AIM initiative program is a collaboration between the Buley Center, Motivate Our Minds, Boys & Girls Club of Muncie, Ross Community Center, and YMCA of Muncie. The AIM Program is a 7-week summer enrichment program that serves an average daily attendance of 300 participants. Many of those participants are primarily low-income youth in grades Pre-K-8. AIM provides an academic experience, as well as an additional focus on the being creative through arts and recreation allowing children to learn, be healthy and avoid risky behaviors. Outcomes show a majority of K-8 students improve and/or retain math and reading skills, plus demonstrate development of character and life skills.

MuncieP3 is a Kindergarten through third grade complementary learning program. It extends the school day and school year to promote literacy acquisition for low-income children. Throughout the school year, children in grades kindergarten through third grade participate in literacy-focused, after school learning. Additionally, summer programming directly addresses the need for a smooth transition from summer break to the new school year, as well as learning loss common among low-income students. Assessments demonstrate improvements in passing the ISTEP Language Arts and IREAD assessments as well as increased school attendance, family engagement, and school event involvement.

Accomplishment 3: Food Strategies

Addressing Food Insecurity as it affects health, has been a top priority in the last few years for Delaware County. Increasing access to not only food, but also healthy food has been a targeted and rapidly moving goal. IU Health/Ball Memorial Health, Minnetrista Farmers Market, and YMCA of Muncie collaborated along with many other community partners to create an innovative strategy called Families at the Farmer's Market. Partnering organizations refer limited resource families that come to the market once a month, June-August, and receive free transportation from partnering organizations, nutrition education, free interactive childcare, and \$20.00 farmer's market vouchers (\$60.00 total for summer) to spend on fruits and vegetables at the farmers market. The goal of this program is to increase fresh fruit and vegetable consumption among local families by changing family eating behaviors and breaking down social and financial barriers. After opening the program in 2013, they increased access and participation to more than 100 families during the 2017 season in Delaware County. They have also expanded to allow approved vendors the option to accept vouchers at other markets, increasing program access for limited resource audiences in closer proximity to where they live. Lastly, they have developed ways that farmers can participate directly with the program. This now allows them to accept vouchers directly at their farming locations throughout the county.

This year Delaware County community members and farmer's markets collaborated to make SNAP available at local farmers markets. Prior to 2017, Delaware County was one of only two counties in Indiana that did not offer SNAP redemption at local farmer's markets. Therefore, it was a great accomplishment to have two local markets open at the start of the 2017 season with SNAP available. SNAP has since increased to five local markets throughout the county. With a goal of improving fruit and vegetable access for SNAP recipients, the markets took in over \$1000 dollars in SNAP dollars during the first season. In addition, two markets have adopted a "Lettuce Change" program. Each market asks customers to donate their loose change after purchasing items. The money donated goes to buy leftover produce at the end of the night. Then, each market takes the leftover produce to the local Soup Kitchen of Muncie and the Salvation Army Food Pantry. To date, there has been over \$400 worth of produce donated to the Soup Kitchen of Muncie and the Salvation Army Food Pantry.

Community Food Boxes are a new food strategy that changes policy, systems, and environment for a variety of organizations and groups in Delaware County. The goal of Community Food Boxes is to increase food access for limited resource individuals in immediate need. One impact of this has been increased partnership between organizations and groups, even those within a close or similar geographic area. Through these partnerships, organizations take on sponsorship of a Community Food Box that is put together by community members. Organizations provide the physical space for the box, while catering to questions from the public. Community members and partnering groups take daily management of the box to help monitor and stock the box with items that limited resource individuals and families might need throughout the month. This includes but is not limited to shelf-stable food items (Food Pantry partnerships and/or donations partnership), produce (community garden partnerships), toiletries, small kitchen utensils, community information, etc. Currently, three Community Food Boxes have been installed. With three more planned for installation by the end of November 2017.

In 2016, the Muncie Food Hub Partnership initiated the first annual Local Food Summit located at the Ball State Alumni Center. People from all over Delaware County and surrounding communities come together to experience and learn about new food related policies at the local, state, and federal level, new food strategies and ideas, make connections, work together to reach shared goals, and more. Community members are provided with information, hands on learning, and discussion sessions to take action on different food issues and strategies taking place in local communities. All day attendees are also provided a locally sourced lunch in which local producers provide locally grown and prepared foods to increase knowledge of what communities have to offer for food access. Before leaving, attendees set goals and initiatives for the on-coming year. Goals included working on a network of urban gardens, increasing community participation in public policy, and addressing barriers to food access. During its first year in 2016, 100 participants attended the event. In 2017, our community exceeded that number by having 115 participants plus local producers and makers that provided onsite food access opportunities.

Accomplishment 4: Healthy Beginnings

East Central Indiana has distinct health disparities that are the result of pregnant women struggling with the disease of addiction. In 2012, 556 Hoosier children died prior to their first birthday. That is more than 3 in 400 infants or one every 16 hours. In Indiana, infants are 25% more likely to die within their first year than their peers are nationally. One of the leading risk factors for infant mortality is mothers who smoke or use illegal drugs while pregnant. An expectant mother's use of any type of drug, illicit or for medical purposes, will affect an unborn child.

The Meridian Health Services Maternal Treatment Program (MTP) is a collective problem solving effort. Local partners include, Meridian Health Services, Delaware County Prosecutor's Office, Delaware County Department of Children Services, local OBGYN offices, IUH Ball Memorial Hospital, Purdue Extension, and other community stakeholders in an effort to reduce the number of babies born in Delaware County, with Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS). The MTP collaborative is focused on improvement of the lives of women, infants and children experiencing devastation of opiate use, abuse, and addiction. Research shows that social and economic factors influence risk behavior, as it is associated with drug use and health. As a public health intervention, the MTP aims to improve the health of opiate users by addressing the social factors that accompany and exacerbate the health consequences of drug use.

The MTP collaborative is an innovative community and agency response to the public outcry surrounding opiate abuse in east central Indiana. Meridian Health Services, the umbrella agency hosting the MTP, looked to other communities for a best practices model of how to create an environment for maternal and infant health. After a team of local stakeholders visited other states to observe their treatment facilities it was discovered that Indiana did not have the Medicaid or insurance billing structure to support residential opioid treatment. Upon learning this, the MTP was refocused on the four core program essentials of intensive therapy, parenting, activities of daily living, and caring for children with special needs. In this way, the MTP collaborative aims to reduce health disparities through an engaged community approach to maternal and infant health. This approach aims to promote the development of healthy families by assisting mothers with opiate addiction issues through systems of care, focused on whole health rejuvenation, including helping addicted babies through the first stages of life.

The mission of the MTP collaborative is to reduce opioid use, abuse, and addiction among pregnant women, neonates, and young children throughout Delaware County. MTP is an integrated program, and services are designed to treat the whole person focusing on prevention, education, treatment, and community support. This helps change lifestyles of mothers in crisis, which in turn changes the outcomes for an infant or toddler born into addictive lifestyles. The MTP is an intensive outpatient model of 9-12 hours of treatment per week, along with other hours focused on prenatal or new mother care, and when needed supervision from legal entities. The program addresses behaviors that lead to substance use, such as criminal thinking, lack of personal autonomy, and gaining positive social skills to help build successful support systems for continued future recovery. Recovery for participants means becoming a functional, productive member of society responsive to social justice and a reduction of trauma on themselves and children in their family unit.

The number of delivering mothers using or dependent on opiates rose nearly five-fold from 2000 to 2009, to an estimated 23,009. In 2012, newborns with NAS stayed in the hospital an average of 16.9 days (compared to 2.1. days for other newborns), costing hospitals an estimated \$1.5 billion. The majority of these charges (81%) were paid by state Medicaid programs, reflecting the greater tendency of opiate-abusing mothers to be from lower-income communities. The MTP opened its doors in June 2017 to begin creating a community around healthy pregnancies and maternal health. To date, 15 women have been through the program. The program is designed for up to two years of treatment for each participant. The program has had three live births to date, and only one infant had to receive a few hours of NICU care.