



Dakota County Statewide Health Improvement Program SHIP 4 YEARS 3 & 4 EVALUATION REPORT

February 2020



Dakota
COUNTY

Acknowledgements

The Dakota County Public Health Department appreciates the support and guidance from the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) to implement the Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP) within our county. We also thank all colleagues who provided support, feedback, and data for the evaluation. Particular mention goes to the following groups:

- Community partners who participated in the implementation and provided evaluation data, Dakota County staff and contractors who provided trainings, technical assistance, and resources to community partners,
- Dakota County departments and divisions that supported all these efforts including staff from Community Services Administration, Public Health, Office of Planning and Analysis, Finance, and Physical Development Planning, and
- The Dakota County Board of Commissioners.

This report would not be possible without their input and public support for SHIP funding. As you review the report, we hope you find the information useful in learning about Dakota County SHIP, the work of our partners and our outcomes. The results were reviewed, synthesized, and summarized by the external evaluation firm ACET, Inc., who authored this report.

If you have any questions about SHIP or the contents of this report, please contact:

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Executive Summary

The Dakota County Public Health Department received \$1.5 million in funding from the Minnesota Department of Health to implement the Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP) from November 1, 2017, to October 31, 2019. Within 24 months, \$6.3 million in additional funds were leveraged by partners from state, federal and private sources to improve community health through policy, systems, and environmental changes. The past two years of SHIP have built on the foundation of relationships, community partnerships, and health promotion efforts during the first six years of SHIP funding.

SHIP 4 is a five-year contracted period. This report will focus on years 3 and 4. For brevity, the report will simply refer to this as SHIP 4. During this two-year period, Dakota County continued to address the burden of chronic disease in Minnesota through supporting activities to increase healthy eating and physical activity, while decreasing commercial tobacco use and exposure. Key strategies were implemented with partners in four settings: schools, work sites, health care and community. In addition, intentional efforts were made to advance the department's goals around improving health equity. Specifically, Dakota County Health Promotion staff and its partners:

- Worked with 18 schools in 6 districts to implement approaches to increase physical activity and healthy eating such as Moving and Learning, active recess, Smarter Lunchrooms, healthy breakfast and snack options before, during and after the school day, as well as conducting school-based health equity projects.
- Supported development of Safe Routes to School plans for six schools across two districts;
- Assisted in the passing 79 smoke-free policies in multi-unit housing properties, including 66 with specific language for e-cigarettes;
- Partnered with 11 worksites to enhance worksite wellness by updating policies and implementing changes to increase stress reduction, support breastfeeding mothers, provide greater opportunities for healthy eating and physical activity; and
- Helped program partners to sustain their project activities with 94% of respondents (n=32) reporting they met at least 6 of 7 criteria to sustain change.

The evaluation helps to tell a powerful story of the work and impact it has in Dakota County. The data and leveraged funds highlight how well Dakota County has managed and implemented SHIP. Beyond the numbers, SHIP is shifting the culture and environment in Dakota County to create more opportunities for all community members to be healthier. The impact has been shared through feedback offered with a few examples below.

- Following a training on physical activity a childcare center manager shared, “*Yes, teachers look at P.A [physical activity] differently than before, it’s ‘built into what we’re doing.’ Choosing to make mindful activity in everyday actions.*”
- The Moving and Learning curriculum was taught to 426 school staff; 94% of survey respondents reported they used the techniques. One teacher shared: survey, “*I was thrilled to hear at conferences how my students are using these strategies at home, and teaching their siblings, because they help them feel better.*”
- Worksites were supported in developing healthy policies, and one employee shared, “*I think it is inspiring to see many employees around me taking advantage of the walking trails.*”

The work of this period built upon the foundation of the previous six years. Funding has been secured for a ninth year and staff will continue to partner with the community to expand opportunities for all to achieve good health.

Introduction

The Dakota County Public Health Department (Public Health) has received 8 years of funding from the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) to implement the Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP) within Dakota County with the aim of reducing and preventing chronic disease and obesity and its associated health care costs through supporting strategies to increase healthy eating and physical activity, while decreasing commercial tobacco use and exposure. Strategies were implemented with partners in four settings: schools, work sites, health care and community. The SHIP team at the County is made up of 5 key staff that facilitate the work and dozens of community partners to implement the work. In addition, MDH has provided guidance, tools, and technical assistance to advance the innovative efforts shaping the County's health.

Dakota County's Community Services Division and Public Health Department use a framework of the Social Determinants of Health (SDoH) to raise awareness that the Division and Department are actively addressing many aspects of these complex individual, societal, and environmental factors that contribute to health. The SDoH framing is also useful when addressing health equity – a priority of both Dakota County Public Health and SHIP.

Dakota County SHIP has taken additional steps in the past two years to further their health equity-based approach to community engagement and prevention. One way the team has approached this is through efforts to expand relationships and build trust with the East African community and the Latinx population across the County. Engagement activities were both informal and formal, and typically driven by the interests and needs of community representatives. Events, early on, mainly centered on building relationships and understanding the communities' needs and how the County's Public Health staff might be able to assist. Several SHIP efforts that centered on health equity are highlighted in the blue "Equity" boxes throughout the report, as well as on page 10, "Health Equity-focused projects".

Community involvement at all levels is key to the SHIP work. MDH has encouraged the development of a Community Leadership Team (CLT), constructed of community leaders and advocates. Dakota County's CLT consists of 11 members, representing 6 unique organizations that have interest in the different SHIP priorities. The group met three times in 2019 to share updates, discuss opportunities, and increase the reach of SHIP activities.

The following pages are organized by strategy area and the locations where the work is happening. Healthy eating is on pages 4 and 5, followed by active living on pages 6-8, commercial tobacco on page 9, and finally, health equity on page 10.



Health equity means everyone has what they need to achieve their highest level of health and wellness.

Healthy Eating

Healthy eating strategies are helping to decrease the burden of chronic disease in Dakota County by providing increased access and availability of healthy foods in various settings, as well as knowledge and capacity-building opportunities for community members. Dakota County partnered with childcare sites and schools to help educators and staff build healthy foods into both the daily menus, as well as making practice and policy changes at the operations-level. The County also worked closely with several local corner stores to stock and display healthy foods as well as worksites to update policies around food, alter types of food in vending machines and at staff gatherings, and provide more opportunities for employees to naturally choose the healthy option.

Child Care:

SHIP staff partnered with community leaders to help create a professional development network of Latinx childcare providers, specifically those not associated with formal child care centers, also known as Family Friend and Neighbor (FFN) child care. The network developed following a series of community listening sessions where the desire was voiced by providers.

Since its inception in 2018, 7 trainings have been held, and 46 providers trained on a variety of topics with free childcare provided. The sessions - all topics the community selected - covered nutrition for young children, Shaken Baby Syndrome, Sudden Unexpected Infant Death Syndrome, feeding basics, emergency preparedness, childhood vaccinations, healthy eating, physical activity, and Moving and Learning for Early Childhood; all materials and presentations were provided in Spanish. The nutrition topics are part of the new Start Strong curriculum from the University of Minnesota Extension. This training resulted in participants sharing:

- 83% of participants said the training helped improve their skills
- 91% felt confident in using content from the training with the children in their care

To launch the work with the Latinx Family Friend and Neighbor child care providers, SHIP staff partnered with community organizations to host several listening sessions. These resulted in an identified community need for a consistent group to meet, learn, and support one another.

The network has brought together other County and metro partners including the YMCA in West St. Paul, Guadalupe Alternative Programs, University of Minnesota Extension, 360 Communities, Centro Tyrone Guzman, 1000 Petals, and University of Minnesota Masonic Cancer Center.

Corner Stores:

One social determinant of health is access to healthy, fresh and affordable food. In the past 8 years of SHIP funding, Public Health has worked diligently on this issue by connecting with new partners to address disparities in access to healthy and culturally appropriate food options.

One innovative effort (Good Food Sold Here) offered through MDH worked with corner stores to increase the presence and visibility of healthy options. Not all communities in Dakota County have equal access to grocery stores and use local convenience stores as an alternative due to transportation limitations or other barriers; however, many of these do not routinely stock the same healthy options as a full grocery store. To help address this, SHIP staff identified three such stores and provided training, one-on-one support, as well as signage and funding. All three reported forging new relationships with distributors, farmers, organizations, or businesses and satisfaction with the program.

Dakota County has also worked with 2 halal grocers in the county who have interest in offering a greater variety of healthy products. (Halal is an Arabic word for foods that are permissible under Islamic law.) Halal stores reach the growing Muslim population in Dakota County and are a valuable resource to the community.

Worksites:

Dakota County residents spend significant time at their workplaces. To encourage healthy behaviors while at work, seven worksites partnered with the County to increase opportunities for healthy eating. These included improving vending machine options and developing healthy food policies for meetings.

"Thank you for offering fruit at the All Team Meeting this morning! I'm so sick of donuts, and I know a couple of my teammates are trying to watch their carbs. This is great." - Employee



One worksite developed a community garden with 35 employees actively participating, planning, implementing, and eating fresh produce.

In addition to increasing healthy eating options, 3 worksites selected to expand or develop breastfeeding support programs at their worksites. For example, one organization arranged a dedicated, quiet room with needed supplies. In addition, the wellness policy was updated to reflect supportive policies for new mothers.

Community Food Access:

SHIP continued to support the expansion of the Metro Food Access Network (MFAN). MFAN is a large group of partners with the mission of leveraging collective capacity to advance equitable access to food for all Metro Area residents. MFAN helps members collaborate and increase their knowledge and capacity to address system issues locally and regionally. It is facilitated primarily by the University of Minnesota Extension with additional funding from Metro County SHIP grantees (Ramsey, Dakota, Hennepin, Washington, and Carver). A sample of the impact of MFAN's work includes:

- Reached more than 300 unique food systems partners through quarterly meetings with topics such as advancing equity in food systems organizations, building a better understanding of regional food systems planning, and food systems policy. (2018-2019)
- Leveraged \$21K to advance racial equity in the food system and to support integration of food access into comprehensive plans. (2018)
- Influenced more than 50% of the comprehensive plans in the 7-county metro region to include food access language for the first time through the MFAN Local Government Action Team. (2018)

Schools:

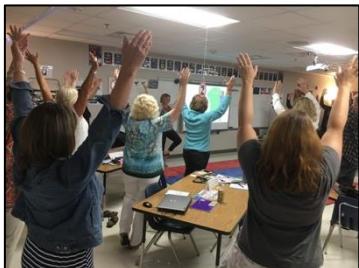
School partners worked a variety of strategies to increase access to and availability of healthy food options before, during and after the school day. Successful school-based healthy food efforts of this cycle include 2nd chance breakfast, healthy snack times, nutrition and cooking classes, and improved district menu alignment with USDA Guidelines. One district developed and infused a new nutrition-focused lesson plan into their permanent English Language Arts curriculum and has decided to make this a permanent feature for the entire grade level.

"At SAC, we have focused on getting youth to eat a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables. We offer snacks with whole grains, dairy, fiber, and protein, while limiting sugars, fats, and sodium. Youth also make healthy recipes for snack panel once a week at Encore, such as spring rolls, trail mix, wraps, and power bowls." - SAC Program Supervisor

Active Living

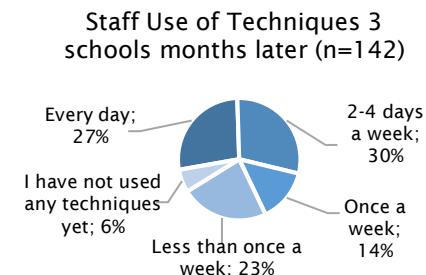
Active Living strategies center on increasing physical activity options through structural environmental and design methods, including where community members live, learn, work and play. The strategies include a range of initiatives, including those focused on school-aged youth, adults in worksites, and the broader community through bike and walking plans. No one effort alone is going to improve the health of our communities, and each should be thought of as a piece of the puzzle of our community's health.

Schools:



The Moving and Learning training is structured to provide teachers with the knowledge and skills to help their students utilize the training's techniques in the classroom. Dakota County sponsored two-hour trainings conducted by 1000 Petals¹ at several local schools. Some staff also received a residency, where further guidance and in-class support was offered. The following results highlight feedback given approximately 3 school-months after the training was provided.

In Dakota County, 426 staff members received the two-hour training, and 142 provided feedback 3 schools months after the training. The pie-chart to the right highlights the strong impact the training had with **94% using the techniques** and **57% using them frequently** (from 2 days a week to every day).



"I have seen a difference in my students who are diagnosed with anxiety for sure. They are able to stay calm and in the classroom for longer periods of time and they can actively use their knowledge to calm their bodies down." - Teacher

Child care:

In the past years of SHIP, many of the larger child care centers have been involved in trainings to incorporate additional physical activity in their sites. In 2017, a cohort of 6 childcare centers were trained, joining 16 sites trained in 2016.

The trainings reached 73 staff across 6 sites impacting 421 children. A few key changes included substituting water for sugary juice, increasing the number of vegetables served, replacing unhealthy snacks, and integrating movement into everyday activities.

Beyond the work done through these completed trainings, SHIP staff have specifically engaged with child care providers who may have been historically left out of statewide support systems such as legal, unlicensed providers or independently-run centers. SHIP support, including professional development opportunities, have been adapted and translated, often working with community



¹ <https://1000-petals.com/>
Prepared by ACET, Inc.

representatives and bicultural/bilingual speakers to tailor each to best meet their needs.

The Youth Support Program Manager at the YMCA led the Latino Family, Friend and Neighbor providers through sample noncompetitive games and physical activity exercises from the Coordinated Approach to Child Health (CATCH). The trainings have impacted participants' work as childcare providers. After the February session:

- 100% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they feel confident in their ability to use the content from the training with the children in their care
- One respondent reported: "*I now have methods that before I had no idea that they existed and now I will not only apply them in the childcare but also for myself.*"

Worksites:



Through SHIP funding, 8 organizations, reaching 2,000 employees, worked to encourage and provide opportunities to be physically active. One organization developed a Wellness Committee that planned programs such as a fitness survey, a "Stand, Stretch, and deStress" challenge, and a walking challenge. They also provided a wellness booth at their benefits event. Other organizations also held walking challenges and created wellness committees to continue to update the environment and policies around health.

Another worksite developed a map and other activities that will be included in new hire materials. The employees here shared;

- *"The City's Wellness Program is great in creating an overall motivation for employees."*
- *"New events that I enjoyed this year were Office Olympics and the Step Challenge. I feel this program is valuable and keeps wellness front of mind when many of us are sedentary at work."*



City and County Projects:

In SHIP 4 the County continued to work with Active Living Dakota County, a group made up of staff from City and County Parks, Planning and Public Health Departments. The group collaborates to plan, design and secure funding for new trails and sidewalks that support active living. SHIP supports these multi-year projects by providing resources for planning and design studies as well as grant writing.

Planning & Design Studies Completed

- City of Farmington Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan
- South St. Paul Mississippi River Greenway Wakota Trailhead and Overlook Design
- Eagan Soo Line Feasibility Studies

Grant Writing

Four projects involving improvements to trails and sidewalks in Dakota County were granted federal funding for construction, totaling \$5,442,240. SHIP funded a grant writer to help apply for these. For all applications

submitted in this round of funding, each dollar spent on grant preparations yielded \$272 in funds awarded, a 26,986% return on investment. Collaboration and shared expertise from City and County staff were integral to the success of grant applications.

Grants Secured by the grant writer for active living infrastructure in SHIP 4.

- North Creek Greenway in Lakeville and Farmington: \$480,000
- CSAH 42 Multiuse Trail and Crossing in Apple Valley: \$1,256,000
- Minnesota River Greenway in Eagan: \$3,508,000
- Greenleaf Elementary Galaxie Crossing in Apple Valley: \$ 198,240

Including Health Equity in City Comprehensive Plans

In 2016-17, Dakota County developed and shared five planning guides with city planners on ways to include health and health equity in comprehensive plans due in 2018. Topics included community health, land use, parks, transportation, and housing. A checklist was later developed by a collaborative metro group and shared. In 2018, County staff surveyed planners, asking about inclusion of health.

- 50-67% of respondents said they used the provided resources.
- 100% of those that responded about usefulness reported the resources were useful in facilitating a discussion and including policies regarding health in their comprehensive plans.
- The biggest changes reported were in healthy food access, health equity, and commercial tobacco-free environments, though an increase was reported in all targeted topical areas
- The Metro Food Access Network reported that more than 50% of the comprehensive plans in the 7-county metro region included food access language for the first time.

The Minnesota River Greenway trail, first proposed in 2011, will connect 6 communities from Burnsville to Saint Paul on the south side of the Minnesota River.

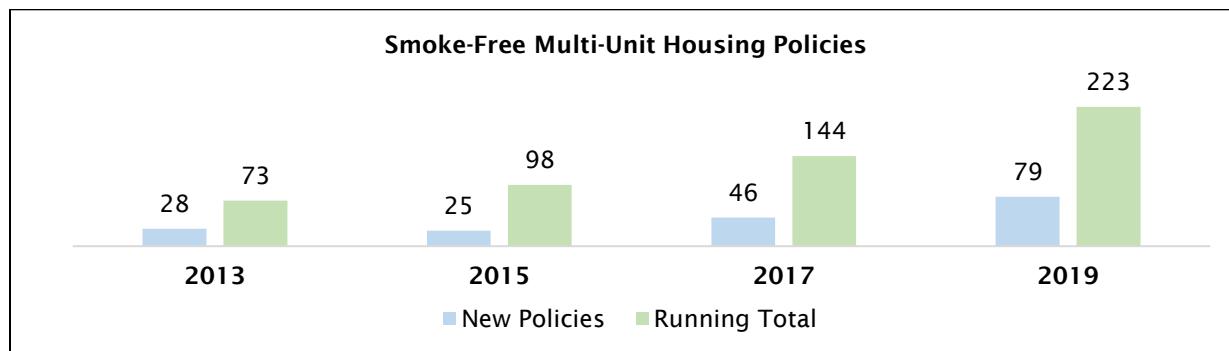
Today much of the trail is complete, but a 2.5-mile gap from Lone Oak Road in Eagan to Cedar Avenue in Eagan remains.

SHIP support has been essential in securing funding to fill the remaining gap. In 2016, with support from SHIP 4 (years 1-2), the County secured \$600,000 to build a trailhead at Cedar Avenue. In 2018, with support from SHIP 4 (years 3-4) the County secured another \$3.5 million to complete the trail. While funding is still needed for one more trail bridge crossing, soon residents will be able to enjoy the trail for both commuting and recreation.

Smoke-Free Housing

Since the beginning of SHIP funding, Dakota County has been working closely with the Association for Nonsmokers-Minnesota (ANSR) to support multi-unit housing owners and managers in implementing smoke-free policies. The work since 2014 has been instrumental in more than 100 policies being passed, impacting thousands of units and even more residents. SHIP 4, years 3 and 4 were most the most impactful with regards to new policies, including:

- 79 Policies
- 348 Buildings
- 4,997 Units
- 2,346 Affordable Units



The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) mandated all public housing facilities be smoke free by July 30, 2018. To help facilitate this transition, ANSR and SHIP staff worked alongside owners and managers to educate and prepare residents. Educational events, posters, handouts, and quit resources were all offered in the year leading up to the policy as well as months after. Health Partners was a key partner throughout the two-year process and provided residents free cessation coaching by a Certified Tobacco Treatment Specialist.



To help understand the impact of the policy change on residents, a survey was completed a year prior and a year after the policy was implemented. It was conducted in two buildings in South St. Paul, Nan McKay and John Carroll. The survey asked about issues around commercial tobacco use including the presence of smoke, the smell of smoke, and current commercial tobacco use, including a few open-ended questions.

Of approximately 300 residents (135 Nan McKay, 164 John Carroll), 165 (55% response rate) completed a pre-survey, and 93 (31% response rate) completed a post survey. In reviewing the pre-and post survey results, a few notable changes in behavior and environment can be seen. The responses of those who smell smoke were not different, but

- nearly half (49%) of respondents shared they did notice less second-hand smoke in the buildings since the policy was implemented, and
- 26 individuals shared they had cut back or quit smoking since the policy was implemented, with several more indicating interest in receiving information to help cut back or quit.

The strong partnerships, support of policy implementation, and resident engagement has helped facilitate a difficult change in public housing agencies in Dakota County. These efforts were highlighted at the National Conference on Tobacco and Health in Minneapolis in August 2019.

Health Equity-Focused Projects:



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This illustration shows that providing the same thing to everyone is not as helpful as providing what is needed and useful.

Commercial Tobacco Pilot Project with Youth	East African Girl's Club: Culturally-tailored Nutrition and Wellness	Latinx Community Engagement	School-based Health Equity Pilot Projects
<p>With the intent of building partnerships with agencies serving East African youth in Dakota County, SHIP staff worked closely with the Dar-us-Salam Mosque and the Tobacco-Free Alliance to develop and deliver tobacco education. The agencies worked together to tailor an existing curriculum and engaged more than 100 youth. The project is continuing forward with youth leading the development of an educational video.</p>	<p>Community partners from Dar-us-Salam Mosque and SHIP staff worked with the University of Minnesota Extension to provide nutrition-education training in a tailored and culturally appropriate way to 30 East African youth and parents. Specific efforts have been made to build relationships to support the sustainability of the partnership, finding project champions and addressing identified needs of this community.</p>	<p>SHIP staff launched a new and evolving effort to authentically engage the county's Latinx community. In partnership with a Latina community engagement specialist, over 150 Latinx residents, leaders and advocates were engaged in identifying strengths, assets and needs of the community. One outcome is early plans to further advance local Latinx leadership and advocacy towards greater health opportunities.</p>	<p>Dakota County SHIP staff instituted a new addition to their Schools Strategy with a goal of raising awareness and building capacity of districts to address health equity. Each districts' health equity projects were unique, designed by Wellness Committee leaders, and tailored to the respective school communities. SHIP staff were selected to present on this health equity approach at the statewide Every Kid Health conference in November of 2019.</p>

Moving Forward

SHIP 4 (years 3 and 4) efforts have resulted in countless successes, and the work accomplished could not have been done in isolation. Dakota County looks forward to continued partnerships with individuals and organizations who are working to increase opportunities for all residents to attain their highest level of health.