



# BUILDING A HEALTHIER DAKOTA COUNTY

Progress Report, April 2023

## Dakota County SHIP Profile 2021 - 2022

- 460,357 residents
- \$782,852 awarded by the Minnesota Department of Health
- \$418,644 distributed to community partners
- \$1,323,083 leveraged in additional grant funds for community partners
- 11<sup>th</sup> year as SHIP grantee

The **Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP)** helps build thriving communities by implementing community-driven solutions for all people in Minnesota to live longer, healthier lives. Chronic conditions are major drivers of decreased quality of life, premature death, health inequities and healthcare costs in Dakota County. In fact, ninety percent of the nation's health care costs are for people with chronic conditions, and the majority of those costs are preventable<sup>1</sup>.

SHIP's unique, locally-based structure allows for adapting to community needs by creating opportunities for residents to be physically active, access healthy food, reduce commercial tobacco use and achieve well-being. In doing so, SHIP is protecting the health of current Dakota County residents while promoting the health of future generations.

## Health Equity - Supporting Opportunities for ALL to be Healthy

SHIP efforts focus on creating health equity. This means ensuring that all residents have the opportunities they need to realize their full health potential, regardless of structures or systems of society that unfairly benefit one population over another. This is reflected across strategies:

### SCHOOLS

10 school districts implemented sustainable wellness efforts; partnered with cultural liaisons & family advocates to advance equity

### WORKSITES

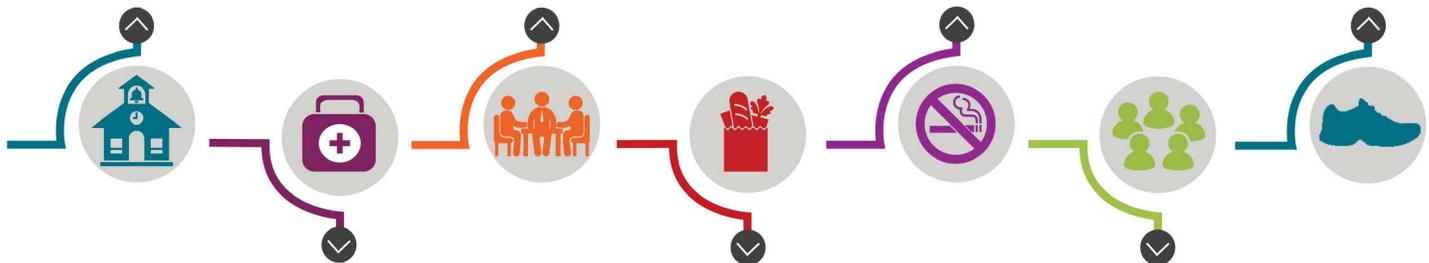
Partnered with 6 worksites with fewer resources to support employees' physical activity, tobacco cessation and mental health and well-being

### TOBACCO-FREE LIVING

Supported commercial tobacco prevention efforts through policy, systems & environmental changes that lead with health equity

### ACTIVE LIVING

Partnered with 4 cities to foster more walkable and bikeable communities and supported bilingual outdoor programs in partnership with DC Parks



### HEALTH CARE

Connected schools and existing healthcare organizations to increase access to school-located preventive healthcare in Dakota County

### HEALTHY FOOD ACCESS

Assisted 6 food shelves and 10 Farmer's Markets in ensuring residents experience an equitable, just, nourishing, and resilient food system that is responsive to change

### COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP TEAM

DC SHIP has been deepening a health-equity focused partnership with Cultural Family Advocates (CFA's) and Cultural Liaisons (CL's) representing 6 public school districts across the County



## Community Leadership Team

Deepening health equity priorities by continuing partnership with South of the River Collaborative (SotRC) made up of Cultural Family Advocates (CFA's) and Cultural Liaisons (CL's) representing 6 public school districts across the County. These staff support students and families with language or other access barriers in navigating the school system, and getting connected to many resources related to health and well-being. CL's/CFA's also play a crucial role in supporting colleagues on topics related to intercultural competency to further help students. The group continues to expand their membership across the County, supporting each other's growth, learning, and resilience - thus expanding their capacity to be vital leaders in their communities.

## Healthy Food Access

Through a partnership with all ten county farmers markets working to increase access to healthy, locally-grown Minnesota produce, 550 Market Bucks mailings were sent to all County SNAP households and a multi-county transit ad was installed on bus and light rail lines to promote these opportunities. Six food shelf partners received funding for sustainable policy, systems and environmental changes such as diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) trainings for staff and volunteers, creation of raised garden plots for equitable, accessible (mobility access for elderly and all), culturally inclusive healthy food access, and environmental projects that resulted in the expansion of culturally specific offerings and acceptance of healthy food rescue items.

## Community

Partnered with Dakota County Libraries to co-host a series of community discussions on *Cross-Cultural Communication and Resilience* and on *Purpose, Belonging, and Joy* led by Adrian Michael Green. A total of 47 community members participated.

## Schools

10 public school districts – including 92 individual sites – implemented sustainable wellness efforts focused on active living, healthy food access, mental health and wellbeing, commercial tobacco, and vaping prevention & health equity. School partners led policy revisions, updated system processes, and created environments to support the health and well-being of students and staff.

## Worksites

Worked with professional worksites to support employers in the areas of SHIP focus. South St Paul Public School District joined the worksite collaborative and focused work on lactation support and creating chestfeeding-friendly spaces, successfully developing lactation space in 4 separate buildings throughout the district with new signage, chairs, mirrors, mini fridges, utility carts. The district completed an assessment, reviewed and revised school district policies and a 'Nursing Mother's Workplace Protections' section was added to the Employee Handbook.

*"The fact that we have been able to designate 4 spaces and make them comfortable for nursing mothers in just a matter of months is a huge success for this District. The support from HR, Buildings & Grounds, Nutrition Services, and School Admin has been a driving force behind these changes, and it's exciting to think that there are plans for the future to make these spaces more permanent."* - Wellness Committee Chair & Nursing Mother

## Tobacco-Free Living

West St Paul smoke-free multi-unit housing survey results show 91% of residents support a disclosure of smoking policy and 75% support a smoke-free requirement. Tobacco-Free Society, a student group at Eagan high school, led vaping prevention presentations to students at multiple middle schools in the County this past school year. Important outcomes from these peer to peer workshops include younger students learning from their older peers about vaping's harmful effects to the developing brain, the commercial tobacco industry's marketing tactics to attract young people, available quit vaping resources, and opportunities to join them in tobacco prevention advocacy work.

## Healthcare

Supported new initiatives to link existing healthcare organizations and school community partners to strengthen collective capacity for delivering preventive healthcare and addressing social determinants of health for students and families.

## Active Living

8 Spanish language or bilingual programs were created with Dakota County Parks and Huellas Latinas, reaching a total of 112 people to highlight six parks and trail systems to new park users. 3 cities received funding to develop city-wide plans identifying future projects to create a more walkable and rideable communities.

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[www.dakotacounty.us](http://www.dakotacounty.us) (search "SHIP")

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