

# Plan4Health: Kentucky Coalition for Healthy Communities

## SUMMARY

Plan4Health connects communities across the country, funding work at the intersection of planning and public health. Anchored by American Planning Association (APA) chapters and American Public Health Association (APHA) affiliates, Plan4Health supports creative partnerships to build sustainable, cross-sector coalitions. The Kentucky Coalition for Healthy Communities seeks to improve access to affordable, local produce and to increase opportunities for physical activity for Kentucky residents age 45 years and older who live in rural parts of the state.



## CHALLENGE

The United Health Foundation recently ranked Kentucky 48th out of 50 for adult health. The coalition is targeting six counties in north central Kentucky and has a priority population of adults 45 and older with one or more chronic diseases. Residents with chronic diseases account for more than 82 percent of the target demographic and a total of 75,403 community members. When compared to the U.S., the six counties had higher rates of inadequate fruit

and vegetable consumption and lack of physical activity. Only 16 percent of adults eat five or more fruits and vegetables a day and only 33 percent participated in 30 minutes of physical activity five or more days per week; 17 percent of adults reported no physical activity. Adults in this region have an identified need for increased access to healthy foods, exercise facilities, and opportunities for physical activity.

## YOUR INVOLVEMENT IS KEY

Residents in the KIPDA region can stay engaged and up-to-date with coalition news and events by visiting the coalition's website ([www.kchcommunities.org](http://www.kchcommunities.org)) and Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/KCHCommunities/](http://www.facebook.com/KCHCommunities/)).

To learn more about the Kentucky Rural Health Coalition and all coalitions participating in Plan4Health, check out the project website ([www.plan4health.us](http://www.plan4health.us)). Join the national conversation at the intersection of planning and public health on social media by using and following #plan4health.

*"I really hope we keep doing these walks. It's a great way to get out and get some exercise."*

*Community member after Oldham County Challenge Walk.*

## SOLUTION

The Kentucky Coalition for Healthy Communities will develop and leverage partnerships to promote physical activity opportunities through the creation of new programs and shared and joint-use agreements as well as increase access to affordable fresh fruits and vegetables. The coalition will increase policies conducive to community gardens as well as the number of community gardens and partners to distribute produce. Resource packets containing information on sites for physical activity, community gardens, and more will be created and distributed to the target population.

## RESULTS

During the month of September, five of the six target counties hosted county challenge walks to expose the public to existing spaces for physical activity. The challenge walks were an expansion of a diabetes walk that took place in Bullitt, Henry, and Shelby County in previous years. The idea behind the walks is to encourage residents to walk for an hour or less at their own pace while wearing a pedometer. The walks are meant to encourage physical activity at all levels and ages, so it is not a race to a finish line. At the end of the walks, steps are counted and age group winners are announced as well as an overall county winner. This year, Oldham and Trimble counties joined the challenge with great success. In its first year of participation, Oldham County had the highest turnout and number of steps out of all of the counties.

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