

LA CROSSE COUNTY

Community Health Improvement Plan

2025-2027



LA CROSSE COUNTY
Health Department
Nationally Accredited



Executive Summary

The Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) describes the health priorities for La Crosse County. The plan was created by looking at local data from the Community Health Assessment, setting local health priorities with partners, and including state and national priorities into the plan.



The Process

shows how we walk through the Community Health Improvement Plan steps

Resources

describes the local resources we have for addressing our health priorities

Vision, Goals, and Objectives

summarizes the three health priority areas and the actionable steps that we will take in our plan

In our health improvement planning, we worked with our community and partners to understand the unique picture of La Crosse County. Together, we determined the health priorities to focus on in the next 3 to 5 years.

Our priorities for 2025-2027

Behavioral Health

Includes:

- Mental Health
- Substance Use Prevention
- Suicide Prevention



Healthy Environment

Includes:

- Safe Housing
- Food Access & Nutrition
- Mobility & Transportation



Access to Care

Includes:

- Access to Health Services
- Dental Health



A special thank you to the community stakeholders for participating in the priority setting sessions and Health Department staff for their dedication to the development of the La Crosse County Community Health Improvement Plan.

About Our Community

La Crosse County is located in the southwest area of Wisconsin and is home to over 120,000 people. The following boxes show the diverse make-up of the residents that live in our county.

Race and Ethnicity

0.4% American Indian or Alaska Native
 4.7% Asian
 1.6% Black or African American
 2.5% Hispanic or Latino
 3.7% Two or More Races
 87.5% White, non-Hispanic

*All racial and ethnic categories are self-identified.

Gender



Education



96%

of adults age 25 or older
 have a high school degree
 or equivalent, such as a
 GED

Rural and Urban

La Crosse County has 2 cities, 4 villages, and 12 towns.

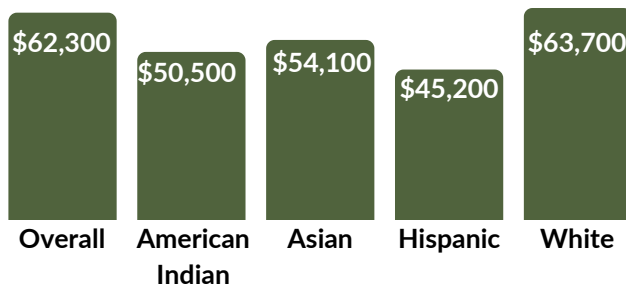


17% Rural Households



83% Urban Households

Average Household Income



Home Ownership



Languages

English is the primary language in La Crosse County.

5.5% of La Crosse County residents
 speak a language other than
 English

Additional languages include:

- Hmong
- Spanish
- German
- French
- Norwegian
- Arabic
- Chinese
- Korean
- Hebrew
- Italian
- Tagalog
- Polish
- Japanese
- Winnebago
- Finnish
- Vietnamese
- Swedish
- Russian

The Process

Every three years, we complete a Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). The CHIP is a process that develops an action plan for our community to use when working on the top three health priorities. The Health Department and local partners identify health priorities, plan strategies, develop an action plan, and track progress. We follow steps outlined in two popular frameworks - American Hospital Association Community Health Improvement (ACHI) and Mobilizing Action for Planning and Partnerships (MAPP).

Here are the steps we use to guide the health assessment and improvement plan process:



The Community Health Assessment and Improvement Plan use these 9 steps to complete the process. The first 6 steps were completed in the Community Health Assessment and can be read about in the [2024 Report](#). The Community Health Improvement Plan includes the last few steps where priorities are finalized with community input.

Step 5: Set priorities

As a community, La Crosse County partners came together in the spring of 2024 to host community conversations. The conversations were a time to learn more about the identified health needs, discuss what resources already exist, and provide feedback on the priorities that are the most important to address in La Crosse County. A short survey was also posted on social media channels to allow for more participation among residents.

People that participated in the community conversations represented local business, education, faith, government, health and human services, non-profit organizations, and the general public. There were 77 individuals that came to the meetings with over 30 organizations represented in the conversations. Another 80+ community members provided feedback with the online survey.

With feedback from our community, we determined the top priority health areas. We will focus our time and efforts on these three areas of health:



**Step 6:
Tell the story**

The Community Health Assessment (CHA) provides health data while sharing the story of the lived experience of our residents. The report includes La Crosse County data that describes the living conditions, health behavior, disease, injury, and health outcomes in our community. To review the 2024 Community Health Assessment, visit the [La Crosse County Health Department website](#).

**Step 7:
Plan strategies**

To begin the CHIP process, we use the health assessment data to identify strategies that will improve the health of La Crosse County. The CHA is designed to be a reflection of our community's needs and the CHIP begins the work to create positive community-wide change that enhances health for all. Each health priority area has a workgroup that plans strategies and creates action steps.

In the fall of 2024, CHIP workgroups reviewed the goals and strategies from the 2024 CHIP Action Plans. The workgroups connected the two plans through a shared vision statement and inclusion of objectives from the State Health Improvement Plan and Healthy People 2030.

**Step 8:
Develop
action plan**

The three-year plan is designed with broad goal statements and strategies. Each year, the CHIP work groups develop an action plan with measurable objectives, a lead agency or person, and evaluation measures. The yearly plan allows for flexibility, program growth, and changes in key needs.

The workgroups use evidence-based programs and policy to guide the action plan development. We aim to foster collaborative solutions that are founded in community ideas and driven by local needs. Community-driven solutions will focus on areas of greatest need to enhance health equity for all.

**Step 9:
Evaluate**

Throughout the year, CHIP workgroups monitor progress through regular meetings, data collection, and quarterly reporting. The CHIP Quarterly reports are provided to the La Crosse County Health and Human Services Board and are posted on the health department website.

CHIP Resources

CHIP Stakeholders

CHIP Work Groups

La Crosse County Community Assets



CHIP Stakeholders

La Crosse County held three stakeholder meetings in the spring of 2024. During the meetings, community members and organizations learned about the health needs in La Crosse County. The stakeholders gave their input about which health areas need the most attention. Their feedback was used to create the top three health priority areas that we will address in our county.

The stakeholder meetings held in La Crosse County included 77 individuals from 33 different organizations. The agencies are listed below:



- Allina Health
- Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater La Crosse
- CASA for Kids, Inc.
- Chileda
- City of La Crosse - Fire Department
- Coulee Recovery Center
- Couleecap, Inc.
- Family and Children's Center
- Gateway Area Council, Boy Scouts of America
- Great Rivers 211
- Great Rivers United Way
- Gundersen Health System
- Hunger Task Force
- La Crosse Area Family YMCA
- La Crosse County Administration, Economic and Community Development
- La Crosse County Board
- La Crosse County Health Department
- La Crosse County Human Services
- La Crosse Medical Health Science Consortium
- LeaderEthics
- Mayo Clinic Health System
- ODCorp
- Outdoor Recreation Alliance
- Scenic Bluffs Community Health Centers
- Scenic Rivers AHEC
- School District of Holmen
- School District of La Crosse
- School District of Onalaska
- The Nature Place
- The Parenting Place
- The Salvation Army
- University of Wisconsin - La Crosse
- Viterbo University

CHIP Work Groups



Behavioral Health Team

- **Chelsey Boldon, Health Educator***
- Katie Boone, Health Educator
- Karlene Buckmaster, Social Worker
- Emily Dix, Nutrition Educator
- Kaycee Irwin, Health Educator
- Tracy Kayser, Dental Hygienist
- Rachel King, Epidemiologist
- Nikki Kvam, Health Educator
- Jennifer Logging, Family Health Manager
- Laura Runchey, Health Educator



Healthy Environment Team

- Chelsey Boldon, Health Educator
- Karlene Buckmaster, Social Worker
- Emily Dix, Nutrition Educator
- Kristin Engstrom, Nutrition Educator
- **Rachel King, Epidemiologist***
- Nikki Kvam, Health Educator
- Jennifer Logging, Family Health Manager
- Mekaela Malloy, Sanitarian
- Hannah Shimanek, Sanitarian



Access to Care Team

- Bridget Boland Cardinali, Access to Care Manager
- Karlene Buckmaster, Social Worker
- Emma Hood, Public Health Nurse
- Maichor Lee, Health Educator
- Tracy Kayser, Dental Hygienist
- **Rachel King, Epidemiologist***
- Jaime McLean, Health Educator
- Lindsey Schwarz-Nichols, Social Worker
- Shana Steedle, Public Health Nurse

*Denotes workgroup lead



The CHIP Work Groups develop annual action plans. Each plan includes measurable objectives, a lead agency or person, and evaluation measures. The teams use evidence-based programs and policy to guide the work.

The current teams consist of health department staff that work in collaboration with community partners and coalitions. With a foundation in equity, our teams work on activities that meet the greatest health needs of our community.

The goal of our plans are to work with our partners to create lasting change in La Crosse County. We work to create a healthy community for all by changing policies, systems, and the environment.



During the community conversations, partners were asked about the current resources that we have to address our health needs. This list does not include every resource, but is a reflection of the conversations. These types of community resources will be helpful for implementing the health improvement action plans.

Community Resources



Physical Places & Buildings

- Boys & Girls Club
- Coulee Recovery Center
- YMCA
- Scenic Bluffs
- Parenting Place
- Gundersen Health System
- Mayo Clinic Health System
- Food pantries
- Family & Children's Center
- Aging & Disability Resource Center
- Public & private school districts
- VARC
- YWCA
- St. Clare Health Mission
- REACH Center
- CouleeCap
- 3 colleges (UWL, WTC, Viterbo)
- Churches
- Neighborhood Family Clinic
- Salvation Army
- Senior low income housing



Skills in our Community

- Community Dental Care Coordinator & La Crosse Smiles
- Community Health Workers
- County Social Workers
- Healthcare staff and departments
- La Crosse County staff and departments
- City of La Crosse Fire, Police, and Zoning
- College students
- CASA for Kids
- Safe Families for Children
- RSVP
- Street Med Team
- Tri-State Ambulance
- Women, Infants, and Children
- St. Clare's Mobile Health Unit
- Family & Children's Center staff



Associations & Networks

- 1000 Friends of Wisconsin
- 4H Club
- AARP of Wisconsin
- Alliance to Heal
- Better Together
- Falls Prevention Coalition
- Great Rivers 211
- Neighborhood associations
- Rotary clubs
- City/County Homeless Action Plan
- Coulee Collaborative to End Homelessness
- Safe Kids Coalition
- Mental Health Coalition
- Health Science Consortium
- The Little Heart Project
- Findhelp



Cultural Assets & Diversity

- Hmoob Cultural and Community Agency
- Hope Restores



Funding & Philanthropy

- Generous donors
- Great Rivers United Way
- Catholic Charities
- Volunteers



Natural Resources & Outdoor Spaces

- The Nature Place
- Local parks
- Nature spots - bluffs, river, outdoor recreation areas
- GROW La Crosse



Business & Local Economy

- Local businesses
- Marine Credit Union 1st Home Program
- La Crosse Chamber of Commerce
- Altra
- Non-profits

Health Priorities

Behavioral Health Vision, Goals, and Strategies

Healthy Environment Vision, Goals, and Strategies

Access to Care Vision, Goals, and Strategies



Behavioral Health Vision

Build a community that prioritizes protective factors for positive childhood experiences and resilient communities.

1

Increase the number of youth that remain substance free.

- Strategy 1: Reduce e-cigarette use among youth through developing and strengthening tobacco prevention policies.
- Strategy 2: Reduce alcohol use among youth through developing and strengthening alcohol prevention policies.
- Strategy 3: Reduce marijuana use among youth through developing and strengthening marijuana prevention policies.
- Strategy 4: Improve youth and adult perceptions on substance use through stigma reduction.

2

Increase mental health and resiliency among La Crosse County residents.

- Strategy 1: Increase screenings for perinatal mental health.
- Strategy 2: Increase connections to resources that provide access to mental health services for people in need.

3

Reduce stigma surrounding substance use.

- Strategy 1: Decrease opioid use for people with non-traumatic dental pain.
- Strategy 2: Reduce stigma surrounding substance use.
- Strategy 3: Increase access to harm reduction resources.
- Strategy 4: Develop suicide and self-harm prevention recommendations.

Healthy Environment Vision

Collaborate for solutions that build healthier and more accessible neighborhoods where people are connected to what they need where they live.

1

Improve the quality, safety, and accessibility of housing for La Crosse County residents.

- Strategy 1: Increase access to resources that improve the safety of homes for people in need.
- Strategy 2: Improve the quality of homes for a safe and healthy living environment.
- Strategy 3: Educate about the policy, systems, and environmental changes that impact health outcomes related to a safe and healthy living environment.

2

Increase year-round access to healthy, affordable, and culturally appropriate foods for low-income and low-access neighborhoods.

- Strategy 1: Educate about the policy, systems, and environmental changes that can impact health outcomes related to food and food access.
- Strategy 2: Develop relationships with trusted partners and community stakeholders.

3

Increase the number of La Crosse County residents who walk or bike to get places.

- Strategy 1: Increase opportunities to encourage and educate children, youth, and their families about walking and biking.
- Strategy 2: Expand Safe Routes to School programming to middle and high school students.
- Strategy 3: Advocate for improved infrastructure that can increase walking and biking opportunities.
- Strategy 4: Develop relationships with trusted partners and community stakeholders to positively impact health equity.

Access to Care Vision

Grow a system of care that represents and supports underserved people to get the right care at the right time.

1

Increase access to clinical services for communities that experience health inequities.

Strategy 1: Increase vaccine clinics in areas with greatest needs.

Strategy 2: Increase dental care access for children in grades K-12.

Strategy 3: Increase lead testing for kids that are 1-5 years old.

Strategy 4: Develop relationships with trusted partners and community stakeholders.

2

Enhance organizational health literacy throughout La Crosse County Health Department.

Strategy 1: Increase staff skill in using health literacy standards.

Strategy 2: Establish tools that enhance organizational health literacy.

3

Increase connections to resources that provide access to care services for people in need.

Strategy 1: Increase the number of people with health insurance.

Strategy 2: Increase outreach opportunities to people in need of education, resources, and services.