

## 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 Food-Resources-Education-Security-Health Project (F.R.E.S.H.) aims to work with County government, Native American Nations and community organizations in east central Wisconsin to improve access to local, fresh food.



# THE F.R.E.S.H. PROJECT

FOOD • RESOURCES • EDUCATION • SECURITY • HEALTH

## CHALLENGE

The Menominee and Shawano area has a combined population of 46,000, with mostly Caucasian and Native American residents. These communities rank poorly in health outcomes, with Menominee and Shawano Counties ranking 72nd and 47th out of 72 counties, respectively. Unemployment is high and median incomes are below the state average; 11.5 percent to 31.4 percent of residents are living in poverty. Menominee County's childhood

poverty rate is 59 percent. Diabetes and coronary heart disease rates are elevated, and obesity rates in both counties are higher than state and national averages. Significant portions of both counties are considered food deserts. Only three Shawano County municipalities have full service grocery stores and Menominee County has only one. Agriculture accounts for a large percentage of economic activity, but only 95 of the 1,200 farms in the area sell local products directly to customers.

## YOUR INVOLVEMENT IS KEY

To learn more about Plan4Health check out the project website ([www.plan4health.us](http://www.plan4health.us)) and join the national conversation by using and following #plan4health.

*"Kids make you rethink your eating habits because you want them to be healthy."*

*-Food pantry patron*

## Contact

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## SOLUTION

The F.R.E.S.H. Project will build capacity to improve access to healthy food by creating a coalition of planning and public health professionals, University of Wisconsin Extension staff, social service agency representatives, people working in the local food system, and community activists. Data will be gathered through surveys and focus groups to analyze barriers to access, understand consumer behaviors, and inform future decision. Ultimately, this project will lead to an enhanced local food system where fresh produce is more readily accessible throughout these communities, making healthier food choices easier and improving overall health outcomes.

## RESULTS

The FRESH Project is working to increase the capacity of the whole community to create a better quality of life for everyone. In collaboration with the Plan4Health national staff, the Project has provided two training events that were open to the entire community. First, a trainer with the Directors of Health Prevention and Education led a half-day session on creating Policy, System, and Environment changes. Second, Mark Winne, a national expert on food systems, gave a talk on how food systems can be designed to provide healthy food to all people. Both of the sessions were well attended by community leaders, non-profit organizations, human services groups, and interested individuals, and the feedback for both was very positive. Through these events, the FRESH Project is building capacity and developing strong connections in the community.

## SUSTAINING SUCCESS

The FRESH Project's work has built a first-ever coalition between Native communities, county government, non-profit organizations, farmers, and the religious community in the Shawano-Menominee area. In order to sustain that effort and coalition, a strong organization has emerged that has shared leadership, a concrete set of goals, formal commitments from its partners, and a recognizable name and mission in the community. That history, mission, strategic plan and organization have provided the FRESH Project with funding opportunities that did not exist before the initial Plan4Health grant. These opportunities that will help make the implementation phase move forward in a positive and timely manner.

Plan4Health is made possible with funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The views expressed in this success story do not necessarily reflect the official policies of the CDC or imply endorsement by the U.S. Government. Learn more about Plan4Health and the National Implementation and Dissemination for Chronic Disease Prevention project at [www.cdc.gov/communityhealth](http://www.cdc.gov/communityhealth).