

Healthy Eating Strategies in Brown, Nicollet, Le Sueur and Waseca Counties

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Introduction & Background

- Brown, Nicollet, Le Sueur, and Waseca Counties are home to over 105,000 individuals
- 29% to 30% of adults living in Brown, Nicollet, Le Sueur, and Waseca Counties are obese compared to 26% of all Minnesotans
- Today Americans spend almost half of their budgets on food away from the home compared to less than 25% in 1955
- Healthy Together - a partnership of Brown, Nicollet, Le Sueur, and Waseca Counties – works with a community Leadership Team and Partners to improve the health of residents with support from the Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP)

Objectives

- The main objectives of the project were to assist local SHIP staff in their evaluation capacity and planning for the next grant period through:
- Evaluating progress of Healthy Together initiatives and structure by surveying Community Leadership Team (CLT)
 - Evaluating relationship and interest with community partners in continuing this work
 - Engaging community members and key stakeholders to develop healthy eating strategies work plan for the next fiscal year.

Healthy Together Partnership Results

Partnership Definition

- 17 community partners completed the survey. The pie chart below displays their definition of their partnership with Healthy Together:



Strength of Partnership

- Majority of community partners agreed or strongly agreed that their organizations benefit from their partnership with Healthy Together and that the work accomplished by the partnership meets their expectations
- 16 respondents agreed that their organizational goals align with those of Healthy Together

Communication

- Partners reported high satisfaction with communication with SHIP staff and community partners
- 11 partners said they incorporated messaging from Healthy Together into their work with other partners

Multi-County Structure

- 8 partners agreed that the multi-county structure allows for greater reach while the remaining were neutral or mixed.
- 4 respondents said they agreed or strongly agreed that the multi-county structure impeded the process and 4 others disagreed or strongly disagreed

Healthy Together Coalition Results

Coalition

- 9 members of the Community Leadership Team (CLT) completed the survey

Level of Involvement

- Mixed responses about the level of involvement in the subject areas of cultural diversity, participation of influential people from key sectors and representation from all communities
- Suggestions for improvement: engaging multicultural partners and provide an orientation process for new members

Planning & Implementation

- All members were very satisfied, satisfied or neutral with planning, implementation, and clarity of vision of Healthy Together
- Suggestions for improvement: ensuring all communities are recipients of funding and providing a better picture of SHIP as a whole

Leadership

- 7 respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the balance of decision making while the remaining 2 were neutral
- Strength and competence of SHIP staff was the highest rated area under leadership.

Meeting Structure & Engagement

- Suggestions for improvement: improve efficiency or meetings through high-level overviews and identifying roles of coalition members

Communications

- Suggestions for improvement: develop a communications plan, contract with experts and allow CLT to view progress reports to know what information is shared with the Minnesota Department of Health

Methodology

Healthy Together Coalition & Partnership Surveys

- Consulted SHIP staff, community partners and existing literature to develop questions to evaluate the partnerships between Community Leadership Team (CLT) and Community Partners
- Created anonymous online survey through Catalyst and distributed surveys to key stakeholders identified by SHIP staff
- Analyzed results and compiled final report to distribute to SHIP staff and Community Leadership Team

Healthy Eating Work Plan Development

- Explored evidenced-based strategies to inform "Healthy Eating in Communities" work plan for the next year of funding with a focus on Healthy Retail
- Interviewed SHIP Coordinators, Minnesota Department of Health Staff, Representatives from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Restaurant Owners, and Food Distributors to learn about Healthy Restaurant initiatives across the state and country
- Provided draft work plan for "Healthy Restaurants" program for SHIP 4 including plans to develop a Healthy Restaurant Advisory Group, engage restaurant owners, target priority populations and develop protocol for approval

Recommendations & Next Steps

Based on the recommendations from the Healthy Together Partnership and Coalition surveys, the student advised SHIP staff to invest in communications planning and implementation. Healthy Eating strategies have been shown to be most successful with branding and promotion. SHIP staff should also make a concerted effort to bring cultural diversity to their partnerships and community leadership time. In its two years as Healthy Together, this was the first partner and coalition assessment. It is recommended to reassess throughout the year and incorporate feedback into work plans.