

2023-2026

# Norton County Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)



## Acknowledgements

The **Norton County Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)** is the result of collaborative efforts among multiple community partners. Live Well Norton, Norton County Hospital and Norton Regional Health Foundation spearheaded the process by assembling data sources, gathering a Design Team of community members, contracting for facilitation services, and extending invitations to the public to participate. Funding was provided by Blue Cross and Blue Shield Pathways to a Healthy Kansas program. Facilitation and technical support were provided by Wichita State University Community Engagement Institute, Center for Public Health Initiatives.

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## Preface

This report describes the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) of Norton County, a community-initiated plan to address the public health priorities determined by studies of the community. “The Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) is the ‘roadmap’ for improving public health system performance, improving population health, and keeping community health planning visible to local decision-makers and communities. It lays out a long-term, strategic effort to address public health issues based on the Community Health Assessment (CHA) results” ([CHIP Collaborative Handbook](#)). The CHIP should address the full range of strengths, weaknesses, challenges, and opportunities that exist in the community. It should look beyond the actions, responsibilities, and performance of any one agency, and instead look to ways many organizations will contribute to the overall health and wellbeing of the community. The CHIP is the opportunity to move beyond identifying the health challenges of the community. This is a chance to look at root causes and design thoughtful, evidence-based approaches to improving community health in a measurable way.



## Norton County Community Profile

Norton County is in the northwest region of the U.S. State of Kansas. The county is 881 square miles, and it borders the state line and neighboring counties of Decatur, Graham, Phillips, Rooks, and Sheridan. The county was established in 1867.

There are four cities in the county, including Almena, Edmond, Lenora, and Norton. The City of Norton is the largest population center and county seat. City residents celebrated the 150<sup>th</sup> birthday of the town in summer 2022.

**Population Demographics.** In 2021, the Norton County population was 5,342. Older adults (65+) comprise 20% of the population with 10% of the population over the age of 75. In comparison to the State of Kansas, the Norton County age demographic is 5% greater for older adults, and 5% less in youth. The median age for Norton County residents is 42, as compared to age 37 for Kansas residents. Individuals of Hispanic or Latino ethnicity are a growing portion of the population, comprising 5.5% which is a 1% increase in the last decade.

**Income/Poverty.** There are 393 people living below the poverty level in Norton County. The poverty rate (7.3%) is lower than the state (11.1%), and mid-range for counties in the region. The median household income in Norton County is \$48,486, which is lower than Kansas at \$61,091. Single-parent households comprise 7.3% compared to 12.8% in the state. Of those, 6.2% are led by women compared to 9.1% in Kansas.

**Disabilities.** Persons living with a disability comprise 13.9% of the population, which is higher than the state of Kansas at 13.0%. While fewer children are living with a disability (1.4% compared to 4.4%), 34% of Norton County residents are living with a disability which is the same as the state. Of those living with a disability, 62.8% are over the age of 75. Disabilities by type are comparable to the state, with 6.1% for ambulatory difficulties being the most frequent.



## Norton County Community Health Needs Assessment

In September 2021, Norton County residents participated in a community health needs assessment (CHNA) for their community. Feedback from residents was given in writing as responses to online and paper surveys and verbally by attending a community forum. The purpose of this process was to gather information to paint an accurate portrait of the community's health status.

Responses from residents indicated concerns and needs impacting the health of the community. The primary health concerns/needs for Norton County are healthcare access and affordability, behavioral health and the use of illegal drugs, use of commercial tobacco products in public spaces, healthy eating, options for physical activity and cancer. Additional details can be found in the report titled "Norton County Community Health Needs Assessment Final Report" prepared by the contractors from WSU CEI Center for Applied Research and Evaluation. Click [HERE](#) to access.

## Additional Plans Used in the CHIP Process

In addition to the CHNA report, Norton County residents have participated in other significant community plans in the last year. The CHIP Design Team used data from the following plans to select relevant data sources for further analysis during the CHIP process:

- Norton County Hospital Strategic Progress Summary, 2022-2024
- Norton Comprehensive Plan, March 2022
- Norton County Regional Food System Assessment, July 2022



## Public Health Priorities identified for consideration

The Norton County CHIP Design Team worked with facilitators from WSU CEI to identify a set of priority areas which were evident from the four community assessments/plans. Additional data was gathered for each priority area by WSU CEI staff. These data were published on small posters to create a gallery walk of community data. This collection of data is available as Appendix A. Priority Areas included in this process were:

1. Demographics
2. Behavioral Health
3. Cancer
4. Childcare
5. Food
6. Housing for Older Adults
7. Physical Activity
8. Tobacco and Vaping

# The Norton County Community Health Improvement Plan

## Community Health Improvement Planning

Once the priority areas were identified through the CHNA process and CHIP Design Team, stakeholders turned their attention to making key decisions to construct the 2022-2025 Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). These decisions were guided by the Community Health Improvement Planning Handbook, published in April 2015 by the Kansas Health Institute (KHI).

- Priorities for Action
- Goals for Norton County
- Desired Outcomes
- Measurable Objectives

## Community Engagement

Community members were invited by the Norton CHIP Design Team to attend two working sessions: Consensus Workshop (Oct. 5, 2022) and Action Plan Meeting (Oct. 6, 2022). The two events will produce identified priorities for action through the CHIP including goals, outcomes, and measurable objectives for each. The five Design Team members invited an additional 14 members of the community to attend the working sessions. Sectors represented by the invitations included healthcare (hospital, public health, Valley Hope, Define Gym), business/employers (chamber of commerce, economic development, schools, corrections), community programs (Norton Pride, summer lunch program, farmers market, pathways) and volunteer service.

Eight (8) attended the Consensus Workshop session. At the beginning of the work session, participants were introduced to the Simon Sinek Golden Circle model which leads us to the “why” of our actions.



Participants were asked to reflect on “why” a CHIP plan is needed and their participation is important. Reflections included:

- Leveling up local
- Achieving educational goals for youth and employees
- Longevity of the community
- Sustainability of the community
- Supporting aging in place
- Alignment with the hospital mission
- Intergenerational opportunities

### Data Walk

Attendees were divided into two groups to review the public health priorities identified by the CHIP Design Team. Group members studied the data provided by WSU CEI in a Data Walk exercise. They discussed professional and personal reflections of each category, identified assets which exist in the community addressing the priority area, and challenges which exist as a barrier to progress. The Data Walk images are included as Appendix A to this report.



### Assets and Challenges

All eight priority areas were reviewed during this process. WSU CEI team members were available to answer questions related to the data presented. Assets and challenges were recorded by the participants, and a debriefing session was held at the end of each discussion. Results of this process are included as Appendix B to this report.

### Additional Areas to Note

At the conclusion of the data discussion time, participants were asked if there were data points not included in the designated set, but important to consider for the health of the community. Upon discussion, substance abuse of illegal drugs was added as a priority area for consideration. Two related items, tobacco use and alcohol abuse, are included in two of the action areas presented (Tobacco and Vaping, Behavioral Health). Therefore, a new category titled “Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs” was created for consideration.

### Community Priorities for Action

At the end of the day, participants were invited to review the priority areas and vote for the top three to include in the CHIP plan. The group agreed not to include demographics in this process, as this was considered an informative section but not one subject to the actions of a working team.

To assist in this evaluative process, participants were invited to use a worksheet included in the CHIP Handbook which employed a rating system to calculate the results.

Participants then visited each data station to place votes for the health areas they believe should be included in the CHIP plan. The worksheet is included as Appendix C to this report.



### Action Planning

The Action Plan session began the next morning with five (5) participants from the previous day in attendance. The group reviewed the votes cast the previous day and identified the areas receiving the most.

After considering the votes, ability to make progress for the community and the availability of funds, the participants identified the following Priority Areas to include in the CHIP plan:

- Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs
- Food
- Housing
- Physical Activity

The group noted that a plan was currently being developed for Norton County to address housing issues. Therefore, the participants agreed to include Housing as a priority area for community health improvement but decided to support the parties already devoted to that effort.

### Goals, Intervention Strategies and Outcomes

Participants worked as one group to identify goals, objectives, intervention strategies and outcome measures for each of the Priority Areas. WSU CEI provided facilitation of the conversation and collected notes for further development by the CHIP Design Team. The group agreed to the following for each area.

## Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs

### Goal #1: Reduce Vaping Among K-12

*Objective A:* Explore K-12 vaping policy in USD 211 and USD 212

*Intervention Strategies:*

- Meet with school leaders to explore vaping policy.
- Meet with Norton County Health Department regarding vape education provided to community youth.
- Reach out to other youth health groups (Youth Forum, SADD, etc.) to discuss vaping use.
- Connect with Norton County Council on Alcohol & Other Drugs to initiate reconvening meetings.
- Determine if RESIST Chapters exist in Norton County or the region.

*Key Partners:*

- Norton County Council on Alcohol & Other Drugs
- Youth health groups (e.g., Youth Forum, SADD)

*First Milestone:*

1. Convene Norton County Council on Alcohol & Other Drugs to make this a known priority for the community.

*Outcome Measure(s):*

- Assess and adjust school policies as needed.
- Increase education to students about the dangers of vaping.
- Reduce prevalence of vaping use in county's K-12 students.

# Healthy Food

## Goal #1: Increasing Access to Healthy Food

*Objective A:* Creation of a Community Commercial Kitchen.

*Intervention Strategies:*

- Get buy-in from the County, City, 4-H, Extension to secure the building space for a community commercial kitchen.
- Identify if the building and improvements would count as matching funds for other grant opportunities.
- Identify in-kind support sources and budget for the project.
- Seek certification and inspection from Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE).
- Assist the volunteers serving on the Community Kitchen Committee with their project steps.
- K-State Extension Council could be the fiscal agent and manage the facility.
- Create a business plan for the project including renovation efforts and ongoing expenses for running the space.
- Apply for funding to offset project expenses.
- Construct community commercial kitchen.
- Launch the community commercial kitchen with hours of operation, reservation process and policies for use.

*Key Partners:*

- Commercial Kitchen Community
- Norton County Commissioners
- K-State Research & Extension Council

*First Milestone:*

1. Meet with Norton County Commissioners to discuss project and get approval for exploring feasibility of using 4-H Building for the community commercial kitchen.

*Outcome Measure(s):*

- Increase awareness of a community commercial kitchen for Norton County.
- Increase funding available to construct and launch the community commercial kitchen.

<p><i>Objective B:</i> Explore feasibility of forming a Food &amp; Farm Council.</p> <p><i>Intervention Strategies:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create an education packet about the benefits to the community from a Food &amp; Farm Council.</li> <li>• Meet with community partners to discuss the role of a Food &amp; Farm Council for the community (e.g., schools, Farm Bureau).</li> <li>• Talk to the City and County about willingness to support the formation of a Food &amp; Farm Council for Norton County.</li> <li>• Apply for funding (up to \$10,000) to produce an education packet to present to county, city, and other community partners.</li> </ul> <p><i>Key Partners:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Venture Advisors (consultant)</li> <li>• Norton County Commission and/or Norton City Council</li> </ul> <p><i>First Milestone:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Engage with consultant to develop proper education and list of stakeholders for the Food &amp; Farm Council.</li> </ol>	<p><i>Outcome Measure(s):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase awareness of and make connections for food and farm resources in Norton County.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Objective C:</i> Explore opportunity to create a Simply Produce program.</p> <p><i>Intervention Strategies:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research local supporters to fund expense of providing Simply Produce baskets.</li> <li>• Explore education options for individuals interested in participating in a Simply Produce program.</li> <li>• Explore the demand from the community.</li> <li>• Identify consistent supplier(s) for Simply Produce baskets.</li> <li>• Build a work plan in 2023 with a proposed launch date of 2024.</li> <li>• Seek funding from Pathways program to perform pilot test in 2023.</li> </ul> <p><i>Key Partners:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Norton Kids Café and/or other volunteers</li> <li>• Local grocer(s)</li> </ul> <p><i>First Milestone:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Secure a volunteer base and supplier to administer a Simply Produce program.</li> </ol>	<p><i>Outcome Measure(s):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the number of people participating in the Simply Produce program.</li> </ul>

<p><i>Objective D: Determine the needs of relocating the Community Garden.</i></p> <p><i>Intervention Strategies:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify the needs of the existing Community Garden and options for expanding the garden.</li> <li>• Document current assets held by stakeholders to support community gardens.</li> <li>• Develop a plan for the Garden Manager.</li> <li>• Align activities with the Food &amp; Farm Council serving Norton County.</li> <li>• Explore demand for Community Garden products by the population of focus.</li> <li>• Secure a formal letter of support from the City of Norton for community garden activities.</li> <li>• Assess issues related to transportation to community garden site(s) by population of focus.</li> <li>• Explore additional community garden access points for population of focus.</li> </ul> <p><i>Key Partners:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Norton Community Garden Coalition</li> <li>• Norton City Council</li> </ul> <p><i>First Milestone:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Securing an agreement with the City of Norton for land use where a community garden will be located.</li> </ol>	<p><i>Outcome Measure(s):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the number of people from the community participating in the community garden.</li> </ul>
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## Housing

### Goal #1: Improve Healthy Housing Options

*Objective A:* Create connections with the existing housing plan.

*Intervention Strategies:*

- Contact Norton City/County Economic Development to share interest in healthy housing options as a priority issue. Meetings are held on the 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of each month and the Hospital CHNA has been a stated priority of this community partner.
- Encourage Norton City/County Economic Development to host an event on healthy housing options and invite public to attend. Live Well Norton will assist with engaging the public in the topic.

*Key Partners:*

- Norton City/County Economic Development

*First Milestone:*

1. Develop and implement a communications plan to create necessary connections.

*Outcome Measure(s):*

- Increase healthy housing options in Norton County.
- Meet the housing needs of Norton County now and in the future.

*Objective B:* Create placemaking and beautification opportunities in Norton County.

*Intervention Strategies:*

- Focus on Norton Housing Authority as first priority.
- Engage housing authority leadership and residents to determine wants and needs for beautification.
- Secure funding for placemaking projects.
- Implement placemaking/beautification efforts.

*Key Partners:*

- Norton County Arts Council
- Norton Housing Authority

*First Milestone:*

1. Secure approval of placemaking work by Norton Housing Authority.

*Outcome Measure(s):*

- Increase applications/fill vacancies to live at Norton Housing Authority.

# Physical Activity

## Goal #1: Increasing Awareness of the Need for Physical Activity

*Objective A:* Engage the influencers to provide more publicity on physical activity events in the community. (See Appendix D for list of physical activity partners in community.)

*Intervention Strategies:*

- Meet with Norton County Community Foundation to discuss planting the seed in “Strategic Doing.”
- Engage physician community on prioritizing physical activity education (e.g., hospital marketing).
- Work with the physician community to explore starting a prescription for physical activity program.
- Convene a “Live Well Norton” Physical Activity Summit including the influencers from the community and clearly identifying the reason for all to attend.
- At the Physical Activity Summit:
  - Share funding opportunities which are shaping physical activity in the community.
  - Create an index of physical activity available in the community (e.g., photos, descriptions, etc.).
  - Recruit people to take on work.

*Key Partners:*

- Norton County Community Foundation
- Norton County Hospital
- Physical Activity partners in community (Appendix D)

*First Milestone:*

- Understand the baseline of influencer engagement for promoting physical activity opportunities in Norton County.

*Outcome Measure(s):*

- Showcase representation from all influencers at the summit.

<p><i>Objective B: Promotion/Awareness of activities, events</i></p> <p><i>Intervention Strategies:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet with the Norton Chamber of Commerce about promotion of physical activity events in the community and in available resources.</li> <li>• Include physical activity options in Visitor &amp; Relocation Guide and Discover Norton website published by the Norton Chamber of Commerce.</li> <li>• Explore option of creating table tents to use at local businesses promoting scheduled events.</li> <li>• Include Norton County Arts Council to potentially implement a mural walk in the Norton community as the number of murals increases; have a QR code linking all of them on a map.</li> <li>• Strategize ways to promote physical activity opportunities at scheduled large community events and/or school events.</li> </ul> <p><i>Key Partners:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Norton County Area Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>• Norton County Arts Council</li> <li>• Norton County Community Foundation</li> <li>• Norton Recreation Commission</li> </ul> <p><i>First Milestone:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Secure funding for grants to design and print promotional materials.</i></li> </ul>	<p><i>Outcome Measure(s):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase promotions of physical activity opportunities in Norton County.</li> <li>• Number of updated/and or added pages and events added to Chamber website.</li> <li>• Increase and/or enhance the information to include in promotions (e.g., Relocation Guide).</li> <li>• Increase opportunities for connecting with the community (e.g., Lions Club food distribution, Halloween parade)</li> </ul>
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**Goal #2: Increasing Access to and Participation in Physical Activity**

<p><i>Objective A:</i> Explore opportunities to increase access to facilities (e.g., recreation center, school, gymnasium).</p> <p><i>Intervention Strategies:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet with the Recreation Commission Director to identify perceived need from the community.</li> <li>• Explore opportunities for sharing space with the district (e.g., weight room).</li> <li>• Identify barriers in the current system (e.g., sidewalks, childcare, liability waiver).</li> <li>• Implement walking path at the hospital for more connectivity and enhanced safety.</li> </ul> <p><i>Key Partners:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Norton Recreation Commission</li> <li>• Define Gym</li> <li>• Norton Public Schools Gym</li> </ul> <p><i>First Milestone:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment of opportunities to share space and the current barriers to accessing their use.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Outcome Measure(s):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the number of people who access the recreation center.</li> <li>• Increase the number of people who use the local gymnasiums.</li> <li>• Increase participation with the senior center.</li> </ul>
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<p><i>Objective B:</i> Focus on increasing access for low-income and socially vulnerable groups</p> <p><i>Intervention Strategies:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with Lions Club (who administers food baskets in the community) to act on the behalf of physical activity (e.g., asking questions about programming, identifying barriers such as hours of operation and hesitance about machines, clothing, judgement)</li> <li>• Work with K-State Extension and Norton County Health Department on ways to promote and enhance SNAP Education and enrollment in Norton County.</li> </ul> <p><i>Key Partners:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Norton Recreation Commission</li> <li>• Lions Club</li> <li>• Twin Creek Extension</li> </ul>	<p><i>Outcome Measure(s):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the number of people who access the recreation center.</li> <li>• Increase the number of people who use the local gymnasiums.</li> <li>• Increase participation with the senior center.</li> </ul>
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<p><i>First Milestone:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Meeting with key partners to review finding of the assessment of barriers.</li><li>• Determine next steps to promoting opportunities and address barriers identified.</li></ul>	
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