



Culture of Health Initiative: Well Connected Communities

America's land-grant universities and Cooperative Extension System, including the 4-H youth development program, with its unparalleled infrastructure, reach and impact, play an important role in fostering a Culture of Health across the nation.

With the support of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF), the nation's largest philanthropy dedicated solely to health, National 4-H Council and Cooperative Extension are empowering communities to come together to help their residents be healthier at every stage of life.

Land-grant universities have identified a minimum of three communities to engage and support in this effort. Within each community, local Health Councils will develop and implement action plans to address top public health priorities in their area. Leveraging the proven power and innovation of 4-H youth leadership, young people will work alongside the Health Councils to provide their ideas and perspective to help create and drive change.

Communities will connect with at least 150 volunteers to mentor youth leaders, build local capacity, and ensure successful implementation of the action plan. Resources and training will be made available to the participating land-grant universities and communities.

The original intention was to start with five land-grant universities, but given great interest and excitement, ten additional universities have joined in this effort. Together, we can show how young people can lead the way in spurring community change with a focus on promoting health and well-being where they live.

Participating Land-Grant Universities

RWJF-Funded Pilot Land-Grant Universities:

- South Dakota State University
- University of Maryland Eastern Shore
- University of Minnesota
- University of Tennessee
- Utah State University

Self-Funded Land-Grant Universities:

- Penn State University
- Purdue University
- University of Delaware
- University of Georgia
- University of Idaho
- University of Kentucky
- University of Maryland College Park
- University of Nebraska

Strategy

This effort hinges on four key strategies:

1. Applying **4-H's proven Youth Leadership Model** – youth will work alongside community members, local public health and non-profit organizations, businesses, and government entities to address top public health priorities.
 - This is a new component for local Health Councils that is expected to serve as a catalyst for innovation and impact.
2. Leveraging the **Applied Research Foundation of Cooperative Extension** – with leading land-grant universities contributing applied research about public health innovations and best practices.
 - This is a valuable resource that many communities and local Health Councils do not have currently.
3. Engaging **Expert Community Volunteers** – the Extension's proven Master Volunteer framework will provide a way for community volunteers to play an active role in implementing community action plans.
 - This will provide a critical grassroots infrastructure that has proven as a key factor in Extension's success with community development.
4. Extending impact through **Technical Assistance** – packaging the resources and best practices from the work of the lead communities to provide technical assistance that can spread the innovation and impact to more communities.

Communications Timeline

