



RICHLAND COUNTY

Communities in Action

Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)

Common Goals. Capacity Building. Collective Impact.

2023—2028

Communities in Action's Vision:

Common goals. Capacity building. Collective impact.

Communities in Action Mission:

The mission of Communities in Action is to provide a structured community platform and foster partnerships to improve quality of life in Richland County.

Values:

Service

Respect

Teamwork

Communication



Richland County Communities in Action

Definitions for Richland County CHIP 2023—2028

Focus Area: An identified data supported topic of interest that has community momentum.

Goal: Generally describes what the action groups are trying to achieve.

Strategy: Activities suggested to measure progress of the goal.

Indicator: Specific measurable results (related to the progress of the goal) .

Sustainable: Program is integrated into regular programming and funded to continue at least five years.

The mission of Communities in Action is to provide a structured community platform and foster partnerships to improve the quality of life in Richland County.

Focus Areas:

- ⇒ Education Access and Quality
- ⇒ Economic Stability
- ⇒ Neighborhood and Built Environment
- ⇒ Social and Community Context
- ⇒ Health Care and Quality
- ⇒ Quality-of-Life Outcomes





History

The Community Building and Strategic Planning process, known as Communities in Action (CIA), has been in place since the first assessment was completed in 2005. It establishes a multi-faceted approach to creating healthy communities in Richland County. Communities in Action utilizes Mobilizing Action through Partnership and Planning (MAPP) to identify, develop, implement, sustain and evaluate its impact on Richland County.

Through this comprehensive approach, communities can share and maximize scarce resources and develop a system that is sustainable. This holistic strategy incorporates all dimensions of the problems that face our communities. The process produces The Richland County Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) that can be utilized to turn planning into action.

Phase 1—Build the Community Health Improvement Foundation

2018 Richland County Strategic Planning Conference

Communities in Action Steering Committee

Richland County “Quality of Life” Strategic Plan, 2019—2021

Phase 2—Tell the Community Story

2022 Community Assessment for Public Health Emergency Response (CASPER)

2023-2028 Quality of Life Community Health Assessment (CHA)

CIA’s Action Groups take action on the county issues and function as coalitions. They identify the top issues and create a collaborative action plan to address the issue.

Phase 3—Continuously Improve the Community

Action groups implement, monitor, promote, and evaluate their efforts.

Every action plan established by Communities in Action “action groups” defines metrics annually. The chairperson of each action group attends A monthly Steering Committee meeting where they report progress on each strategy.



Background

The Vision and Values of CIA were adapted in 2023. CIA's Vision is Common Goals. Capacity Building. Collective Impact. CIA's Values are Service, Respect, Teamwork, Communication. The mission remains to provide a structured community platform and foster partnerships to improve quality of life in Richland County. Currently CIA consists of action groups that are responsible for creating strategies for the goals in the strategic plan and nurturing partnerships within the community to benefit a common goal. Action groups are supported by Volunteers in Action, the RSVP AmeriCorps program dedicated to recruiting and supporting volunteers in Richland County. Progress on the strategic plan is overseen by a steering committee comprised of local leaders and representatives from each action group. Collaborative action plans are not plans to raise money or create new projects in addition to the work everyone is already doing. CIA partners commit to completing various aspects of the action plan. The partners plan and provide support for the component of the action plan that their organization covers. Other partners can provide support as needed.



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Methodology

In June 2022, CIA conducted the Richland County Health Assessment using CASPER, which is the Community Assessment for Public Health Emergency Response, with the help of community volunteers. The data from CASPER is specific to Richland County thereby helping CIA specify the areas and levels of need. Secondary data was collected, reviewed, and gathered in the Community Health Assessment (CHA). The CHA data was reviewed and modeled after the Healthy People 2030 Objectives and the Social Determinants of Health (SDOH). Action groups submitted strategies to address the goals identified in the Richland County Quality of Life CHIP.

SDOH are the non-medical factors that influence health outcomes. They are the conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live, and age, and the wider set of forces and systems shaping the conditions of daily life. One of the goals is to create social, physical, and economic environments that promote attaining the full potential for health and well-being for all.



Richland County SOAR Analysis

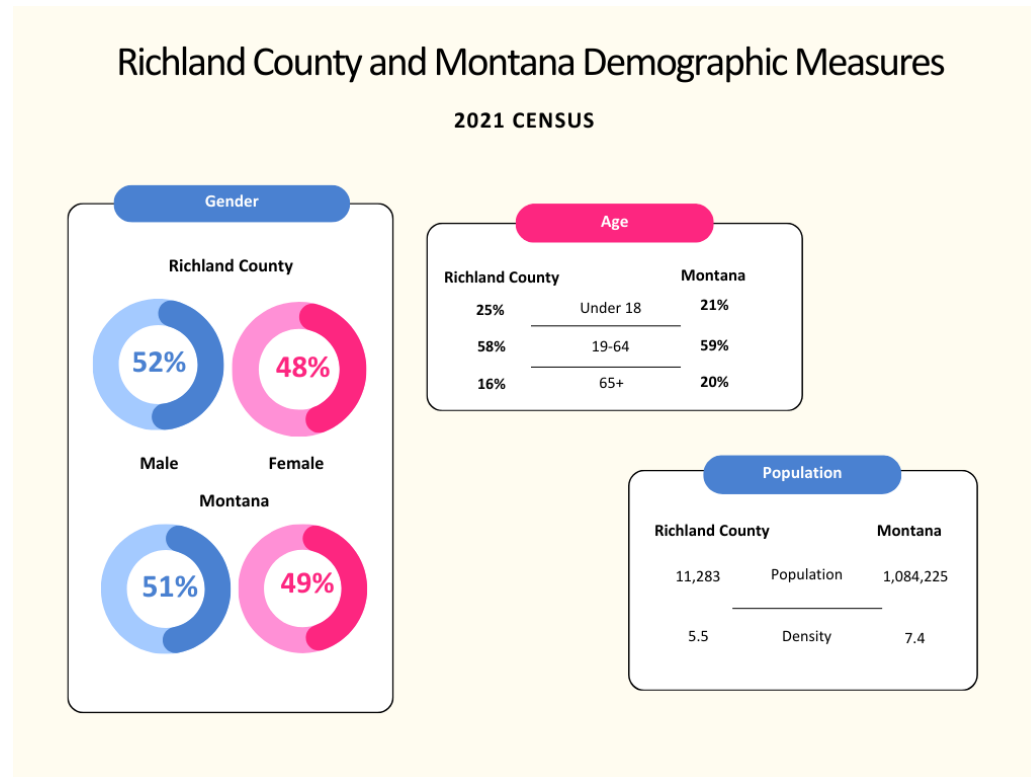
SOAR: Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results

According to the *American Service Quality Division*, a SOAR analysis is a strategic planning tool that focuses an organization on its current strengths and vision of the future for developing its strategic goals. This tool engages all levels and functional areas of an organization and community by enhancing what is *currently* done well and using those strengths to achieve the desired opportunities, aspirations, and results. The following SOAR analysis was reviewed and updated at the September 2023 Steering Committee Planning Meeting.



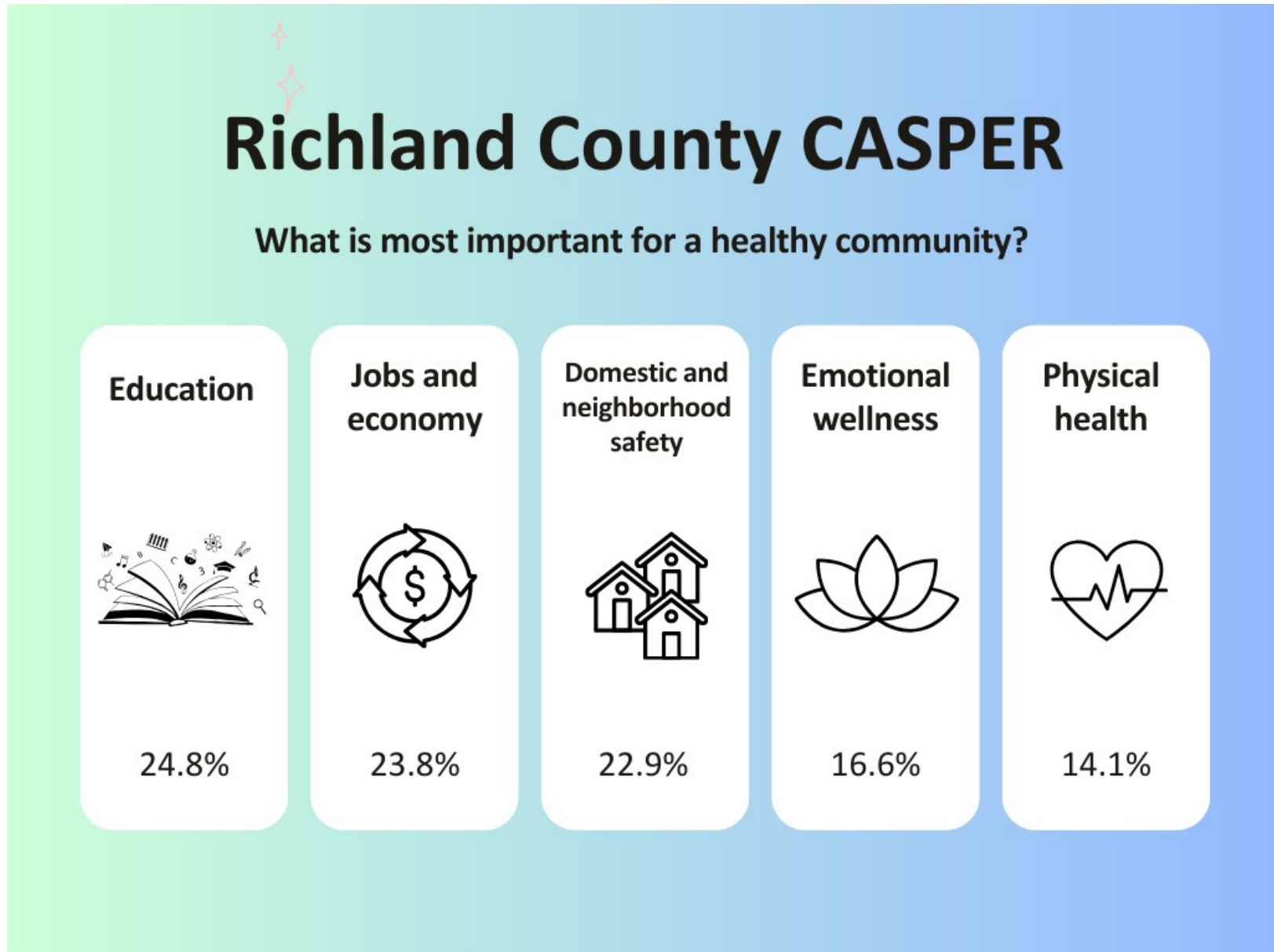
Demographics

Founded in 1914, located in northeast Montana on the border of North Dakota, Richland County has a comparatively short but indelibly rich history, as a primarily ranching and agricultural community, grounded by strong familial ties and a deep connection to the land. Richland County is the 19th most populous in Montana, with a population of roughly 11,283 residents per the 2021 Census data. However, this does not accurately record the number of temporary residents who are seasonal agricultural workers and oil field workers who need services but do not claim Richland County as their place of residency for tax purposes. The racial makeup of the county is 96.0% white, 0.3% Black or African American, 1.3% American Indian, 0.8% Asian, 3.3% Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, 5.5% Hispanic or Latino, and 3.4% other. The median income is \$62,530, however, 9.1% of the county's recorded residents live below the poverty level. The county has a land mass of 2,103 square miles and is classified as "frontier" per the National Rural Health Association Policy Brief. The association defines "frontier" as, "sparsely populated areas that are geographically isolated from population centers and services." Residents travel four hours or greater for a variety of services including medical, mental health and substance use services.



Healthy Community

During the 2022 CASPER, Richland County residents were asked to rank the most important factors for a healthy community. According to respondents, education, the economy, and neighborhood safety are the top three factors for a healthy community. This CHIP is organized according to these results and the Social Determinants of Health.



Education Access and Quality

People with access to quality education are more likely to be healthier and live longer. Graduating from high school provides an opportunity for safe, high-paying jobs. Children from low-income families struggle from social discrimination like bullying and are more likely to struggle in school. This means they're less likely to get safe, high-paying jobs and more likely to have health problems like heart disease, diabetes, and depression. Interventions to help children and adolescents do well in school can have long-term health benefits.

Nearly 25% of Richland County residents who responded to the 2022 CASPER believe education is the most important factor for a healthy community. 69% would be interested in taking classes on nutrition / health and wellness, 27% on first aid/CPR, 27% on healthy aging, and 18% on mental health. Other areas of interest include heart disease, health insurance, grief counseling, substance abuse, diabetes, early childhood development, cancer, and parenting support.

CIA and the steering committee will collaborate with local organizations and non-profits to provide these education courses to the community. Partnership for Promise will collaborate with Eastern Montana Community Mental Health Prevention Specialist to promote Parenting Montana.

	Goals	Strategies	Indicators
Steering Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote and provide continuing education opportunities in the community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Map existing educational opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase participation in Learning Volunteers for Adults and Continuing Education classes by 5% every year.
Partnership for Promise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with Eastern Montana Community Mental Health to promote Parenting Montana. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate and update Family Resource Center parenting and behavioral health backpacks at library. Provide Parenting Montana opportunities through social media and Family Resource Center. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase participation in Parenting Montana by 5%.

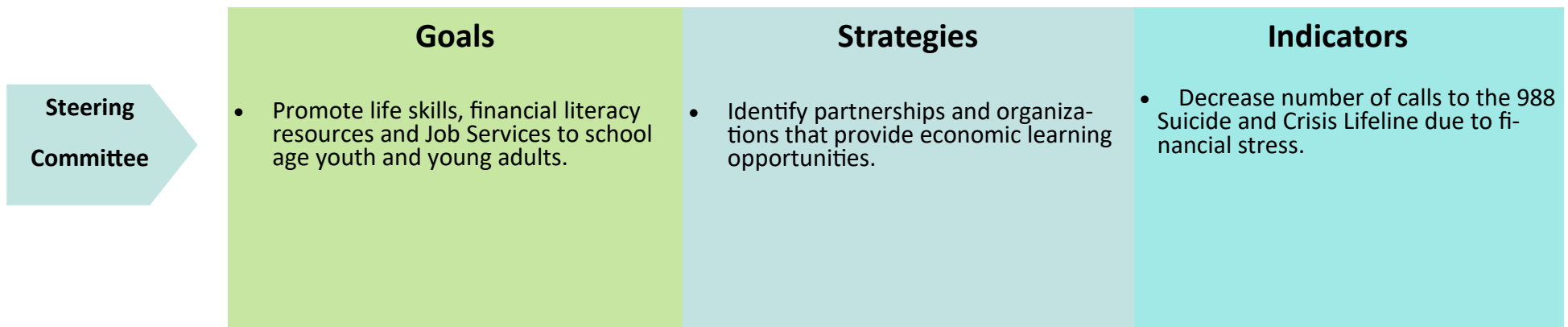
Economic Stability

In the United States, 1 in 10 people live in poverty and many people can't afford things like healthy foods, health care, and housing. People with steady employment are less likely to live in poverty and more likely to be healthy. Employment programs, career counseling, and high-quality child care opportunities can help more people find and keep jobs.

The top 5 industries in Richland County are: 1) Education services and health care; 2) Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining; 3) Retail trade; 4) Accommodation and food services; 5) Construction. The median income is \$69,169 with a 6.4% unemployment rate. The biggest barriers preventing CASPER respondents from working full time is the cost and availability of childcare.

The economy is the second most important factor to a strong community, according to 2022 CASPER respondents. The job-related classes respondents are interested in include computer skills, interview classes, resume writing, and the application process. These courses and resources are already being offered at Sidney Job Service. The Steering Committee will collaborate with Job Service to promote and provide job seeking skills.

To help prepare youth for the future, CIA will collaborate with local organizations and the schools to provide life skills and financial literacy curriculum. In 2022 there were a number of focus groups, conducted by an AmeriCorps member, with 8th and 12th grade students to understand their concerns about transitioning to the next phase of their lives. The top requests from students were life skills and financial literacy.



Neighborhood and Built Environment

The neighborhoods people live in have a major impact on their health and well-being. Interventions and changes can help reduce health and safety risks and promote health. For example, providing opportunities for people to walk and bike in their communities can increase safety and help improve health and quality of life ([Healthy People 2030](#)).

Factors in the Neighborhood and Built Environment domain include housing, transportation, safety, recreation and parks, water quality, and access to healthy food. 82.6% of residents feel safe walking alone at night, but access to affordable housing, transportation, and access to healthy food are concerns. Affordable housing is considered to be 30% of an individual's monthly gross income (National Foundation for Credit Counseling). The Richland County Housing Authority offers 232 federally subsidized housing units, as well as tenant-based Section 8 vouchers. These programs provide income-based rent to residents who qualify. Richland County Transportation Service provides free service within Richland County.

Unintentional injuries are the 4th leading cause of death in Richland County. The DUI/Injury Prevention Task Force is taking the lead on this statistic to reduce these deaths. With goals to distribute helmets, host a mock crash, and share important resources on safe storage of narcotics, the task force will focus on reducing these deaths.

DUI / Injury Prevention Task Force	Goals	Strategies	Indicators
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decrease accidental overdose. • Decrease under the influence driving, both alcohol and cannabis. • Increase helmet use. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote safe storage practices. • Host events to educate on the dangers of driving under the influence. • Distribute helmets. • Concussion education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decrease accidental overdose of kids from 7 to 0. • Decrease DUI violations from 82 per year by 10% per year. • Decrease traumatic brain injury hospital admissions per 100,000 from 67 by 10% per year.

Social and Community Context

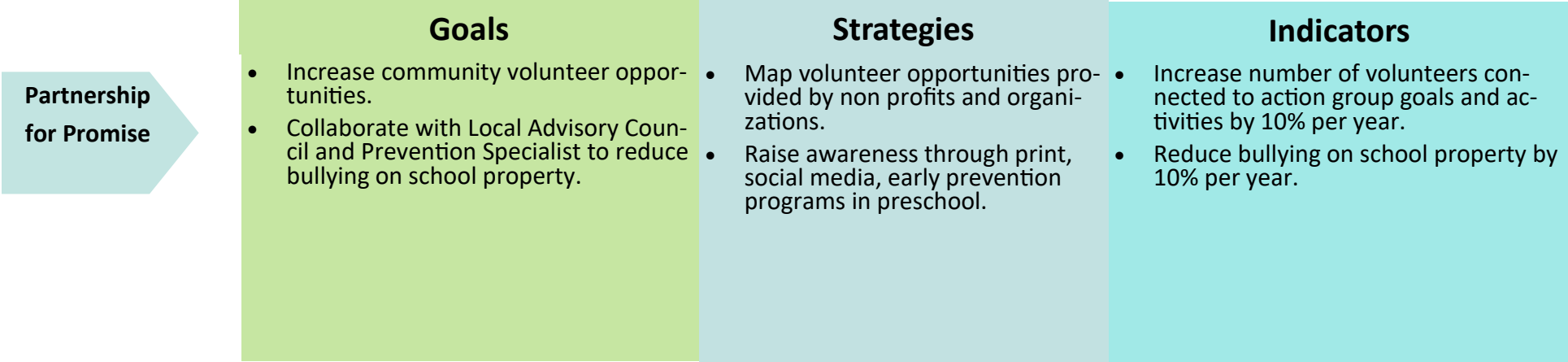
People’s relationships and interactions with family, friends, co-workers, and community members can have a major impact on their health and well-being. Positive relationships at home, at work, and in the community can help reduce negative impacts such as isolation or bullying. Interventions to help people get the social and community support they need are critical for improving health and well-being ([Healthy People 2030](#)).

The level of community engagement and support systems can impact stress. Stress can increase or decrease depending on the value of social support. This includes opportunities to volunteer, safe spaces for youth, and healthy parent child relationships and communication.

Partnership for Promise has chosen to address improving social context through collaboration and education. Partnership will collaborate with the Prevention Specialist to provide more family-friendly events. The coalition will collaborate with the Local Advisory Council to support the Hope Squad and Character Strong practices at the Boys and Girls Club and provide and promote more opportunities to volunteer in the community.

An important aspect of social and community context is the relationships and communication between parents and children. The Richland County Library provides parenting resources through the Family Resource Center. Partnership will work with the library to update and promote the parenting backpacks on various topics.

The Faith Alliance Church in Fairview hosts a youth group on Friday’s. This provides a safe place for youth to go when there is no school on Friday. CIA will work with the community to reinstate the Sidney youth group.



Health Care Access and Quality

Many people in the United States don't get the health care services they need. About 1 in 10 people don't have health insurance. Strategies to increase insurance coverage rates are critical for making sure more people get important health care services, like preventive care and treatment for chronic illnesses. Interventions to increase access to health care professionals and improve communication, in person or remotely, can help more people get the care they need ([Healthy People 2030](#)).

The leading causes of death in Richland County is heart disease and cancer. The Cancer Coalition and the Chronic Disease and Nutrition Coalition will provide a variety of activities and education to address these challenges.

Communities in Action strives to reduce these deaths through the Men's Health Screening, the Montana Breast and Cervical Cancer Screening Program, and ongoing blood pressure checks at the grocery stores each month.

Chronic Disease and Nutrition

Goals

- Increase community awareness of Chronic Diseases and Nutrition.
- Establish community partnerships to increase educational opportunities for all residents.
- Ensure help and identify resources for those already with chronic diseases.

Strategies

- Provide monthly blood pressure checks at local grocery stores.
- Offer Hypertension Class and Montana Asthma Program to residents.
- Support Boys & Girls Club backpack program and Community Services Building food table.
- Support SHC Chronic Care Management program (including vaccine promotion).
- Explore opportunities to partner with SNAP program.

Indicators

- Decrease Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease Hospitalization Rate (residents aged 45+, Age-Adjusted rate per 100,000), 2019-2020, from 166.8 to 145.5.
- Decrease Heart Failure Hospitalization Rate (residents aged 65+, Age-Adjusted Rate per 100,000), 2019-2020, from 109.7 to 95.2.
- Sustain or increase chronic disease & nutrition programs.
- Increase # of weekend meal backpacks delivered.

Cancer Coalition

- Increase access to emotional and physical support services for cancer patients, families and caregivers
- Increase or maintain screening opportunities using national recognized guidelines for breast, cervical, colorectal, lung and skin cancers.

- Host annual Community is Stronger than Cancer event
- Provide and promote screening opportunities per year.

- Increase access to Cancer Support Community Montana website by 10% per year.
- Increase or maintain an additional 1 or 2 screening opportunities per year.

Quality-of-Life Outcomes

Social determinants of health have a major impact on people’s health, well-being, and quality of life. Communities in Action (CIA) and their partners in sectors like education, transportation, housing and healthcare are taking action with the help of passionate community volunteers to improve the conditions in Richland County’s environments.

93.3% of residents feel Richland County is a good or excellent place to live. 86.9% have felt hopeful consistently for more than 3 months, and 82.6% feel safe walking alone at night.

The biggest factors impacting a positive quality-of-life in Richland County are access to marijuana and alcohol, and the community acceptance of the use of these substances. This leads to behavioral health challenges where there are limited resources. CIA as a whole, and the Local Advisory Council and Drug Free Communities coalitions are working to create social, physical, and economic environments that promote attaining the full potential for health and well-being for all.

	Goals	Strategies	Indicators
LAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase awareness of emotional wellness and accessing resources. Decrease stigma around Behavioral Health. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement school-based wellness programs in K-5: Character Strong Kelso’s Choice, etc. Provide QPR training, behavioral health presentations, and resources for 6-12 grades. Implement Hope Squad in three schools. Implement print and social media campaigns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce YRBS responses of youth who made a plan from 24% by 10% per year. Decrease # of students who flag for suicide ideology in Rural Behavioral Health Institute by 50%. 5% increase of use of behavioral resources, such as the Richland County Behavioral Health webpage and Montana Cares app.
DUI/ Injury Prevention Task Force	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decrease underage drinking Decrease underage marijuana use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate trainings and presentations within school system about substance use. Collaborate with local youth organizations to identify projects of interest for youth substance use prevention. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase % of youth reporting they did not drink alcohol more than a few sips in last 30 days from 41% to 43%. Increase % of youth reporting they did not use marijuana in last 30 days from 81.9% to 83.9%

Richland County Community Health Improvement Plan 2023—2028 Goals



Action Group Participation

	CIA Steering Committee	Behavioral Health Local Advisory Council	Partnership for Promise	DUI Task Force/ Injury Prevention	Cancer Coalition	Chronic Disease / Nutri-
Increase awareness of emotional wellness and accessing resources		√				
Decrease stigma around behavioral health		√				
Implement Hope Squad in in three schools		√				
Implement print and social media campaigns	√	√	√	√	√	√
Decrease chronic obstructive pulmonary disease hospitalization rate						√
Decrease heart failure hospitalization rate						√
Collaborate with Prevention Specialist to promote Parenting Montana			√			
Decrease accidental overdose				√		
Decrease under the influence driving, both alcohol and cannabis				√		
Increase helmet use				√		
Increase community volunteer opportunities			√			
Collaborate with Local Advisory Council and Prevention Specialist to reduce bullying on school property		√	√			

Richland County Community Health Improvement Plan 2023—2028 Goals



Sector Representation

	Sector Representation					
	CIA Steering Committee	Behavioral Health Local Advisory Council	Partnership for Promise	DUI Task Force/ Injury Prevention	Cancer Coalition	Chronic Disease / Nutrition
Increase community awareness of chronic diseases and nutrition						√
Establish community partnerships to get the education out to all residents						√
Ensure help and identify resources for those already with chronic diseases						√
Increase access to emotional and physical support services for cancer patients, families and caregivers					√	
Increase or maintain screening opportunities using national recognized guidelines for breast, cervical, colorectal, lung and skin cancers					√	
Promote and provide continuing education opportunities in the community	√					
Promote life skills, financial literacy resources and Job Services to school age youth and young adults	√					
Decrease underage drinking				√		
Decrease underage marijuana use				√		