

We deserve  
healthier food  
options!



## IOWA COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION GRANT BIMONTHLY BRIEFING

### Let's Get Healthy - Our Community Deserves

In April, the fourth phase of the "Let's Get Healthy" promotional campaign was released. It is entitled, "Our Community Deserves," and it focuses on the access to healthy food options in the community, particularly fresh fruits and vegetables. This campaign is an adaptation of a promotional unit released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention last year. The Iowa Community Transformation grant has modified their materials to target the "Let's Get Healthy" audience of men over 50 years old who live in rural communities.

The 25 CTG grantee counties have received the "Our Community Deserves" materials and will be placing them in their local communities. Promotional materials distributed to the counties included:

- Outdoor billboards
- Newspaper advertisements
- Radio scripts
- Posters



These promotional items have also been shared with Cultivate Iowa, an initiative of the Iowa Food Systems Council's Food Access & Health Work Group. Cultivate Iowa helps to promote the benefits of food gardening and produce donation to create a sustainable future and healthier communities in Iowa. Visit [www.cultivateiowa.org/](http://www.cultivateiowa.org/) for more information.

To download and use the "Our Community Deserves" materials in your community, please visit [www.idph.state.ia.us/ctg/LetsGetHealthy.aspx](http://www.idph.state.ia.us/ctg/LetsGetHealthy.aspx).

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### Recent News

On April 15-16, representatives from the Georgia Health Policy Center provided presentations and trainings on the PRISM (Prevention Impacts Simulation Model) developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The PRISM model will be helpful for the CTG program to show potential impacts.

On April 17, Project Director Kala Shipley presented during a National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) Million Hearts webinar and provided information on the many of the CTG counties. Link to the webinar at: [www.naccho.org/topics/HPDP/chronicdisease/million-hearts/index.cfm](http://www.naccho.org/topics/HPDP/chronicdisease/million-hearts/index.cfm).

On May 6-7, the Iowa CTG program held spokesperson communication trainings for CTG county awardees, I-Smile Coordinators, and Tobacco Prevention Community Partnerships. The trainings provided best practices for communicating data, using communication to address health equity and disparities, writing success stories, and other general tips. CTG county participants also had the opportunity to perform in mock interviews. FHI 360, the CDC's contracted communication advisor for CTG, provided the training.

Regional CTG meetings were held with awardee counties during April and May.

The Community Transformation Grant is intended to prevent leading causes of death and disability through evidence-based initiatives, environmental and systems change, and strengthening the health infrastructure. A minimum of 50 percent of the grant funds, distributed to local boards of health, must be used for four strategic directions: Tobacco-free living, active living and healthy eating, healthy and safe physical environments, and increased use of high impact clinical prevention services.

## Rural County Success Story

The Van Buren County CTG program worked with the most-frequented convenience store in the county to implement a Green Smart Choice Checkmark system. CTG provided a Nutrition Environment Measurement Survey for Stores (NEMS-S) to assess the healthy options available. Afterwards, the staff worked with the store manager to implement the Green Smart Choice Checkmark system to indicate healthy options available in the store. The manager also agreed to post in-store signage on healthy options and will continue the Green Smart Choice Checkmark system on new healthy products that are added. The Van Buren CTG program will work with other convenience stores and small grocery stores in the future to implement similar changes.

## Metropolitan County Success Story

From the assistance of the Mills County CTG program, residents, WIC participants, and seniors have increased access to fresh fruits and vegetables through local farmer's markets. The limited access to fresh produce and its high cost has prohibited many lower-income individuals in the county from being able to afford healthier food options. The Healthy Mills County Coalition partnered with farmer's markets in the community to determine strategies to increase the availability of locally-grown, low-cost produce to all residents in the county.

The coalition identified two main issues to help increase produce availability and consumption: the need to increase the number of vendors at farmer's markets and the need to accept vouchers as payment from seniors with limited resources and WIC participants. As a result, local food initiative meetings have been held to provide education and support to local growers, and fifteen new vendors participated in the meetings and committed to provide produce at farmer's markets.

The local food initiative meetings also helped to identify a vendor who agreed to become certified to accept WIC and senior vouchers. This vendor - who also accepts EBT (Electronic Benefit Transfer) for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program - has been designated as the "Moveable Produce Stand" (MPS) and will travel to all area farmer's markets.



## Spotlight on Health: WIC at Farmer's Markets

Providing access to fresh produce can lead to an increased consumption of healthier foods within the community. This can help prevent obesity and lower risks for chronic disease.

The Iowa WIC Program promotes the purchase and use of Iowa-grown fresh fruits and vegetables in many ways.

- WIC participants have received produce seeds through Cultivate Iowa and information about container gardening.
- Breastfeeding women, pregnant women, and children ages 1 to 5 are eligible for nine \$3.00 vouchers (\$27.00 total) to be used at certified farmer's markets through the WIC Farmer's Market Nutrition Program.
- WIC participants are able to use their Cash Value Vouchers at farmer's markets.
- Farmer's markets booklets that contain information on selection, preparation, and storage of fresh fruits and vegetables are provided to WIC agencies to hand out. Each booklet contains recipes as well as cooking techniques.

In the past, WIC farmer's market vouchers have been provided only to counties with a certified farmer's market due to concerns about transportation barriers in the remaining counties. A team of local public health agencies and the Iowa CTG staff inquired if it was possible to extend the vouchers to all counties. As a result, the Iowa WIC Program met with the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship and the Iowa CTG team to discuss this potential system change. A new distribution process is in place for the 2014 growing season that provides farmer's market vouchers to every county. WIC participants residing in counties without authorized markets or farm stands will receive information about the closest options. Participants can then choose to travel to neighboring counties or decline the farmer's market vouchers.



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