

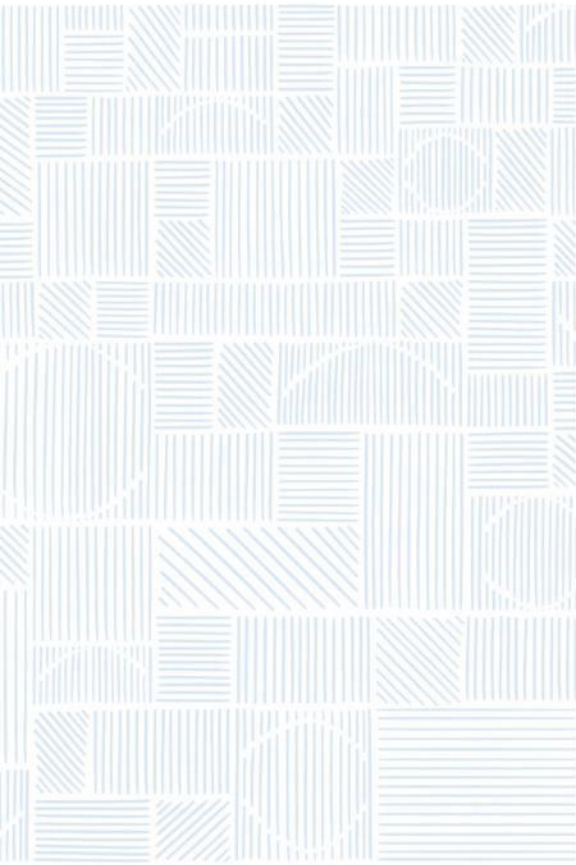


# Blue Health Initiatives Update

Virginia Barnes, Director Blue Health Initiatives



**Kansas**



**01 Blue Health Initiatives  
Purpose**

**02 Pathways to a Healthy  
Kansas**

**03 Healthy Lifestyles**

**04 Trailblazers**

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# Blue Health Initiatives

## INVESTING IN HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

Invest in communities to create sustainable, healthy places where Kansans live, work, and play in ways that improve the quality of their lives.

## ABOUT BLUE HEALTH INITIATIVES

We were created by the communities of Kansas, and we exist to serve those communities. We will be deeply involved in the communities we serve, making them a better place to live.

1. We believe our customers' health and quality of life depends on the conditions of the towns and neighborhoods they live in.
2. When environments improve, so do health and quality of life, which in turn reduce the cost of healthcare.

### PATHWAYS

We are helping provide communities with tools and resources to help create healthier lives.

### TRAILBLAZERS

Innovative solutions that address the unique needs of our state.

### HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

Healthy habits are crucial at every state of life.

### HEALTH EQUITY

By improving outcomes at both the individual and community levels, we're committed to pursuing a more accessible, inclusive and equitable system that helps everyone reach their full health potential.

#### IN SCOPE:

- Serve all Kansans in our service area
- Focus upstream on SDOH and health equity (prevention)
- Grants, sponsorships and projects that align population health within business function

#### OUT OF SCOPE:

- Initiative that serves only our members
- Downstream or direct care
- Projects where primary purpose is marketing, branding

# Blue Health Initiatives Team



Virginia Barnes

Director Blue Health Initiatives



Sonia Jordan

Health Equity Program  
Manager



Vacant

Community Health  
Program Manager

# There is More to Health than Healthcare



Healthcare  
20%



Genetics  
20%



Social,  
Environmental,  
Behavioral  
Factors  
60%



Social determinants of health are the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age that shape health...and the fundamental drivers of those conditions. (WHO)



02

# Pathways to a Healthy Kansas

The Pathways to a Healthy Kansas initiative combines community-wide evidence-based solutions and promising practices for improving **active living, healthy eating, behavioral health and commercial tobacco prevention** to make a meaningful impact across multiple sectors in communities by addressing the **social determinants of health and health equity**. The program provides community coalitions with the tools and resources needed to engage their communities and remove barriers to healthy living.

# What We Aim to Achieve

- Increase awareness and community engagement in leading healthy lifestyles
- Make the healthy choice the default choice **across sectors of the community through both policy and practice**
- Increase consumption of and access to healthy foods
- Increase access to and use of safe environments for physical activity
- Support commercial tobacco-free living
- **Improve behavioral health using a whole-person health approach to reduce stigma and increase community connections.**
- Improve quality of life **now and continuing for generations to come**



# Upcoming Grant Cycle

## PHASE 3

- **Focus Areas:** Healthy Eating, Active Living, Commercial Tobacco Prevention, Behavioral Health
- **Pathways:** Healthy People 2030 SDOH Model
- **Funded Communities:** 16-20 with Health Coalition Hub for non-funded coalitions
- **Grant Period:** 2 years w/standard RFA open period and invitation to apply starting in 2026
- \$100,000 competitive grant and additional non-competitive implementation grant funds up to \$250,000 per community
- Focus on Health Equity

## Social Determinants of Health



# Pathways and Packages

## ECONOMIC STABILITY PATHWAY

This social determinant represents an individual's ability to access essential resources such as food, housing or healthcare. It also involves creating a healthy business culture to help an employer attract and retain talent, reduce absenteeism and turnover, and improve productivity. Pathways grantees will be required to engage partners to sign a Pathways pledge. Packages under this pathway include:

- ▶ Food Pantry/Food Reclamation
- ▶ Healthier Food Retail
- ▶ Healthier Restaurant
- ▶ Kansas Power of the Positive - Family Friendly Workplaces
- ▶ Social Entrepreneurship Supports

## EDUCATION ACCESS AND QUALITY PATHWAY

This social determinant creates connections between education and health and well-being by promoting healthy lifestyles, creating supportive infrastructure and environments that enable educational attainment, language and literacy skills, and early childhood education and development. Pathways grantees will partner with early childhood centers, school districts, and/or higher education organizations to sign a Pathways Pledge and meet the minimum requirements related to the following packages:

- ▶ Farm to School or Child Care
- ▶ Healthier Higher Education Food Environment
- ▶ Healthier Child Care Facilities
- ▶ Substance Use Prevention in Schools
- ▶ Youth Physical Activity

## HEALTHCARE ACCESS AND QUALITY PATHWAY

This social determinant focuses on connecting access to healthcare, both physical and behavioral healthcare, and people understanding how health services impacts their own health. It ensures that healthcare organizations work to address factors that impact community health. Pathways grantees will be required to engage healthcare partners to sign a Pathways pledge and complete work related to the following packages:

- ▶ Community-Engaged Quality Improvement
- ▶ Community Health Needs Assessment/Health Improvement Plan Support
- ▶ Food Is Medicine
- ▶ Health Related Social Needs
- ▶ Healthier Hospital Food Environment
- ▶ Physical Activity Prescription Program
- ▶ Placemaking in a Healthcare Setting

## NEIGHBORHOOD AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT PATHWAY

This social determinant focuses on building connections between where a person lives (e.g., housing, neighborhood, and environment) and his or her health and well-being. Pathways grantees will be required to engage partners to sign a Pathways pledge. Potential packages under this pathway include:

- ▶ Community Planning
- ▶ Gardens and Community Farms
- ▶ Healthier Affordable Housing
- ▶ Multimodal Transportation and Recreational Trails

## SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY CONTEXT PATHWAY

This social determinant focuses on work at the community level to improve social integration, support systems, community engagement, and reduce stress and eliminate discrimination. Pathways grantees will be required to engage partners to sign a Pathways pledge. Potential packages under this pathway include:

- ▶ Community Resilience and Behavioral Health
- ▶ Healthier Communal Meals
- ▶ Health in All Policies
- ▶ Incubator Kitchen and Food Hub
- ▶ Placemaking

# Who Does the Work?



Community Coordinators



Design Team

# Impacts in Phase 2

268 grants given  
to 194 organizations

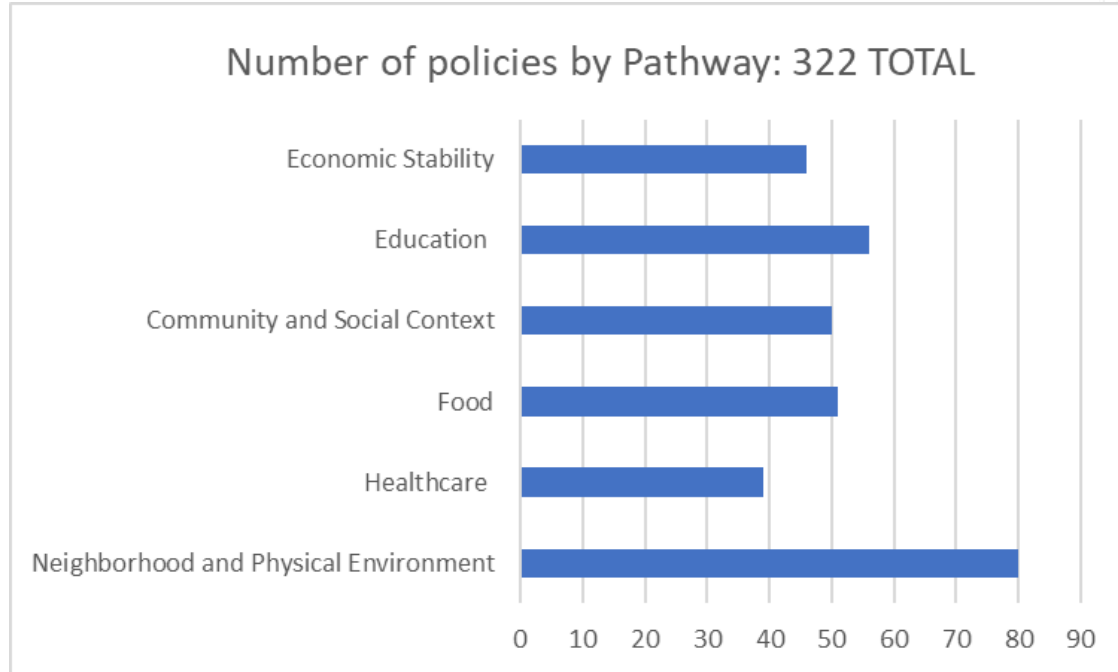
\$5,957,000 in  
Implementation Grants

\$16,535,563  
In Kind, Match, Related  
and Implementation



PATHWAYS to a  
HEALTHY  
KANSAS

# Policies Passed by Pathway





# Highlights





## **Placemaking: Lovie Watson Park**

The priorities for enhancements to Lovie Watson Park identified by community members as part of the Juneteenth celebration included a restroom facility as the top priority...and either a playground round swing addition or xylophone and drums play equipment.



“Our program has completely grown to the point that we are slated to expand our boxes into three other Kansas counties. I was able to create a PRN paid position for a driver to deliver the produce boxes as well.

Today we had 70 boxes delivered to our rural community of 300!

One small spark ignited this entire thing! So thankful for BCBSKS Pathways and HBCAT partnering with us.”

– Kelly Perry, Perry’s Produce



**Emporia High School**  
Apr 15 · 🌐

Ms. Rios' class assisted the Presbyterian Manor's Garden Club in constructing their raised flower beds. The students and residents had a great time working together to complete the project!  
#BCBSKSPathways #SpartanProud



**Norton Community Garden Coalition**  
Apr 17 · 🌐

For 2024Service Learning Day Jr. High Students worked to prepare the raised beds for planting workshops starting the end of this month at the Garden.

#BCBSKSPathways  
#livewellnorton  
#nortonregionalhealthfoundation



**Healthier Lyon County**  
6d · 🌐

It's a beautiful day for a walk. If you haven't checked out the trail at the Lyon County Fairgrounds you should put it on your to do list.  
#BCBSKSPathways #healthierlyoncounty



**The Healthy Bourbon County Action Team**  
Apr 22 · 🌐

THANK YOU THANK YOU to everyone who attended today's ribbon cutting for the new "Welcome to Fort Scott" downtown arch!!! It was such a wo... See more



**Reno County, Kansas - Government**  
Apr 5 · 🌐

U.S. Senator Roger Marshall visited New Beginnings Bisonte Food Service to learn about their Nutrition for Recovery Program on Wednesday, April 3, 2024. The Nutrition for Recovery Program is designed to provide balanced meals and nutrition education to people in recovery in a communal meal setting, so they can support and sustain their recovery. That program recently received a \$10,000 Pathways to a Healthy Kansas implementation grant, a Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas (BCBSKS) initiative, in partnership with Heal Reno County and the Substance Abuse Center of Kansas (SACK), said Candace Davidson, Promotion Supervisor with the Reno County Health Department and with Heal Reno County. To read more about his visit, go to [www.renogov.org](http://www.renogov.org)

#renocountyks #renocountykshealthdept  
#healrenocounty #BCBSKSPathways



**CHC SEK Community Health Center of Southeast Kansas**  
1d · 🌐

CareVan General Public Transportation is helping riders increase their access to fresh food and exercise facilities thanks to a partnership with Red Iron Activity Center and the Columbus Farmers Market.  
<https://chcsekchronicles.org/2024/04/partnership-increases-access-to-fresh-food-exercise-facility/>  
#BCBSKSPathways



[chcsekchronicles.org](http://chcsekchronicles.org)



PATHWAYS to a  
**HEALTHY  
KANSAS**

#BCBSKSPathways

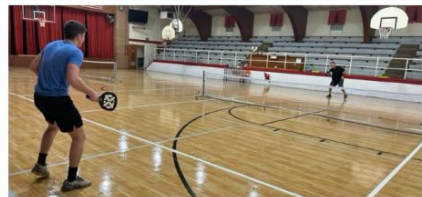


## Four Years of Impact

The Kiowa District Healthcare Childcare Center utilized a Pathways grant to install sunshades in the outdoor areas of the child center. This addition will enable children and staff to spend more time outdoors, enhancing playtime and promoting health.

The Medicine Lodge Peace Treaty Association (MLPTA) received a Pathways grant to install amenities to enhance the experience at the Intertribal Powwow Grounds and 5-Tribes Trailhead area. The Pathways funding also strengthened partnership efforts between BCU, MLPTA, the city and county by supporting engineering and environmental studies as well as policy work for a regionally impactful Transportation Alternative project, the Peace Treaty Connector Trail.

Kiowa Hometown Market (HTM) was awarded a Pathways grant to replace a decades-old meat cooler, allowing access to increased options of fresh fish and poultry to shoppers. Prior to receiving this funding, HTM was a key partner in Pathways projects at South Barber Food Bank, Kiowa District Healthcare and USD 255.



“ BCU helped the City of Sharon navigate the Pathways process and was instrumental in making the Community Center floor replacement a reality.  
Wendy Crenner, City Council member, City of Sharon, KS ”

## From Voices to Victories: The Impact of Community Engagement

The City of Hardtner's park project engaged community members through community conversations to gather ideas for developing the space. The community voted on the installation of a professional disc-golf course, pet clean-up station and additional accessible seating. This transformation was made possible by community voices.



**Initiative Wide:**  
In general, my community has sufficient opportunities for physical activity.

**60.6%**  
Strongly agree/Agree

**20.1%**  
Neither agree nor disagree

**15.8%**  
Strongly disagree/Disagree

Note: Results are from a survey of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas members for whom e-mail addresses were available in communities that received Pathways funding. The survey response rate was 4.7% (N = 3,354). Blank response = 3.5%.



**Barber County United, Inc.**  
(620) 866-1759  
barbercountyunited@gmail.com  
Facebook: @barbercountyunited  
Instagram: @barbercountyunited

**15**  
Implementation Grants

**\$500,000**  
Total Pathways Funding

**22**  
Policies Passed

**15**  
Partner Organizations Engaged



## Four Years of Impact

The Mitchell County Food Pantry received a Pathways grant to update their facility to better serve the needs of their clients. Grant funds were used to purchase new shelving, refrigeration and a freezer unit that will increase capacity to store and distribute fresher, healthier items.

The NCK Health Collaborative is humbled to be able to invest in several of our underserved rural communities. The City of Jewell, Burr Oak, Formoso and Mankato all received placemaking grants through the Pathways initiative to support physical activity and tobacco-free spaces.

Jewell County Strong received Pathways grant funding in recognition of their work to create a community recreation facility for Jewell County. The recreation facility will be the first in Jewell County and provide physical activity exercise opportunities with an intentional focus on supporting their senior population.

## Jewell & Mitchell Counties

The mission of the **NCK Health Collaborative** is to align efforts regionally to improve the health of our rural communities. Together through the Pathways initiative, Jewell and Mitchell County have partnered to improve access to healthy food, physical activity opportunities and educate our youth on the harmful effects of tobacco usage.



“ Thanks to the Pathways grant, our food pantry is better positioned to serve our community and donors are already purchasing healthier items for our shelves!  
Kathy Roberts, Food Pantry Coordinator,  
Beloit Ministerial Association ”



**Initiative Wide:**  
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## From Voices to Victories: The Impact of Community Engagement

The Mitchell County Food Pantry Hunger Relief Initiative surveyed food pantry clients around health barriers in relation to nutrition. Nearly 50% of clients reported struggling with chronic disease and many have limited access to household cooking appliances. This input provides a platform for advocating for healthier options with donors.



**NCK Health Collaborative**  
(785) 738-9493  
sbohnert@mitchellcountymf.org  
Facebook: NCKHealthCollaborative  
Instagram: nckhealthcollab

**11**  
Implementation Grants

**\$500,000**  
Total Pathways Funding

**14**  
Policies Passed

**\$293,069**  
Related Grant Funds



03

# Healthy Lifestyles

# National Fitness Campaign – Fitness Courts



2024: Wichita, Seneca, Parsons,  
Junction City, Garden City, Spring Hill (Healthy Blue)  
2023: Ottawa, Coffeyville, Independence  
2022: Meriden, Garnett, Garden City Community College

<https://nationalfitnesscampaign.com/kansas>



Next cycle approved for  
2024-2025 school year



Total of \$610,000 over four  
two-year grant cycles.



Challenges KAY Clubs (middle and high school)  
to engage their peers in a healthier lifestyle  
focusing on physical activity and mental health.

# Healthy Lifestyles Grants

Bike Share ICT & KANcycle

Double Up Food Bucks

YMCA 360 –

Kansas Hospital Association – Walk with  
a Doc & Healthier Hospitals

Kansas Interscholastic Cycling  
Association

Clara Barton walking path

The Giving Grove





04

# Trailblazers

# NXTSTAGE

The 2024 program brought together seven community partners from leading Kansas health and economic-development organizations and 10 innovative finalists from around the world.

Finalist pitched, and the program partners committed to piloting solutions that tackle key challenges such as women's and maternal health, veteran career opportunities, holistic individual care, early skin cancer detection, citizen engagement, and gamified addiction recovery.

Since 2021, the competition has kick-started 55 local and statewide projects, and this year's program attracted **136 competitors from 31 states and 11 countries.**







05

# Health Equity Program



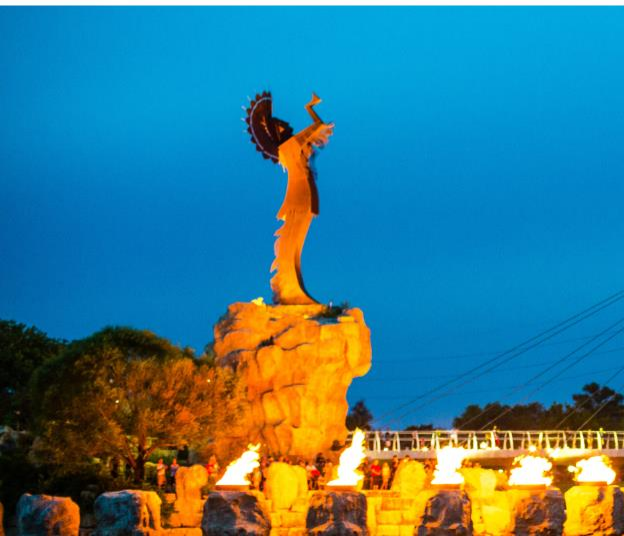
## Program Purpose:

Support the Association's National Health Equity Strategy to reduce racial health disparities by:

- 1) collecting data to measure disparities
- 2) scaling effective programs
- 3) working with providers to improve outcomes and address unconscious bias
- 4) leaning into partnerships at the community level, and
- 5) influencing policy decisions at the state and federal levels.

## Health areas of focus:

- Maternal Health
- Mental Health
- Diabetes
- Cardiovascular Disease



## Health Equity Statement

At Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas, we value you, your culture and community. By improving outcomes at both the individual and community levels, we're committed to pursuing a more accessible, inclusive and equitable system that helps everyone reach their full health potential.



Virginia Barnes

Director Blue Health Initiatives

Virginia.Barnes@bcbsks.com



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THE STRATEGY OFFICE