

Illinois State Profile

Building Resilient Inclusive Communities

Overview

Building Resilient Inclusive Communities (BRIC) is a program of the [National Association of Chronic Disease Directors](#) (NACDD) [Center for Advancing Healthy Communities](#). NACDD and its more than 7,000 Members seek to improve the health of the public by strengthening leadership and expertise for chronic disease prevention and control in states, territories, and at the national level. Established in 1988, in partnership with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), NACDD is the only membership association of its kind serving and representing every state and U.S. territory's chronic disease division.

In collaboration with the CDC's Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity (DNPAO) and the Division of Population Health (DPH), and a team of nationally recognized experts, NACDD is providing funding to 20 states (including 15 DNPAO SPAN-funded states and five DNPAO Ambassador states) to implement BRIC at both a state and local level. As part of the program, states are engaging more than 60 communities to address food and nutrition security, safe physical activity access, and social connectedness through policy, systems, and environmental (PSE) change strategies. Social determinants of health, health equity, and social justice principles are integrated into the planning and implementation of all three strategy areas, in addition to accounting for the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on groups at highest risk.

The initial project period was Jan. 1, 2021 – Dec. 31, 2021; an additional year of funding was awarded in 2021 and again in 2022, expanding the project period to Dec. 31, 2023. These profiles represent the state- and community-level activities planned by each BRIC state.

Learn more about the [BRIC program](#) or e-mail BRICinfo@chronicdisease.org.

State-Level Activities

Overarching

- The Illinois Public Health Institute (IPHI) has worked for over 10 years with multi-sector partners across Illinois to promote PSE changes that improve nutrition, physical activity, and reduce chronic disease.
- Convene the Illinois Alliance to Prevent Obesity (IAPO), a state-level PSE-focused chronic disease prevention coalition. IPHI engaged BRIC Technical Assistance provider Phil Bors, Healthy Places By Design, to educate coalition members on the connection between public health and social connectedness, a newer topic area for IAPO. As a result, social connectedness considerations are being integrated into coalition strategic planning discussions.

Food and Nutrition Security

- Support multiple pantries in St. Clair County, Peoria, and the Southern Seven region in adopting and implementing nutrition guidelines and expanding capacity for distributing healthier foods. The focus includes increasing cold storage and engaging communities in high need regions to address local and cultural preferences.

- Develop a webinar for food and nutrition security partners to increase understanding of how racism, oppression, and colonialism have shaped American food and nutrition culture and how racism, oppression, and discrimination show up at food pantries, emergency food programs, and nutrition programs.

Safe Physical Activity Access

- With support from Active Transportation Alliance, help conduct a community walk audit in the city of Cairo to help prioritize improvements that will promote walkability in the small port town.
- Neighborhood associations, faith-based coalitions, and others interested in promoting walkability in St. Clair County work to build new partnerships and capacity to improve the built environment and promote physical activity. Conduct a Complete Streets and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) audit in the Washington Park community.

Social Connectedness

- Convene the Illinois Alliance to Prevent Obesity (IAPO), a state-level PSE-focused chronic disease prevention coalition. IPHI engaged BRIC Technical Assistance Provider, Healthy Places by Design, to educate coalition members on the connection between public health and social connectedness, a newer topic area for IAPO. As a result, social connectedness considerations are being integrated into coalition strategic planning discussions.
- In collaboration with the Area Agencies on Aging in Southern Seven and St. Clair Counties, support new partnerships and programs to promote social connectedness.

Community-Level Activities

St. Clair County/Healthier Together (Rural)

Food and Nutrition Security (*Reaching an estimated 2,190 residents*)

- Revitalize gardens in the East St. Louis and Washington Park communities and develop a sustainable community gardening plan to help get food from the garden to nearby residents.
- Adopt, implement, and evaluate nutrition policies at eight feeding sites and food pantries; four have already adopted their nutrition policies.

Safe Physical Activity Access

- Connect with and assist local advocacy organizations, coalitions, and neighborhoods seeking to re-establish or build their community plans for promoting community-based active living.
- Initiate select recommendations from the Complete Streets and CPTED audit conducted by BRIC Technical Assistance Provider, Equitable Cities LLC; co-align these initiatives with similar Complete Streets efforts re-initiated in 2021 with the Belleville Bike/Walk advocacy group.

Social Connectedness

- Build faith- and school-based partnerships and coalitions with organizations that serve older adults and youth in the Washington Park neighborhood to develop or expand existing programs and opportunities for intergenerational mentoring, social interaction, and educational and physical activities.

Southern Seven Region (with focus on Alexander and Pulaski Counties, City of Cairo)

Food and Nutrition Security (Reaching an estimated 5,125 residents)

- Work with the Tri-State Food Bank to expand partnerships and access to fresh produce and dairy via the new cold storage site in Vienna, IL. Pilot a new delivery route for the food bank to deliver fresh foods from the cold storage facility to local pantries in Alexander and Pulaski counties. IPHI, in partnership with the SNAP educator in the region, support three (3) local pantries to set up new cold storage capacity and adopt nutrition guidelines for their sites.
- Launch a new food pantry in Cairo, Illinois including cold storage units at the site. It is the first-of-its-kind client choice pantry in the region, open five days a week.

Safe Physical Activity Access (Reaching an estimated 1,733 residents)

- Conduct a walkability assessment with the Southern Five Regional Planning District and Development Commission (S5RPC), Active Transportation Alliance (Active Trans or ATA), and the City of Cairo. The results will support development of a walkability improvement plan that prioritizes locations for walkability improvements based on essential services/destinations and census-level data on high-concentration areas of priority populations.
- Establish a committee of volunteers through the Mayor's Office to help prioritize the walk audit recommendations and guide the implementation process. This will build community capacity to pursue funding opportunities to install infrastructure improvements in the town.

Social Connectedness (Reaching an estimated 151 residents)

- Expand computer skills training programs offered by local colleges to more sites supporting older adults, with tablets provided by American Rescue Plan Act funds via the Egyptian Area Agency on Aging.
- Work with Egyptian Area Agency on Aging to establish more partnerships and referral mechanisms to expand the telephone reassurance program that addresses loneliness among high-need vulnerable older adults.

Health Equity Spotlight

- IPHI focuses its BRIC work in counties that were impacted significantly by the COVID-19 pandemic and that had high rates of chronic disease, food and nutrition insecurity, and social isolation. Through technical assistance and funding, IPHI encourages local partners to engage community members to help shape and implement initiatives, and to focus on addressing the needs of communities that have been the most disinvested.



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COMMUNITIES

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