

# Community Wellbeing

## Overview

The Community Wellbeing Program is committed to implementing sustainable, socially, and culturally responsive strategies to support individual and community wellbeing so all people in Minneapolis feel safe, accepted, connected, and valued.

## Promoting wellbeing with a community-driven approach

Wellbeing is not just the absence of disease or illness. It's a complex combination of a person's physical, mental, emotional, and social health. Having a strong sense of wellbeing helps individuals and communities to be more resilient.

A positive sense of wellbeing is associated with physical benefits, including lower incidences of cardiovascular disease, stroke, and increased productivity and creativeness in both employment and personal lives.<sup>1</sup>

Health and wellbeing start where we live, learn, work and play. Historical trauma, racial injustice, systemic health inequities and the COVID-19 pandemic have caused increased levels of stress, social isolation, and a feeling of uncertainty. These factors hinder wellbeing, as they limit individual and community sense of purpose, power, and life satisfaction.

The Community Wellbeing Program aims to address community needs by engaging the knowledge and experience of organizations and individuals to identify culturally responsive ways for people in Minneapolis to nurture social and cultural connections, address trauma and promote healing and resilience.



# Community Wellbeing

## Our current focus

Everyone deserves opportunities to learn skills to manage stress, increase social connections and build resilience. These skills become protective factors that can improve wellbeing and help people feel more engaged with their own lives, families, and communities.

Through a community needs assessment in 2021, the Community Wellbeing Initiative identified five key priority areas to support community wellbeing:



## Collaboration and partnerships

Cultivating authentic partnerships is essential to develop shared knowledge and co-create relevant solutions that improve wellbeing across all communities. Through its current community wellbeing work, the Healthy Living Initiative is working on two collaborative projects:

- Partnering with community-based organizations to implement projects that support community wellbeing through increasing social connections, reducing social isolation, increasing cultural connections, addressing trauma, and/or promoting healing and resiliency.
- Serving as the co-lead of the Minneapolis Highrise Health Alliance Behavioral Health Committee. This group brings together Minneapolis Public Housing staff and residents, social service organizations, the Minneapolis Highrise Representative Council, managed care organizations, and the Minneapolis Health Department to work together to identify ways to support the mental and behavioral health of public housing residents.



## Working with communities to identify solutions to improve community wellbeing

To support the five wellbeing priority areas identified through the 2021 needs assessment (increasing social connections, reducing social isolation, increasing cultural connections, addressing trauma, and promoting resiliency and healing), the Healthy Living Initiative launched the 2022-2023 Community Wellbeing Project. The goal of this project was to bring people and organizations together to identify sustainable ways to improve the overall wellbeing of vulnerable communities in Minneapolis.



Funds from the Minnesota Department of Health funded Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP) program and Charitable Gambling were leveraged to support 14 funded community organizations. Partners engaged with more than 2600 individuals representing diverse communities in Minneapolis, including African American women, youth and elders, East African youth and families, Native American youth and elders, Latinx women and families, and individuals living with mental and physical disabilities.



Examples of projects included:

- Building connections through social media, gatherings, and sharing of cultural practices.
- Community healing through sharing of personal stories, art, gardening, and physical activity.
- Outreach and education to address mental health stigma.
- Sharing of resources to support mental and physical health.
- Trauma informed training and implementing trauma informed policies and practices.



Leading to

**25+** changes on:

- Policies, Practices;
- Systems; and/or
- Physical and Social Environments  
to support community wellbeing.

The HLI will continue working with community partners and fostering collaborations to strengthen local communities' capacity to improve wellbeing.

## WELLNESS AT WORKPLACES

Employees are the most valuable resource of an organization. Workplace wellness initiatives help organizations offer a structure and physical environment that supports employee health and encourages positive lifestyle behaviors.

Some benefits of workplace wellness initiatives are: decreased absenteeism, Increased employee recruitment employee turnover and retention, Improved productivity, bolstered employee morale and commitment to the company, improved stress management and reduce your organization's health care costs.

### Healthy Worksites Microgrants Program

Healthy employees enjoy a better quality of life and face a lower risk of diseases and illnesses. They are also more likely to engage positively with their communities. By investing in the health and wellbeing of workers, organizations can help them find a better balance between work and personal life, enabling them to perform at their best.

Since its inception in 2022, the Minneapolis Health Department has introduced a microgrants program aimed at assisting worksites in the development of wellness initiatives. The Healthy Worksites Microgrants Program provides organizations with both technical support and funding to implement projects that improve employee health and wellbeing.

### With support from the Healthy Worksites Microgrants, Minneapolis worksites are:

- Creating programs to promote healthy food and beverage choices at work.
- Offering opportunities to be physically active during workhours.
- Creating a workplace lactation programs to support breastfeeding employees.
- Supporting employees in reducing their tobacco consumption and ceasing use.
- Developing innovative solutions to improve employee wellbeing and social connectedness.

Is your organization ready to foster a wellness culture?

Healthy Worksites Microgrants applications open each January.



A company that cares about employees' health is often considered a better place to work.

## People are struggling with increased levels of stress, social isolation, and feelings of uncertainty.

People living in Minneapolis neighborhoods without long-term supports report being less healthy than people in well-supported neighborhoods:<sup>2</sup>



4 times as many adults report frequent physical distress.



2 times as many adults report frequent mental distress.

1 in 3 teen girls and 1 in 5 teen boys in the U.S., have experienced new or worsening anxiety since March 2020.<sup>3</sup>



About one-third of U.S. adults age 45 and older report feeling lonely – and, due to an increased number of aging adults, the number is growing.<sup>4</sup>



## Supporting individual and community wellbeing can help people achieve their full potential.

## The positive effects of healthy wellbeing



Increases social connections



Reduces social isolation



Helps cultivate a positive attitude



Builds agency to address trauma



Promotes resiliency



Nurtures & cultivates healing



Helps build healthy relationships



Fosters healthier work environments



Contributes to cultural connectedness

... helps people live longer healthier lives.

### Sources

1. *Why Wellbeing*. (n.d.). [Vitalise Psychology is a private practice]. Vitalise Psychology. <http://www.vitalisepsychology.com.au/resources/why-wellbeing>
2. City of Minneapolis Health Dashboard, 2019 (Internal data).
3. Mostafavi, B. (2021, March 15). *National Poll: Pandemic Negatively Impacted Teens' Mental Health* [Blog]. Michigan Health. <https://www.michiganmedicine.org/health-lab/national-poll-pandemic-negatively-impacted-teens-mental-health>
4. Anderson, G. O., & Thayer, C. (2018, September). *Loneliness and Social Connections: A National Survey of Adults 45 and Older* [Nonprofit, Nonpartisan Organization]. AARP. <https://www.aarp.org/research/topics/life/info-2018/loneliness-social-connections.html>

## Going forward

Promoting wellbeing at a community level can have a significant impact on the physical and mental health of individuals in Minneapolis. The Community Wellbeing Program and its partners will continue working together to design and implement culturally responsive programming to support community wellbeing.



### For more information contact:

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We invite you to join us in our efforts  
to create healthier communities  
together in Minneapolis.



Building Healthier  
Communities



For reasonable accommodations or alternative formats please contact [healthyliving@minneapolismn.gov](mailto:healthyliving@minneapolismn.gov). People who are deaf or hard of hearing can use a relay service to call 311 at 612-673-3000. TTY users call 612-263-6850. Para ayuda, llame al 311. Rau kev pab 311. Hadii aad Caawimaad u baahantahay wac 311.