



## HEALTH EQUITY PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Health Determinants Rural Learning Collaborative increased awareness of health determinants and equipped participating communities with an action plan to address areas identified in the needs assessment phase of this project.

**Over the last 9 months, four rural communities were selected with the goals of:**

- 1 increasing their knowledge about health determinants,
- 2 assessing the needs in their community,
- 3 prioritizing the needs they identify, and
- 4 developing an obtainable action plan to develop programs to address health disparities.

Within each of the grantee communities, a community team or coalition was established to guide the grant objectives. When creating these community teams, IRHA worked with grantees to identify potential cross-sector partnerships and ensure all members of the community were being considered in the work. The result of the Health Determinants Rural Learning Collaborative is four successful health equity projects across the state of Iowa. While the projects vary in many ways, each project increased community partnerships, infrastructure, and community knowledge of the social determinants of health.

# CITY OF MALVERN

**At the beginning of the grant period, the City of Malvern identified two areas for improvement in their community.** The first centered around the county highway that cuts through the middle of town. The location of this road makes walking to the K-12 school and Dollar General unsafe. While several proposals for the creation of safer walking paths had been brought to Malvern's City Council, they ultimately had not been funded.

The second area of improvement was food security. Due to the loss of the town grocery store and limited produce access at Dollar General, fresh fruits and vegetables were hard to come by. The IRHA grant funds were used to jump-start work in both areas of need. The initial funding served to create a level of buy-in with other community organizations and the city.

As the project evolved, the focus on increasing access to physical activity and the walkability for their town increased. Malvern plans to expand their initial success to include establishing a walking school bus, a bicycle rodeo, additional trail options connecting neighborhoods with the downtown area, and creating a local camping grounds with restrooms.



**As part of the Health Equity Grant, various groups that had previously been thought of as having disconnected interests were brought together as stakeholder to provide input on the Wolverine Trail Safe Route to School. Bringing these groups together showed areas where there was overlap in organizational mission and opportunities for collaboration.”** — Joe George, Malvern City Clerk

# CITY OF MALVERN

## CONTACT THE CITY OF MALVERN

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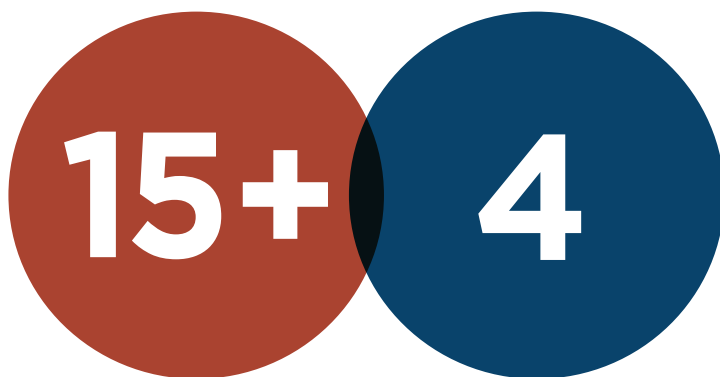
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**Building these relationships means that stakeholders can both be better informed about projects and programs that are going on in the community and helps better direct those with needs to organizations that can provide a benefit or service.”** — Joe George, Malvern City Clerk

## BEST PRACTICES

- Involve a diversity of stakeholders in the planning process to get a true understanding of what the community needs and wants.
- Solicit feedback from the community early in the process, it will save you time in the end.
- Meet community members where they are when wanting input, don't expect them to find the group.
- It is the unlikely relationships that can be the most powerful. Just because missions don't align perfectly doesn't mean organizations don't have common goals.



**15+ PARTNERSHIPS  
CREATED, EXPANDED  
OR MAINTAINED**

**4 COMMUNITY  
OUTREACH ACTIVITIES  
FACILITATED**



**AN AREA IN NEED OF IMPROVEMENT IN MALVERN  
TO INCREASE WALKABILITY AND SAFETY.**

## ABOUT IRHA

The Iowa Rural Health Association aims to provide leadership on factors that influence healthy living in rural Iowa. The Health Equity grant has been instrumental in allowing IRHA to imagine new and creative ways to facilitate health improvement for rural Iowans by allowing each community to prioritize their own needs and approaches. Throughout this process, IRHA has been able to foster unique strategies for health improvement in rural areas.

We've learned so much from the creative programs, projects, and processes our partner communities have implemented to address their community's needs and are excited to share their successes to aid leaders across rural Iowa improve the lives of those they serve. We look forward to continuing to play the role as convener and cohort-facilitator for more communities in the years to come!

*Audrey Tran Lam,  
IRHA Board President*



**Public Health**  
Iowa HHS