



YOUTH COMMUNITY HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PLAN

2025 YOUTH CHIP

For a community where youth voice drives change



PROJECT
LEARN



GLHA
GREATER LOWELL HEALTH ALLIANCE

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For a community where youth voice drives change

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to extend our sincere gratitude to the Boys & Girls Club of Greater Lowell, Project LEARN, and the University of Massachusetts Lowell for their invaluable partnership in hosting the Youth Community Health Improvement Plan (Youth CHIP) workshops.

We also gratefully acknowledge the Atrius Health Equity Foundation for providing the funding that made this initiative possible during the planning phase of the Youth as Health Care Agents Project.

We would not have been able to conduct this report without the teens from Lowell who contributed their time. These teens shared their perspectives on the city's top health priorities and contributed ideas to help shape the next CHIP action plan, guiding efforts to improve health outcomes across the community. Their engagement exemplifies the importance of giving youth a seat at the table and the leadership they bring when empowered to shape the change they want to see.

Your continued support, collaboration, and dedication to empowering youth voices made this initiative possible. By providing safe, engaging, and inspiring spaces for young people to share their ideas and shape community health priorities, you have helped build a foundation for lasting change in Lowell.

Thank you for your commitment to youth leadership, community wellness, and creating opportunities for the next generation to lead with purpose and impact.

With gratitude,

The Greater Lowell Health Alliance

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO...

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

WHAT IS A YOUTH CHIP?

- Collaborative plan to improve youth health and well-being in Greater Lowell.
- Informed by the 2025 Community Health Needs Assessment.
- Sets priorities, coordinates efforts, and guides resources.
- Highlights community strengths, challenges, and opportunities.
- Aims to reduce health inequities and address root causes.
- FOR YOUTH BY YOUTH!

METHODS:

5 Workshops

100

**Total YOUTH
Participants**

**Phenomenological Analysis
of Youth Ideas**

Creating themes from
lived experiences

Key Partners

- The Greater Lowell Health Alliance
- Boys & Girls Club of Greater Lowell
- Project Learn
- University of Massachusetts Lowell

PRIORITY TOPICS:

Mental Health

- Self Harm & Suicide
- Social & Family Connection
- Addiction

Economic Mobility

- Individual & Family Financial Literacy
- Education & Career Opportunities
- Bridges to Success

Safety in All Spaces

- Safe at Home
- Safe in Relationships
- Safe at School
- Safe Online

Family Health Ecology

- Family Food System
- Ecological Health Resources
- Whole Home Support

WHAT IS A YOUTH CHIP?

The Youth Community Health Improvement Plan (Youth CHIP) defines health priorities & guides resources toward initiatives that youth themselves have identified as critical. This CHIP is based on the findings of the 2025 Greater Lowell Community Health Needs Assessment, and is part of a larger Community Health Improvement Plan to address the health needs of all residents in the Greater Lowell region. This CHIP reflects the community's strengths, challenges, and opportunities as they are seen through the experiences of local youth themselves, creating a road map that is guided by lived experience & expertise.

The Greater Lowell Youth CHIP guides the investment of resources from schools, community organizations, healthcare partners, and other stakeholders committed to supporting youth. Its mission is to translate data into actionable strategies across priority youth health domains, focusing on reducing health inequities and addressing the underlying factors that affect young people's well-being.



HOW TO USE THIS CHIP

We want youth in our community to use this Youth CHIP to create and lead their own health projects. You can:

- Align your school or organization's plans with the bigger CHIP goals
- Cite this CHIP while applying for grants to fund your ideas
- Pick projects that matter most to your group or community
- Shape project ideas so they actually meet community needs
- Track progress with clear measures and goals
- Take action on issues that matter through advocacy
- Help influence policies or new rules that support youth health
- Decide how to use funding for projects that fit CHIP priorities
- ...and so much more!

**THE POWER OF COMMUNITY TO CREATE A HEALTHIER
COMMUNITY THROUGH COLLABORATION, EDUCATION
AND COORDINATION OF RESOURCES.**

METHODOLOGY

In the Fall of 2025, the Greater Lowell Health Alliance (GLHA) hosted a series of Youth CHIP workshops engaging 100 youth participants from Lowell schools & community organizations. Five 2-hour workshops were held to gather input, identify priorities, and draft youth-focused goals and objectives. We evaluated the draft of the Youth CHIP at a local High School Resource Fair at Butler Middle School.

Workshop participants reviewed data, brainstormed activities and goals for various domains of focus, and participated in a gallery walk to review, endorse, and refine ideas generated by other groups.

The data team used a phenomenological approach to analyze the workshop data, focusing on the lived experiences and perspectives of youth participants. This involved identifying recurring themes & patterns across workshops, which were then grouped & prioritized according to topics most frequently mentioned & endorsed by youth. By centering youth voices, this method ensured that the main ideas and priorities reflected their experiences and insights.

Youth participants also brainstormed potential projects and initiatives that could be implemented over the next three years to maximize community resources, fill gaps, and reduce duplication of efforts. To track progress, the GLHA matched these community-driven goals with measurable indicators, establishing benchmarks for accountability. The GLHA Steering Committee, task forces, and Youth Empowerment Initiatives will monitor these indicators & report results back to the community.

Although still in its early stages, the Youth CHIP has already had an impact, helping to identify funding priorities and ensuring that grants and resources are directed toward programs that address the most urgent youth health needs in Greater Lowell.

PRIORITY 1: MENTAL HEALTH

Youth experience the impacts of mental stress & illness as individuals as well as within their households. Isolation, anxiety, depression, self-harm, and thoughts of suicides are all issues of concern to young people. Youth suggested that positive connections with friends & trusted adults were critical to their wellbeing, and to preventing the risk behaviors associated with poor mental health, like drinking and gambling

Subcategory	Goals
Self Harm & Suicide	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase knowledge of & comfort discussing mental health, self-harm & suicide, especially within families 2. Increase youth leadership in planning, design, and implementation of suicide & self-harm awareness & prevention campaigns 3. Expand training for school staff & parents on youth on suicide prevention & community response
Social & Family Connection	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase opportunities for youth & family to participate in activities that promote connection, community engagement & wellbeing 2. Increase our shared understanding of the health & social impacts of past & ongoing social isolation on youth 3. Increase accessibility & diversity of after-school programs to foster pro-social relationships
Addiction	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase resources addressing problem gambling, vaping, and alcohol use among youth 2. Incorporate youth leadership in initiatives to address addiction among youth & their families

	Activities
Self Harm & Suicide	<p>Train youth as Mental Health Ambassadors and Mentors</p> <p>Host school and community assemblies during awareness months</p> <p>Host a mental health storytelling or open mic event</p> <p>Create a youth-led Suicide PSA via a podcast or social media campaign</p> <p>Create a Youth Mental Health Resource Guide</p> <p>Host a school-wide mental health panel with guest speakers related to mental health services</p>
Social & Family Connection	<p>Host a community-wide talent show</p> <p>Host a neighborhood “day of play”</p> <p>Create an intergenerational mentorship program, like “Adopt a Grandparent.”</p> <p>Launch a youth & parent intramural sports kickball league</p> <p>Offer incentives for youth & parents to complete communication skills workshops & trainings</p> <p>Partner with the library to create an intergenerational book club that focuses on books related to immigrant experiences, LGBTQ youth, etc.</p> <p>Partner with temples to participate in Gratitude Day (ភ្ជុំបិណ្ឌ, or <i>Pchum ben</i>)</p>
Addiction	<p>Create an after-school drop-in support group for youth struggling with gambling</p> <p>Incorporate gambling risk into financial literacy classes</p> <p>Create a youth-focused, sober-friendly calendar of activities & incentivize youth participation</p> <p>Engage youth in designing a public awareness campaign about the risks of sports betting</p> <p>Host a vape trade-in day</p>

PRIORITY 2: ECONOMIC MOBILITY

Youth experience the emotional and physical effects of financial stress at home and in their communities. Youth expressed a fear of growing up in the current socioeconomic environment and its impacts on health. They have suggested a need for financial literacy opportunities, pathways to high-paying careers, and strategies to break generational poverty.

Subcategory	Goals
Individual & Family Financial Literacy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase youth & family knowledge of the fundamentals of financial literacy 2. Increase knowledge of real-world financial planning related to avoiding predatory loans, establishing credit, financing college, and the ROIs of various career paths
Education & Career Opportunities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase the number of youth placed in internships & training related to high-paying careers 2. Strengthen community - school partnerships to provide all youth equitable access to educational & career opportunities with long-term growth & sustainability 3. Increase paid opportunities for youth
Bridges to Success	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase youth participation in college readiness programs (e.g. dual enrollment, bridge programs) 2. Increase parent engagement in post-graduate planning 3. Increase high-engagement mentorship for youth into high-yield career paths (e.g. careers in medicine, law, executive leadership, etc.)

	Activities
Individual & Family Financial Literacy	<p>Host family financial health trainings via churches & temples</p> <p>Partner with local credit unions to launch a financial mentorship program for families</p> <p>Offer safe credit-building programs for youth & families</p> <p>Host a Salary & Debt Transparency event where people in varying careers share their salary in the context of their educational debt via a panel or speed-dating style activity</p> <p>Advocate for tax incentives for businesses that offer student loan forgiveness or assistance</p>
Education & Career Opportunities	<p>Engage philanthropy teams at local orgs to support a community-wide scholarship fundraiser for youth</p> <p>Incentivize mentors in high-paying fields to offer high-engagement, long-term mentorship to youth</p> <p>Host a community-wide job shadow day</p> <p>Host a “Careers You’ve Never Heard Of” speaker series to explore lesser-known careers in varying fields</p> <p>Incentivize event planners to offer free youth access tickets to donor events, annual meetings, or galas where youth could connect & network with professionals</p>
Bridges to Success	<p>Create a high school to college to career transition toolkit</p> <p>Host Parents of College Kids groups where parents of high school students can ask questions of parents whose kids are currently in school</p> <p>Partner with UML to increase the number of courses high school students can enroll in for college credit</p> <p>Partner with UML & MCC to offer summer “boot camps” for high school students to prepare for college, enroll in an accelerated course, and familiarize themselves with each campus</p>

PRIORITY 3: SAFETY IN EVERY SPACE

Youth are impacted by violence in their homes, friendships, romantic relationships, and online, either personally or through someone they know. They have expressed the need for strategies, knowledge, and skills to promote safety, create healthy relationships, and access supportive resources at home and at school. They have emphasized the need for supportive systems, particularly adult guidance, across these settings.

Subcategory	Goals
Safe at Home	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase youth & parent participation in activities that build positive communication & promote safe home environments for all 2. Increase accessibility of resources for youth who feel unsafe at home 3. Increase education & training for identifying & responding to signs of unsafe home environments for people who work with youth
Safe in Relationships	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase youth participation in activities that provide education & skills about healthy relationships 2. Increase efforts that promote cultural norms that promote healthy relationships 3. Increase accessibility of domestic violence resources tailored to youth
Safe at School	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase the number of schools participating in trainings or certifications designating safe spaces for students 2. Increase activities that foster positive, pro-social relationships between teachers & students 3. Increase activities that reduce school-based violence, especially bullying and gun violence
Safe Online	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promote education regarding safe social media & online use 2. Increase engagement of youth in campaigns & advocacy efforts to create safe online spaces

	Activities
Safe at Home	<p>Host family workshops and follow-ups on conflict resolution, communication skills, and stress management to promote healthy home environments.</p> <p>Host a youth-led panel bringing in guest speakers who work in the field of Domestic violence.</p> <p>Match younger youth with “big brother/ big sister” mentors to discuss healthy family dynamics.</p>
Safe in Relationships	<p>Partner with local police departments and gyms to host self-defense lessons.</p> <p>Launch a youth-led anti-bullying & safe relationships social media campaign.</p> <p>Match younger youth with “big brother/ big sister” to plan monthly check-ins.</p> <p>Create a youth-developed healthy romantic relationships playbook.</p> <p>Create a community wall for youth to write notes of appreciation for their friends who supported them in any way.</p> <p>Create monthly friendship-building bingo card competitions.</p>
Safe at School	<p>Train and incentivize youth leaders to participate in bystander intervention courses and act as ambassadors.</p> <p>Partner with local gyms to refer teens who are responsible for school violence to boxing classes.</p> <p>Pair teens responsible for school violence with mentors</p> <p>Design and implement a youth-led safe schools podcast initiative.</p> <p>Design a youth mural with artwork symbolizing and evoking feelings of safety</p> <p>Create a youth-led school safety checklist that is sent to all students, parents, and teachers</p> <p>Designate inclusive, accessible and monitored spaces in schools for youth to escape violence and peer conflict</p>
Safe Online	<p>Launch a series of workshops to educate youth about self-regulating social media use</p> <p>Host monthly youth-led screen-free events or community-wide days of play</p> <p>Implement a youth-led campaign on demystifying online beauty standards.</p> <p>Host a series of workshops encouraging self-acceptance, identity, and trust among others, to undo the impacts of misusing social media</p> <p>Host competitions where the teen with the least amount of screen time wins prize money or an A+ on a quiz/ assignment</p> <p>Host an “influencer” training where teens learn how to use their platform to advocate for health, human rights, and things they are passionate about</p>

PRIORITY 4: FAMILY HEALTH ECOLOGY

Youth experience health challenges and stress within their families, including limited access to nutritious food and difficulty managing preventive care. They emphasize the importance of resources, guidance, and supportive connections to promote healthy eating, family health management, and overall well-being. Youth understand and highlight the impact of family dynamics on mental and physical health.

Subcategory	Goals
Family Food System	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase access to food resources in youth-serving spaces 2. Increase education about culturally-relevant nutrition in youth-serving spaces 3. Increase youth-parent collaboration in activities that promote healthy, positive relationships with food (e.g. family meals, food as cultural preservation, etc.)
Ecological Health Resources	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase education & resources regarding whole-family impacts of chronic health conditions (i.e. resources for caregivers) 2. Increase household health confidence & skills (i.e. ability to prevent unwanted health issues or self-manage existing conditions) 3. Incorporate whole-household approaches to chronic disease prevention & management interventions (i.e. nutrition interventions that focus on family meal planning, home air filtration to manage asthma, etc.)
Whole-home Support	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Expand trainings, education, and support regarding intergenerational mental & physical health 2. Expand community - school partnerships to coordinate resources addressing the impact of health issues on individuals & households (i.e. support for children of parents with cancer) 3. Increase accessibility of tangible support for households navigating health issues (i.e. childcare vouchers for chemotherapy, transportation between schools & medical appointments)

	Activities
Family Food System	<p>Host a series of culturally congruent family cooking classes.</p> <p>Launch a series of hands-on workshops for youth and their families focused on planning, shopping, and preparing healthy, affordable, and delicious meals.</p> <p>Create a social media vlog series where youth grocery shop at local stores and cook affordable meals.</p> <p>Host a culture potluck night where families bring dishes relevant to their identity and culture to share.</p> <p>Create a competition where dads and teens cook together once a week and post on social media to win a prize.</p> <p>Provide teens with vouchers to take their father or guardian out to eat</p>
Family Health Ecology	<p>Partner with local gyms to host family spin-a-thon and box-a-thon.</p> <p>Give students an excused day off to get vaccinated with their families and enjoy a fun family outing afterward.</p> <p>Host a speed networking event where families rotate between professionals to discuss health and wellness management.</p> <p>Implement a youth-led family checklist or certification program for managing family health</p> <p>Host a father-child field day with sports competitions and cooking/BBQ competitions</p>
Mental Health Support	<p>Incentivize and provide youth-led “family days” where parents spend time with their households.</p> <p>Host a speed networking event where families can come together to meet local health & mental health serving organizations</p> <p>Create and disseminate a youth-led bingo card for families to complete together with community-building activities</p> <p>Incentivize conversations at home about mental health</p> <p>Create a newsletter for fathers to stay up to date on youth events, after-school programs, or family health workshops.</p>

INDICATORS

Progress within CHIP categories is evaluated using several indicators. Implementation indicators report on the specific projects or activities that were put into place. CHNA indicators measure specific changes in items reported in the needs assessment year over year. Population indicators measure changes in health outcomes or behavior at the population level. Indicators listed in this section are sample indicators that can be made more specific as projects & initiatives are launched.

Category	Indicator	
Mental Health	Implementation	Number of youth serving on advisory boards/planning teams related to youth MH Total number of public campaigns/initiatives related to youth MH yearly Total number of youth & family member participation in relevant MH initiatives
	CHNA	8% decrease in YA participants reporting thoughts of suicide 9% increase in YA participants reporting having friends/family they can rely on when needed 9% increase in YA participants reporting improved MH compared to previous year 8% decrease in YA participants reporting problems with alcohol
	Population	<14% of HS students reporting vaping in previous 30 days (from 16%) <16% of HS students reporting self-harm (from 19%) <40% of HS students reporting ever gambling (from 42%)
Economic Mobility	Implementation	Number of youth & family participating in financial literacy trainings Increase in reported knowledge/skills/confidence of participants pre/post training Number of successful youth placements in jobs, internships & mentorships Number of youth successfully transitioning to college/competetively paid work post-graduation
	CHNA	13% increase in YA participants reporting improve financial health compared to previous year 8% decrease in participants unable to pay bills in full/on time
	Population	Increase in YA median income Increase in minority homeownership Increase in minority applicants/acceptances into graduate school (i.e. medical school)

INDICATORS

Category	Indicator	
Safety in Every Space	Implementation	<p>Number of youth serving in leadership roles in efforts to promote home/school/relationship/online safety</p> <p>Total number of public campaigns/initiatives related to promoting safer spaces for youth</p> <p>Total number of new initiatives that address reducing youth victimization</p>
	CHNA	<p>8% decrease in YA participants reporting not having a safe place to sleep at night</p> <p>9% increase in YA participants reporting feeling safe in their neighborhoods</p>
	Population	<p>>94.5% of HS students reporting feeling safe with caregiving (from 92.1%)</p> <p>>68% of HS students reporting feeling they belong at school (from 61.2%)</p> <p><6% of MA youth report being physically hurt on a date (from 9%)</p>
Family Health Ecology	Implementation	<p>Number of youth & family participating in activities promoting health literacy</p> <p>Increase in reported health-related knowledge/skills/confidence of participants pre/post training</p> <p>Number of youth-serving spaces incorporating services that reduce the burden of chronic disease (i.e. nutrition programs)</p> <p>Number of food-related services incorporating culturally-relevant and/or whole-family resources or programs</p>
	CHNA	<p>12% increase in YA participants reporting always having access to nutritious food</p> <p>4 - 8% decrease in YA participants reporting a range of chronic conditions</p>
	Population	<p>< 12% diabetes prevalence in Lowell (from 13.7%)</p> <p><37% hypertension prevalence in Lowell (from 39.3%)</p> <p><31% obesity prevalence in Lowell (35.3%)</p> <p><9 per 100 pediatric asthma rate in Lowell (from 10.1)</p>



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