

Health & Safety

We will be a healthy community in which everyone has access to health care, fresh food, quality housing, and support services.

Subthemes

- Addiction prevention + treatment
- Healthy & locally grown foods
- Safe places
- Active police force
- Locally-driven
- Educational programs



What's Underway

In the last few years, we've seen...

- the Crawford County Planning Office undergo a comprehensive county-wide housing study to collect in-depth data on the state of housing in Crawford County
- Crawford County Human Services receive a grant and subsequently launch a cross-sector initiative to make Crawford County one of the first trauma-informed communities
- the development of more than 3 community gardens, over 10 city gardens, one community orchard, and the Grow Meadville Garden Network that connects them all
- the rise of Not One More, a grassroots effort to fight the cycle of addiction and support those recovering from addiction
- the launch of the Meadville Medical Center's Let's Talk Campaign to de-stigmatize addiction
- the enstatement of the Community Navigator position, a Medical Center employee dedicated to helping community members navigate the path to recovery
- the start of the Mobile Market House, an initiative to increase access to local foods and support local farmers



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Action 1 **Change zoning ordinance that prevents urban agriculture**

Overview

Currently, the City's Zoning Ordinance prohibits urban agriculture which includes community gardens within City limits. A moratorium has been placed on the ordinance to allow for the development of community gardens that we've seen (Creating Landscapes for Families' garden on South Main, the MARC Community Garden, and the garden in Fifth Ward). That moratorium is due to expire. The City of Meadville's Planning & Zoning Commission, however, is preparing to rewrite the Zoning Ordinance. We hope to include a provision allowing urban agriculture, including community gardens and urban farms. An ordinance such as this will allow for long-term sustainability of existing gardens as well as the development of new gardens and farms, making fresh, locally grown foods accessible to more members of our community.

Lead Solution Partner

- City of Meadville Planning Commission
- Grow Meadville Garden Network

Community Values

- ✓ Small Town
- ✓ Nature

Existing Resources

- Growing number of gardens and support for community gardening
- Grant received by City of Meadville to update Zoning Ordinance

Action 2 **Establish tenants' rights and education program**

Overview

In Meadville, 56% of houses are renter occupied. This, coupled with the realities that 55% of our residential buildings were built before 1950, and 56% of residents are identified as "low to moderate income", indicates a need for a strong tenant-focused support network. Such a network will address community concerns expressed about the aesthetics and safety of our neighborhood and empower renters in tenant/landlord relationships. In resident interviews, many residents expressed concerns regarding unfair treatment by landlords, neglected properties, and unsafe homes. By sharing knowledge, skills, and resources, community members hope that this program will begin to create safer and healthier homes and neighborhoods.

Lead Solution Partner

- Common Roots
- Northwest Legal Services

Community Values

- ✓ Small Town
- ✓ Inclusion

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Action 3 Develop neighborhood hubs

Overview

Neighborhood Hubs will be supported, physical spaces embedded in local neighborhoods where residents can gather, connect, and have increased access to resources. These Hubs will use pre-existing properties within neighborhoods in order to retain community identity. The Hubs will employ community residents as leaders and organizers of these spaces. This project meets the expressed need for safe, local, and affordable spaces for residents of all backgrounds and ages to gather and receive support and build relationships, both formally and informally, as well as the expressed need for easier access to information about support services.

Lead Solution Partner

- Common Roots
- Crawford County System of Care

Partner Organizations

- Women's Services
- Living Waters Church

Community Values

- ✓ Small Town
- ✓ Inclusion
- ✓ Local Economy

Existing Resources

- County Planning's Housing Study
- System of Care

Action 4 Establish recovery peer leaders

Overview

As a way to bridge the gap between individuals who are actively using drugs and those in long-term recovery, trained peer leaders will be delegated and placed in key institutions to support active users who choose to seek recovery. These peer leaders will be those who are currently in recovery and have a strong working knowledge of the tools and systems that exist to support and encourage community members to seek help and healing. Peer Leaders could be stationed at Neighborhood Hubs (see above).

Lead Solution Partner

- "Let's Talk..." Campaign
- Crawford County Drug & Alcohol Commission

Partner Organizations

- Women's Services
- Meadville Medical Center
- St. James Haven
- Stone UMC Soup Kitchen
- Neighborhood Hubs



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Action 5 Host an "Ask an Addict" community panel

Overview

Many residents have expressed concerns around the current drug crisis in our community, but often feel ill-equipped to offer tangible solutions due to the magnitude of the issue. After listening to community members who are in recovery, we have heard that relationship-based education and open communication can be an effective healing tool. Several residents who are in recovery have proposed regular open forums in which community members can discuss addiction and the current public health crisis in personal as well as larger social contexts. This work will demonstrate the goal of the current "Let's Talk..." campaign to end the stigma of addiction in our community and will provide a resource for meaningful community education.

Lead Solution Partner

- "Let's Talk" Campaign

Partner Organizations

- Women's Services
- Meadville Medical Center
- City of Meadville

Community Values

- ✓ Small Town

Action 6 Launch youth mentor program

Overview

Folks have expressed a desire for more drug and alcohol education resources within the Crawford Central School System. To meet this request, community members will develop a network of volunteer mentors who can have open and honest conversations with young people, encouraging them to choose paths that will prepare them for fulfilling futures. These mentors will primarily be paired with at-risk youth, but will also be able to go into schools to facilitate meaningful conversations about drug use, addiction, and recovery.

Lead Solution Partner

- "Let's Talk..." Campaign

Partner Organizations

- Women's Services
- Meadville Medical Center
- City of Meadville
- Crawford Central School District

Community Values

- ✓ Children & Youth Education



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Action 7 Institute an Addiction and Recovery Advisory Council

Overview

One of the most concerning issues in addressing our current drug addiction crisis is the disconnect among those who are currently using, those in recovery, and those who are in positions of power. As a method to bridge this gap, an Addiction and Recovery Advisory Council will be established to work with the City and County to develop policies and institutions that promote safety, understanding, healing, support, and recovery. This council will be composed of those who are in recovery and their closest allies. The Addiction and Recovery Advisory Council will meet regularly and will have the opportunity to weigh in on City decisions that effect this vulnerable population.

Lead Solution Partner

- "Let's Talk" Campaign

Partner Organizations

- Women's Services
- Meadville Medical Center
- City of Meadville

Community Values

- ✓ Small Town

Action 8 Create a Needle Exchange Program business plan

Overview

Residents have expressed interest in the idea of bringing a "Needle Exchange" program into the community. Such a program will benefit the users by reducing the chance of transmitting blood-borne illnesses such as Hepatitis C and HIV, as well as the families and friends in direct contact with active users. A needle exchange program also facilitates a way for used needles to be disposed of in a safe and appropriate manner, further decreasing chances of disease transmission in the community.

Lead Solution Partner

- "Let's Talk" Campaign

Partner Organizations

- Women's Services
- Meadville Medical Center