**2019 All-America City Award Application**

Spotlight: Creating Healthy Communities Through Inclusive Civic Engagement

**Community Information**

**Community name and state: \_Dubuque, Iowa**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Your community is applying as a:**

\_\_\_\_ Village \_\_\_ Town \_\_\_ Tribe \_x\_\_ City \_\_\_ County \_\_\_ Region

**If applying as a region, name participating communities:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**If applying as a neighborhood, name city:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Has your community applied before?** **X** Yes No If Yes, which years:\_1997, 2007, 2012, 2013, 2017\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Has your community been a Finalist before?** X Yes No If Yes, which years:\_ 1997, 2007, 2012, 2013, 2017\_\_\_\_

**Has your community been an All-America City before?** X Yes No If Yes, which years:\_ 2007, 2012, 2013, 2017\_

**Contact Information**

**All-America City Award contact (primary contact person available throughout competition & follow-up):**

Name: \_Cori Burbach\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Title (if any):\_\_Assistant City Manager \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Organization/Government/Other: \_City of Dubuque \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_50 W 13th St\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ City, State, Zip\_\_Dubuque, Iowa 52001\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Phone (business/day): 563.589.4110\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Mobile Phone\_563.564.0343\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address(es): cburbach@cityofdubuque.org\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**The applying community will receive a complimentary membership (or membership renewal if an AAC application was submitted last year) to the National Civic League for one year. To whom should this membership be directed?**

Name\_Michael C Van Milligen, City Manager \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Address\_50 W 13th St\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

City, State & Zip Code \_Dubuque, Iowa 52001\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_563.589.4110\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_563.589.4149\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_ctymgr@cityofdubuque.org\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**We agree to follow the National Civic League’s rules regarding use of the All‑America City Award logo, a registered trademark of the National Civic League. We allow the League and the All-America City Award to share this application and the information enclosed in it with League and AAC networks to promote the work of our community. If we are named an All-America City, we agree to conduct a post-AAC conference call or regional forum for the AAC network that features our projects. In a pay-it-forward spirit, if named a finalist or All-America City, we agree to consider supporting AAC through a National Civic League membership for a minimum of the next three years.**

Signature: \_\_Cori Burbach\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_3.5.19\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_Cori Burbach\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_Assistant City Manager \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Community Statistics and Map**

Note: Use the most up-to-date statistics possible for your neighborhood, town, city, county, or region (source suggestions: U.S. Census Bureau, State Department of Economic Security, State Department of Finance, Department of Public Health, and local school statistics).

POPULATION (in year 2010 or most recent): 58,266

Source/Date: 2017 ACS 1 yr estimate

POPULATION PERCENTAGE CHANGE 2000-2010 (indicate + or -): -0.09 %

Source/Date: 2000 & 2010 decennial census

RACIAL/ETHNIC POPULATION BREAKDOWN:

White \_90.6\_%

Hispanic or Latino (of any race) \_2.2\_\_%

Black or African American \_4.4\_\_%

Asian \_1.5\_\_%

American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) \_0.08\_%

Mixed Race \_2.3\_\_%

Other \_0.6\_\_%

Source/Date: 2013-2017 ACS

MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME: $64,168

Source/Date: 2013-2017 ACS

PERCENTAGE OF FAMILIES BELOW POVERTY LEVEL: 10.4 % (of population 16+ yr)

Source/Date: 2013-2017 ACS

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE: \_2.5\_\_\_%

Source/Date: Dubuque County rate, Iowa Workforce Devt, Dec 2018

POPULATION BREAKDOWN BY AGE GROUP (percentages, if available):

19 years old and under \_25.1\_%

20-24 \_8.3\_\_%

25-44 \_24.2\_%

45-64 \_25.3\_%

65 and over \_17.0\_%

Source/Date: 2013-2017 ACS

PERCENTAGE OF HOME OWNERSHIP: 63.3 %

Source/Date: 2013-2017 ACS

WORKFORCE DISTRIBUTION -- Name the three largest employment sectors (include military services and/or installations, if any) in your community and provide the percentage of total employed in each:

 Service \_19.5\_\_\_\_\_\_%

\_Sales & Office\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_25.5\_\_\_\_\_\_%

 Mgt, Business & Financial \_11.3\_\_\_\_\_\_\_%

Source/Date: 2013-2017 ACS

**MAP** -- Please attach a state map (8.5” x 11”) with your community clearly marked

**PART I: How equitable are opportunities in your community?**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Race:American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) | Race: Asian  | Race: Black or African American | Race: Hispanic or Latino (of any race) | Race: Mixed Race | Race:Other  | Race: White | Gender:Female | Gender:Male | Gender: Other |
| Overall Community Demographic | 45 (0.1%) | 864 (1.5%) | 2560 (4.4%) | 1287 (2.2%) | 1320 (2.3%) | 330 (0.6%) | 52934 (90.6%) | 29993 (51.3%) | 28417 (48.7%) | Not collected |
| Elected Officials  | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2(28.6%) | 0 | 0 | 5(71.4%) | 1(14.3%) | 6(85.7%) | Not collected |
| City Staff Department Heads | 0 | 0 | 1(3.5%) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 28(96.5%) | 17(58.6%) | 12(41.4%) | Not collected |
| City Staff | 1(0.1%) | 0 | 34(3.7%) | 18(1.9%) | 0 | 0 | 873(94.3%) | 314(33.9%) | 612(66.1%) | Not collected |
| Venders and Contractors | 185 of our vendors and contractors in the past year have voluntarily identified themselves as female or minority owned |
| Resident Boards and Commissions | 0 | 1 (0.005%) | 3 (0.01%) | 1 (0.005%) | 1 (0.005%) | 0 | 71 (42.5%) | 59 (35.3%) | 86 (51.4%) | 0 |
| Youth Advisory Board | City-led program not in existence; under development |
| Police Citizen Groups (DCPRC) | 0 | 0 | 2(12.5%) | 3(18.7%) | 0 | 0 | 11(68.8%) | 6(37.5%) | 10(62.5%) | Not collected |
| Leadership Academies  | City-led program not in existence; partner-led initiatives under development |

**Note re: Race: Other:** Dubuque has a Pacific Islander population from the Marshall Islands. We have concerns that these numbers may not accurately reflect the actual number of Marshallese living in our community.

**Note re: Boards and Commissions:** Of the total 167 Resident Boards and Commissions members, 77 (46.1%) provided racial/ethnic info and 145 (86.8%) provided gender info in a new demographic data collection process. 22 seats (13.2%) were vacant.

In Dubuque, we view equity and inclusion as ever-evolving work. Our approach is both “inside” and “outside” government. Internally, we developed an equity team structure that is designed to withstand the test of time. Our goal is to use disaggregated data and strong community engagement to assess equity, hold up successes, and intervene in removing barriers or addressing gaps. We are in the early stages of educating, establishing strategic goals, and gathering baseline data. Please read this application with the following in mind: 1) we are striving towards ideals and have not arrived; 2) we view people as whole and capable and view inequities as caused by structures that inhibit people from reaching their potential; and 3) specific program outcomes are examples of contributions toward more equitable outcomes and are insufficient in themselves to eliminate inequities. Areas for continued growth include: 1) normalizing conversations around race; 2) consistently using disaggregated data and a racial equity analysis; and 3) implementing policies that advance racial equity.

**“Inside” Government**

The *City Council* explicitly added equity to its vision and mission, adopted community engagement principles that include equity considerations, and receive reports from staff that include a description of a policy agenda item’s equity impact.

The *City Manager* directed each department to develop and implement an equity plan around four general goal areas for Advancing Equity:

* Goal 1: Workforce Recruitment and Retention Efforts
* Goal 2: Grant, Contract, and Purchased Services Agreements
* Goal 3: Service Delivery and Community Engagement
* Goal 4: Collective Impact Partnerships with Community

The *Human Rights Department* has coordinators and a matrix of cross-departmental teams to advance equity:

* Equity Outreach Coordinator (EOC): facilitates equity teams and elevates the voices and skills that staff and community members most impacted by inequities bring to our community.
* Community Engagement Coordinator (CEC): facilitates use of an Equitable Community Engagement Toolkit and works to supports authentic community engagement when making decisions related to equity and inclusion, including ways in which we recruit and retain representative boards and commissions.
* Strategic Workforce Equity Coordinator (SWEC): infuses equity into our recruitment and retention efforts.
* Equity Teams include:
	+ Core Team: develops department-level equity assessments and supports departments in developing internal equity teams and plans.
	+ Recruitment and Retention Team: supports SWEC and departments to advance City’s workforce equity and inclusion goals.
	+ Cash Out Team: infuses equity measures into grant programs and annual contracts with outside partners, including those involved in collective-impact efforts.
	+ Community Engagement Team: develops engagement strategies to inform, consult, and empower diverse resident groups.
	+ Data Team: establishes usable and available equity data around service delivery and reporting templates for the organization.
	+ Intercultural Facilitators Team: designs and delivers equity workshops for City staff and partners.
	+ Communication Team: uses marketing and communication strategies to tell the story of the organization’s work to advance equity and inclusion.

The *Police Department* established the “Chief’s Forum,” an informal group of the Police Chief and representatives from the following groups: National Alliance on Mental Illness, 4 the People, Inc., Dubuque Transgender, Children of Abraham (Christian, Jewish, Islamic interfaith group), African Diaspora, Tri-State Islamic Center, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), Black Men Coalition, Dubuque Downtown Christian Outreach, Dubuque Area Congregations United, Marshallese community, Co-Dubuque (LGBTQ+).

The *Finance Department* collects voluntary data from vendors regarding female/minority-owned business status. We will soon begin using this data to support local businesses, explore trainings and support systems to develop more businesses that fit this category, and collect optional demographic data from utility customers to allow more granular analysis than current Census data provides.

The *Public Works Department* uses a mix of resident input, visual inspections, objective pavement ratings, and geographic distribution to create an annual street resurfacing plan. Street maintenance work includes ADA curb ramp upgrades, improving pedestrian access for those who are unable or choose not to drive.

Using transit route-planning software with an embedded Title VI analysis engine, Public Works piloted an analysis of who benefits from street resurfacing projects and whether the improvements disproportionately occur in high-income, non-minority neighborhoods. This analysis used Census blocks to capture the entire city limits and a low-income threshold based on the federal poverty rate, then compared the block areas to the overall low-income and minority populations in the city. The analysis calculated the difference in impacts between both low-income and minority groups versus the average population. Between 2017 and 2018, minority groups benefitted 12% more than the average population, while the average population benefitted 2.8% more than low-income residents.

The *Leisure Services Department* layered the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) area map with City park locations to identify those areas either used for various programs or in need of amenities that would permit expansion of neighborhood programming efforts.

**“Outside” Government**
This outside work is facilitated through the Inclusive Dubuque network described in Part 2 below.

The Peer Learning Council (PLC) developed the Best Practices in Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) nine-month workshop series to help businesses, non-profits, and educational institutions craft and meet their DEI goals.

The PLC hosted Race Forward, a pre-eminent national action institute helping communities improve outcomes for all with an emphasis on racial equity. Race Forward facilitated technical assistance for 40 non-profits to build shared language, assess our readiness for action, and increase capacity for policy advocacy around racial equity issues.

Thirty CEOs formed the Business Leaders Equity cohort to address substantial under-representation of racial/ethnic minority and low-income residents in our current workforce pool. This cohort, facilitated by CFGD, is focusing on preparing the unemployed and underemployed for available jobs, and on strategies to retain and advance those individuals in their workplace.

Greater Dubuque Development Corporation (GDDC), the region’s economic development non-profit, has established the Future Leadership Team. This cohort of 30 young, diverse professional will advise GDDC’s board and be mentored for future leadership opportunities in the organization.

**PART II: Tell Your Community’s Story**

Dubuque, Iowa strives to be a resilient, equitable community of choice. We actively work to address our pressing challenges of creating:

* A more resilient community that can prevent, prepare for, and recover from potential economic, environmental, and social/cultural vulnerabilities.
* An informed, equitable and inclusive community where all people are respected, valued and treated fairly.

For the last decade, private, non-profit, and public sectors collaborated with residents to create a more viable, livable, equitable future for all through the **Sustainable Dubuque** model of economic prosperity, environmental integrity, and social/cultural vibrancy. It provides residents and businesses with information and action steps to save money and resources, improve the environment and economy, and improve their health.

Since 2008, the Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque (CFGD) and City partnered to support Project HOPE (Helping Our People Excel), a network of partners addressing barriers to economic opportunity. After the community identified mental health and childcare services as weaknesses, the CFGD convened service providers and clients to conduct needs assessments and develop action plans.

IBM and Dubuque partnered in 2009 to create Smarter Sustainable Dubuque, an initiative to utilize high-tech and “high-touch” strategies to engage residents in saving resources and improving their environment.

Since 2012, Dubuque’s Green & Healthy Homes program has addressed physical conditions of 238 low- to moderate-income households, as well as health and quality of life of occupants. Since 1997, we have made 1,280 units lead-safe, and lowered the elevated blood lead levels from 12.8% to 2.2% considered lead-poisoned in the target area. Crescent Community Health Center continues to provide primary medical and dental care for underserved populations in the Dubuque area. Through community partnerships, Crescent expanded services in 2018 to launch the Pacific Islander Health Project.

In 2012, business leaders acknowledged challenges related to diversity, equity and inclusion in the community. Residents faced challenges accessing needed services and connecting to parts of the community; neighborhoods were experiencing struggles related to demographic changes; and businesses were reporting difficulty attracting and retaining a diverse workforce.

**Inclusive Dubuque** is a peer-learning network of 60 partners from faith, government, labor, nonprofit, business, and education sectors working to advance justice and social equity in our community in which all people feel respected, valued and treated fairly.

To learn more about the lived experiences of diverse groups and to discover what disparities exist in economic wellbeing, housing, education, health, safe neighborhoods, transportation, and arts and culture, the 2015 Community Equity Profile engaged 584 participants through dialogues and collected 1,995 surveys. In 2016, the network turned its focus to providing equity learning opportunities, tools and resources, and baseline data to help community members and collaborative institutions continue to advance equity in our region.

**Imagine Dubuque**, the City’s new Comprehensive Plan adopted in 2017, reflects inclusive community engagement with 12,500 ideas from 6,000 participants driving its content and recommendations. Engagement was representative by race, age, ethnicity and gender. A collective impact initiative is underway to similarly engage all sectors in a call to action to implement the plan’s community recommendations.

**PART III: Describe the Strength of Your Community’s Civic Infrastructure**

**Shared Vision and Values**

In Dubuque, our demographics continue to change as households become more mobile and employers recruit from far and wide - changes that bring with them the benefits and challenges of cultural diversity.

In 2012, community leaders discussed the impacts of changing demographics, sharing stories of individuals facing challenges accessing resources, neighborhoods struggling with cohesion, and employers struggling to recruit and retain diverse talent. Leaders aligned, forming Inclusive Dubuque in 2013 as a network dedicated to furthering equity and inclusion in our community.

Imagine Dubuque, the 2017 City Comprehensive Plan, reflects a new level of community engagement, showing the importance of planning and gathering input on our future. It celebrates the collective “voice” of our community and was developed via input collected at community events, small focus groups to ensure representative demographic participation, and online tools available anytime, anywhere.

**Culture of Engagement**

Over the past two decades, we have engaged residents, neighborhoods, stakeholders, and partners from the public and private sectors in all major initiatives. This has been critical in our recipe for Dubuque’s success: people, planning, and partnerships.

In 2015, Inclusive Dubuque launched its first major collaborative effort: the Community Equity Profile Project. This extensive process sought to discover how diverse groups are affected by various community systems that impact economic wellbeing, housing, education, health, safe neighborhoods, transportation, and arts and culture.

### Working with the Interactivity Foundation, CFGD trained 24 diverse facilitators to lead community dialogues. CFGD met with formal and informal community leaders of traditionally marginalized communities to develop culturally appropriate processes, establish parameters of participation, translate materials, and conduct dialogue sessions. Events attended include Juneteenth, Spanish mass, Marshall Islands Constitution Day, PrideFest, Friends of India celebration, and meetings of LULAC, NAACP, Tri-State Muslim Association, and Filipino residents.

### Imagine Dubuque builds on past planning efforts and takes direction from the community with our most extensive public engagement process ever. To ensure Imagine Dubuque was inclusive and representative of the community, City planners spent 12 months in outreach to organizations, stakeholders, neighborhood associations, students and traditionally underrepresented groups. Key partnerships to reach underrepresented sectors were formed early and strengthened throughout the process, providing opportunities and for everyone to connect and share ideas in the way that felt most natural to them.

### Engagement included traditional and non-traditional methods to meet people where they are. From high schools and universities, to neighborhood associations and service clubs, to groups representing blacks, Latinos, Marshallese, LGBTQ people and those living in poverty, on-site mini-workshops inspired participants to share ideas on the future of Dubuque, download the app, follow the website, and tell others to do the same!

**Inclusive Community Leadership**

Intentional efforts to develop leaders from all backgrounds and diversify leadership across sectors, including youth, are underway.

* University of Dubuque Student Life Department held ally training to create awareness of experiences of LGBTQ people.
* YAPPERS are youth grantmakers who engage in teambuilding and leadership activities, discuss local youth issues, and make funding decisions to support youth-serving organizations.
* Washington Middle School formed “Moxie Squad”, a group of students who receive training on how to navigate and understand cultural differences to foster a positive learning environment, presenting to educators, government leaders, and community members.

**Equity**

Inclusive Dubuque has focused onand supported cultural diversity with numerous opportunities for people to discuss their experiences in community dialogue sessions based on their cultural lens. People from diverse backgrounds were trained to facilitate dialogue sessions, developing skills crucial to diversity and inclusion work. Beyond data collection, the process helped catalyze a larger community conversation about cultural and equity issues.

Each network partner also determines how they can be part of creating an inclusive and equitable community by "doing what they do best." Early actions have included:

* Dubuque Community School District (DCSD) implementing cultural proficiency training
* Chamber of Commerce developing its first Minority Business Council
* Northeast Iowa Community College hiring outreach coordinator to connect minority residents to education and training opportunities.

Racial disparities reveal themselves in the data. Working with Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) and the Results Leadership Group, CFGD hosted educational sessions to help normalize conversations around race, learn about using a Results Based Accountability (RBA) framework to track progress, and infuse an equity lens in our decision making. Working groups use an RBA framework to determine where strategies will focus and what disaggregated indicators will be tracked at the population level to evaluate progress over time.

The DCSD recently launched its new five-year plan “Success for All,” which seeks to further the district’s work in ensuring that every student served – of all abilities and from all backgrounds – is empowered with the skills needed to live a rewarding life. Equity elements are woven throughout the plan as the district looks to remove barriers and enhance the learning of every student.

**Authentic Communication**

Our broad impact is in large part due to the willingness of a diverse cross-section of people to come together, roll up their sleeves and tackle challenges head-on. As has been the case in the past, driving change begins with a conversation. Inclusive Dubuque network partners include advocacy and non-profit groups led by African-American and Latino community members (4 the People, Inc., LULAC, NAACP), an Interfaith group consisting of Christian, Jewish, and Muslim members, Multicultural Family Center, large employers and health care providers with a diverse employee base, K-12 and higher education institutions, government, and local human services organizations.

In 2017, Inclusive Dubuque partnered with a national storytelling initiative, the Facing Project, to highlight Marshallese individuals in Dubuque. It offered a safe and empowering avenue for 12 Marshallese people to tell their stories and for others to learn about their culture.

**Collaborative Institutions**

Dubuque residents expect to have access to opportunities to craft decisions that affect their daily lives. Businesses, non-profits, government agencies, and grassroots organizations expect that we will work hard to not just share information, but identify shared outcomes to work towards, based on the data we review and the relationships we build.

Providing safe neighborhoods and ensuring healthy homes are two ways we address barriers that undermine our children’s ability to advance through the key milestones on Our Roadmap for Success:

* ready for kindergarten due to quality pre-school and childcare,
* reading at proficiency level by 3rd grade,
* proficiency in grade-level math by 8th grade,
* graduation from high school,
* access to college, a certificate course, or job training to move to a living-wage job.

There are many collaborative institutions working together in Dubuque. To measure the impact of the volunteers that developed and lead several of them is impossible.

Dubuque’s My Brother Keeper Network is committed to efforts to support youth, especially young men of color, meet their potential, and is working towards achieving its goals related to education, social and emotional readiness, employment, and safety. My Brother’s Keeper includes Dream Center, Multicultural Family Center (MFC), St. Mark’s Community Center, and Black Men Coalition representatives.  FY18 data across all four institutions:

* Mentors and tutors donated time valued at $5,000+
* 377 students completed out-of-school-time academic programs during the school year; 191 maintained or increased literacy skills.

Opened in 2005, the MFC is an inviting and safe place for community members, stimulates connections, and provides programs to foster civic engagement and social and economic success. The Center hosts numerous free events that showcase Dubuque’s diversity, celebrates culturally significant days, provides programming that teaches culturally distinct content, and promotes long-term learning. MFC FY18 data:

* STEP (Summer Teen Empowerment Program): 40 teens (20 boys/20 girls) participated; 35 received 80% of the potential money earned ($400 without the savings match); 21 out of 35 also received a $100 savings match; 17 partners included 9 field trips to area businesses and higher education institutes; 14 teens attended 1 and 2 week overnight camps at local colleges.
* 13 cultural events in partnership with community members with 1,700+ participants.
* 175 Teens served in teen empowerment programs throughout the year.

The Dubuque Dream Center is a community outreach center committed to mobilizing youth and families to build on Dr. King's Dream of transforming communities by embracing, empowering, and unifying those who live there. The Center provides structured academic programs, college and career preparation, and goal-setting where youth build relationships with caring adults, have a safe place to belong, and participate in value driven programs and activities. Dubuque Dream Center 2017-18 annual report data:

* 50% of program mentors include school teachers, parents, and community members who live and work in the area served;
* Center trained 40+ volunteers who served an average of once per week;
* 78% of students increased or maintained reading MAP test scores;
* 100% of students increased reading FAST test scores;
* 84% of students increased or maintained math MAP test scores;
* 150 youth participated in 2017-18 school year programming; 127 participated in 2018 summer programming.

The Fountain of Youth (FOY) serves individuals impacted by generational poverty, including many who are or were incarcerated. Since its launch in 2016, FOY has served over 40 young adults in the “Pioneer” program and 80 adults through the “Real Talk” program. All who completed programming in 2017 are employed and many continue to stay engaged as FOY volunteers.

Since 2008, CFGD and the City have supported Project HOPE, an initiative to increase access to economic opportunity for all. Successful programs include: high school dropout re-engagement, connecting individuals to job training and careers, and connecting families to financial services. Project HOPE convenes stakeholders to implement recommendations of the Mental Health and Child Care Needs Assessments.

In its 2016 *Advancing Equity: Community Efforts and Outcomes* report, Inclusive Dubuque recognizes partners and community organizations working to advance equity and inclusion. The network supports people being actively engaged and their voices being valued in the choices and direction for the community.

**Engaged Residents**

The community-based engagement approach used for the Marshall Island Health Project shows how we address needs of all residents, including some of our most vulnerable. The City, Mercy Medical Center, Crescent Community Health Center, Northeast Iowa Community College, the Multicultural Family Center and IowaWorks (a branch of Iowa Workforce Development) aligned to improve the health of the Marshallese community.

Over 120 surveys were collected from service providers, and over 100 surveys were collected from the Marshallese community, thanks to the combined use of translated surveys, a cultural broker, and one-on-one collection methods. Service providers attended an event hosted in partnership with the federal government to learn more about our Marshallese neighbors. Mercy Hospital used the Marshallese community feedback to develop a resource guide detailing community services available to the Marshallese population, and the areas where there are limitations in eligibility, to assist service providers.

This intercultural community engagement approach resulted in more effective collaboration to address inequities in other areas.

For the first time in Dubuque, the Marshallese community was represented in the Art on the River event. The community displayed an island boat, providing a look into Marshallese history.

As we remove systemic barriers, Marshallese community leaders have taken the initiative to work with governmental and non-governmental organizations and are becoming more represented in the community on multiple levels.

The Immigration Legal Representative for Catholic Charities Archdiocese of Dubuque has been providing representation for community members and presentations on Pathways to Citizenship. US Citizenship and Immigration Services met with service providers and the Marshallese community, providing learning session about the naturalization process. The Iowa Department of Human Rights Office of Asian & Pacific Islander Affairs offers leadership and civic education to community members who are interested in learning about the democratic process.

**PART IV: Describe Three Community-Driven Projects**

**PROJECT ONE**

 *Project: Health Care for All*

*Contact: Nancy Van Milligen, Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque*

*700 Locust St #195*

*Dubuque Iowa 52001*

*nancy@dbqfoundation.org*

*563.588.2700*

***Flash Back:* Crescent Community Health Center**

“Quality of care for all, resulting in a healthy community.”

This vision has guided Crescent Community Health Center (Crescent) since opening its doors in 2006, after several years of planning and grant writing by over 75 community individuals and agencies. As a federally qualified health center (FQHC), people from Dubuque and seven surrounding counties turn to Crescent to receive exceptional, affordable care for chronic conditions, urgent care, oral health, and preventative services.

Interestingly, Crescent was one of the community projects featured in Dubuque’s 2007 All-America City application. We are excited to share Crescent’s evolution in our 2019 application.

Crescent provides primary health and dental care for people with little to no access to care and, often, no way to pay for that care. Approximately 20% of the patients are uninsured and likely to remain so, which leaves nowhere for them to go for their health care. Even Medicaid patients have limited choices based upon the managed care insurance company to which they have been assigned. Crescent’s doors are open to all.

As Mayor Roy Buol stated, “the Crescent Community Health Center provides a critical service to those of lesser means in our community. As federal healthcare funding becomes more precarious, we need to ensure that this service is available to respond to the urgent, growing need for healthcare.” Crescent’s vision is to create a health care campus with one building housing other health agencies that will provide a wide range of specialty services to the patients.

Crescent was honored with the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) 2017 Health Center Quality Leader award. This recognition is awarded to the top one-third of all 10,000 health centers across the nation in meeting patient quality of care goals.

**Planned Expansion**

By partnering with other health and community-based organizations in Dubuque, Crescent has expanded to provide access to additional quality services to over 6,500 patients. From 2008-2017, that number has grown by 38%. By 2020, the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) expects Crescent to increase its patients to 8,057, a 20% increase.  This reflects a 41% penetration rate of the total low-income population within Crescent’s service area. To continue the mission, Crescent has begun to develop and move to larger space within the Washington Neighborhood. This move will almost double its current space, combining three locations into one and increasing health care access for the community.

Crescent’s patients are primarily children and individuals 30 to 64 years of age. Fifty-eight percent are less than 100% of the federal poverty level, 73% are on Medicaid, and 49% are uninsured. Through outreach and enrollment efforts, Crescent has assisted 12,625 individuals with health insurance applications and enrolled approximately 2,262 though the ACA/Medicaid since 2013. Crescent’s quality focus is evident in their patient outcomes, prevention focus and health screening rates, and data indicates successes for at-risk populations that are not often experienced in the private medical system: Cervical Cancer Screening 58.42% of patients; Weight Assessment and nutrition/physical activity Counseling of Children and Adolescents 64.26%; Body Mass Index (BMI) Screening and Follow-up 87.81%: Tobacco Use: Screening and Cessation Intervention 98.25%; Use of Appropriate Medication for Asthma 75.44%; Coronary Artery Disease Lipid Therapy 74.51%; Ischemic Vascular Disease use of Aspirin or other Antiplatelet 86.08%.

As Crescent plans for an expanded location, they are also adding services to address needs identified in the Community Health Needs Assessment. The CHNA, updated in 2018 through a process led by a steering committee of private health care providers, the Dubuque County Board of Health, City, and Crescent, included a public engagement process to confirm trends and needs identified through data analysis.

The building expansion will address not only the projected increased patient load, but also is poised to address new initiatives underway to add mental health and substance abuse services through collaboration with other community partners including Hillcrest Family Services, Substance Abuse Services Center (SASC), the Brain Health Task Force and Opioid Response Team.

In 2017, the Patient/Family Advisory Council was formed to create a connection between patients, the Crescent Board, and the surrounding community. Patients are able to provide input directly to the Board about social determinants of health and health care needs in their community, and are mentored to prepare them for eventual Board membership. The Council also serves as a venue to conduct proactive healthy behaviors educational sessions.

**Pacific Islander Health Project**

One specific area Crescent has expanded over the last two years is through the Pacific Islander Health Project. In 1986, the United States signed a Compact of Free Association (COFA) with three Pacific Island nations, including the Republic of the Marshall Islands. The Compact followed a history of nuclear weapons testing by the U.S. in the Marshall Islands between 1946 and 1958. The testing consisted of 67 explosive tests which equates in total power to 7,200 Hiroshima-sized weapons. This created many serious direct and indirect health outcomes. The Compact permits the Marshallese to migrate to the U.S. for reasons such as health care, economic opportunities, and education. The Marshallese can legally live and work in the U.S. while retaining their citizenship in the Marshall Islands. Because of what many consider to be an oversight in the Welfare Reform Act of 1996, most Marshallese are excluded from U.S. safety net and federal benefit programs, including Medicaid and Medicare.

Dubuque has 600 to 800 Marshallese residents, the largest Marshallese population in Iowa. The Marshallese have high rates of cancer, and diabetes prevalence is estimated at 25-50% of Marshallese adults. A local survey of 82 Marshallese adult residents in Dubuque revealed that 61% have diabetes, 28% have heart disease, 5% have cancer, and 5% have hypertension. Seventy-three percent of those interviewed lack health insurance. Among those surveyed, 58% have not seen a doctor within the last year, 65% of those because they lack health insurance, and 23% because of cost.

To address this high community need, a community-based committee was established by Mercy Medical Center to develop an engagement strategy and accessible health care for the Marshallese and Pacific Islander population. Crescent hired a Marshallese individual as a community health worker, a nurse, and a social worker. The community health worker trains service organizations regarding Marshallese cultures and systems, translates documents and case manages 86 Marshallese patients, helping them to navigate the healthcare system. The Dubuque Pacific Island Health Project’s (DPIHP) mission is to engage, educate, and empower the Pacific Islander community in achieving and maintaining health.

In addition to improvement in diabetes and other chronic disease management in the Pacific Island Health Project, patient results of the project include a 38% decrease in hospital emergency room visits and a 60% decrease in missed appointments at Crescent. Specific diabetic classes for the project, which incorporate foods more relevant to the Marshallese population, have improved the diabetic A1c marker in the majority of class participants.

The project has sparked other Pacific Islander target services including Girl Talk, housing, youth outreach and engagement, specialized health services and other initiatives to assess needs for the Pacific Islander population in Dubuque.

***Momentum:* Brain Health Task Force**

Crescent has expanded its on-site services to include mental health counseling because of high community need and participation in the community-based Brain Health Task Force. Urgent mental health is sometimes referred to as “brain health”.

Based on community feedback received through the Project HOPE initiative, the CFGD facilitated a community needs assessment specific to mental health services in the fall of 2016. That work outlined five key recommendations:

1) Strengthen collaboration among stakeholders,

2) Develop solutions to address dual diagnosis,

3) Alleviate barriers that prevent access to care,

4) Expand mental health prescription services, and

5) Expand mental health advocacy efforts.

To address these needs a 34-member stakeholder group was formed representing the United Way, Hillcrest Family Services, Mercy Medical Center, SASC, Amerigroup, National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), Dubuque Community YMCA/YWCA, and the City of Dubuque (including law enforcement and public health) along with several individuals personally affected by mental health. This group of community stakeholders has formed the Brain Health Task Force and is focusing on three main areas:

1) Review of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) that need to be addressed;

2) Education for medical staff, providers and volunteers; and

3) Advocacy, bringing community awareness to Brain Health.

**Mobile Crisis Unit**

Dubuque police requested assistance for officers who respond to mental health crisis incidents. On average, police respond to approximately 400 calls for service with mental health concerns per year. Most of these calls are resolved successfully through verbal de-escalation. Traditionally, officers responded to these calls in three ways:

* 1. Attempt to involuntarily commit for mental health treatment;
	2. Individually attempt to resolve the issue, which was very time consuming; or,
	3. Arrest.

Police administration and the county sheriff expressed concern about these limited options and requested assistance in setting up a mobile crisis response.

A working group comprised of the Dubuque Police Chief, Assistant Chief, County Sheriff, Chief Deputy, captains, commander road deputies, CFGD staff and associates from Hillcrest Family Services convened to identify a solution. A mobile crisis unit existed at Hillcrest, and a new protocol was developed to outline how law enforcement officials could engage this service as needed. This provided a much better resolution for the individual in crisis, and allowed the law enforcement officials involved to return to their policing duties much quicker.

In addition, Mental Health First Aid Training was identified as another tool to assist law enforcement when interacting with individuals facing an immediate mental health crisis. To date, 30 local officers have been trained.

**Inmate Wraparound Program**

A Wraparound Program identified issues impacting jail inmates with acute brain health behaviors such as inmates staying in jail too long, jeopardizing Medicaid status, and inmates released into the community without support. They also identified a specific cohort of minor crimes, where inmates are ultimately released without probation officer support. This Inmate Wraparound Program results in improved communication with the District Court prior to initial court appearances and creating wraparound support after release for inmates without formal probation. Training was provided to judges and attorneys who will be assigned to cases associated with these individuals, increasing their awareness of the specific needs of this group and accelerating their cases through the judicial system to avoid any lapses in medical or housing services.

**Access Center**

Besides advocacy, education and SWOT needs assessment, the Brain Health Task Force is working to establish an access center in Dubuque for individuals with urgent mental health — brain health — needs. Currently, the nearest facility to Dubuque County is planned to be at least 90 minutes away.

Urgent and acute mental health services outside of the in-patient committal process are one of the many brain health needs identified in Dubuque by health care providers, law enforcement, families and community-based organizations.

“An access center would give law enforcement a great option in the community for people needing a little extra help beyond the traditional local options,” said Dubuque Police Chief Mark Dalsing. “An all-hours access center would give officers a safe location to take community members who need someone to speak to, a chance to decompress, or a place to develop a long-term recovery plan beyond the traditional court-ordered mandated treatment, which is too often away from our community and the client’s support system.”

**Education and Outreach**

A Brain Health educational and marketing campaign, spearheaded by a community member, Debi Butler, is also underway with a goal of de-stigmatizing mental health through effective education, coordinated services, and treatment, which are all pivotal to end the stigma around brain health issues. Mental Health First Aid training and awareness about the community Mobile Crisis units have been delivered to volunteers, providers, law enforcement and emergency medical services personnel. A community-wide billboard and social media awareness campaign logged 122,000 impressions in its first five months of operation.

**PROJECT TWO**

*Project: Bee Branch Creek Watershed Restoration & Activation*

*Contact: Kristin Hill, City of Dubuque*

*50 W 13th St*

*Dubuque Iowa 52001*

*khill@cityofdubuque.org*

*563.589.4110*

***Flash Back:* Bee Branch Creek Restoration Project**

Imagine being at home on a stormy evening waiting out a tornado warning in the safety of your basement, when suddenly, water from heavy rain starts pouring into the basement around you. Do you stay in your basement at the risk of electrocution or drowning? Or go upstairs and risk the tornado? Unfortunately, residents in Dubuque’s Bee Branch Watershed have been faced with this dire situation multiple times.

In 1999, Dubuque experienced one of its most destructive flash floods, with $16 million in property damage. “It was evacuate the tornado shelter or drown,” described resident Mike Hillard. Hundreds of basements were flooded.

Following that storm, the City studied the flash flooding to identify potential solutions. Heavy rains came again in 2002, 2004, 2008, 2010 and 2011. Six Presidential Disaster Declarations were issued with total damage estimates of almost $70 million.

In 2003, a 16-member Bee Branch Citizen Advisory Committee was formed to determine a means to safely channel water out of the flood prone neighborhoods with two options: open waterway or underground sewers. After committee, public, and neighborhood meetings, the committee’s recommendation to create an open channel and restore the Bee Branch Creek was adopted by the City Council in 2004. To develop the community’s vision for the creek, the City’s design team held public workshops in 2008. Based on citizen input, a corridor concept was developed with greenspace, scenic overlooks, and recreation opportunities.

The project involved replacing almost one-mile of buried storm sewer with a creek and floodplain that resembles the one that traversed the area over 100 years ago. The creek is split into two distinct sections. The Lower Bee Branch Creek was completed in 2011 and the Upper Bee Branch Creek was finished in 2017.

The creek stretches through Dubuque’s Washington and North End Neighborhoods, where most residents are low to moderate income. Based on 2010 Census data, approximately 69% of the people in these neighborhoods are low income, earning less than 80% median income. These neighborhoods also encompass significant racially and ethnically diverse minority populations. The Washington Neighborhood has a 23.1% minority population and the North End Neighborhood has a 12.5% minority population while Dubuque at large has only a 5.8% minority population.

In these two neighborhoods, where older homes sit closely together and there is limited yard space, the restored creek serves as a linear park with a multi-use trail, scenic overlooks, play areas, a community orchard and garden, an outdoor classroom, benches, lighting, and over 4,000 plantings, designed over several years with the residents of the area. Most importantly, the creek has increased the area’s capacity for stormwater by tenfold. What was once an 8-foot by 12-foot storm sewer is now an 8-foot by 120-foot corridor that moves stormwater safely through the neighborhood without flooding adjacent properties.

In 2017, a 4.9” rain fell in less than 24 hours. Thanks to the completed Bee Branch Creek, property damage was largely avoided. In 2002, a 4.9” of rain in a 24-hour period resulted in enough property damage to warrant a Presidential Disaster Declaration. Based on the damage caused by the 2002 storm, it can be estimated that the completed creek prevented $11.6 million in property damage.

The Bee Branch Creek restoration is innovative. Dubuque could have constructed a concrete

ditch or massive storm sewers. Instead, a citizen-led engagement process and acceptance of a citywide stormwater management fee created a solution that protects the neighborhoods and provides environmental resiliency. Residents throughout the watershed are proud of the investments we have made to protect our most vulnerable people and historic properties.

The Bee Branch Creek will function for the next century and beyond, and in combination with other watershed improvements, is expected to prevent an estimated $582 million in damages over the next 100 years.

**Bee Branch Healthy Homes**
To change the flow of water isn’t enough to ensure healthy outcomes for all residents. Health goes beyond the doctor’s office and the choices people make. Our health depends on where we live, learn, work and play. In 2014, we conducted assessments of 191 flood-damaged properties; 82% had needs related to mold, moisture intrusion, and dampness. It became clear that these homes overlapped significantly with the Bee Branch Watershed. The Dubuque County Health Needs Assessment notes the Bee Branch watershed as a high-risk area for the social determinants of health.

Due to improvements like the Bee Branch Creek and upstream detention basins, the watershed is experiencing less flash flooding. However, many residents are still living with residual health and safety issues from water intrusion. In 2016, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) awarded the City of Dubuque $8.4 million for the Bee Branch Healthy Homes Resiliency Program. We are now working to improve up to 320 housing units in the watershed. The program is available to both property owners and tenants who are low- to moderate-income. A variety of repairs and renovations are being made to decrease health and safety issues and make homes more resilient to future flooding.

Health is determined by a wide set of forces and systems shaping our daily lives. In addition to our built environment, neighborhood safety, health care, economic stability, transportation, education, and employment play a significant role in our health. That’s why every participating household meets with a Visiting Nurses Association home advocate. Through a comprehensive assessment, the advocates identify barriers the participants are facing and connect them to local resources that can help them overcome those challenges.

One participant was referred to a higher education opportunity to complete their massage therapy certificate. Another was able to setup a payment plan with a local utility company to catch up on energy bills. A participant who frequently traveled out of town for medical treatment was able to receive mileage reimbursement. Each of these situations resulted in extra monthly income that can now be used for other family needs.

The data below identifies the needs most often identified by the home advocates, and the percentage of the time that case management and community partner support can create a positive impact for the affected family.



Since 2016, the program has received 558 inquiries, approved 207 applications, and made home improvements to 61 units while an additional 20 are under contract. The average cost of the repairs per unit is $18,979.

The advocates have assisted 67 families, discovered over 285 individual family needs, made referrals to 30 unique agency resources, and built relationships with 23 community partners from a variety of sectors. In 2017, several partners formed a resource group that now meets quarterly to discuss local healthy homes challenges. The resource group includes representatives from the school district, faith organizations, utility providers, health and social services organizations, and more – all with the common goal to create safer, better neighborhoods. When a participant’s need goes beyond what the program can address, this group does all it can to find a way to help. Most importantly, this group is led and driven by the community.

Bee Branch Healthy Homes is an innovative program that impacts watershed residents in a very real and tangible way. We cannot have a collective impact if we only focus on structural improvements. We must also address family needs. Only then can we create a healthier and more resilient community.

**Community Engagement Through Art**

While infrastructure improvements build stability in a neighborhood, public art can bring neighbors together to celebrate and increase social resiliency. In the heart of the Washington Neighborhood along the Lower Bee Branch Creek sits a former scrapyard/recycling facility (circa 1942) recently purchased by the City.

A fence of old corrugated metal panels surrounds the property. Inside, the soil is contaminated with lead and arsenic. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) awarded the City Brownfields grants to clean up the former scrapyard.

Once fully remediated, what is now an eyesore will be transformed into a welcoming gateway to the Washington Neighborhood and all of Dubuque. The campus will house City offices and community educational and recreational spaces.

In 2018, the City partnered with Washington Neighborhood leaders to gather over 180 pieces of hand-drawn artwork from residents, most of them children. The drawings were converted into digital art, enlarged, and placed on banners. The result is a collage of larger than life artwork created by the community which will replace the patchwork fence until full development of the site occurs.

**Arts & Culture: Accessibility, Engagement, and Inclusion**

Dubuque’s arts and culture community provides opportunities for residents from all neighborhoods and cultural backgrounds. Dubuque aims to be a model for arts and culture engagement of both marginalized and traditionally-included groups.

To achieve this vision, we have created an Arts & Culture Accessibility, Engagement, and Inclusion Working Group, a collaboration of the City’s Arts & Cultural Affairs Advisory Commission and the Inclusive Dubuque Arts Working Group. This peer network is open to all residents interested in creating an inclusive and welcoming arts and culture community. The group dedicates a portion of each meeting to peer learning, allowing members to bring issues to the table and seek advice and guidance from other members.

The group reviews current and proposed programs and policies to identify ways Dubuque can make arts and cultural activities more accessible and relevant. For example, what barriers can be removed to make it easier for under-represented groups to engage with arts and culture? What incentives could be provided to encourage greater diversity? What types of events is our community lacking?

The working group is a platform to form partnerships, create complementary programs, combine resources, find new audiences, cross-promote programs, and expand the reach of the arts and culture community. By bringing together experts in the visual arts, music, theater, story-telling/spoken word, historic preservation, building arts, and more – we will find creative solutions to difficult issues that are truly representative of all voices in the community.

***Momentum:* Activating Public Spaces**

**Recreation on the Roll**

At community events in Bee Branch neighborhoods and throughout the city, you’ll find families gathered around a colorful trailer filled with big foam building blocks and other games and activities. This mobile fun lab is the Leisure Services Rec ‘n Roll Trailer. The trailer allows the department to serve residents where they live instead of expecting residents to come to them.

The trailer was rolled out 2017, visiting nineteen community events including the opening of the Bee Branch Creek Greenway. In 2018, the Rec ‘n Roll Trailer was utilized over 50 times, greatly expanding the community’s offering of free programs. The trailer transports a large inflatable movie screen that can be popped up in any open greenspace. Free movie nights in parks throughout the city are now a popular offering. By eliminating transportation and cost barriers, the Rec ‘n Roll Trailer brings family, friends, and neighbors together in a fun and equitable way.

**Bridging the Participation Gap**

There are several types of free neighborhood programs offered in Dubuque. With the help of CDBG funding, along with 20+ community partnerships, free programs are offered exposing low-income families to a variety of recreational activities. However, there was a clear gap in the participation of low-income residents in paid programs and services.

To bridge the participation gap, a scholarship program utilizing additional CDBG funds was created so 150 low-income families in Dubuque now have access to $125 in credits to use to register for any recreation program —not just specific reduced-fee programs. The scholarship approach opened approximately 300 programs that previously were not included as reduced fee programs. In FY17, $11,311 in credits were redeemed to register for programs, purchase pool passes, and rent pavilions. As a result, there was an increase in participation per program of 0.4 registrants over the previous year. In FY18, $16,446 in credits were redeemed and again there was an increase in participation of 0.6 registrants compared to FY17. In just two years, this is an increase of one person registering per program offered. Annually, over 800 programs are offered.

**PROJECT THREE**

*Project: Dubuque Eats Well*

*Contact: Michaela Freiburger, Dubuque Main Street*

*1609 Main Street*

*Dubuque Iowa 52001*

*Michaela@dubuquemainstreet.org*

*563.588.4400*

***Flash Back:* Iowa is the Most Altered Landscape**

To outsiders, Dubuque, Iowa is located in the heart of “food production country”. However, Iowa’s landscape is the most altered in America, quickly shifting from its native prairie, to small, family farms, to today’s landscape of corn and soybeans. Today, we import our food, and are ranked last in the nation in terms of fruit and vegetable consumption. Obesity has been identified as a top community health concern, as it is now characteristic of 27% of Dubuque County residents, and our 5,000 households who receive SNAP benefits often struggle with health effects of obesity in addition to a variety of other threats that put them at risk for decreased life span.

In 2006, Dubuque residents identified Healthy Local Foods as one of twelve Sustainable Dubuque principles during a community visioning process. We are a community that “values the benefits of wholesome food from local producers, distributors, farms, gardens and hunters.” Home to the oldest continuously-operating farmers market in Iowa, we had lost our connection to the agricultural land that surrounds our city.

Data reviewed during the Community Health Needs Assessment indicated an increasing obesity rate, while three census tracts that include some of the highest percentages of low-income and/or minority families meet the USDA’s definition of a food desert. In 2016, approximately 12-17% of Dubuque households were “food insecure”, meaning members had anxiety over food sufficiency or shortage at least once a year.

**Dubuque Eats Well**

To combat these trends, and to develop a collective impact model to increase healthy food access that capitalized on grassroots work in our community, a Regional Food Coordinator was hired in 2012, and the Dubuque Eats Well (DEW) coalition was formed.

DEW is a network of area organizations and community members working to advance local food system development in the Greater Dubuque area. DEW completed the community’s first Food System Assessment in 2015, and began forming working groups to address the gaps identified. The groups are grounded in the shared core values of collaboration, justice, wellness, education and environmental stewardship. Their first five projects were:

* Farm-to-School education programs
* Farm-to-Institution economic development efforts
* Edible forest for the Bee Branch Creek Greenway
* Double Up Food Bucks program to increase low-income access to farmers markets
* Development of a Collaborative Farm at Sinsinawa Mound that supported beginner farmers.

**Double Up Food Bucks**

In 2015, Dubuque Main Street (DMS) began accepting Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) cards in exchange for tokens to be used at the Summer Farmers Market. The program expanded and launched the Double Up Food Bucks incentive in 2016.

The program provided SNAP users with a dollar for dollar match, up to $10 per market day, for purchasing local and fresh fruits and vegetables at market, increasing the ability of low-income families to purchase healthy foods while increasing income for local farmers, many of whom are also struggling to make a living. In 2017, voucher distribution increased by 24% and attracted 74 new users. In 2018, over $12,831 from SNAP recipients was redirected to local farmers, and use of the tokens was recently expanded to the Winter Farmers Market, providing year-round access to healthy local foods.

Offering financial incentives to eat healthy isn’t enough, especially if you come from a family where these habits haven’t been instilled from an early age. DMS launched Kids at Market to engage families who attend, offering on-site cooking classes, and hosted Market tours for those who had never attended before. Outreach to the Multicultural Family Center and other neighborhood organizations expanded the diversity of participants.

**Dubuque Rescue Mission Community Garden**

Facing a growing need to provide fresh and healthy food to its residents, the Dubuque Rescue Mission, a men’s homeless shelter in downtown, convened community members in 2008 to create a small garden to provide produce for its kitchen. The community garden was the first of its kind in the city. Through a partnership with the City of Dubuque, a small lot was acquired and converted into a garden a block from the Mission. The garden provides an opportunity for Mission residents to engage in employment skill-building programs while working to help maintain the garden. As urban farmers, Mission residents learn valuable skills while spending restorative time in a natural environment.

The garden grows over 2,000 pounds of fresh produce each season to provide fresh, organic produce for the families served by the Mission’s free meal program. With fresh produce from the garden and creative use of donated food, vegetable consumption has increased by 40% for Mission residents. As the garden space grows, its multiple benefits expand. In 2018, Mission residents began growing and selling micro-greens and seedlings, learning the principles of small business development as they connected with local retail institutions.

**Dubuque Community Garden Collaboration**

The Dubuque Community Garden Coalition is a partnership of community gardeners who share resources and work together to expand opportunities to grow food in Dubuque. Their mission is to create greater access to affordable, inclusive, sustainable gardening opportunities in an urban environment, building community around food.

The Washington Neighborhood Community Garden offers space where neighborhood families can grow produce and build relationships with one another. In 2018, gardeners not only provided food to neighbors, but gardeners from in and around the Dubuque area donated produce to River Bend Food Bank.

The St. Luke’s United Methodist Wading Pool Garden project takes a non-traditional definition of the community garden model. The project provides blue, plastic children’s wading pools to residents like renters or those with small yards who can’t establish their own garden. Often, these wading pool gardens find their way to in-home childcare centers, adult group homes, renters, or low-income families. The new gardeners are paired with garden guides, who accompany them to a garden fair to choose plants, and visit often throughout the season to mentor as they learn to grow, harvest, and prepare healthy vegetables. Since 2011, the program has provided over 70 wading pool gardens to those in need.

**Convivium Urban Farmstead**

Convivium Urban Farmstead, a non-profit strategically located in one of Dubuque’s food deserts, was founded in 2016 with a mission of creating community around food. Convivium restored a derelict greenhouse to an urban farm, and began reaching out to neighbors to plant small raised beds in their yards that would provide 24-7, accessible produce to residents and visitors alike.

In 2018, Convivium participated in the National Civic League-facilitated community conversation to build non-profits’ skills and abilities to meaningfully engage with traditionally unengaged neighbors, especially people of color. Working with the CFGD and neighborhood elementary schools, Convivium developed the Food Scholars Program and intentionally worked to enroll Marshallese youth and their families. They worked through English Language Learners staff and conducted home visits to recruit families. Thirty-five attendees participated in the five-week program, learning how to grow, shop for, and cook healthy foods. This knowledge is especially important, as most of the families live in one of Dubuque’s food deserts, and diabetes rates are disproportionately high in the Marshallese population.

**School-Based Food Pantries**

Recognizing that inadequate food access often leads to a loss in learning, the Dubuque Community School District and River Bend Food Bank teamed up to meet family food needs at a point of daily interaction – in their neighborhood school.

Mobile food pantries have been a common offering over the years to area families. In an effort take food access to the next level, partners have created deeper collaborations and launched Dubuque’s first, consistent school-based food pantry.

Thanks to funding from Dubuque’s 5-2-1-0 Healthy Choices Count grant from the Iowa Department of Public Health, facilitated locally through the East Central Intergovernmental Association, Lincoln Elementary School was able to purchase the initial food and equipment needed for a fully functioning pantry during the 2017-2018 school year that distributed fresh produce, dairy, meats, grains and dry products.

After this pilot period, River Bend Food Bank and local volunteers collaborated to continue the program for the 2018-2019 school year. From February 2018 through February 2019, the program provided 2,588 individuals (547 families) with food resources that lead to healthy living and learning.

Prescott Elementary School, another Title I school, added food pantry distribution in November 2018 and has served 466 individuals (88 families) through January 2018. With the success of the program and support from public and private partners, the District continues to explore additional opportunities to provide families with needed food resources.

**Meals for Summer Reading & Recreation Programs**

Many of our at-risk youth rely on the school day as their only access to a healthy meal. As summer arrives, their families struggle to feed their children. In Dubuque, at-risk youth participate in many summer programs aimed at keeping them safe and preventing the “Summer Slide” as part of our Grade-level Reading Initiative. In 2018, the Boys & Girls Club partnered with United Way to serve over 17,000 meals through the City’s playground programs, St. Mark’s Youth Enrichment and Boys & Girls Club summer programs, and a summer teen program, ensuring those children get access to healthy meals year-round.

**Celebration & Shared Cultural Heritage**

With a mission of building unity out of diversity, the Multicultural Family Center (MFC) recognizes that community is often built around food. Hundreds of individuals from around the world come to the MFC to share experiences and cook together at events including but not limited to: Celebration of Africa, a night of African foods, fashion, and games; Dia de los Muertos; Indian Cultural Night; Marshallese Constitution Day, a celebration highlighting culture, music, and food; and Hawaiian Culture Night. Additionally, the MFC serves as a food pantry to meet families where they are, and provides food for 75 low-income families each quarter through a partnership with the River Bend Food Bank.

**Resident Engagement In Policy-Making & Action Planning**

“We must identify as gardeners of sustainable communities. Being a gardener is about getting your hands dirty and keeping your ear to the soil.” – Dr. Marcus Hendricks

Farmers, and gardeners, lead by doing. Quite literally, they get their hands dirty to solve problems. In addition to the project-based work listed above, DEW utilizes their shared voice to engage the residents it strives to impact, and to impact policy change. In 2017, the group collectively advocated for healthy local foods to be included in the City’s Imagine Dubuque Comprehensive Plan for the first time. DEW also successfully lobbied Dubuque County to establish the Dubuque County Food Policy Council and allocate $25,000 in funding for institutional and system-level improvements. These system-level changes begin to address root causes of lack of access to healthy foods that programs alone cannot.

***Momentum:* Healthy Futures for All**

Partners continue to seek opportunities to increase access to healthy foods and exercise to lead to healthier outcomes for all. The City of Dubuque’s AmeriCorps Healthy Futures grant is focusing on promoting educational health and wellness activities that engage and empower under-served community members to develop healthy attitudes that lead to living healthy lifestyles and increased community connectedness. Our program has identified community needs to serve youth between the ages of 12-17.

Together, our AmeriCorps Program, the City Leisure Services Department, Carnegie-Stout Public Library, and the Multicultural Family Center, will provide an opportunity for teens entering grades 8-12 to work with caring adults to explore social and emotional experiences together. AmeriCorps members will develop and implement programming around teen interest and best practices promoting healthy lifestyle choices.

A few examples include field trips to experience Dubuque’s many offerings, exploring new types of physical activities, outdoor education, and developing relationships through gaming, music, and outreach. Programming would center these social and emotional goals around activities that promote wellness in conservation, social equity, and healthy lifestyles.

Continuing forward, our AmeriCorps Program will partner with community organizations to address health inequities, such as food security, workforce development, and a continued effort to provide fidelity in supporting mental and social/emotional health for youth through community connectedness. Future opportunities would support building capacity in organizations to address community needs and be a part of building healthy lifestyles for under-served communities.

*End of Application. Thank you for submitting your All-America City Award Application!*

Need additional guidance? Email aac@ncl.org or go to [**www.nationalcivicleague**](http://www.nationalcivicleague)**.org** for announcements of upcoming webinars for prospective applicants and AAC resources or call the League at 303-571-4343.

