

AREAS OF ACTION



Below are top priority next steps for community action over the next three years, organized by Social Determinant of Health. By focusing on these actions, we intend to build collective community strength and resilience, leading to a positive impact on our community's health behaviors, outcomes, and overall quality of life.

Areas of action are included throughout the report and within each section as a guide for prioritizing efforts in our community. We recommend looking at them not in isolation but rather in relationship to each other to inform practice and funding.

The full list of areas of action can be found by turning to the corresponding Social Determinant of Health section in this document.

In addition to the items listed here, Mesa County Public Health aims to prioritize effective data collection and analysis to better inform our understanding of the Social Determinants of Health and their impact on health outcomes.

- Identify gaps in available data for Mesa County and collect data to fill the gaps.
- Examine key areas across different locations, demographics, and socioeconomic factors.

● ● ● ECONOMIC STABILITY

Household Stability

- Identify Mesa County areas impacted by stacked disadvantage - e.g. those experiencing high rates of unemployment, single parent families, and poverty.

Industry and Occupation

- Identify economical training and education opportunities for workers looking to transition away from waning industries.
- Incentivize desired economic growth in Mesa County.

● ● ● EDUCATION

P-12 Education

- Consider opportunities to expand quality, licensed child care in communities with few care options. Support existing child care facilities in achieving high quality ratings.
- Identify best practices to measure the impact of teacher training and curriculum changes on elementary proficiency.
- Encourage four-year high school completion and support students who do not finish in four years so they eventually achieve graduation.

Higher Education

- Support students who will be the first in their families to pursue higher education.
- Expand high school student engagement in concurrent enrollment opportunities.
- Support expansion of WCCC and CMU programs to meet current employer and student demand.
- Work with employers to provide internships and practical experiences for students.

● ● ● HEALTH CARE AND ACCESS

Health Care Access and Utilization

- Investigate root causes for health care use barriers such as access to providers and appointments, cost barriers, and personal challenges.
- Research the medical debt burden on Mesa County residents and the circumstances that lead to severe medical debt. Explore opportunities to increase public insurance plan and subsidy enrollment for eligible individuals.
- Investigate availability of specialty care in Mesa County to understand current gaps.

Mental Health

- Improve mental health experiences for first-time patients.
- Reduce barriers associated with seeking mental health services.
- Consider community resources to best keep people in non-emergency substance use intoxication or mental health crises safe while reducing community and health care system disruption.

● ● ● NEIGHBORHOOD AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT

- Assess the rates of infractions that impact public safety but are not included in violent crime and property crime databases.
- Develop a clear enforcement process for health and safety violations for Code Compliance and opportunities for residents to engage in community clean up efforts.
- Explore opportunities to increase food access in areas with limited or no options.
- Determine current gaps in housing assistance and explore opportunities to increase availability of housing assistance.

● ● ● SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY CONTEXT

- Conduct a survey and focus groups of Mesa County residents to better understand their personal relationships and social networks.
- Identify strategies to boost social resources in unincorporated areas.
- Work to address higher levels of bullying among specific sub-groups.
- Improve voter participation in low-turnout precincts.

**"IF YOU WANT THE
OUTCOME TO CHANGE,
YOU HAVE TO CHANGE THE
SYSTEM."**

-DAN HEATH, AUTHOR

SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY CONTEXT (CONT.)

- Engage with existing service organizations to understand their priority and funding areas and how they align with community health improvement efforts.

● ● ● HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

Health Behaviors

- Consider how to direct tobacco, substance use, and obesity interventions to communities most affected. Track the impact of these efforts to evaluate effectiveness.
- Increase school immunization rates and support schools in collecting immunization records.
- Investigate the role of geography in teen birth rate, and identify services or educational resources that may be lacking in areas with high rates.

Health Outcomes

- Investigate the higher rates of chronic disease seen in Mesa County.
- Identify interventions for accidental and intentional (non-disease) causes of death to reduce local rates.
- Support Veteran's groups in suicide-reduction efforts, especially among the 65 and older population.

