



WV Healthy Lifestyles
Annual Legislative Report
2025



Office of Community Health Systems and Health Promotion
350 Capitol Street, Room 515
Charleston, WV 25301

Healthy Lifestyles Legislative Report July 2024 - June 2025

Overview

During the 2024-25 fiscal year, \$905,020 in state funding was allocated to Healthy Lifestyles and equally divided between the West Virginia Division of Health Promotion and Chronic Disease (HPCD) and the West Virginia Division of Tobacco Prevention (DTP). Both divisions are housed within the West Virginia Bureau for Public Health's (BPH) Office of Community Health Systems and Health Promotion.

DIVISION OF HEALTH PROMOTION AND CHRONIC DISEASE

HPCD's Healthy Lifestyle budget for 2024-25 totalled \$453,615. HPCD works in partnership with community-based organizations to disseminate health education, community programming, and capacity-building funding to improve statewide health around physical activity and nutrition. Two positions supported by Healthy Lifestyles funding are integrating strategies with current chronic disease prevention and management projects for better impact. Partners Active Southern West Virginia (ASWV), the Center for Active West Virginia (CAWV), and Try This West Virginia disseminate funding to organizations to improve their capacity and implement planned strategies to increase community nutrition and physical activity access. Funded organizations for these projects include schools, cities, healthcare clinics, recreational organizations, environmental conservation groups, youth development programs, and others. Additionally, HPCD is in the fifth year of running the Celebrating Healthy West Virginia (CHWV) Community Recognition Awards Program (previously known as Healthy People Healthy Places). This work focuses on improvements in communities around physical activity, nutrition, and tobacco prevention/cessation and is only possible through a collaboration between internal bureau partners, university/academic partners, and subject matter experts within the community.

The impressive synergies between the grant-facilitating organizations and their grantees continue to build the infrastructure needed to address the health of West Virginia residents. Even with some additional technical assistance needs, grantees were able to complete a number of sustainable policy, system, or environmental (PSE) changes that will help create a context in which the healthy choice is the easier choice.

Partnerships, Collaborations and Staffing

Center for Active West Virginia - \$166,718

During the 2024-25 grant cycle, the Center for Active West Virginia (CAWV) funded 11 projects across West Virginia to increase access to physical activity. The projects reached a total estimate of 100,000 individuals through social media and community projects. Technical assistance and evaluation was provided to the CAWV grantees of the 11 project activities. Activities included improving public access to walking trails, installing bike racks, providing exercise equipment, and teaching exercise classes, among others. All 11 completed activities resulted in PSE changes. Of the changes, grantees implemented 11 environmental changes (100%). This shows that the grantees prioritized making physical changes to the environment to

improve access to physical activity and other healthy behaviors. As with previous years, implementing policy changes at the community level remains a challenge. Grantees are expected to consider and specify which groups experiencing health disparities their project will reach. The most frequently listed population reached by CAWV grant partners were children (60%) and older people (50%). Other populations included people with low incomes, people living with a disability, and those in rural communities. Most commonly used strategies targeted the recruitment of priority populations and ensuring that the project location was accessible. The most commonly reported successes among CAWV grantees were increasing opportunities and access to engage in healthy behaviors (80%) and positive feedback, interest, and excitement from participants (50%), followed by expanding partnerships (30%). This re-emphasizes the program's strengths in creating sustainable opportunities for physical activity and healthy lifestyles, as well as forging lasting partnerships and collaborations.

Funded projects included: The City of Beckley mountain biking trail Mercer County; The City of Belington Kiosk and promotional material for disc golf course; Experience Learning Circleville (Pendleton County) Bikes for after school program already in place Barbour County; Pendleton County Parks and Recreation finish and promote the use of a large net climbing play structure and a half mile walking path Pendleton County; Kanawha County Schools - Elk Elementary project plans to expand and enhance walking track and plans, connect to curricular efforts in reading and math, and also include lining the track to promote wheelchair Kanawha County; Randolph County Extension / Parks and Rec - The "walking enhancement project" to enhance and promote a variety of outdoor paths and tracks that are already publicly available and free to use. The plans include coordinating signage to promote use across parks and rec and schools Randolph County; Roane General Hospital - The wellness team at the hospital provided signage on the new trails and for marketing materials to promote the PATH wellness program to patients and employees Roane County; Town of Cowen built the Bulldog Bike Track near Glade Elementary School in Cowen. This location will serve as the trailhead for Cranberry Tri-Rivers Trail as well; Waverly Activity Center - Develop and promote a garden circuit and green living workshops for community members at an old school that is now a community Center Webster County, Ceredo Kenova Middle School - purchased and installed an outdoor exercise equipment along an existing trail near the school Ceredo County; and Summers County Commission purchased, install new play equipment at Camp Summers promoting physical activity Summers County .

Active Southern West Virginia - \$107,639

During the 2024-25 grant cycle, ASWV funded 12 projects across West Virginia to promote workplace wellness. The projects reached a total of 875 employees. ASWV grant recipients completed a total of 28 project activities (65%) out of 43 proposed activities. The completed activities focused on promoting physical activity and healthy eating by providing equipment, facilities, educational programming, and wellness challenges. PSE changes made up for 93% of all completed activities. Thirty-five PSE changes consisted of 11 policy changes (31%), 14 systems changes (40%), and 10 environmental changes (29%). The other six activities were individual-level changes that were not PSE changes. The most frequently reached populations included women (100%), followed by people with low-incomes and older populations (75%). Most commonly identified strategies included having an accessible project location (100%), taking safety considerations into account (27%), and providing financial assistance (27%). ASWV funded 72 Kids Run Clubs. The impact was 18 counties, 61 schools/groups, 36 new clubs with a total of 2,087 participants.

Twelve grantees reported increased opportunities and access to engage in healthy behaviors as a result of the grant program (91%), and nine grantees reported increased educational opportunities or improved knowledge about health (82%). Other successes included receiving positive feedback, interest, and excitement from participants (73%). Funded worksites this year included: Cabell Huntington Health Department Cabell County, FamilyCare: Eleanor Putnam County, FamilyCare: Patrick Street Kanawha County, FamilyCare: St. Albans Kanawha County, FamilyCare: St. Albans East Kanawha County, FamilyCare: Teays Valley Putnam County, Healthnet Aeromedical, Lewis County Health Department Lewis County, Liberty High School Raleigh County, Pace Analytical Services, LLC Putnam County, Region 1 Workforce Development, and WVU Institute of Technology Fayette, Greenbrier, McDowell, Mercer, Monroe, Nicholas, Pocahontas, Raleigh, Summers, Webster, and Wyoming counties . ASWV hosted the 5rd annual Workplace Wellness Conference at Glade Springs, WV, in the fall of 2025. Sixty participants, which included providers, members, speakers, and keynote guests, gathered to promote a healthier and happier workforce in West Virginia. Throughout the day of presentations and networking the conference brought barriers to health to the forefront of discussion while brainstorming solutions to decrease and overcome these barriers at the workplace.

ASWV funded 72 Kids Run Clubs. The impact was 18 counties, 61 schools/groups, 36 new clubs with a total of 2,087 participants. Thirty-six run clubs, funded this year with Healthy Lifestyles money, includes: Kasson Elementary/Middle School Barbour County, Berkeley Heights Elementary Berkeley County, Spring Mills Primary School Berkeley County, Village of Barboursville Cabell County, Explorer Academy Cabell County, Gallaher Village Community Group Cabell County, Arnoldsburg Elementary School Calhoun County, New River Intermediate Fayette County, FPK-8 Hike & Disc Fayette County, Driswood Elementary Jefferson County, Kenna Elementary Kanawha County, Chamberlain Elementary Kanawha County, Richmond Elementary Kanawha County, Salvation Army Boys and Girls Club of Charleston WV Kanawha County, Salvation Army Boys and Girls Club of Charleston WV - St. Albans Club Kanawha County, Kanawha City Elementary Kanawha County, Brushfork Elementary Mercer County, Melrose Elementary Mercer County, Montcalm Elementary Mercer County, Blue well Elementary Mercer County, Lashmeet Matoaka Elementary Mercer County, Mountain Valley Elementary Mercer County, Morgantown ELF Monongalia County, Mt. Nebo Elementary Nicholas County, Zela Elementary Nicholas County, Panther Creek Elementary Nicholas County, Gauley River Elementary Nicholas County, Bruceton School Preston County, Aurora School Preston County, Hurricane Town Elementary Putnam County, Ridgeview Elementary Raleigh County, Sophia Christian Academy Raleigh County, Liberty High/Trap Hill Middle Raleigh County, Harrisville Elementary Ritchie County, Jumping Branch Elementary Summers County, and Baileysville EL and Middle Wyoming County.

ASWV also provides fiscal oversight for the CHWV Recognition Program, which began in 2019 (then known as Healthy People Healthy Places), and grew out of a state engagement meeting led by HPCD and the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors. CHWV acknowledges exceptional communities and community leaders who work together to create healthier places to live, learn, work, eat, and play. Communities and organizations can apply, or be nominated, and are assessed by the programs they have implemented around water consumption, healthy eating, physical activity access, and tobacco prevention or cessation. The 46 organizations recognized for 2025 include a diverse range of organizations making significant strides in health promotion and community wellness. Those organizations are: Cabell-Huntington Health Department Cabell County, Charleston Thunder Sled Hockey Kanawha County, City of Montgomery Kanawha County, City of Nitro Kanawha and Putnam County, City of Smithers Fayette County, Clendenin Brewing Co. Kanawha County, Community Markets Inc. Jefferson

County, Diana Community Center Webster County, Farms Work Wonders Hardy County, Freedom's Run Races & Grant program Jefferson County, Garden of Promise Berkeley County, Good Samaritan Free Health Care Clinic Berkeley County, Greenbrier County Health Alliance Greenbrier County, Grow Ohio Valley Ohio County, Hardy County Cryptids Hardy County, Heart + Hand Outreach Ministries Kanawha County, HOH Share Ohio County, Kanawha Starting Points Family Support Center Kanawha County, Lost River Trails Coalition Hardy County, Main Street Martinsburg Berkeley County, City of Martinsburg Berkeley County, Martinsburg CVB Berkeley, Marshall County Family Support Center Marshall County, Masontown Community Garden Preston County, Mingo County 4H Mingo County, Motown Flow: Spinning Community Monongalia County, Mountains of Hope Outreach Fayette County, Movin' in May Jackson County, Planned Approach To Community Health Coalition of Taylor County Taylor County, Raleigh County Parks and Recreation Authority Raleigh County, Ranson Community Gardens Jefferson County, Roane General Hospital, Prescription for Your Health Roan County, Roots of Resilience, Child Protect of Mercer County Inc. Mercer County, Slanesville Garden- Ice Mountain School Garden Hampshire County, Something Sober, NAMI Greater Wheeling Ohio County, Summersville Lake State Park Nicholas County, T. L. Fruits and Vegetables LLC Nicholas County, The Amputee Center Wood County, The Resilience Collaborative of United Way of Harrison and Doddridge Counties Harrison and Doddridge County, Watermark Farm Hardy County, Wellness and Recycling, West Liberty Lions Club, FSC Ohio County, West Virginia Interscholastic Cycling League Monongalia County, Wheeling Line Dance/Yoga Project Ohio County, WV Farmers Market Association Kanawha County, WV Food & Farm Coalition Kanawha County, WVU Extension Greenbrier County, and Yoga at Valley Falls Mason County.

Try This WV - \$29,000

HPCD is a founding member of Try This WV. The organization's mission is to knock West Virginia off the worst health lists. Expertise on building community capacity to assess, plan, and partner for obesity prevention initiatives have resulted in communities obtaining a \$15 dollar return on investment for every \$1 spent through the initiatives funded by Try This WV. In 2025, 11 communities whose outreach touched 21 different counties received funds to promote physical activity and/or access to nutritious food. Communities proposed nine system changes (50%) and nine environmental changes (50%). Results indicate that 11 out of 18 PSE changes were accomplished.. Funded projects this year included: Health & History - Community Square Dances in Preston County expand the square dancing project, Wild & Wonderful Schoolyard at Capon Elementary School butterfly garden, raised bed & cut log seating project in Hampshire County, We Bike WV bike repair and maintenance in Preston County, raised beds at the Capon Elementary School in Hampshire County, Health and History: Preston County Community Square Dance project that expands free access to square dances at Arthurdale Heritage, and Preston County Bikes started a new bike hub in Preston County distributing bikes, helmets and providing bike repair.

HPCD Staffing - \$78,244

Health Promotion and Coordination Branch Manager

This is the lead contact for the Healthy Lifestyles programs. The person in this position is also the subject matter expert for obesity prevention, oversees administrative duties related to the Healthy Lifestyles programs and the contractual partnerships, and provides technical assistance to communities.

Epidemiology and Evaluation Branch Manager

This person assists with evaluation and the data process for reporting performance measures and outcomes. The manager also assesses and utilizes current measures that HPCD or other partners are using to assist in reporting evaluation outcomes for the Healthy Lifestyles programs.

Statistical Data

All data provided are from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 2023 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Prevalence & Trends Data Tool, unless otherwise indicated.

Weight Status

- Obesity (Body Mass Index of 30.0 or above): the crude prevalence of West Virginian adults who have obesity was 41.2%, compared to the median rate of 34.3% among all states and DC
- Overweight (BMI of 25.0-29.9): the crude prevalence of West Virginian adults who are overweight was 32.0% compared to the median rate of 34.4% among all states and DC

Physical Activity

- Exercise: the crude prevalence of West Virginian adults reporting **no** physical activities during the past month was 32.0% compared to the median rate of 24.2% among all states and DC (Note: this question specifically **excludes** any physical activity as part of a person's regular job.)
- Met the US Department of Health and Human Services Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans recommendations:
 - Met aerobic activity guidelines (150 minutes or more of aerobic physical activity per week): the crude prevalence of West Virginian adults reporting they met aerobic physical activity guidelines was 53.1% compared to the median rate of 59.9% among all states and DC
 - Met strength activity guidelines (participated in muscle strengthening exercises two or more times per week): the crude prevalence of West Virginian adults reporting they met strength activity guidelines was 30.7% compared to the median rate of 41.2% among all states and DC
 - Met full Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans recommendations (both aerobic and muscle activity guidelines): the crude prevalence of West Virginian adults reporting they met full guidelines was 20.6% compared to the median rate of 30.4% among all states and DC

Nutrition (Most recent data from 2021)

- Fruit consumption: the crude prevalence of West Virginian adults who reported consuming fruit **less than** one time per day was 46.0% compared with the median rate of 40.8% among all states and DC
- Vegetable consumption: the crude prevalence of West Virginian adults who reported consuming vegetables **less than** one time per day was 18.9% compared with the median rate of 19.7% among all states and DC

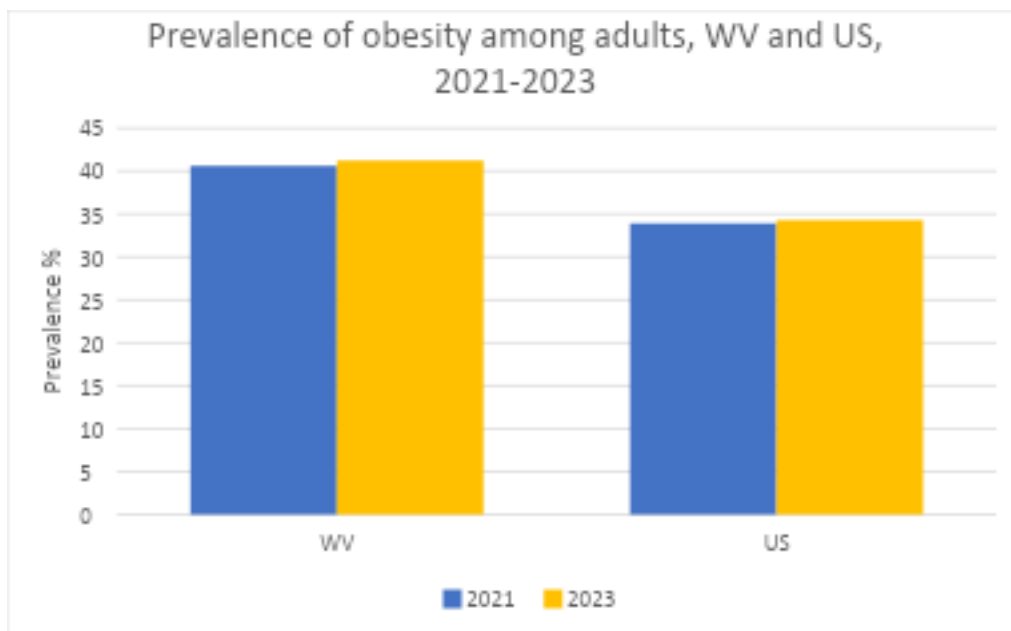
Health Status

- Fair or poor health: the crude prevalence of West Virginian adults reporting fair or poor health was 26.5% compared to the median rate of 18.2% among all states and DC

Additional Data

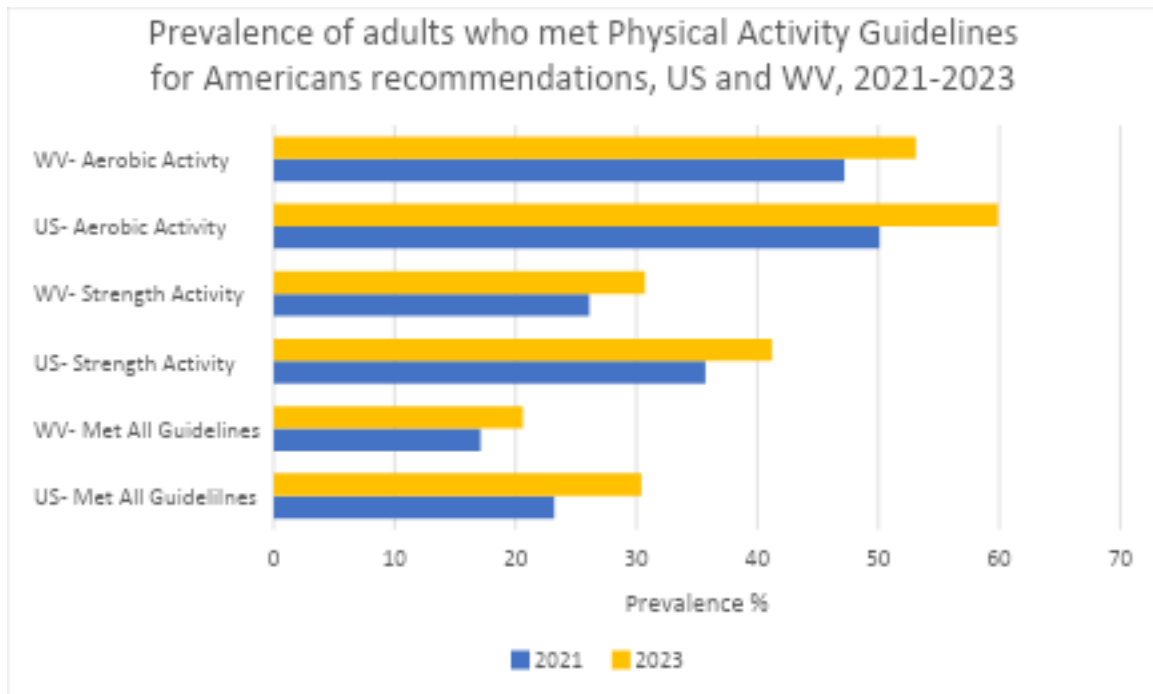
- Access to exercise opportunities: according to the 2024 County Health Rankings Report, the percentage of the population in West Virginia that had adequate access to locations for physical activity was 58% (counties ranging from 1% to 99%) compared to the national value of 84%

Graph 1. Prevalence of obesity among adults, WV and US, 2021-2023



Data source: CDC BRFSS 2021 & 2023

Graph 2. Prevalence of adults who met Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans recommendations, US and WV, 2021-2023



Data source: CDC BRFSS 2021 & 2023

DIVISION OF TOBACCO PREVENTION

The Division of Tobacco Prevention (DTP) is the lead state agency for comprehensive tobacco prevention, cessation, and control, and works to prevent and reduce tobacco use in West Virginia – the leading cause of preventable disease, disability, and death in the United States. The DTP partners with local coalitions, community agencies, and state and national organizations to implement and evaluate effective tobacco prevention and cessation activities that strive to:

- Eliminate secondhand tobacco smoke.
- Promote quitting among adults and youth.
- Prevent youth tobacco use initiation including vaping and other electronic delivery devices.
- Identify and eliminate disparities among populations.

DTP's Healthy Lifestyle budget for 2024-25 totalled \$451,404. Partners included Community Connections, McDowell County Commission on Aging, the West Virginia Perinatal Partnership (WVPP), the American Lung Association (ALA) of West Virginia, the Coalition for a Tobacco Free West Virginia (CTFWV), Covenant House, and RVO Health.

Partnerships, Collaborations, and Staffing

American Lung Association of West Virginia (Raze) - \$100,404

Youth are critical and powerful voices for addressing tobacco use. Raze is a WV youth-led movement against the tobacco industry and its negative influence on the health of our state. Raze uses crews (groups of youth) to encourage their peers to be tobacco-free, serve as positive role models, stand up to the tobacco industry and its deceptive marketing, and urge elected leaders to take action. One method to accomplish these goals is through Raze events, designed to provide education and organize interactive and attention-grabbing activities. Presentations to elementary school students, educating local and state officials, and promoting cessation resources are a few examples of Raze events.

Raze 2024-2025 school year facts:

- Raze crew member ages: 11 - 18 years
- No. of Raze crew members: 1,545
- No. of crews in the state: 52
- No. of counties with crews: 33
- Youth exposures: 327,298
- Adult exposures: 102,634
- Tobacco-Free Day at the Capitol: 465 attendees

RVO Health (West Virginia Tobacco Quitline) - \$118,000

In 2024, the DTP was able to finalize and release a Request for Proposals (RFP) for continuation of WV Tobacco Quitline services. In response to ongoing challenges and Task Force recommendations, staff sought input from multiple key stakeholders and consultants with the goal of building a strong, effective resource to support WV residents who want to quit using tobacco. The final RFP included a comprehensive set of requirements, ensuring use of evidence-based approaches and best-practices, effective data collection and evaluation, as well as strategies to target high-risk populations. RVO Health was selected as the Quitline Vendor in September 2024 and began providing services on November 1, 2024.

Between January 2025 and August 2025 (the most recent Quitline data available at the time of this publication), the Quitline has served 1,045 West Virginians with specialized counseling services, resources, digital support, and if chosen, Nicotine Replacement Therapy.

During the same period of time, the DTP learned that over half of those enrolled for Quitline services reported having one or more behavioral health conditions; and of the Medicaid participants, this number jumps to 78.6%. Almost 40% of all cigarettes smoked by United States (US) adults are consumed by people with behavioral health conditions. The most common causes of death among people with behavioral health conditions are heart disease, cancer, and lung disease, which can all be caused by smoking.

Coinciding with these health risks, over 67% of the Quitline participants reported having one or more chronic health conditions. Chronic diseases are the leading cause of illness, disability, and death in America and smoking is a leading cause of several chronic conditions.

McDowell County Commission on Aging (African American Population) - \$25,000

Through the award of subgrantee funds, the DTP created key partnerships to address the high prevalence rate of tobacco use among WV African American population. The African American Tobacco Prevention Network (AATPN), a faith-based network of churches and community partners, was created in 2021 by the McDowell County Commission on Aging to serve as a guide and community champion.

The purpose of this project was to:

- Build the capacity of the African American community to address tobacco prevention and cessation efforts at the grassroots level by partnering with a faith-based and community-based organization to carry out evidence-based programming that targets explicitly high population areas with African Americans; and
- Increase tobacco cessation attempts among African American tobacco users.

Between July 2024 and June 2025, the AATPN expanded to include 26 congregations which were in turn able to offer at least 22 tobacco community education workshops, specifically targeting African American communities and offered 21 cessation workshops, reaching in total 504 individuals.

West Virginia Perinatal Partnership (Perinatal Tobacco Users) - \$35,000

WV has the highest rate of women who use any type of tobacco product while pregnant. Because of this high prevalence, as well as recommendations made in the 2021 Task Force Final Report, the DTP strengthened partnerships during this reporting period with the purpose of increasing the awareness of and opportunities for evidence-based perinatal cessation services. Partnering with West Virginia Perinatal Partnership (WV PP) and with their collaboration with the WV Tobacco Quitline, the DTP was able to bolster their services. The WV Tobacco Quitline provides pregnant participants with referrals to the Baby and Me Tobacco Free Program (BMTFP). Additionally, the DTP allocated funds to assist with implementation of BMTFP. BMTFP is a proven, evidenced-based prenatal/postpartum cessation program, effective in reducing premature births and low birth weights, including reducing exposure to second and thirdhand smoke. The DTP and partners are currently working to enhance these activities among the WV pregnant population by creating stronger program activities and evaluation services.

McDowell County Commission on Aging (Smokeless Tobacco Users) - \$25,000

In WV, eight out of every 100 people use smokeless tobacco (the 2nd highest rate in the nation). Smokeless tobacco users in WV are often of low socioeconomic status, have low educational attainment, and limited access to healthcare. The purpose of this project was to:

- Give current smokeless tobacco users the support and skills needed to successfully quit.
- Increase knowledge about the dangers of smokeless tobacco use among blue-collar workers, senior citizens, and college-age students.

The following work was done to increase the knowledge about the harms of tobacco use as well as to decrease overall use of smokeless and other tobacco products in WV:

- Ninety-one invitations for organizations to host tobacco cessation workshops were sent out.

- Six tobacco cessation workshops were conducted at local organizations with a total of 33 participants.
- Seven tobacco cessation workshops were conducted within the mental health facilities with a total of 35 participants.
- Five community-based tobacco education workshops and two community events were conducted with a total of over 400 participants.
- Through partnerships with dental offices, media campaigns were conducted that reached 31,846 citizens.
- Disseminated the tobacco control work done in WV by publishing a journal article in an open access journal:
 - o (<https://frontiersin.org/journals/public-health/articles/10.3389/fpubh.2025.1503858/full>)

Covenant House - \$25,000

Covenant House is ideally situated to implement programs that will effectively address smoking related issues for priority populations. During the fiscal year, Covenant House used funds to increase awareness of tobacco related issues, expand tobacco cessation opportunities, promote the benefits of living a tobacco-free lifestyle, and increase the capacity among grantee leadership and connecting organizations.

Coalition for a Tobacco Free WV - \$50,000

The Coalition for a Tobacco Free WV (CTFWV) has been an integral part of the DTP for over 20 years. The mission of the CTFWV is to educate the public about tobacco-related issues and policies that reduce, with the intent to eliminate, tobacco use in WV. Those policies include but are not limited to increasing the cost of tobacco products by raising the state excise tax on those products and decreasing exposure to secondhand smoke. Secondhand smoke exposure causes heart disease and lung cancer in adults and numerous health problems in infants and children, including severe asthma attacks, respiratory infections, ear infections, and sudden infant death syndrome. Policies like smoke-free laws, marketing restrictions, and educational campaigns are effective in preventing youth uptake, promoting cessation, and protecting the public from the harmful effects of tobacco.

DTP Staffing – \$73,000

Tobacco Cessation Coordinator

Charged with managing the Tobacco Cessation program. Duties include overseeing the operation of WV Tobacco Quitline vendor, managing subrecipient grants for tobacco cessation and prevention for priority populations. Additionally, this position represents DTP at regional and national meetings and conferences that are about tobacco cessation and prevention. The current staff member is a Certified Tobacco Treatment Specialist.

Statistical Data

WV Adult Tobacco Use

- 21.0% of adults are current smokers compared to the national rate of 14.0%.
- 7.7% of adults use smokeless tobacco products (chewing tobacco, snuff, or snus), which is second highest in the nation (3.4%).
- 9.3% of adults currently use electronic vapor products (such as e-cigarettes, vapes/vape pens, etc.) compared to the national rate of 7.7%.

WV Youth Tobacco Use

- 6.2% of high school students reported currently using smokeless tobacco products.
- 9.7% of high school students reported currently smoking cigarettes or cigars.
- 48.8% of high school students reported ever using an electronic vapor product.
- 27.0% of high school students reported currently using electronic vapor products.
- 13.0% of high school students reported daily use of electronic vapor products.
- 28.5% of high school students reported currently smoking cigarettes or cigars or using smokeless tobacco or electronic vapor products.
- Among high school students who reported using any tobacco products during the 12 months before, 55.6% reported they tried to quit using all tobacco products in the past year.
- Among high school students who reported the past month use of electronic vapor products, 3.4% reported buying them themselves in a convenience store, supermarket, discount store, or gas station.

Health Outcomes

- West Virginia had the second-highest rate of tobacco-associated cancers in the U.S. at 223.1 cancers per 100,000 people.

Cost of Tobacco

- Smoking in West Virginia is estimated to cost over \$1 billion annually in direct healthcare costs, including \$298.1 million in Medicaid costs.

Sources

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