



2019

Community Snapshot: TWIN FALLS



TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 3 | **The CTG Model & Process**
- 5 | **Community Snapshot**
- 6 | **Community Context**
- 7 | **Secondary Summary & Data**
- 9 | **Community Survey Overview**
- 11 | **Community Conversations Summary**
- 13 | **Additional Resources**
- 13 | **Conclusion**
- 13 | **References** (links to data)



COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION GRANT MODEL & PROCESS

Community Transformation Grant (CTG). CTG is a multiyear grant designed to mobilize Idaho communities around childhood obesity. The grant focuses on policy, systems, and environmental changes specifically centralized on physical activity and food. The grant focuses on the following principles:

- 1 UNDERSTANDING:** The Blue Cross of Idaho Foundation for Health does not bring any preconceived notions or prescriptive programming to each community. The grant starts with understanding community assets, needs, and opportunities to make an impact.
- 2 COLLABORATIVE:** The grant focuses on building a collaborative effort to address childhood obesity. Many community partners come to the table in the form of an impact team to craft an emergent strategy to create change.
- 3 CATALYTIC:** The focus of the grant is to “light a fire” that creates momentum and energy to create system level change.
- 4 EMERGENT & ADAPTIVE STRATEGY:** The Foundation embraces an adaptive and emergent strategy that does not focus on linear change. This strategy method has allowed previous communities to be agile and shift focus as needed.
- 5 SUSTAINABLE CHANGE:** The grant focuses on creating sustainable change that will last for generations. While the Foundation will remain an active partner with these communities after the grant ends, we emphasize that the things funded under this grant need to be sustainable.



PHASE 1: TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

1 Community Snapshot

Use data as the foundation to inform, guide, and track the needs, assets, and challenges in the community. This allows for ongoing adjustments, improvement, learning and accountability as the partnership structure is formalized.

TIME FRAME: Perform during the first six months of the process.

2 Partnership Structure

Build on the community's synergy to engage and empower partners throughout the process. There is alignment of community stakeholders, policy, and funding focused on the development of the data-driven strategy and plan execution.

TIME FRAME: Build the first six months. Refine throughout.

3 Data-Driven Strategy

Create an action plan focused on effective solutions using the best evidence available to design and implement transformation projects that are well-suited to the community's needs.

TIME FRAME: Community session comes after the snapshot is complete (near the end of year one).

PHASE 2: FUNDING & IMPLEMENTATION

4 Plan Execution

Collaboration with partners, organizations, businesses, faith leaders, and other stakeholders to develop and implement the community's shared vision, key projects, policies, and other methods of community transformation.

TIME FRAME: Formal implementation of the action plan following the workshop (begins in year two). Monitor the progress of all selected projects during the grant.

5 Sustainable Framework

An inclusive process that includes tools and resources to manage and support the sustainability of the community transformation process.

TIME FRAME: Throughout the duration of the grant.

COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT

The first year of the grant includes a community snapshot. The intent of the snapshot is to provide data and information about Twin Falls that will be used by the CTG impact team to inform, guide, and track the needs, assets, and challenges within the community. This snapshot should be used as a “flashlight” to better understand the community and for the creation of the CTG action plan that will focus on effective solutions that are well-suited to the community’s needs. There are several components of the snapshot:

SECONDARY DATA: This is data that has been previously gathered and is publicly available. It's used to provide an overview of the community. Data related to basic demographic information of the community, health indicators, and other measures related to physical activity and nutrition are included.

COMMUNITY SURVEYS: Working with the impact team, surveys were developed and deployed to parents/guardians and youth in the community to learn how parents and youth feel regarding access to healthy, affordable food and physical activity. The surveys also help determine the greatest barriers and supports to healthy eating and physical activity.

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS: Spark! Strategic Solutions met with youth and parents in the community to gather feedback on potential opportunities to help kids become more physically active and have access to healthy, affordable foods. The question asked was, “What would you like to see to make your community healthier for youth related to physical activity and access to healthy, affordable food?”

MUNICIPAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN REVIEW: Comprehensive Plans for municipalities help guide communities in developing goals, objectives, and future activities. One opportunity to reflect a municipality's value for the health of its residents is to include health concepts throughout its comprehensive plan, particularly within the goals, objectives, and policies of the plan. The comprehensive plan for Twin Falls was reviewed and suggestions are being provided to include “health in all policies.” This review has been shared with the city.

SUSTAINABLE CHANGE: The grant focuses on creating sustainable change that will last for generations. While the Foundation will remain an active partner with these communities after the grant ends, we emphasize that the things funded under this grant need to be sustainable.

Various organizations and individuals were involved in the creation and collection of various components of the snapshot. All of this research, work, and material are part of the CTG process because the Foundation recognizes the importance of understanding the community fully before the action plan for the grant funds is created.

COMMUNITY CONTEXT

FSG, an international nonprofit that helps foundations create more effective strategies and impact beyond grant dollars, is one of the many organizations working with High Five, powered by the Blue Cross of Idaho Foundation in the CTG process. As part of its work, FSG developed an overview of the community context in Twin Falls:

The town of Twin Falls is located in South-Central Idaho, the largest city in “Magic Valley,” the agricultural region in the Snake River Plain. The Twin Falls area developed around mining, dairy farming, and agricultural farming industries in the late 1800s, and was formally established as a city in 1904.¹ The economy today remains concentrated in agribusiness, “with a full range of food production, processing, science, and related support services.”² Major employers in the area include dairy farmers, Chobani (yogurt), Clif Bar (sports nutrition), and Glanbia Foods (cheese manufacturer). Twin Falls also has a recreational tourism industry, particularly known for base-jumping.³

Twin Falls is one of three Idaho cities with a “council-manager” government. The mayor is selected by the city council, not elected. This position was described as serving “as the chairman of the board” with limited executive power, while the city manager “functions like the CEO of the organization, overseeing day to day operations of the city.”⁴



SECONDARY SUMMARY & DATA

Publicly available secondary data for Twin Falls and/or Twin Falls County was gathered. Secondary data is research data that has previously been gathered and can be publicly accessed by others. The data was assembled and summarized by a Master of Public Health student from Idaho State University.

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

POPULATION & ETHNICITY: Twin Falls' population in 2015 was more than 47,400 people, up 8% since 2010 and its growth outpaced similarly sized towns.⁵ This population growth trajectory means that Twin Falls will qualify as a metropolitan statistical area (MSA) in the 2020 census, a process that requires significant review of city codes and infrastructure. The population growth and ensuing development has also led to more affluent populations living at the edges of the city where there is land to build. Meanwhile, lower income neighborhoods are located closer to City Hall and on the western side of town.⁶

Twin Falls represents 56% of Twin Falls County's population of more than 85,100. The county residents are 79.1% non-Hispanic white, 16.5% Hispanic, 1.8% Asian, 1.3% American Indian and Alaskan Native, 0.5% non-Hispanic African American, and 0.3% Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander.⁷ Twin Falls has been a refugee resettlement community since the 1980s. As a result, Twin Falls is home to a relatively large Bosnian community in its second and third generations, Iraqi and Afghan refugees who were part of the military conflicts and worked for the U.S. army, and Congolese and Senegalese populations.⁸

HOUSEHOLD: From 2013-2017, the American Community Survey reported that there were 28,760 households in Twin Falls County. Families made up 69.4% of the households, and 35.4% of all households have one or more people under the age of 18.⁹

EDUCATION: From 2013 -2017, 87.7% of people 25 years and older had at least graduated from high school, which is close to the state average of 90.2%. Additionally, 19.1% had a bachelor's degree or higher, which is lower than the national average of 26.8%. An estimated 19.7% did not complete high school.⁹

INCOME: Median income among households in Twin Falls County was \$49,118, which is lower than the state average of \$52,225 (ACS). Additionally, 50% of children in Twin Falls County receive free or reduced price lunch, which is higher than the state average of 45%.⁷

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The Walkability Score for Twin Falls County is 7.78 compared to a national median of 9.03.



HEALTH DATA: County Health Rankings rank Twin Falls County as 21st in Idaho for health outcomes out of 42 counties total.⁴

OBESEITY DATA: The county has an adult obesity rate of 31.3%, which is slightly higher than the state as a whole (28%).¹⁰ Secondary data related to childhood obesity at the county level is currently not available.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY DATA: As it relates to physical activity, 76% of Twin Falls County residents have access to exercise opportunities compared to 78% in the state as a whole, and 22% are physically inactive, compared to 19% in the state as a whole.⁴

The Walkability Score is an indicator of a community's design and infrastructure to encourage walking. The Walkability Score Index ranges from 1 to 20, with higher scores indicating a more walkable community. The Walkability Score for Twin Falls County is 7.78 compared to a national median of 9.03.¹⁰

NUTRITION DATA: The Food Environment Index provides a score from 0 (worst) to 10 (best) and equally weights two indicators of the food environment: access to healthy foods and food insecurity. Twin Falls County has a Food Environment Index of 8.2. This is higher than the state as a whole, which has a Food Environment Index of 7.2.¹¹



COMMUNITY SURVEY OVERVIEW

A survey was administered to parents and youth in Twin Falls. The intent of the survey was to showcase how Twin Falls parents/guardians and youth feel regarding access to healthy, affordable food and physical activity; to determine the greatest barriers and supports to healthy eating and physical activity. The survey was developed by a Master of Public Health student from Idaho State University and Spark! Strategic Solutions, who are part of the team working with High Five, powered by the Blue Cross of Idaho Foundation for Health, in the CTG process. The impact team, which had the opportunity to modify and add questions, deployed the survey in the community. The survey was available in English and Spanish languages, though no responses were received from the Spanish version.

PARENT/GUARDIAN SURVEY



Challenges for being physically active: lack of physical activities available, expense of physical activities, stronger interest in technology, or lack of interest.

The parent/guardian survey was administered through several channels. Online surveys were distributed by the CTG impact team via email and social media. Surveys were open for responses from September 9 to October 7, 2019.

Eight hundred and seventeen (817) parents and guardians completed the online survey. The age distribution of respondents' children ranged from kindergarten to 12th grade.

More than half of the responding parents felt their children did not face challenges in being physically active (58%), while 48% reported one or more of their children face challenges in developing healthy eating habits.

52% of parents stated that their children participated in land-based activities (walking, hiking, biking, etc.) every few days or every day. Land-based activities, team sports, and gym-based activities were the most frequently listed youth physical activities as reported by parents.

Challenges listed related to being physically active included a lack of physical activities available outside of school, the expense of physical activities, a stronger interest in technology for the student or a student's lack of interest in physical activity. These were the most frequently reported.



Parents would like to see more: biking/walking paths, winter recreation opportunities, kid-centric activities, and more affordable indoor, kid-friendly activities.

The three largest supports to being physically active were physical activities available outside of school, proper understanding of the importance of physical activity and accessible transportation (41%, 36%, and 35%, respectively).

For winter activities, the most common responses were sledding, skiing and indoor sports to keep children active.

Parents reported they would like to see more of the following in the community of Twin Falls: biking/walking paths, winter recreation opportunities, and kid-centric activities (sports, clubs, cooking classes, etc.). Additional comments expressed the need for affordable indoor kid-friendly activities.

Almost 61% of parents responded that their children had eaten fast food 1-3 times in the past week.

Nearly 90% of parents said that their children have lunch and dinner every day, while only 68% reported their children eat breakfast every day.



Healthy food challenges:
options at school,
social pressures,
lack of time for
parents/guardians,
picky eaters,
and convenience
of pre-packaged
foods.

90% of parents mentioned that their children had meals in the home every time or most of the time.

The reported challenges children face to eating healthy food include food options at school, social pressures, a lack of time for parents/guardians, picky eating preferences of the children, and the convenience of pre-packaged foods.

The two largest supports in developing healthy eating habits were food options at home and accessible transportation.

Though 80% of parents reported they can afford and do purchase healthy food, 1 in 5 parents reported they wish they could purchase healthy food but their budget does not allow it.

Nearly one-third of parents reported they use government food assistance programs. Additional comments from parents expressed they did not qualify for government assistance but experience financial stress and operate on a very tight budget. Others reported a desire to utilize government assistance but did not know how to access it.

YOUTH SURVEY

Approximately
50%

of the youth
surveyed
feel they face
challenges in
being physically
active.

The online survey link was sent to schools in the Twin Falls School District and the school principals were asked to arrange a time for students to take the survey during class time.

One thousand five hundred and sixty-six (1,566) youth in Twin Falls completed the survey. Respondents ranged from fourth to 12th grade, with the majority (60%) being in the 5th, 6th, and 7th grade.

Land-based activities, team sports, and gym-based activities were the most frequently listed physical activities by the youth. This was a similar finding in the parent survey. Survey results suggested that participants receive the majority of their education on physical activity from their school, parents/guardians, and/or community. 11% reported they receive physical activity education via social media. Approximately half of respondents said they feel they face challenges in being physically active.

The top barriers the youth listed to being physically active include being more interested in technology, not having enough time, social pressures, too costly, and winter weather. The top supports the youth listed as helping them be physically active include physical activities available at school and outside of school, understanding the importance of physical activity and transportation.

20%

of the youth
surveyed want
to eat more fruit
and vegetables
and consume
more water to
improve their
health.

The majority of the youth said they ate meals at home or school every time or most of the time (84%), and 43% of respondents said they feel they face challenges in forming healthy eating habits. The most frequently reported challenges the youth face in forming healthy eating habits are food options at school, home, and stores, convenience of pre-packaged food, and being a “picky eater.” 1 in 5 youth reported they want to eat more fruit and vegetables and consume more water to improve their health.

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

Spark! Strategic Solutions met with youth and parents in the community to gather feedback on potential opportunities to help kids become more physically active and get access to healthy, affordable foods. The question asked was, “What would you like to see to make your community healthier for youth related to physical activity and access to healthy, affordable food?”

THEMES & IDEAS FROM TWIN FALLS PARENTS

- ▶ **Indoor opportunities are needed for youth in the winter months.**
Most youth do not get out in the winter and they need a safe place to play to stay active.
Specific ideas were to find partners willing to provide indoor spaces dedicated to affordable sport options, continue to focus on building the rec/community center, and leverage existing opportunities with the Boys and Girls Club expansion.
- ▶ **Ensure we are working with those that have the greatest need for healthy food.**
Those challenged with food insecurity must be a high priority.
Specific ideas were to coordinate partners working in one neighborhood or location to provide multiple services, look into bringing back Cooking Matters or a variation of the program, expand the Breckenridge Farm to include a kitchen and farm-to-table option, and provide cooking classes, kits and education to youth.
- ▶ **Explore Intramural sports for older kids.**
Many kids want more options and there is a gap in filling interest across the community.
Specific ideas included focusing on time after school and the winter season to offer a new range of options to older youth (middle school to high school ages).
- ▶ **Promote existing opportunities more widely.**
Parks and Recreation has a number of existing programs that could be expanded to meet the needs of the community. Other nonprofit partners are also working to promote healthy eating and physical activity, so there is opportunity for leverage.
Specific ideas were about where to advertise what is currently going on more broadly, help with transportation and access to locations, take an inventory of existing programs, find the best partners for collaboration, highlight existing trails and nature-focused opportunities, and build healthy eating into physical activity programming.

THEMES & IDEAS FROM TWIN FALLS YOUTH

► More places to play.

This includes parks and areas to have both traditional and nontraditional sports options. Traditionally this includes basketball, soccer and baseball. Alternatively, they are also seeking places to skate, play with water features, outdoor trampolines and even places to dance.

Specific ideas were to improve the turf and bark at parks, add soccer goals at school, and have more opportunities to play at places when school is out (seasonally and at the end of the day).

► Better play options.

There needs to be better options for simple sports activities in the school setting.

Specific ideas were to install walking tracks, expand Monday Miles (a walking program) to more days, repaint four-square lines, and add outdoor exercise equipment. Updates to playground equipment was another top comment for improvement.

► Safer transportation options for walkers & bikers.

Concerns ranged from crossing intersections, having completed sidewalks near school, safe pick-up and drop-off locations, and clear bike paths to ride to school.

Specific ideas were to make parking rules more visible, add more bike racks at school and parks, add a cross sign at Fieldstone/Grandview, install bike lanes, pour paved sidewalks versus gravel, and make sure walkways are plowed.

► Improve the aesthetics at schools & parks.

The older schools need improvement and youth would like to see updates to their buildings, grounds, and classrooms.

Specific ideas were to paint the exterior of buildings, fix broken doors and walls, add murals and art elements, create better fields and areas to play on grass, and update parks with better playground equipment.

► Provide better access to healthy food options.

Youth felt like there are not many options for fruits and vegetables in the cafeteria. They would like to have more options to choose from as well as a more diverse meal offering. A frequent comment was the need for daily snacks.

Specific ideas were to increase portion size of meals, add diet drink options, more allergy friendly options, installing healthy vending machines and water fountains (fill stations), add more school gardens, and extend lunch time. Outside of school they would like to have more healthy restaurants that include options for those with food allergies.

► Healthy food education opportunities.

There are not enough opportunities in the school or community to learn about healthy food and youth would like to see more of this.

Specific ideas were to install greenhouses for year-round learning, have fun, goofy vegetable posters to encourage healthy eating, add food-focused classes to teach healthy eating habits, hire school nurses, and mentoring of younger eaters from older kids.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

We acknowledge additional data and resources — needs assessments, walkability/bikeability audits, etc. — are available and may relate to this work. The impact team may wish to take these sources into consideration to help inform future planning for the Community Transformation Grant or other similar work.

CONCLUSION

The intent of the snapshot is to provide data and information about Twin Falls that will be used by the impact team to inform, guide, and track the needs, assets, and challenges within the community. This snapshot should be used as a “flashlight” to better understand the community and for the creation of the CTG action plan. The snapshot may also be useful when applying for outside funding related to community health or leveraging funding within the community. The hope is that the document provides helpful insights and spurs constructive dialogue within the impact team and the community related to community health.

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ABOUT THE BLUE CROSS OF IDAHO FOUNDATION FOR HEALTH

The Blue Cross of Idaho Foundation for Health, Inc., is a nonprofit charitable foundation established in 2001 by Blue Cross of Idaho. The Foundation works statewide to improve the health of all Idahoans through wellness and prevention programs.



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