

Fort Bend County Health & Human Services **COMMUNITY HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PLAN**



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Executive Summary

The 2022 Fort Bend County Health and Human Services Community Health Assessment (*CHA*) identified the county's top five priorities based on over 800 responses from the community and 25 key informant interviews. After analyzing the data, we assembled existing and new partners from sectors including healthcare, education, philanthropy, and many more. Together, strategies were formulated to address the identified priorities. After analyzing over 300 strategies generated and shared by the participants at these focus group sessions, the Community Health Improvement Plan (*CHIP*) was developed. This plan outlines goals, objectives, and strategies to improve the health of all Fort Bend County Residents via projects, programs, and policies. These priority areas are listed in order of the frequency of mention during stakeholder interviews and survey responses.

This CHIP includes 10 objectives that address five priority areas:

- 1. Mental Health
- 2. Housing
- 3. Obesity
- 4. Heart Disease
- 5. Prenatal Care

This CHIP is designed to be a broad, strategic framework for community health, that evolves with the changing needs of the community. It is developed and written in a way that engages multiple perspectives and voices so that all community groups and sectors – private and nonprofit organizations, government agencies, academic institutions, community- and faith-based organizations, transportation and residents – can unite to improve the health and quality of life for all people who live, learn, work, and play in Fort Bend County. We encourage you to review the priorities and goals, reflect on the suggested strategies, and consider how you can participate in this effort: individually, within your organizations, and collectively as a community.

On behalf of Fort Bend County Health and Human Services, we would like to thank everyone who participated in the CHIP input sessions for their time, input, and expertise as a member of the community we serve. FBCHHS encourages anyone in the County to utilize the CHIP as a roadmap to guide existing and future efforts to make Fort Bend County the healthiest community it can be.

Introduction

The Public Health Accreditation Board (*PHAB*) defines a Community Health Improvement Plan (*CHIP*) as a "longterm systematic effort to address public health problems on the basis of the results of community health assessment activities and the community health improvement process." The CHIP acknowledges the significant contribution of many sectors within our community in order to improve the health of the entire county. CHIPs are created through a community-wide, collaborative planning process that engages partners and organizations to develop, support, and implement the plan. A CHIP is intended to serve as a vision for the health of the community and a framework for organizations to use in leveraging resources, engaging partners, and identifying their own priorities and strategies for community health improvement.

After gathering input from individuals from across Fort Bend County, the following themes emerged:

- Leverage partnerships and collaboration
- Promote awareness and education
- Increase access to services, care, and programs

Although Fort Bend County Health and Human Services (*FBCHHS*) serves as the local health department (*LHD*), collaboration outside of the department is key to achieving the goals, objectives, and strategies set forth by this plan.

Methodology

In the summer of 2022, Fort Bend County Health & Human Services (*FBCHHS*) completed its first Community Health Assessment (*CHA*) in 15 years. FBCHHS and CHA partners followed the Association for Community Health Improvement Community Health Assessment Toolkit¹ to guide the CHA process. As a result of the CHA, five priority issues were identified which include mental health, housing, obesity, heart disease, and prenatal care. From September 2022 to December 2022, FBCHHS engaged the community to develop plans to address the priority areas.

Each priority area has an action plan, which consists of:

- Goal: A statement of what we want to achieve
 - Objective: How we will measure success
 - Baseline: Where we are
 - Target: Where we want to be
- Strategy: Actions taken to move the objective forward

Where applicable, objectives, targets and strategies of this CHIP are aligned with Healthy People 2030 goals, objectives and evidence-based interventions.

FBCHHS facilitated community input sessions to share CHA results and generate solutions to community needs. More than 150 Fort Bend County leaders, residents, stakeholders and health champions representing 70 organizations attended the community community input sessions (*see Appendix A*). These meetings provided a platform for diverse agencies, community members and perspectives to generate inclusive, cohesive and attainable health improvement goals.

Community Health Education Specialists, Community Health Workers, and subject matter experts facilitated small round-table group exercises and discussions. Participants discussed performance measures, resources and strategies, including addressing health disparities, for priority issues. Representatives from the round-table exercises were able to share their group's top strategies with other attendees, which generated further discussion and built consensus.

Recurring themes of conversations throughout the community input sessions reflect core improvement planning. These themes included the necessity to address inequitable access to services, care and programs; promoting awareness and education; and leveraging partnerships and collaboration. The strategies included in the action plans are those that were amplified most frequently and consistently by multiple round-table groups and participants. Priority areas are listed in this plan based on the frequency of topics being mentioned in the survey or during the stakeholder interviews.

¹ Association for Community Health Improvement. (2017). Community Health Assessment Toolkit. Accessed at www.healthycommunities.org/assesstoolkit

Priority Areas

Mental Health

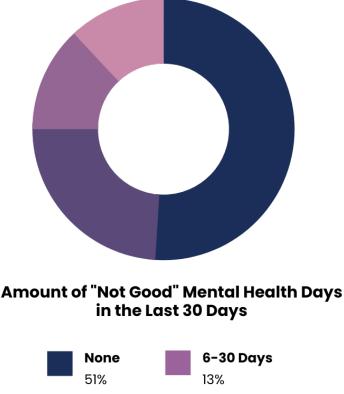
According to County Health Rankings, Fort Bend County residents report an average of 3.6 mentally unhealthy days per month and 11% of Fort Bend County adults report 14 or more days of poor mental health per month.² Of 845 CHA survey respondents, 24% stated that their mental health was not good one to five days out of the past 30 days and 13% indicated that their mental health was not good six days or more out of the past 30 days. 46% of CHA survey respondents indicated that mental health had been a problem within their households in the past year.

CHA results demonstrate that access to mental health education and treatment services in Fort Bend County has been a barrier. There are 1210 Fort Bend County residents



for every mental health provider.³ 13.7% of CHA survey respondents stated that in the past year there was a time that they or a family member needed mental health services but could not receive it. In addition, 46% of survey respondents want mental health education and services.

Through increasing mental health literacy in the community and investing in the mental health workforce, we want to improve the overall mental health and well-being of the residents of FBC.



1-5 Days 24% Don't Know/ Not Reported 12%

Goal 1: Improve mental health by increasing access to services and providing education

Objective 1.1: By 2026, increase the number of mental health providers serving FBC residents **Baseline:** 1210 residents per mental health professional

Target: 985 residents per mental health professional (*trend to 760 by 2030 to meet ratio in the state of Texas*)

Suggested Strategies:

- 1.1.1 Advocate and support legislation for mental health workforce investment, including student loan forgiveness, salary increases, and insurance reimbursement for other professionals (i.e., LMSWs) providing services
- 1.1.2 Increase salaries for mental health professionals
- 1.1.3 Increase quality student placement and internship opportunities

² Poor Mental Health Days. (2022). County Health Rankings. https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/texas/2022/measure/out-comes/42/data

³ "Fort Bend (FBE) County, Texas." n.d. County Health Rankings & Roadmaps. Accessed September 27, 2022. https:// www.county-healthrankings.org/app/texas/2022/rankings/fort-bend/county/outcomes/overall/snapshot.

1.1.4 Expand the use of Peer Support Specialists

Objective 1.2: By 2025, decrease the number of poor mental health days per month reported by adults **Baseline:** 3.6 days

Target: Decrease - < 3.6 days

Suggested Strategies:

- 1.2.1 Increase the use of telehealth to improve access to health services
- **1.2.2** Increase mental health education within the community, particularly at places like churches, community centers, and schools
- **1.2.3** Increase opportunities to provide education about mental health and stigma to children and adolescents
- **1.2.4** Increase the number of support groups for family and friends of people living with mental health issues
- 1.2.5 Improve system collaboration through sharing resources and networking
- **1.2.6** Provide prevention and early intervention services and opportunities by training PCPs, educating teachers and parents, increasing mental health services in schools, and offering Mental Health First Aid courses

Lead: Fort Bend County Mental Health Taskforce

Potential Partners/Resources:

- Local Mental Health Authority
- Mental Health America Greater Houston
- Primary care physicians
- Philanthropic organizations
- State and local elected officials
- Law enforcement
- Mental health providers
- Non-profit agencies
- Local FQHCs
- Pre K-12 educational partners
- Institutions of higher learning
- Faith community

Determinants Affecting this Health Outcome:

- Knowledge Access to services
- Cultural norms and values
- Health insurance
- Income
- Social inequities
- Transportation

Housing

Both CHA survey respondents (32%) and key informant interviewees (54.5% of 25 key informants) indicated that housing is a resource/service that is missing in the community. In Fort Bend County, most housing units (78%) are owner-occupied. 26.5% of households are housing cost burdened. While only 22% of county residents rent their homes, almost half (44.2%) of the rental households that are housing cost-burdened (*spending more than 30 percent of household income on housing*).⁴ According to the 2016-2020, American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates, 11% of Fort Bend County households are severely housing cost-burdened (*spending more than 50 percent of household income on housing*). To put into context the affordability of rental units in the County:

⁴ Salud Americal: Get a Health Equity Report Card for Your Areal - Salud America (salud-america.org)

- An individual would need to make \$23.23/per hour (\$48,320 annually) to afford a 2-bedroom unit at fair market rent (*FMR*) in the County
- One would need to work 3.2 full-time jobs at minimum wage to afford a 2-bedroom unit at FMR

The strategies below address three different aspects of housing which are related to the physical and mental health of individuals:

- Physical conditions of homes
- Conditions of the neighborhoods in which the homes are located
- Affordability

Affordability: Fair Market Rent (FMR)		
Cost of 2-bedroom at FMR (2022)		
Fort Bend County	Texas	
\$1208	\$1172	
Full-time jobs at minimum wage to pay for 2- bedroom at FMR		
Fort Bend County	Texas	
3.2	3.1	
Dollars per hour to afford 2-bedroom at FMR		
Fort Bend County	Texas	
\$23.32	\$22.54	
Annual income to afford 2-bedroom at FMR		
Fort Bend County	Texas	
\$48,380	\$46,889	

Goal 2: Ensure safe and affordable housing units are available for ownership and rent for the present and future residents of Fort Bend County

Objective 2.1: By 2026, reduce the proportion of households that spend more than 30% of income on housing

Baseline: 26.5%

Target: Decrease - 25.5% (Healthy People 2030)

Suggested Strategies:

- 2.1.1 Identify a community member or organization to lead affordable housing efforts in Fort Bend County
- **2.1.2** Establish an affordable housing coalition that creates and strengthens partnerships, particularly with local government, in order to:

- Support the construction and preservation of affordable rental and ownership housing through land use/zoning policy, direct subsidies, financing and technical assistance.
- Increase awareness of fair housing issues and vigorously enforce fair housing laws, including regular and rigorous testing.
- Consider affordable housing needs and goals when planning for major capital investment in new or redeveloping existing major community facilities
- Expand housing for special populations by setting aside units in new developments
- **2.1.3** Provide education including financial literacy, tenant's rights, and subsidized housing information
- 2.1.4 Expand the number and use of Tenant-Based Housing Vouchers throughout FBC (HP 2030)
- **2.1.5** Advocate and support policy to raise the minimum wage to \$15.00 per hour and create living wage jobs

Objective 2.2: By 2026, reduce the percentage of renters who are housing cost burdened

Baseline: 44.2%

Target: Decrease - < 44.2%

Lead: Fort Bend County Judge's Office

Potential Partners/Resources:

- State and local elected officials
- Local housing authorities
- Non-profit agencies
- Local Continuum of Care
- Employment agencies
- Local employers
- Texas Workforce Commission Employment Service agencies
- Faith-based organizations
- Philanthropic organizations
- Pre K-12 educational partners
- Institutions of higher learning

Determinants Affecting this Health Outcome:

- Income
- Unemployment & underemployment
- Social inequities
- Knowledge
- Racism
- Physical environment

Obesity

From the Center of Disease Control (*CDC*) Adult Obesity Facts data, 30% of Fort Bend County adult are obese.⁵ Obesity emerged as the top health issue for Fort Bend County CHA survey respondents. One in four (25%) survey participants selected obesity as one of their top three health issues. People who have overweight or obesity*, compared to those with healthy weight, are at increased risk for many serious diseases and health conditions.⁶

⁵ Health Effects of Overweight and Obesity. (2022, September 24). Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. https://www.cdc.gov/ healthyweight/effects/index.html

⁶ Adult Obesity Prevalence Maps. (July 15, 2022). Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/data/prevalence-maps.html#overall

Our priority will be to reduce the rate of adult obesity by 5%. Knowing that physical activity is related to obesity, we will focus on increasing physical activity and reducing the proportion of adults who do no physical activity in their free time.

Goal 3: Improve health by decreasing obesity

Objective 3.1: By 2026, decrease the rate of adult obesity

Baseline: 30%

Target: Decrease - < 30%

Suggested Strategies:

- **3.1.1** Increase awareness about healthy eating and physical activity in the community through events, such as nutrition classes, grocery store tours, and partnering with community centers and churches
- 3.1.2 Increase the number of health centers/clinics who make food and fitness prescriptions

Objective 2.2: By 2026, reduce the proportion of adults who do no physical activity in their free time **Baseline:** 26%

Target: Decrease- 23.9% (trend to 21.8% by 2030 to meet Healthy People 2030 target)

Suggested Strategies:

- **3.1.1** Increase opportunities for the community to be active by offering regular and consistent family events and after school activities
- **3.1.2** Partner and collaborate with Fort Bend County Parks and Recreation Department to offer outdoor events and programs
- **3.1.3** Start early by encouraging and supporting children and adolescents to participate in daily school physical education and sports as well as healthy eating (*HP 2030*)

Lead: Fort Bend County Health & Human Services

Potential Partners/Resources:

- Texas Department of State Health Services
- Local grocery stores
- Food pantries
- Federally Qualified Health Clinics (FQHC's)
- Healthcare systems
- Parks and community centers
- Philanthropic organizations
- Faith Community
- Non-profit agencies
- Pre K-12 education partners
- Primary care providers
- Health educators
- Childcare centers
- Texas A&M AgriLife
- Community gardens
- Libraries

Determinants Affecting this Health Outcome:

- Diet and Nutrition
- Physical Activity
- Built Environment
- Genetic Factors
- Food Security

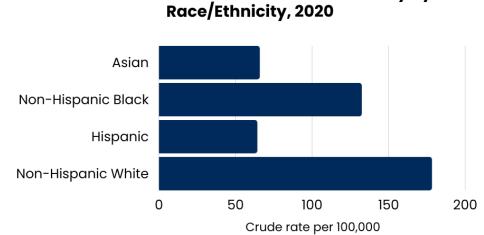
- Income
- Knowledge
- Workplace/School Policies
- **Psychosocial Stress**

Heart Disease

Heart Disease is the leading cause of death in Fort Bend County.⁷ Non-Hispanic White and non-Hispanic Black populations have at least two times higher rates of heart disease compared to other populations in Fort Bend County.

Heart Disease was the fifth most commonly cited health issue by CHA survey respondents and key informants with 14.8% of survey respondents identifying heart disease as a health concern.

The overall goal is to improve cardiovascular health at all ages via prevention and interventions. Recognizing that obesity is a risk factor for cardiovascular health, the strategies outlined for Community Priority Area #3: Obesity, are applicable to this community priority area.



Heart Disease Deaths in Fort Bend County by

Goal 4: Improve cardiovascular health by increasing awareness and access

Objective 4.1: By 2026, reduce heart disease deaths

Baseline: 111.7 per 100,000

Target: Decrease - < 111.7

Suggested Strategies:

- 4.1.1 Increase awareness about healthy eating and physical activity through community events
- 4.1.2 Provide education about how to access healthcare in the community (HP 2030)
- 4.1.3 Provide education about the symptoms of and how to respond to a stroke
- 4.1.4 Increase the availability of behavioral counseling to promote a healthy lifestyle in adults without cardiovascular risk factors (HP 2030)
- See strategies from Community Priority Area #3 4.1.5

Objective 4.2: By 2026, increase the proportion of adults who consume the recommended (5 or more) servings per day of fruits & vegetables

Baseline: 19.3%

Target: Increase > 19.3%

Suggested Strategies:

- **4.2.1** Provide early exposure to children about healthy foods via nutrition education in schools and summer programs
- **4.2.2** Increase access to food bank/panty locations and food delivery resources, especially to areas identified as food deserts
- 4.2.3 Increase the number and use of community gardens (HP 2030)

Lead: Fort Bend County Health & Human Services

Potential Partners/Resources:

- Primary care providers
- Medical specialists (cardiologists)
- Federally Qualified Health Clinics (FQHC's)
- Local grocery stores
- Food pantries
- Faith community
- Healthcare systems
- Parks and community centers
- · Philanthropic organizations
- Non-profit agencies
- Pre K-12 education partners
- Health educators
- Childcare centers

Determinants Affecting this Health Outcome:

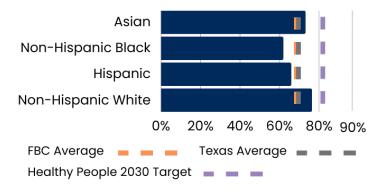
- Diet and Nutrition
- Nutrition
- Physical Activity
- Built Environment
- Genetic Factors
- Food Security
- Income
- Knowledge
- Workplace/School Policies
- Psychosocial Stress

Prenatal Care

The latest data show that Fort Bend County has a three times greater percentage of births to women receiving late (*after the first trimester*) or no prenatal care (30%) compared to Texas (10%) and five times greater percentage than the US (6%). Over the years, there has been a significant decrease in early prenatal care (*within the first trimester*) and an increase in no prenatal care. Non-Hispanic Black and Hispanic women have lower rates of early prenatal care and higher rates of no prenatal care compared to non-Hispanic White and Asian women.

Low birth rates are also an area of concern. Fort Bend County has higher rates of low birth rates compared to Texas and FBC is not meeting national benchmarks. Non-Hispanic Black and Asian babies have higher rates of low birthweights compared to other races/ethnicities. Increasing early prenatal care can help reduce maternal mortality, increase the success of having a healthy baby and decrease risks of the infant having long-term health issues.

Percentage of Women in Fort Bend County who Received Early Prenatal Care, 2020



Goal 5: Prevent pregnancy complications and maternal deaths and improve women's health before, during, and after pregnancy.

Objective 4.1: By 2026, increase the proportion of pregnant women who receive early prenatal care **Baseline:** 60.7%

Target: Increase - 70.6% (trend to 80.5% by 2030 to meet Healthy People 2030 target)

Suggested Strategies:

- **5.1.1** Increase the number of locations of the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (*WIC*) program
- **5.1.2** Increase awareness in the community about the importance of taking steps to improve health before becoming pregnant and steps to take to improve the likelihood of having a healthy pregnancy
- **5.1.3** Provide training to medical professionals about different pregnancy, childbirth and postpartum care cultural practices
- 5.1.4 Increase awareness about the benefits of doulas and midwives
- 5.1.5 Improve collaboration and service coordination between doulas, midwives, and physicians
- **5.1.6** Advocate for Medicaid expansion, increased eligibility during and following a pregnancy, and coverage for doula services

Lead: Fort Bend County Health & Human Services

Potential Partners/Resources:

- Insitutions of higher learning
- Federally Qualified Health Clinics (FQHCs)
- Healthcare systems
- Primary care providers
- Health educators
- Childcare centers
- Medical specialists (OBGYNs)
- Doulas
- Midwives
- Hospitals
- Texas Department of State Health Services

Determinants Affecting this Health Outcome:

- Health insurance
- Knowledge
- Cultural awareness
- Social norms and values
- Access to care
- Income
- Smoking
- Illness
- Poor nutrition
- Obesity
- Psychosocial stress
- Substance use
- Access to and quality of housing
- Genetic factors

Next Steps

Tracking Progress

The CHIP is designed to align with FBCHHS's organizational strategic plan, Public Health Accreditation Board accreditation efforts, and organizational strategic plans of community partners and collaboratives to support implementation efforts. FBCHHS will remain engaged in community collaboratives, serving on workgroups, leadership teams and coalitions, to develop work plans and logic models to implement components of the improvement plan. As part of the action planning process, partners and resources will be solidified to ensure successful CHIP implementation and coordination of activities and resources among key partners in FBC.

FBCHHS will host annual input forums in partnership with stakeholders to continue resource identification, determine project leads, facilitate collaboration and provide an annual report to community members on the CHIP progress. Implementation steps to be carried out in the next 12 months include, but are not limited to:

- Identifying a lead agency for CHIP objectives without a primary lead
- Identify additional partners and resources surrounding each objective
- Development of work plans for strategies

To ensure metrics of the plan are achieved and to facilitate communication, FBCHHS will hold executive oversight for improvement plan implementation, assessment and adaptation.

Using the Fort Bend County CHIP

The FBC CHIP is a document for the community, informed by the community. We encourage you, regardless of your role, to use the CHIP as we collectively work towards a healthier Fort Bend County for all!

Below are some suggestions for getting involved as a:

Resident

- Share with your family, friends, neighbors, and coworkers about the priority areas outlined in our Community Health Improvement Plan
- Have conversations about what you can do at an individual level and what we can do as a community to address these issues
- Select a priority area that interests you and get involved in related community groups or organizations

Community-Based Organizations

- Understand priority health issues and promote strategies among the audiences and stakeholders you serve
- Utilize this plan to guide current and future efforts
- Align activities and outreach efforts with health improvement needs and goals in this plan
- Advocate for changes that improve health when interacting with policy makers and legislative officials
- Partner and/or collaborate with other organizations who are doing similar work

Health Care Systems

- Incorporate strategies into organizational strategic planning
- Share data on health outcomes
- Partner and/or collaborate with community-based organizations

Government

- Understand and advocate for the priority areas affecting constituents
- Champion policy that will support the health-related needs of the community
- Identify barriers to health in the community and make plans for action
- Invent in programs, services, and policy changes that will support the health needs of the community

Philanthropy

- Understand and promote priority health issues among the communities that are served
- Support the health issues and goals in this plan when considering allocation of funding resources

Employers

- Understand priority health issues and goals in this plan and how they apply to your workforce
- Promote health and wellness for all employees
- Include wellness policies and procedures

Schools

- Understand and promote priority health issues and goals in this plan and incorporate them as educational lessons in health, science, social studies, and other subjects
- Create opportunities to take action at schools to support the recommendations in this plan that impact students, faculty, staff, and parents
- Promote school-wide health policies
- Promote healthy behaviors for all students

Appendix A: Participating Partners

Listed in alphabetical order are organizations, agencies and stakeholders that participated in the CHIP planning process:

- A Heart for Senior Care
- Abigail's Place
- AccessHealth
- Advocacy Now
- Alzheimer's Association
- ARTreach
- Attack Poverty
- AVDA
- Bo's Place
- Boys & Girls Clubs
- Catholic Charities
- Child Advocates of Fort Bend
- Christ Clinic of Katy
- Coalition for the Homeless
- Counseling Paid Forward
- DePelchin Children's Center
- Dini Spheris
- Easter Seals
- Family Houston
- Fort Bend County Behavioral Health Services
- Fort Bend Community Supervision & Corrections
- Fort Bend County Court at Law #3
- Fort Bend County Emergency Medical Services
- Fort Bend County Human Resources
- Fort Bend County Judge's Office
- Fort Bend County Libraries
- Fort Bend County Sherriff's Office
- Fort Bend County Social Services
- Fort Bend Family Promise
- Fort Bend Habitat for Humanity
- Fort Bend History Association
- Fort Bend ISD
- Fort Bend Meals on Wheels
- Fort Bend Regional Council on Substance Abuse
- Fort Bend Transformation Church
- Fort Bend Women's Center
- Foster Grandparent Program
- God's Garden

- Grace After Fire
- Gratia Plena
- Greater Houston Community Foundation
- HEB
- Henderson Wessendorff Foundation
- HOPE Clinic
- Hope Fort Bend Clubhouse
- Houston Area Parkinson Society
- Houston Humane Society
- Houston Womb Service
- Ibn Sina Foundation
- Katy Cares
- Lamar Consolidated ISD
- March of Dimes
- Memorial Hermann Hospital System
- Memorial Hermann School Based Clinics
- Mental Health America Greater Houston
- NAMI Greater Houston
- Parks Youth Ranch
- Pregnancy Resource Medical Center
- Premier Doulas
- Rescue Us Mission
- Rosenberg Railroad Museum
- Rosenberg Richmond Helping Hands
- Rupani Foundation
- San Jose Clinic
- SERJobs
- Stafford Municipal school District
- Sugar Land Methodist Church
- Tahirih Justice Center
- Texana Center
- The Arc of Fort Bend
- The George Foundation
- The Network of Behavioral Health Providers
- Understanding Houston
- UT Health
- YMCA

Many thanks to the Fort Bend County community for taking part in this initial effort. The above list is not exhaustive of all the community partners who have contributed to this Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP).