# Pend Oreille County Community Health Improvement Plan

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# Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) Process

## Framework

The Pend Oreille County Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) process was based on Results Based Accountability, with some adaptations. This framework for planning was developed by Mark Friedman and described in the books *Trying Hard is Not Good Enough* and *Turning Curves.* This framework was used in Pend Oreille County to identify indicators to track progress over time for the selected population level goal statement, develop strategies to work towards impacting the population results, and brainstorm and choose programs to help reach the population level goal statement.

During the Pend Oreille County Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA), which was completed in February 2023, a workgroup was formed with members who live and work in Pend Oreille County. These individuals were familiar with the varying issues Pend Oreille County residents face, and they worked together to determine the greatest needs of Pend Oreille County. Upon completing of the CHNA, the members of this group were invited to work on the corresponding CHIP.

## Choosing Data Indicators

From the CHNA, three priorities emerged: childcare, housing, and communication of local information. Prior to setting the overarching goal statement, data related to these three topic areas were presented to the Pend Oreille County workgroup to provide additional background information on the identified issues, help choose a focus area, and begin a discussion about relevant progress metrics for the CHIP work. From these data, the workgroup discussed which were most relevant to the needs identified in Pend Oreille County and a ranking system was subsequently used to determine to what degree the datasets were appropriate to measure progress related to the corresponding topics, based on the following powers:

- Communication Power – Is the indicator easily understandable by the public?
- Proxy Power – Does the indicator help define the goal statement, and can the indicator be a proxy for other measures related to the goal statement?
- Data Power – Is there high-quality data on a timely basis?

Using this process, two indicators were selected. Both related to childcare, therefore childcare was selected as the issue of focus for the Pend Oreille County CHIP. The two indicators selected were:

1. Number of childcare centers per 1000 population under 5 years old.
2. Number of after school activities available in Pend Oreille County.

## Defining the Population Level Goal Statement

After selecting childcare as the priority issue through the indicator discussion, the workgroup further narrowed the focus for the CHIP. Given the broad need for childcare across Pend Oreille County for families of all backgrounds and socioeconomic statuses, the population level goal statement written by the workgroup was:

***All families in Pend Oreille County have access to childcare.***

## The Story Behind the Curve

To determine the story behind the data or "curve", the group was asked to consider what makes securing childcare a significant issue in Pend Oreille County. The four areas of consideration were:

- Knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs.
- Social and environmental determinants of health.
- Policies and systems.
- Inequities or "isms".

Through the group's discussion and brainstorming exercise, the following ideas were brought forward:

### Knowledge, Attitudes, and Beliefs

- Many families in Pend Oreille County homeschool their children.
- Families desire to send kids to known and responsible childcare providers.
- Belief that it is hard to find qualified people to be childcare workers.
- Perceived regulations inhibit people from beginning their own in-home childcare businesses.
- Recognition that Pend Oreille does not have a population that can pay for a "franchise style" childcare facility.
- Understanding that the 10-hour rule related to childcare necessitates that parents working in Spokane find childcare in Spokane, or near wherever they work.
- Concern for safe childcare.
- Understanding that the hours of childcare operation are not always conducive to shift work.
- Belief that North Pend Oreille County residents are less trusting of systems and government.

### Social and Environmental Determinants of Health

- Recognition that Pend Oreille County has many single-family households.
- There are limited childcare options in Pend Oreille County and surrounding areas.
- There are few after school community activities.
- Poverty.
- Transportation and time may be barriers for parents/guardians.
- Family/household type (single parent, two parent, guardians, etc.) impacts childcare needs.
- Family/household dynamics and adult availability impact childcare needs and barriers.

### Policies and Systems

- There are few accessible parks and playgrounds for youth.
- There are few, if any, local programs to help people become licensed childcare providers.
- Regulations for licensing childcare are burdensome.
- Understanding that state reimbursements aren't enough and that adjustments to minimum wage requirements would assist with childcare.

### Inequities or "isms"

- Socioeconomic status impacts available childcare options.
- Household structure.

## Determining Strategies

Strategies corresponding with childcare access were identified during the CHNA. Through discussions at the three CHIP meetings, the workgroup further brainstormed and refined strategies to impact the overarching goal that all families in Pend Oreille County have access to childcare.

Conversations within the workgroup meetings centered on the small number of licensed childcare providers and after-school activities across Pend Oreille County. Therefore, the two strategies chosen by the workgroup were:

1. Increase the number of licensed childcare providers across Pend Oreille County.
2. Increase safe after-school options for children & youth across Pend Oreille County.

## Identifying Programs Within Each Strategy

Upon defining the strategies, the workgroup considered several potential programs to positively affect the corresponding strategies. The workgroup brainstormed a list of programs by considering:

- Existing but currently under-utilized or under-funded programs.
- Research or evidence-based programs.
- Low cost or no cost programs.
- Off-the-wall programs.
- Programs which might work but require more information.

To narrow the possible programs, ranked-choice voting was used to subsequently determine the program of focus within each strategy. When ranking the program ideas, workgroup members were asked to consider the feasibility for the program's success through partnerships and county/community buy in; values of the program as related to the overall goal statement; specific and realistic expectations of change over the next 3 years; and leverage to create change through the program within the county.

The list of brainstormed programs corresponding with each strategy can be seen in ranked order below and in Figure 1:

### Increase the Number of Licensed Childcare Providers Across Pend Oreille County

1. Create and distribute a survey to Pend Oreille County parents/guardians who have children younger than 5 years old to understand childcare needs across Pend Oreille County.
2. Network with existing childcare programs in Pend Oreille County to identify what current issues and gaps are faced.
3. Coordinate with the Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families to streamline childcare licensing process to increase interest amongst county residents in becoming licensed childcare providers.
4. Identify ways to encourage well-known, established childcare providers (i.e. KinderCare, Bright Horizons, etc.) to Pend Oreille County.
5. Identify stumbling blocks for large employers who may be interested in and capable of providing childcare services to employees.
6. Identify qualified county residents to provide in-home childcare and work to understand the barriers they face to providing licensed childcare.
7. Explore the feasibility of school district levies for Early Learning Center funding like Valley School District and Kettle Falls School District have done in Stevens County.

8. Utilize Working Connections Childcare, which is a subsidized program for childcare provided in Washington State.

### Increase Safe After-School Options for Children & Youth Across Pend Oreille County

1. Identify current afterschool clubs and activities in Pend Oreille County, as well as existing gaps in afterschool clubs and activities.
2. Talk with larger organizations (YMCA, Boys and Girls Club, etc.) about offering programs in Pend Oreille County.
3. Identify ways to create more awareness about and recruit more youth to existing summer programs in Pend Oreille County (library programs, etc.).
4. Seek grant funding to support more school-based activities.
5. Create and maintain a community calendar of youth program options.
6. Coordinate communication about youth program options across Pend Oreille County.
7. Hire a county-wide community coordinator to gather resources and communicate resources across Pend Oreille County.
8. Work with colleges to increase programs in Pend Oreille County, such as science fairs, craft fairs, etc.
9. Engage with local churches and faith-based organizations about offering youth activities.

Figure 1.

## Pend Oreille County Community Health Improvement Plan Outline

### Overarching Goal Statement

**All families in Pend Oreille County have access to childcare.**

### Health Indicator

1. **Number of childcare centers per 1000 population under 5 years old.**
2. **Number of after school activities available in Pend Oreille County.**

### Strategy #1

**Increase number of licensed childcare providers across Pend Oreille County.**

### Programs*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Survey parents with kids <5 to understand childcare needs. | Network with existing programs to identify current issues and gaps. | Talk to DCYF about streamlining licensing. |
| Learn how to solicit well - known, established childcare providers. | Identify stumbling blocks for large employers. | Identify qualified residents to provide childcare and understand their barriers. |
| Explore school district levy for Early Learning Center funding like Valley and Kettle Falls School Districts. | Utilize Working Connections Childcare, a subsidized program for childcare provided in Washington. | |

### Strategy #2

**Increase safe after-school options for children & youth across Pend Oreille County.**

### Programs*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Identify current afterschool clubs and existing gaps. | Talk with orgs about programming in Pend Oreille (YMCA, etc.). | Recruit more youth for summer programs. |
| Seek grant funding for more school-based activities. | Create c ommunity calendar of options. | Coordinated communication about offerings across county. |
| Hire a county-wide community coordinator. | Work with colleges to increase programming (Science fairs, craft fairs, etc.). | Engage churches in conversation about activities. |

## Partners Who May Have a Role to Play

After brainstorming different programs that might work to address the population result, the workgroup brainstormed partners who might be useful in and wish to participate in accomplishing these tasks. More partners may be added, however the initial list identified the following partners:

- Better Health Together
- Boys and Girls Club
- Scouts and Girl Scouts
- Churches
- Empire Health Foundation
- EWU Early Head Start
- Family Crisis Network
- Homeschool Co-Op
- Innovate Ione
- Kalispel Tribe
- Local municipalities
- Merkle Standard
- Metaline Beautification
- Moms of Pre-Schoolers (MoPS)
- Northeast Tri County Health District
- Newport Hospital and Health Services
- North Pend Oreille Chamber of Commerce
- Pend Oreille County Community Development
- Pend Oreille County Counseling Services
- Pend Oreille County Economic Development Council
- Pend Oreille County Library District
- Pend Oreille Youth Sports Association (POYSA)
- Pend Oreille Public Utility District (PUD)
- Rural Resources
- School districts
- Seattle Power and Light
- Washington Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF)
- YMCA
- Youth Emergency Services

## Next Steps

After further research and discussion with partners to determine feasibility, the workgroup will outline action plans for the top ranked program under each strategy. All remaining programs under each strategy will be tabled until either sufficient progress is made on the initially selected programs, or the first program is determined to be impractical due to insurmountable barriers or constraints.

Performance measures will be developed to track program progress within the CHIP context and the CHIP workgroup will continue to meet and provide updates on program progress. The leadership and

effort for each program, however, may be assumed by various agencies and organizations within the CHIP workgroup whose missions are related or who have an interest in the program area. CHIP milestones will be shared publicly so those interested can follow the progress and see how their involvement in the community-based process makes a difference.