

LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT AND PARTNERS USE HEALTHY NORTHEAST OHIO DATA TO OBTAIN CDC REACH GRANT

A Success Story from Healthy Northeast Ohio

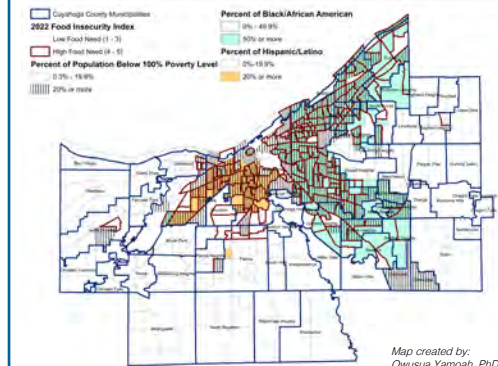
AT A GLANCE

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released a request for applications in early 2023, for the Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH) Program. The Cuyahoga County Board of Health and one of its partners, the Mary Ann Swetland Center for Environmental Health at Case Western Reserve University, were looking for data to utilize in their application to make the case for funding to build on previous REACH efforts to reduce racial and ethnic health disparities in Cuyahoga County. Swetland Center staff utilized data from the Food Insecurity Index available on Healthy Northeast Ohio to identify and present specific, eligible, under-resourced geographic areas to focus the proposed nutrition strategy activities. Additionally, the Cuyahoga County Board of Health was able to use vaccination-related indicators from the site to highlight existing disparities related to adult vaccine uptake in Cuyahoga County to reference in the proposal. Having easy access to these data at a granular level assisted the Cuyahoga County Board of Health and partners in submitting a successful application to ultimately receive funding from the CDC for the next 5-year cycle of REACH in late 2023.

CHALLENGE

The Cuyahoga County Board of Health (CCBH) has received funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for the Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH) program since 2014. REACH is a federal program that aims to reduce health disparities, and achieve health equity, among specific racial and ethnic groups in communities with the highest risk or rates of chronic disease (CDC). In Cuyahoga County, REACH efforts are focused on promoting healthy behaviors and reducing chronic disease risk in Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino communities that are under-resourced. CCBH collaborates with a variety of partners in this work, including universities, community organizations, and health centers.

When the CDC released the 2023 REACH request for applications, CCBH and partner organizations including the Swetland Center for Environmental Health at Case Western Reserve University, Bike Cleveland, and the Cuyahoga County Executive's Office, were looking for data to make the case for the continuation of REACH in Cuyahoga County. CCBH and these partners wanted to create maps to help refine the focus of the proposal and identify priority geographic areas for the proposed grant activities. Darcy Freedman, PhD, of the Swetland Center, who was interested in leading select nutrition strategy efforts, was specifically looking for census tract level food insecurity data to overlay with poverty, and demographic data obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey. Additionally, CCBH staff were looking for vaccination-related data for Cuyahoga County, broken out by race and ethnicity, to identify disparities and compare with other state and national statistics.



Flu Vaccinations: Medicare Population

Flu Vaccinations: Medicare Population by Race/Ethnicity



"Applying for these funding opportunities has become increasingly competitive due unfortunately to dwindling resources and increased need for under-resourced racial and ethnic populations. The ability to access data easily from healthyneo.org that is both easy to interpret as well as current, allows us to help build the case for our community's resource needs," stated Nichelle Shaw, REACH Project Director/Co-Principal Investigator at the Cuyahoga County Board of Health.

SOLUTION

Healthy Northeast Ohio (www.healthyneo.org) is a population health data repository that can be used by grant seekers to support grant applications and reporting. The website allows grant seekers with varying levels of data skills to explore 300+ health, social determinants, and quality of life indicators from more than 30 credible sources. These indicators are available at various geographic levels, including state, region, county, city, zip code, census tract, and neighborhood levels, depending on the data source. Healthy Northeast Ohio includes several specialty dashboards, including a Demographics Dashboard, Health Disparities Dashboard, and Healthy People 2030 Progress Tracker. Additionally, it contains the Socio Needs Index® Suite, created by Conduent Healthy Communities Institute (HCI), the vendor for Healthy Northeast Ohio. This suite is a tool for assessing, planning and collaborating on community health improvement. The Socio Needs Index® Suite is made up of three indices, including the Healthy Equity Index, the Food Insecurity Index, and the Mental Health Index. Each index summarizes multiple health and socioeconomic indicators in one validated composite score to identify under-resourced areas down to the zip code and census tract levels. Because this data is available at a granular level, it facilitates more specific local prevention and early intervention planning efforts. Click [here](#) to learn more about how Healthy Northeast Ohio can be used by grant seekers, grantees, and grant makers.

RESULTS

To identify local geographic areas that met the REACH program criteria for the 2023 REACH grant application (percent of the population living below 100% of the federal poverty level; percent of population that is Black/African American; percent of population that is Hispanic/Latino), CCBH staff pulled data from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey at the census tract level. Dr. Freedman, at the Swetland Center, was interested in overlaying this poverty status, race, and ethnicity data with food insecurity data. Owusua Yamoah, PhD, exported data from Conduent HCI's [Food Insecurity Index](#) on Healthy Northeast Ohio, for all Cuyahoga County census tracts, to create the desired map. The Food Insecurity Index is a tool that can be used to identify areas at highest risk for experiencing food insecurity. This map allowed Dr. Freedman and her team to identify eligible neighborhoods to prioritize the nutrition strategy activities included in the REACH proposal. *"These easy to access data helped us work with partners to visualize areas in the county where there were significant opportunities for impact. The Food Insecurity Index helped us prioritize where to begin our REACH work as we plan for expansion efforts in the future,"* shared Dr. Freedman, Swetland Professor of Environmental Health Sciences at Case Western Reserve University, School of Medicine.

CCBH staff were able to utilize vaccination-related indicators from Healthy Northeast Ohio, including influenza and pneumonia vaccination rates in the Medicare population. Both indicators have breakout data available by gender and race/ethnicity, and were used to help highlight disparities by race in Cuyahoga County. They found that vaccination rates were lower in the Black/African American population compared to the overall rate for Cuyahoga County. CCBH staff also used this data to make comparisons between Cuyahoga County and Ohio rates and U.S. hospitalizations. These data were incorporated into an optional adult vaccine equity component of the proposal. Samantha Smith, Data Analytics Supervisor at the Cuyahoga County Board of Health, commented that *"Healthy NEO was a helpful resource to quickly gather the data we needed to develop a strong proposal to support our work."*

Ultimately, having easy access to this granular data helped CCBH, the Swetland Center, and other partners, submit a strong proposal to the CDC, and receive funding for the next five-year cycle to be able to continue the important REACH work in Cuyahoga County.

ABOUT HEALTHY NORTHEAST OHIO

Healthy Northeast Ohio provides hospitals, public health departments, community-based organizations, philanthropic agencies and other stakeholders with data and resources to support regional and community health improvement activities and strengthen collaboration in the 9-county region. Healthy Northeast Ohio serves as a neutral repository of de-identified health information that facilitates a collective impact approach toward positive health outcomes. It allows for easy identification of top health needs and under-resourced populations, and comparisons by community and over time. Vetted and verified data comes from more than 30 sources.



Visit us at healthyneo.org

Questions? Please contact us to learn more or to share your own success story.

SARAH SZABO - Data Analyst
sszabo@ccbh.net