

## Englewood Health Department

### Resident Health Needs and Program Recommendations

March 2021

This report summarizes the findings of three phases of research conducted as part of the *Healthy Communities Network* grant awarded to the City of Englewood Health Department. The intent of the research was to determine what Englewood residents describe as their primary health needs, and to obtain feedback from them about desired topics and delivery formats for health programming and ideas for improved promotion and coordination of programs. The research consisted of three major components – interviews, focus groups, and survey. A set of 18 interviews were carried out in the spring of 2020 with community leaders. Next, a set of three focus groups were conducted, with community representatives in English and in Spanish, and with school students. Finally, a survey was implemented in early 2021 with 187 respondents. (See interview, focus group and survey questions in Appendix).

Below we summarize the input received from the Interviews and Focus Groups (Part 1), and then from the Survey (Part 2). The conclusion (Part 3) suggests evidence-based recommendations for moving forward from this base of research to the implementation of new health programming, promotion and coordination to achieve the goal of better health and well-being for Englewood residents.

#### **Part 1: Results of Interviews and Focus Groups**

A series of interviews with leaders of community organizations and institutions in Englewood, combined with three focus discussion groups with 15 total participants, led to the following key take-aways regarding the major health-related challenges, desires for programs and program delivery preferences, and ideas for promotion and coordination.

##### **Major Health-Related Challenges**

- COVID
- Fitness – need for exercise
- Nutrition – access to healthy food
- Social isolation
- Drug abuse
- Mental health
- Lack of preventive care and health information

According to community leaders representing various populations in Englewood, primary health concerns center currently around COVID and the related social isolation and mental health stresses associated with the impacts of the pandemic, especially on the elderly and homebound, and on those suffering economic hardships. There are also ongoing concerns about access to fitness opportunities and healthy affordable food, for those of lower income. The same low-income and immigrant population often lacks proper preventive care and health education due to affordability and transportation access issues. Representatives of youth populations pointed to drug abuse and mental health challenges of anxiety.

##### **Desired Topics for Programs**

- Diabetes
- Blood pressure
- Mental health – (Stress management, Trauma, Grief, etc.)
- Intergenerational programs

- Nutrition and healthy living
- Exercise
- Age-appropriate playground programs
- Women’s and mother’s Issues
- Bike or bike-share program
- Student – Parent programs at school
- Wellness checks

To address the challenges, desired health programming would focus heavily on healthy and active living, including nutrition and exercise. Increased access to preventive services and wellness checks are also important. In terms of chronic disease management, more education and programs around diabetes and hypertension are most needed. Participants also mentioned ideas around intergenerational programming, such as grandparents cooking or exercising with their grandchildren.

**Delivery of Health Programs**

- Online, during pandemic
- Community-oriented events – Picnics, Breast Cancer Walk, etc.
- Yoga and exercise classes in the Park
- Coordination with external city organizations (BFC, SESCIL, library, ShopRite)
- Tournaments or game nights
- Cost: People will pay but can be tough for youth and lower-income.
- Time: Daytime for seniors, evening or summer for youth and working adults
- Use school facilities

Community leaders recognize that online delivery has been a necessity during the pandemic of 2020-21, but ideally, delivery of health programs through community events and at community facilities like schools, community centers, churches and parks is preferred delivery. Participants stressed that delivery should be coordinated between the City and other local organizations. Programs offered during the day are preferred for the elderly, but evening or summer programs are best for working adults and youth. In terms of costs, most community representatives felt that residents are willing to pay, but that programs should be as low cost as possible for lower-income populations and youth.

**Promotion of Programs**

- Marquee by city hall, banners
- City website
- Blast e-mails
- *Suburbanite*
- WRIC
- Social Media
- Home drop-off of flyers
- Phone calls
- Faith-based organizations
- Greek organizations
- Use multiple methods
- Bergen Family Center
- School flyers – and through guidance counselors
- Teen peer mentor at health department
- Student “Morning News” reports

Those interviewed and participating in discussion groups were highly in favor of coordinated efforts and of using multiple methods of program promotion. For some people, particularly those who are home-bound and may not access the internet, the mass media outlets or home delivery of flyers is best, but for others, visibility throughout the community in the form of message boards and messages sent through community organizations works best. For younger populations, social media and working through schools is a key method of promotion.

## Part 2: Resident Survey Results

The survey instrument was implemented in February and March of 2021. The survey asked seven questions about health needs, and about interest in various health programming topics and delivery methods. It also asked participants for their willingness to help to support city health programs. It collected two demographic characteristics – age and ward of residence. Most of the options were close-ended choices, but comments were also encouraged.

A total of 187 people completed the survey. More of the respondents resided in the third ward (41%), and the fewest in the second ward (15%), but there were respondents from all wards. While almost two thirds of respondents were middle-aged adults, almost thirty percent were over 65. Fewer than ten percent were under 35 years of age.

### Residence of Survey Respondents

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
1st	17.22%
2nd	15.00%
3rd	41.67%
4th	21.11%
Not an Englewood resident	5.00%
TOTAL	

### Age of Survey Respondents

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Under 18	0.54%
18-35	7.53%
36-65	63.44%
Over 65	28.49%
TOTAL	

Respondents reported that ***e-mail was the method most used*** for finding out information about health programs, with more than two thirds using it. ***Social media*** was the second most frequently used source of information. The ***Suburbanite, city hall signs and Age-friendly Englewood*** were also consulted sources for about 15-20% of respondents, presumably representing those in older age groups.

### Health Program Information Sources

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Marquee Sign at City Hall	13.90%
Banners	11.23%
City Website	14.97%
Emails	66.84%
Suburbanite	17.11%
Women's Rights Information Center	4.28%
Social Media	39.04%
ShopRite Bulletin Board	2.67%
Faith-based Organizations	3.21%
Bergen Family Center	10.70%
School Flyers	8.02%
Age-Friendly Englewood	14.97%
Other (please specify)	8.02%
Total Respondents: 187	

By far the number one health challenges reported was in the area of ***fitness and exercise***, with almost 80% reporting this as a health challenge. Connected and also highly ranked were ***nutrition and heart-related diseases*** (often associated with poorer nutrition and fitness). So these findings suggest a strong need for more programs that help residents to live more ***healthy lifestyles*** by exercising and eating right. A second strong area of need is in the area of ***mental health***, with social isolation a concern noted by 27% of respondents. This could be tied to pandemic-related restrictions in 2020, but comments also noted that senior citizens face both physical and mental health needs associated with access to services that would be a concern even without the pandemic.

### Top Health Challenges

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Fitness - Exercise	79.35%
Nutrition - Food	36.96%
Social Isolation	33.70%
Drug Abuse	1.63%
Mental Health	19.57%
Diabetes	13.59%
Heart Disease (high blood pressure, high cholesterol, etc)	27.17%
Lack of Preventive Care	9.78%
Lack of Health Information	12.50%
Other (please specify)	14.13%
Total Respondents: 184	

Health challenges mentioned by those who checked “other” included COVID-19, safety issues related to vandalism and crime, and also consideration of needs of senior citizens (e.g. such as modern and affordable senior housing and associated services).

### Level of Interest in Health Programs

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Very interested	36.36%
Somewhat interested	50.27%
Not very interested	10.16%
Not at all interested	3.21%
TOTAL	

Clearly, there is interest in Englewood health programs, with more than 85% of respondents reporting at least some interest in attending them, and more than a third saying that they were “very interested” in attending.

### Participation in Englewood Health Programs

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Serving on a citizen committee	34.75%
Providing input via website or periodic survey	68.79%
Leading or developing new programs	20.57%
Other (please specify)	9.93%
Total Respondents: 141	

Englewood residents are ***enthused about participating in Englewood health programs***. In the survey sample, more than two thirds were very interested in continuing to provide input regarding Englewood health programming, and over a third also expressed interest in serving on a citizen committee. Of those checking “other,” most mentioned that they would definitely like to attend programs. More than 20% of citizens are willing to help to lead or develop programs.

### Programs Interested in Attending or Supporting

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Mental Health - Stress, Trauma, Grief	35.76%
Nutrition/Cooking and Healthy Eating	55.15%
Community Garden	34.55%
Exercise and Fitness	69.70%
Exercise equipment in the park	45.45%
Age-appropriate Playground	25.45%
Bike or bike-share program	26.67%
Other (please specify)	7.27%
Total Respondents: 165	

Matching with the major health needs identified above, the most desired programs are those that address ***exercise, fitness and nutrition***. Some stressed in comments that yoga and meditation should be included. Second most desired are in the area of mental health. Those checking “other” mentioned specifically programs for seniors and for youth, and related to women’s issues.

### Preferred Time

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Weekday morning	28.14%
Weekday afternoon	23.95%
Weekday evening	44.31%
Weekends	56.89%
Total Respondents: 167	

For about half of the respondents, either ***weekends or evenings are the best times for programs***. Weekday mornings or afternoons are preferred by about a quarter of the respondents. Given the input received from interviews and focus groups, it is likely that ***senior citizens are most likely to prefer weekday programs***, while youth and working age adults prefer evenings and weekends.

### More likely to Attend

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Convenient Time	85.88%
Convenient Location	60.59%
No Cost	60.59%
Low Cost	47.06%
Free Transportation	12.94%
Offered Online (after pandemic)	36.47%
If it's offered through other organizations	9.41%
Other (please specify)	4.12%
Total Respondents: 170	

The most important factors that would encourage more people to attend programs are related to ***convenience of time and place***. Secondary factors are related to cost, with “no cost” preferred to low cost. Online delivery is also an influencer of participation for more than a third of respondents. Around 10-15% of residents would be ***more likely to attend if transportation were provided***, and some checking “other” mentioned the ability to bring kids along and having the classes geared to education levels. These factor are likely more important for senior citizens and those of lower income.

### Summary of other survey comments:

More than 50 comments were provided in the open-ended section of the survey. Several comments mentioned modeling programs and facilities after the towns of Tenafly and Teaneck.

They can be summarized in the following categories (some comments reflected by multiple respondents):

#### Promotion:

- Health and recreation newsletter
- Use community members to share information with their individual networks
- Booklet and/or video describing all activities of health department and how to access them.
- Wellness website that tracks individual progress and overall health of the community
- Dwight Morrow students can help as their community service projects

#### Fitness:

- Walking/biking path through Englewood
- Develop the railway to include a path
- Sports equipment loans
- Walking "clubs" for each ward, focused on 10,000-step routes
- More exercise equipment in parks / playgrounds
- Workshops on healthy eating and healthy living
- Extending boating program in Leonia
- Free online exercise class for all ages
- More healthy food available
- Tai Chi Meditation
- Stress relief and massage in the park from massage therapy students

#### Events

- Programs with guest speakers that focus in a specific topic
- Events that are handicap accessible
- Health fairs held at local school gyms
- Outside events at McKay Pavilion
- Health seminars and clinics every year
- Informational events and motivational activities in the Community and Park twice a month

#### Community Center and Facilities

- Community Center for Youth and Seniors (many comments favoring this)
- Basketball courts at depot square
- Native Plant Garden to attract butterflies

#### Seniors

- Senior program for exercise and health awareness in multiple languages.

#### Family/youth

- Children's programming--exercise, sports, especially for very young children
- Activities for overweight children
- More affordable help and resources for special needs children and families
- Programs that involve the kids and parents.



- Rites of Passage program
- Vocational training for youth

Other health concerns and program ideas:

- Noise
- Air purifier laws to reduce secondhand smoke
- Brain challenge
- Focused discussion groups of people with similar issues
- Testing/Vaccination/Boosters
- First aid and CPR
- Utilizing most benefits from Medicare Health Insurance
- Dental clinic

**Part 3: Program Recommendations for Improved, Sustained and More Equitable Health Outcomes**

Supported by the information collected in all three phases of the study, we make the following program and process recommendations for top consideration:

1. **Community Center:** Development of a community center that would serve all populations and serve as a focal point particularly for youth activities and seniors. It could range from communal space for fitness, nutrition and health education programs to inclusion of new facilities like basketball courts, depending on space and resource support. The center should be conveniently located with easy or no-cost access from the City's 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> wards, and offer programs and events in English and Spanish.
2. **Healthy Living Programs:** New or enhanced programs should be developed in the areas of fitness (aerobic, walking, exercise, yoga) and healthy eating (nutrition, cooking) that meet regularly and at convenient locations and times for all City residents. Programs can be coordinated through various existing organizations and use existing community spaces in parks, schools or at community organizations. Programs should be sustained over time (meet regularly, allow for individual goal achievement) and suitable for various ages and education levels.
3. **Sustainable Partnerships for Programs:** Programs and events should be advertised and promoted through city organizations like non-profits, churches, businesses and local media who can provide program information via newsletters, stories and flyers. City website and e-mails are very important, as is local signage. Many community organizations are willing to host and promote programming. Coordinating with trusted and stable local organizations will create a sustainable connection to all of Englewood's residents, including those of lower income, seniors and immigrants.
4. **Citywide Committee on Health and Well-Being:** A city-wide committee can meet regularly to focus on health and well-being needs of all Englewood residents. It could consist of leaders of the key local nonprofits, city facilities and businesses, and interested residents. The committee could ideally coordinate promotion of all health-related events and programs, and recruit community members or outside speakers to hold special events on various health topics.

## Appendices

## Englewood Health Audit

### Interview Questions

1. How would you describe the most socially and economically vulnerable populations in Englewood? (age, ethnicity, geography, socioeconomics, disability)

2. Can you describe the major health challenges facing Englewood's most vulnerable populations?

#### Prompts:

- What health conditions do they suffer from disproportionately?
- What challenges do they face in accessing health care?
- What are the primary behavioral health needs?

3. How successful have health promotion programs been in improving health outcomes and well-being for Englewood residents most in need of them?

#### Prompts:

- If they haven't been as successful as hoped, why not?
- If they have worked, why?

4. What are some new or modified programs that you think would benefit Englewood's more vulnerable residents?

#### Prompts:

- What should be the topics?
- What should be the format or structure?
- What should be the cost?
- When, where and how should they be offered?

5. What role could your organization play in new health promotion programs?

6. Can you recommend anyone else we should add to our interview list?

## Englewood Health Audit

### Focus Group Questions

1. Can you describe the major health challenges that you and others of your peers face?

Prompts:

- What health conditions do you suffer from disproportionately?
  - What challenges do you face in accessing health care?
  - What are your primary behavioral health needs?
2. How successful have current health promotion programs been in improving health outcomes and well-being for you?

Prompts:

- If programs are not as successful as hoped, why not?
  - If they have worked, why?
  - Are you aware of the city programs?
3. What are some new or modified programs that you think would benefit you and your peer group?

Prompts:

- What should be the topics?
  - What should be the format or structure?
  - What should be the cost?
  - When, where and how should they be offered?
4. How could you help in new health promotion programs?
- a. Promotion?
  - b. Peer learning?
  - c. Task force/Advisors?

## ENGLEWOOD RESIDENT SURVEY HEALTH NEEDS AND PROGRAMS

The Englewood Health Department is asking residents to complete this short survey to assist in identifying new programs to improve the health and well-being of the community.

**1. How are you usually informed about upcoming city events and programs about health topics? (Check all that apply).**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Marquee Sign at City Hall         | <input type="radio"/> Social Media              |
| <input type="radio"/> Banners                           | <input type="radio"/> ShopRite Bulletin Board   |
| <input type="radio"/> City Website                      | <input type="radio"/> Faith-based Organizations |
| <input type="radio"/> E-mails                           | <input type="radio"/> Bergen Family Center      |
| <input type="radio"/> <i>Suburbanite</i>                | <input type="radio"/> School Flyers             |
| <input type="radio"/> Women's Rights Information Center | <input type="radio"/> Age-Friendly Englewood    |
|   | <input type="radio"/> Other _____               |

**2. What are the top three health challenges you and your household face? (Check three.)**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Fitness - Exercise | <input type="radio"/> Heart Disease (high blood pressure, high cholesterol, etc) |
| <input type="radio"/> Nutrition – Food   | <input type="radio"/> Lack of Preventive Care                                    |
| <input type="radio"/> Social Isolation   | <input type="radio"/> Lack of Health Information                                 |
| <input type="radio"/> Drug Abuse         | <input type="radio"/> Other _____  |
| <input type="radio"/> Mental Health      |  |
| <input type="radio"/> Diabetes           |  |

**3. What is your level of interest in attending health programs in Englewood?**

- Very interested
- Somewhat interested
- Not very interested
- Not at all interested

**4. Are you interested in participating in Englewood City health programs or planning in the following ways? (Check if the answer is "yes.")**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Serving on a citizen committee                 | <input type="radio"/> Leading or developing new programs |
| <input type="radio"/> Providing input via website or periodic survey | <input type="radio"/> Other _____                        |

5. **If you are interested, which of the following programs would you consider attending or supporting? (Check all that apply.)**

- Mental Health – Stress, Trauma, Grief
- Nutrition/Cooking and Healthy Eating
- Community Garden
- Exercise and Fitness Programs
- Exercise equipment in the park
- Age-appropriate Playground
- Bike or bike-share program
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

6. **What is your preferred time for programs?**

- Weekday morning
- Weekday afternoon
- Weekday evening
- Weekends

7. **What would make you *more likely* to attend a program? (Check all that apply)**

- Convenient Time
- Convenient Location
- No Cost
- Low Cost
- Free Transportation
- Offered Online (after pandemic)
- If it's coordinated through other organizations
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

8. **Which ward do you live in?**

- 1<sup>st</sup>
- 2<sup>nd</sup>
- 3<sup>rd</sup>
- 4<sup>th</sup>

9. **What is your age?**

- Under 18
- 18-35
- 36-65
- Over 65

**What other ideas or suggestions do you have about health programming in Englewood?**

---

---

---

---

**THANK YOU!**