

**Department:** Health & Wellness

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**2024 Adopted Budget:** \$558,099

### Department Functions:

The Department of Health and Wellness is charged with coordinating the Live Well Kingston Commission (LWK), implementing the Creating Healthy Schools and Communities (CHSC) grant program, and managing and supporting other projects that increase access to health in the City of Kingston. The department was created in 2017 with funding from a private foundation.

In 2024 we wrapped up year three and began year four of the CHSC grant (fiscal year is June 1-May 31), which totals \$1.525 million for five years. Physical activity and nutrition strategies are implemented in the Kingston City School District (KCS D), early care and education settings such as daycares, and in the community with food service guidelines and active transportation projects that connect everyday routes to destinations. We continued to partner with our subcontractors: Family of Woodstock focuses on early care, and Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ulster County (CCEUC) works with KCS D.

Coordinating the Live Well Kingston Commission includes the support of its six subcommittees: Age Well, Eat Well, Grow Well, Heal Well, Travel Well, and Play Well. These “Focus Teams” build coalitions with the community, pilot projects, and create policy, environment, and systems change. The department also communicates about health, community projects, and LWK initiatives.

### Highlights of 2024 Accomplishments:

#### Creating Healthy Schools and Communities (CHSC)

- Launched nutrition policies at the Ulster Immigrant Defense Network (UIDN) food pantry along [with City of Kingston Healthy Vending Guidelines](#) for machines in 8 municipal buildings
- Entered into contract with a new, local vending machine vendor for the City of Kingston, working with them to ensure a product selection that met the Healthy Vending Guidelines
- Purchased equipment for community partners, including a new stove for the YMCA kitchen and food pantry equipment and staff training at UIDN
- Deepened support of 5 community partners through mini-grants to purchase items such as a smoothie bar, healthy eating kitchen equipment, a dishwasher, and more
- Supported the Earth Fair through the recruitment of food vendors to follow the Earth Fair Food Vending Guidelines
- Subcontractor [Family of Woodstock](#) supported 33 early care programs with physical activity and nutrition education
- Subcontractor [Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ulster County](#) facilitated the Kingston City School District Health & Wellness Committee along with five



*A New Vending Machine with Healthy Options at City Hall*

elementary school wellness committees and worked directly with these schools to implement physical activity and nutrition initiatives

- In partnership with the Parks and Recreation Department, installed 13 bicycle racks
- Completed the [Kingston Greenline Wayfinding Plan](#) which has signage designs for the system of rail trails and complete streets
- Advertised the [Bike Valet Kit](#) directly to 47 people, 7K indirect awareness
- Envisioned a [“traffic park” project](#) and held a bicycle rodeo on 6/15/24, 10 families received bicycle skills

### Facilitated the LWK Commission and Supported Focus Team Projects

- LWK Commission
  - Met 10 times, received presentations from each Focus Team, and reviewed a health assessment
  - Sent out four newsletters
  - Signed four letters of support for grant applications and policies
  - Initiated a strategic reflection project to streamline goals
- Age Well
  - Met seven times in person and virtually
  - Promoted technology education opportunities with blogs posts and created a [community events guide](#)
  - Created an article about how to use the UCAT app that was featured in the OFA’s Buzz newsletter
  - Continued the [Midtown Walking Group](#) and a [Chair Zumba pilot class](#)
  - Supported the Community Connections event hosted by Statewide Senior Action Council
- Eat Well
  - Hosted seven meetings with presentations and networking opportunities
  - Hosted four casual Eat Well gatherings at free or low-cost locations
  - Facilitated working groups about food waste and culinary nutrition
  - Relunched the Citywide [Kingston Eats](#) campaign, which includes the veggie/fruit of the month on KCSO menus, stocking at food pantries, on restaurant menus, taste testings and activities at schools and daycares, and tabling at the Kingston Farmers’ Market
  - Collaborated with Hudson Valley Farm Hub and CCE UC to design Harvest of the Month posters through the Food Waste Working Group
  - Launched the [Kingston Eats Passport](#), a digital activity created in partnership with Trust Up, the Culinary Institute of America, and the Kingston YMCA Farm Project to provide food education through augmented reality
  - Launched [Kingston Cooks](#) and hosted four free cooking workshops with communal meals
  - Hosted a culinary nutrition training led by The Teaching Kitchen for organizations that prepare free or low-cost community meals
  - Drafted the [City of Kingston’s Food System Plan](#)
  - Piloted a monthly [food policy newsletter](#)
  - Awarded a mini-grant for the Midtown Neighborhood Kitchen equipment
- Grow Well
  - Met 21 times total, via Zoom and in person, at community gardens



*A Kingston Cooks Free Community Cooking Workshop at the Andy Murphy Neighborhood Center*

- Promoted the gardens with outreach at events, including the Earth Fair, and a bicycle tour with stops at five of the community gardens
- Provided educational materials and a workshop
- The Grow Well Facebook Group grew to 187 members with consistent conversations
- Delivered compost and distributed donated seed packets
- Coordinated [the building of a farmstand](#) at South Pine Street Farm with Ulster Youth Build
- Heal Well
  - Met five times
  - Hosted a presentation about Food as Medicine programs
  - After extensive discussion, decided to take a hiatus as a subcommittee
  - Completed [the Mobile Mental Health pilot grant](#) that pairs a mental healthcare specialist with a Kingston Fire Department Emergency Medical Technician to staff a mobile response unit. The program continues with alternative funding.
- Play Well
  - Met as a group seven times, this included general team and sub-committee meetings to work on projects that promoted physical activity and access to public spaces
  - Worked on a list of physical activity opportunities to be posted on the LWK website
  - Promoted the County's UCAT Nature Bus program
  - Managed the construction of [Post Office Park](#) which will include 28 trees, 100 shrubs and perennials, signs, benches, art pedestals, bicycle racks, and a ping pong table
- Travel Well
  - Held one Travel Well meeting
  - Participated in two Linear Park stakeholder meetings and four taskforce meetings to address the social issues on the rail trail
  - Drafted a Greenline Trail Steward Scope of Work for a potential program
  - Installed a pedestrian counter on the Linear Park
  - Advised the Parks and Recreation Department on how they hosted 10 bicycle encouragement community rides with 51 total participants, which covered 69 miles
  - Advised stakeholders about an e-bicycle policy which was adopted 2/7/24, [Res 28 of 2024](#)
  - Won a NYSERDA Clean Mobility Grant to plan a shared-use mobility system. The project will kick off in January 2025
  - Hosted the [Complete Streets Advisory Council](#) (CSAC) meetings and led a policy assessment
  - Supported the CSAC when they finalized the [Sidewalk Improvement White Paper](#) which was presented to the [Common Council on 6/26/24](#)
  - Supported the application for an ESD Strategic Planning & Feasibility Studies Program grant to fund a Sidewalk Improvement plan
  - Hosted free bicycle valet at the Earth Fair



*The Grow Well Focus Team at Rondout Garden*



*Shrubs and Perennials at Post Office Park*

## 2025 Goals

- Continue to manage the CHSC grant project
- Facilitate the LWK Commission, Focus Teams, and enhance communications

- Continue to streamline Live Well's goals and strategies
- Develop a "traffic park" at Forsyth Park
- Re-invigorate the Greenline Leadership Committee
- Continue Kingston Cooks and Kingston Eats
- Install ten more bicycle racks at various locations
- Finalize and start to implement the recommendations from the Kingston Food Systems Plan
- Complete Post Office Park and host a ribbon-cutting