



January 2026

A Healthy 2026 Starts with Routine Preventative Care

As we head into 2026, one of the simplest and most powerful things Allen County residents can do for themselves and their families is to stay connected to routine healthcare—seeing your doctor regularly, staying up to date on vaccines, completing recommended screenings, and making sure your kids are established with a pediatrician are all simple things we can and should do in 2026 and beyond!

1. Don't wait until something is wrong. Annual checkups help catch issues early—before they become emergencies.
2. Vaccines: not just for kids! Childhood vaccines keep schools and child care settings safer. Adults also need updates—flu, COVID boosters, shingles, pneumonia, tetanus, and others depending on age and health. Staying vaccinated protects seniors, infants, and immunocompromised neighbors across Allen County.
3. Screenings save lives! Common screenings include: Blood pressure and cholesterol; Breast, cervical, colorectal, and prostate cancer; Diabetes and lung cancer (for those at risk).
4. Get kids connected to a pediatric office. Well-child visits track growth, development, vision, hearing, and behavior.
5. If cost or insurance is a concern—don't skip care. Allen County has resources for: Medicaid and Marketplace enrollment, Community health centers and low-cost clinics. Preventive services are often covered at no cost. Help is available, you don't have to figure it out alone.

Simple Action Step Checklist:

____ Schedule a yearly checkup for every adult in your household

____ Confirm vaccine status for both kids and adults

____ Ask your provider what screenings you're due for this year

____ Make sure children have an established pediatric provider

____ Use local resources if insurance or transportation is a barrier

Healthy Families Expo Recap

We ended 2025 with a great time at our annual **Healthy Families Expo**! A huge thank you to our over 30 community vendors and our many volunteers and entertainers who made this event amazing!



Stage Demos



10:15A - Tasha Banks



10:45A - Mentoring with Music



11:30A - Lyn's Academy of Dance



12:00P - Ohio Cheer Nation



12:30 - Soldiers of Honor

Activated Neighborhood Challenge

Our **Activated Neighborhood Challenge** with partner, **The City of Lima**, awarded 2 community projects funding. Both the Children's Garden and the YWCA received funds through this program. We are excited to see these projects come to life!



South Jackson Community Garden Facelift



We are so thankful to **The City of Lima** for assisting us in making our **South Jackson Community Garden** space a **real community gathering place**! A restroom, handicap parking and a covered shelter area were added this last fall. We can not wait to have our **summer educational series** at this space in the summer! Stay tuned!



Activated Faith Community Challenge is Open!

The **2026 Activated Faith Community Challenge** is open for applications! We are looking to work with Faith Based Organizations and Churches to assist them in creating healthy environments for those they serve. Projects in the past have included walking paths, meditation spaces, healthier foods at fellowship time, Mental Health First Aid trainings, and so many more! **We would love to work with you and fund projects** that are impactful and sustainable. Contact us with questions, or get started by filling out the application using the link below. Applications will be accepted through February 21, 2026. Thank you to our **sponsor for this funding, Mercy Health!**

To apply for the challenge, follow this link:

<https://form.jotform.com/82953511418155>



Join us for the 2026 Garden Season!



Our **South Jackson Community Garden** and the raised beds that are on the property are once again available for the 2026 gardening season. These beds are great for new and seasoned gardeners alike. Beds are available at no cost. **If you have questions** about the gardens, contact Chad at cwelker@limachamber.com. **If you would like to reserve a bed**, fill out the form located here:

<https://form.jotform.com/213334179170048>

Chili for Charity- Applications to Pitch Open

Activate Allen County will once again be hosting our annual **Chili for Charity crowd funded luncheon event on March 26, 2026**. This will be year 3 and we are looking forward to another successful year of this unique event. If you are unaware, this is a luncheon where you apply to be a presenter (or "pitch" your idea) to the crowd in attendance. Those will then be the voters and will determine which projects walk away funded. This year, the funding source is different, so the requirements will be different. While we are still focused on Mental Health, opioid prevention, education and treatment will take center stage. This still provides a variety of areas that you can apply under and you do not have to be in treatment world only to be funded. You can learn more about what we are looking for when you access the application. Some of the strategies that we are looking for can include prevention activities, screenings, school-based interventions, community support systems, programs, etc. Applications will officially open on January 26, 2026. \$10,000 will be awarded to multiple "winning" pitches based on the crowd at the event.

Questions?? Contact Kayla Monfort at Activate Allen County

kmonfort@activateallencounty.com or 419-973-0516

Application Link: <https://form.jotform.com/253623051896158>



Mental Health &
Recovery Services Board
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Dates to Note

Now- February 25th- **South Jackson Community Garden bed applications** for the 2026 season are available (first come, first serve, so apply early!) **Link to apply on previous page!**

Now- February 21st- **Activated Faith Community Challenge Applications** are open **Link to apply on previous page!**

January 26th- February 28th- **Chili for Charity Applications** to pitch your idea for a chance at \$10,000 at our crowd funded event is open

March 26th- **Chili for Charity event** at Mercy Graduate Medical Education Building

April 11th- Bridging the Gap FREE Health Fair at Lima Senior



2026 Newsletter, January

YOU Are Activate! Please follow us on Facebook and Twitter if you have not already done so! Website: www.ActivateAllenCounty.com
These avenues are great ways to stay up to date with what is happening!
Please check out the 2025 Summary of Work on the next 2 pages.

ACTIVITIES

ACTIVATED CHALLENGES

Awards Schools, Neighborhoods/Non-Profits, Childcares and Faith Communities mini grant funds for sustainable work

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Free events such as Plant Swaps, Locos Kids Night, Block Parties, Bridging the Gap, and the Expo to support healthy living

GRANT SUPPORT

Led a tobacco related media campaign to promote quitting smoking and vaping—promoting and referring to free resources

PROGRAM SUPPORT

Lima Farmers Market, NextGen Plus EAP, Green Prescription, Tobacco Cessation, Community Gardens, Walking Audits

MEDIA EFFORTS

Woof Boom contract, Noon Edition, Radio show/podcast, quarterly newsletter, social media posts, local press conferences

DETAILS

OUTCOME

9,977 Youth and Adults Impacted

1,800 Residents and Families Impacted

2 Media Campaigns—41,700 Average Reach

Over 6,800 Residents and Families Impacted

30,000 Residents reached monthly

2025 BY THE NUMBERS...

<18%

County residents served through programs, events and challenges

29%

Covered employees and families using free EAP services (7% National average)

270

Bike helmets provided to area kids in need

2,625

Followers on Social Media

1,589

New users this year of the Allen County Health Atlas

<19%

County residents served through programs, events and challenges

88%

CHIP goals "on track" in year 2 of plan

17

Community garden beds managed

610

Residents participated in community event surveys

36

Sustainable community projects funded

90

Safety Lock Boxes provided to families

2025 Activate Summary, Con't.



New in 2025...

In 2025, we continued to grow by adding another community event to our annual calendar. In partnership with our Executive Council and with Cenovus as the presenting sponsor, we added a **Mental Health Symposium/Educational Event for the community**. The goal of this activity is to reach our business community and challenge attendees to make mental health awareness part of their everyday company culture. We hope with these trainings, employees will work more effectively together in a thoughtful manner. We spend much of our lives at work– let's work together to promote workplace wellness! This will be an annual event, and we were excited to have dynamic speaker Chad Dunlap headline our inaugural event. We look forward to growing this concept in the years to come. We also had an **upgrade at our South Jackson Community Garden** location in partnership with the City of Lima! This space now has restroom facilities and a covered pavilion area with seating. In 2026, this space will be used for additional community education! Finally, Activate Allen County had a **staffing change in 2025, welcoming Chad Welker** to replace Josh Unterbrink who moved into the role as the Chamber CEO. Chad is off to a great start as our new Associate Director!

Year 2: 2023–2026 Allen County Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)

Activate Allen County staff, along with Allen County Public Health, leads the effort in gathering stakeholders and leaders to the table to discuss community health planning. This year was our second year executing the goals set forth within this plan. Our community focus areas are Thriving Communities, Mental and Behavioral Health, Supports for Healthy Living and Maternal and Infant Health. Of the **40 goals established within these areas, 88% are currently "on track" for completion or completed as of our fall 2025 (year 2) reporting cycle**. In coordination with finishing Year 3 of our current CHIP in 2026, our stakeholders will be working on looking at community data and needs in order to create our 2026–2029 Allen County CHIP. **Do you want to be involved in this goal setting and very important work? Reach out to Kayla Monfort– kmonfort@activateallencounty.com– to be added to our email list for these meetings.**

Engage with Activate Allen County!

The **Allen County Health Atlas** is a great data resource available for you to use for FREE! Check out <https://allencountyhealthatlas.org/> before you start a new program, apply for a grant or just to learn more about the community. There are so many data points and different information sets available to you through the Atlas! Follow **Activate Allen County on Facebook** to stay up to date with all of our events and learn more about all of the great resources and activities that our partners are providing. Activate also has a **quarterly newsletter** that gives a lot of updates and information, but you have to sign up to be included. Head to www.activateallencounty.com and find the newsletter tab to sign up with your email today!

Additional Activities

Activate Allen County staff strives to be involved in many aspects of the community. We support the efforts of the Lima Chamber by participating in and volunteering at many of their programs and events. Additionally, we are happy to be a part of many other boards and committees including: the United Way partnership committee, Family and Children First Council, the Wheelhouse Board, Ohio Tobacco Free Alliance, Ohio Breastfeeding Work Group, Allen County Food Council, Allen County Bike/Ped Task Force, Bike/Ped walking audit project, Cenovus Community Advisory Committee, Community Violence Prevention Coalition, Bridging the Gap planning committee, and others!

Without our funders and their ongoing support and dedication to Activate Allen County, these programs, events and activities would not be possible!

