



HEALTH EQUITY ZONE (HEZ)

WOONSOCKET

THUNDERMIST HEALTH CENTER



Woonsocket HEZ is a group who takes action to improve the health and quality of life for all people of Woonsocket with the people of Woonsocket.

Health Equity Zones are geographical areas designed to achieve health equity by eliminating health disparities using place-based (where you live) strategies to promote healthy communities. Healthy communities are places where people live, work, play, and learn. These are neighborhoods consisting of social and physical environments that support healthy choices and safe living.

STORY SPOTLIGHT: RESIDENT ADVISORS



Woonsocket Resident Advisors are a collective group of residents with lived experiences and a mutually vested interest in the community. Resident Advisors are the most important component of the Health Equity Zone. Resident Advisors actively participate in priority area work group meetings where they provide resident perspective and relevant input. Resident Advisors have facilitated community feedback sessions where they continuously work to build their understanding of the community and needs of the people. Woonsocket HEZ Resident Advisors have identified youth leadership and prevention as well as Racial Equity their project priority areas.

PROJECT TIMELINE

- May 2015** Woonsocket Health Equity Zone kick-off and launch of priority area workgroups
- August 2015** Launched Comprehensive Food System Planning Project
- November 2015** Opening of Serenity Center, “for all stages of addiction and recovery”
- January 2016** Teen Health Survey to assess access to health education
- March 2016** Resident Ambassadors joined HEZ work
- February 2017** NWBRV’s Hub to support food entrepreneurs launched
- September 2017** HEZ Sexual Health and Family Planner hired for Woonsocket High
- June 2019** 3 partner innovative programs funded to support child well-being initiative
- July 2019** Ambassador group re-established to Resident Advisors
- September 2019** Comprehensive Opioid Planning Assessment complete

BACKGROUND INFO

Woonsocket HEZ collaborative engages more than 30 local cross sector organizations and 7 resident leaders focusing on the following PRIORITY AREAS:

- Addressing the opioid epidemic by saving lives, making treatment and recovery available on demand in real time.
- Addressing teen health to ensure that all teens, including young parents, will have high quality healthcare and accurate and complete sex education to make informed decisions and choices about their lives.
- Improving access to food by ensuring healthy food is easy to find and affordable in every neighborhood.
- Addressing child well-being to ensure all children are safe from harm and live in families and neighborhoods that help them to thrive.

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: Serenity Center

At Serenity Center, people can come to be with others who support their recovery. It is a peer-run place that offers supports with Certified Peer Recovery Specialists. Support groups like Medication Assisted Treatment, AA and Narcotics Anonymous, and Families Coping with Addictions are also offered. A person can visit and get a referral for basic needs and family supports, financial literacy classes, health and wellness activities, etc. A Community Care Alliance and a Health Equity Zone initiative, the Serenity Center is operated with the advocacy of a Consumer Advisory Council.



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“It’s really exciting and moving to see how the residents have empowered through this process. To witness how their lived experiences, knowledge and passion for this community has informed and changed the landscape of our collaborative and the strategies identified improve the community’s health outcomes, is really inspiring.”

-Former Project Manager, Ckarla Agudelo

WHERE WE ARE AND WHERE WE ARE GOING

Tamara Burman, Woonsocket HEZ Project Manager, makes sure that residents guide the work of the HEZ. “The Resident Advisors are the community, and truly inform HEZ work.” They actively participate in workgroups, set their own priorities, and facilitate their own projects. She is especially proud of how the residents have been empowered to take ownership of their own budget by selecting how and what initiatives by supporting and initiative projects that truly help the community.

The collaborative has laid groundwork in addressing teen pregnancies, overdoses, and improving access to food by supporting and implementing collaborative projects and strategies. Looking forward, the collaborative continues to work collectively and is focusing in on engaging families and those with lived experiences to engage the entire community to help young people thrive.



BACKBONE AGENCY

Thundermist Health Center

HEZ COORDINATORS

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Shared public health strategic priorities working with partners statewide.

- Addressing the social and environmental determinants of health
- Eliminating the disparities of health and promote health equity
- Ensuring access to quality health services including vulnerable populations.