Promoting Community Health and Well-Being through University Extension

Sonali Diddi, PhD

Engaged Faculty Lead – Office of Engagement and Extension

Need of the Hour

- Addressing today's rural health disparities requires highly engaged and collaborative approach

- The pandemic brought forward rural communities' vulnerabilities and accessibility concerns to affordable health care

- Cross-sector collaborations involving different stakeholders has shown to help address health inequities

- Coordinating different networks and facilitating dialog to cocreate solutions has shown to be the key to success – Michigan State University model (Dwyer et al. 2017)

- Extension is a long-standing component of the land-grant university
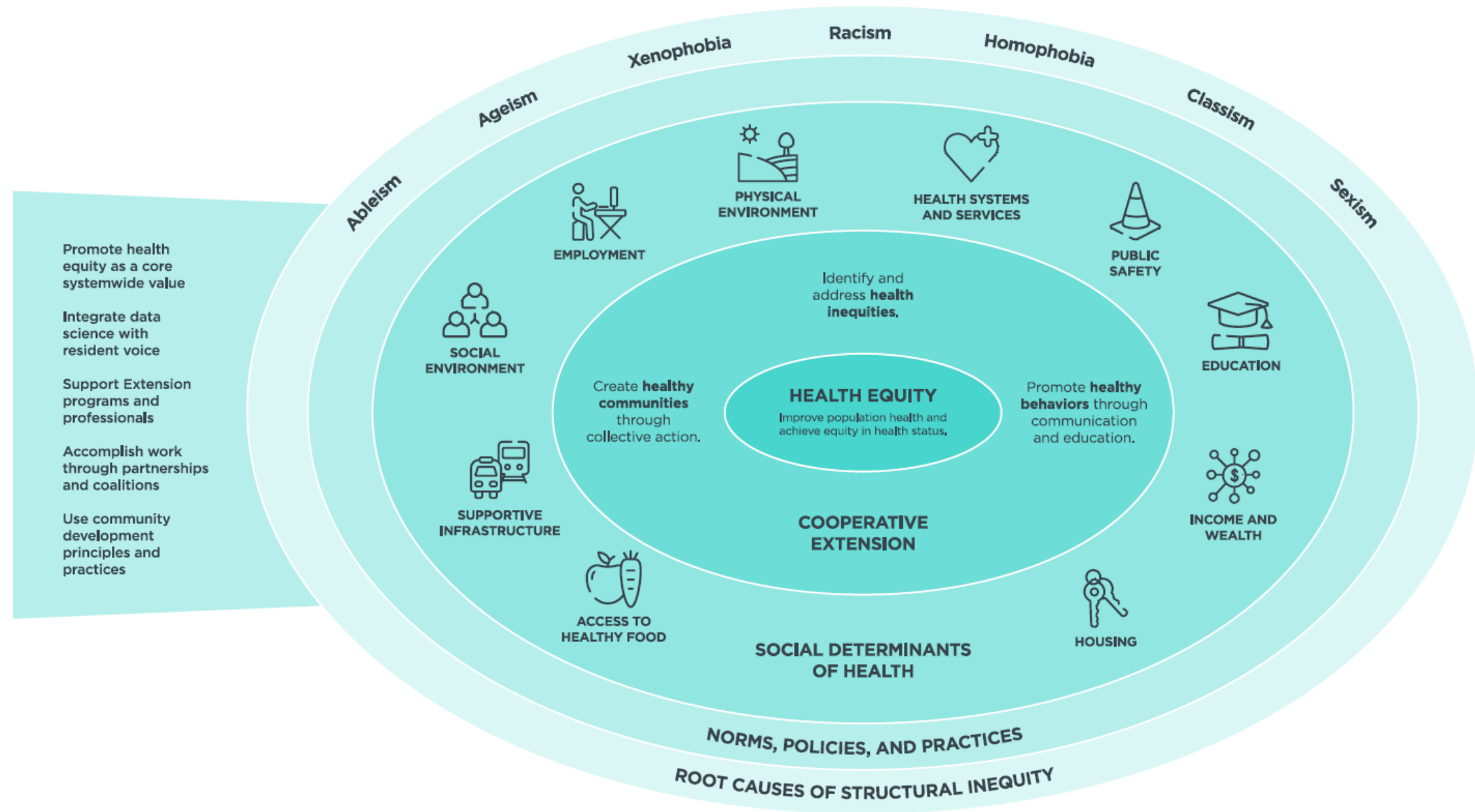
Cooperative Extension's Framework for Health Equity and Well Being (2021)

Cooperative Extension's Framework for Health Equity and Well-Being Recommendations

To the Cooperative Extension System and its partners:

1. *Advance health equity as a core system value* to ensure that all people have a fair and just opportunity to be as healthy as they can be.

2. *Utilize community assessment processes* that integrate data science and resident voice to identify and address health inequities with greater precision.

3. *Invest in the success and visibility* of Extension's health-related professionals, programs, and initiatives.

4. *Establish partnerships* with academic units, universities, government agencies, corporations, nonprofit organizations, and foundations that share a commitment to reducing or eliminating health inequities.

5. *Utilize a community development approach* to advance the work of coalitions focused on influencing the social determinants of health.

Burton et al. (2021) *Cooperative Extension's National Framework for Health Equity and Well Being.* [Report of the Health Innovation Task Force] Extension Committee on Organization and Policy: Washington, DC Available at https://www.aplu.org/members/commissions/foodenvironment-and-renewable-resources/board-on-agriculture-assembly/cooperative-extensionsection/ ecop-members/ecop-documents/2021%20EquityHealth%20Full.pdf

Colorado State University

CSU Around the State

- CSU – a land-grant university, earned the Carnegie Foundation's Classification for *Community Engagement designation* in 2000 and 2015, and continues to hold the designation

- In 2016, CSU earned the *Innovation & Economic Prosperity (IEP) Universities Designation* from the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities.

- CSU has been recognized on the *President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll* from the Corporation for National and Community Service.

- CSU's statewide ecosystem serves as a platform for CSU to connect to communities, and for communities to connect to CSU's research and education, facilitate local connections and work alongside communities.

CSU Agricultural Research Centers	CSU SPUR
Regional Centers	Colorado State Forest Service
Collaboration Campuses	CSU Extension

The Story of Our Community

Where Colorado State University Meets Community

COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

ABOUT THE **OFFICE OF ENGAGEMENT AND EXTENSION**

We Learn and Work Together across Colorado to Exchange, Develop and Apply Knowledge, Empowering Individuals and Communities to Thrive from Learning.

CSU Extended Campus
Education for Everyone, from Anywhere

CSU Extension
Your Connection to CSU in Your Community

Colorado Water Center
Serving the Greater Colorado Community for Nearly Six Decades

Salazar Center for North American Conservation
Building Bridges in Conservation Research, Policy and Practice

CSU COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT - OVERVIEW

- From 2020-21: embarked on a year-long, formal community needs assessment (CNA) process

- Overarching goal: to more fully tell the story of our communities and Extension's role in our communities

- Conducted in all 64 Colorado counties

- Methodology:

  – Mixed methods including secondary data analysis to make use of pre-existing information such as demographic reports, strategic plans, economic development documents, and health assessments

  – Key informant interviews to gather in-depth information to fill in understanding of select issues

  – Community surveys to quantify the prevalence of issues among a broad population of respondents
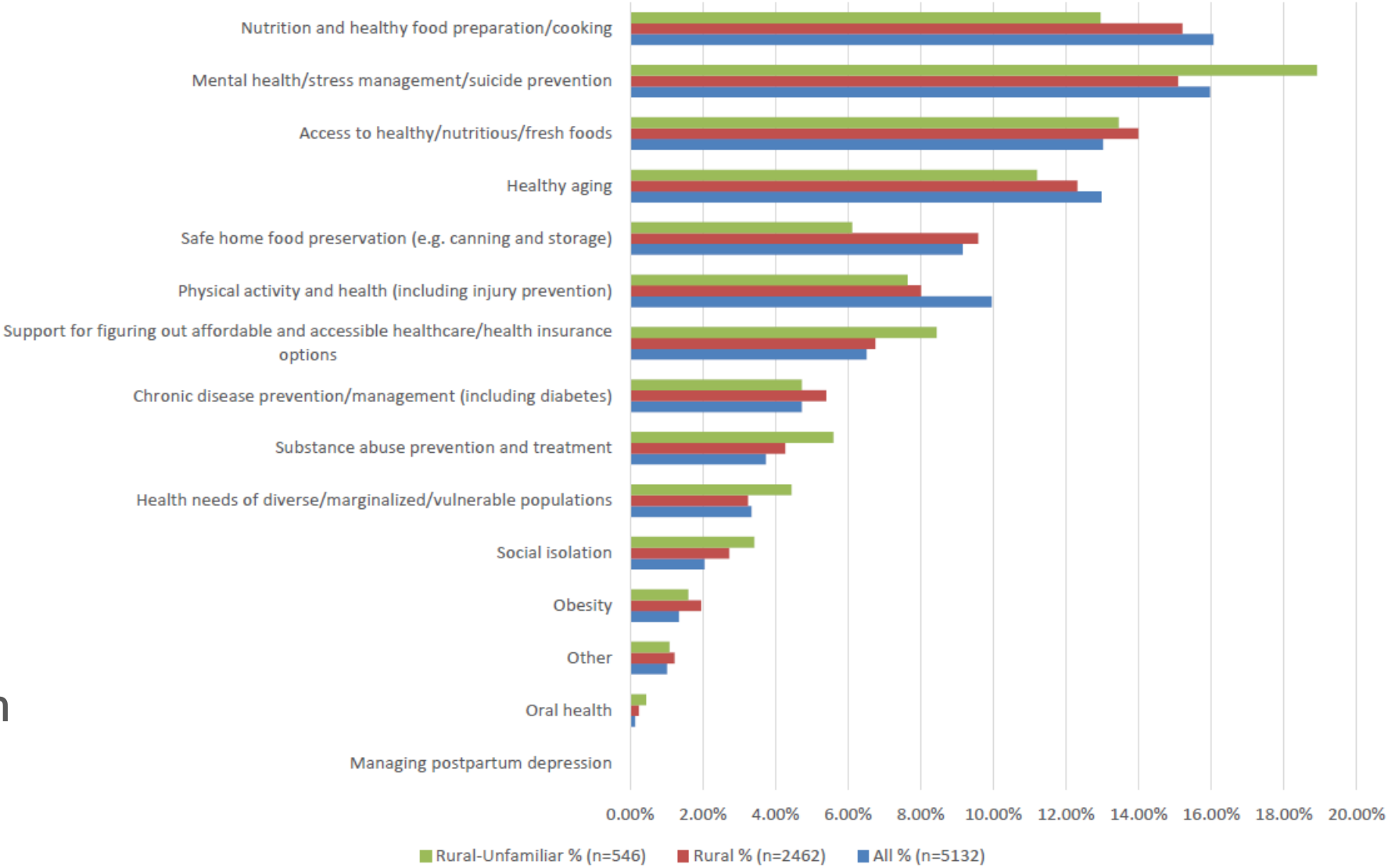
COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT - OVERVIEW

Secondary Data Analyses

Uncover broad issues and demographics

111 issues from 450 sources

Interviews & Focus Groups

Gain deeper understanding of select issues, demographics

250 interviews, 7 ESL focus groups

Community Surveys

Assess prevalence of issues for which educational resources might have impact

5,100 responses to 45 surveys
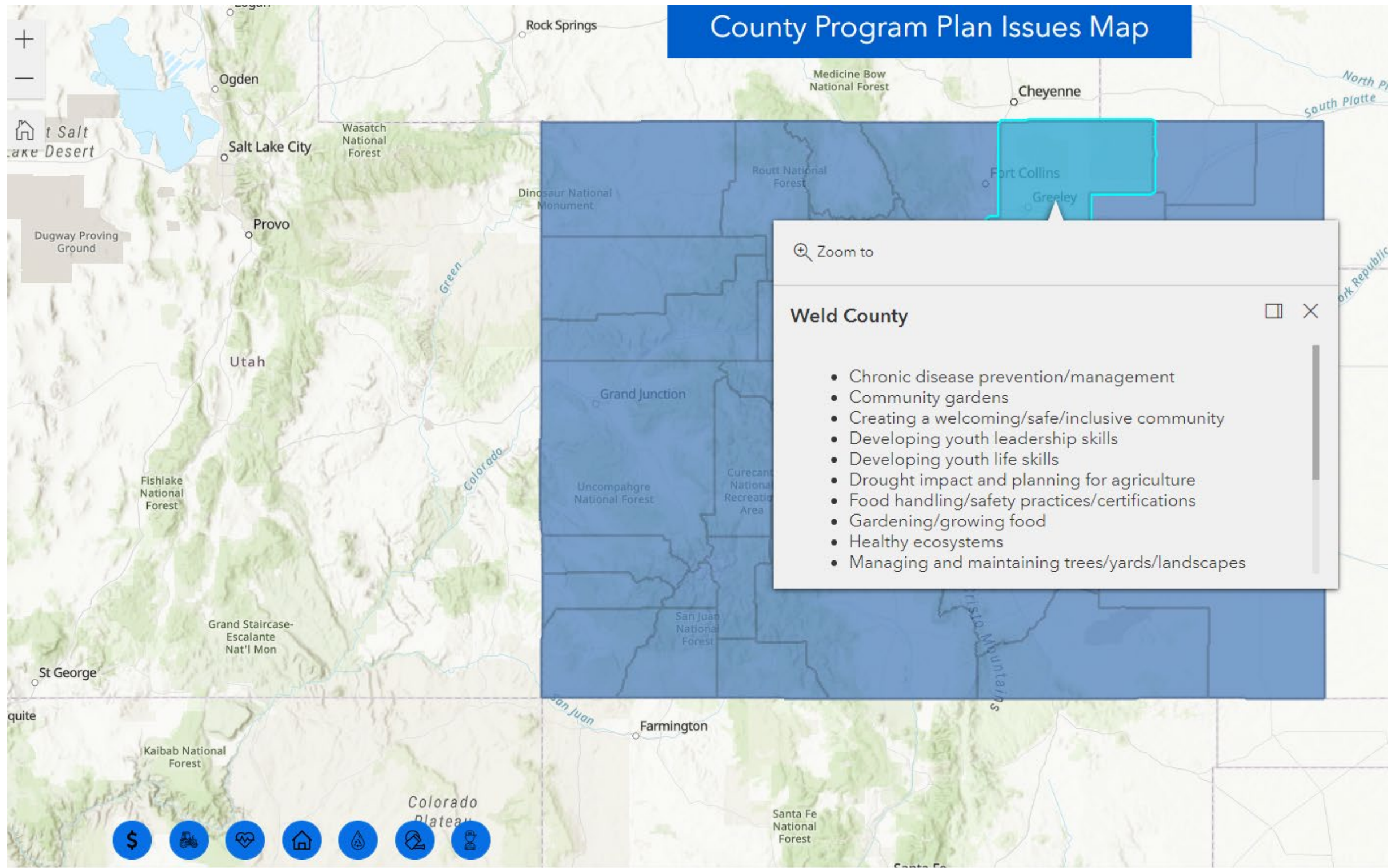
Colorado State University

In the area of health and well-being, select up to three topics where information and educational resources would be most helpful to you.

- Mental health/stress management/suicide prevention

- Nutrition and healthy food preparation/cooking

- Access to healthy/nutritious/fresh foods

- Healthy aging

Weld County

- Chronic disease prevention/management
- Community gardens
- Creating a welcoming/safe/inclusive community
- Developing youth leadership skills
- Developing youth life skills
- Drought impact and planning for agriculture
- Food handling/safety practices/certifications
- Gardening/growing food
- Healthy ecosystems
- Managing and maintaining trees/yards/landscapes

Zoom to

Civic Capacity Index

David MacPhee, Patti Schmitt and David Chrislip

Human Development and Family Studies, Center for Prevention Science and College of Health and Human Sciences

- Initial funding from the Boettcher Foundation

- The initial stage of the two-part project aims to *validate the Civic Capacity Index* against indicators of community resilience and well-being, equity and inclusion, and collective efficacy.

- The second stage is aimed at the *translational science* aspect of the project. This focuses on providing these communities with technical assistance involving training community collaborators in using the CCI.

"Civic Capacity describes a community's capacity for collective action to solve local problems...it goes beyond coping with a crisis like the coronavirus and returning to the status quo. It is a dynamic process of reinvention and transformation from within the community."

The Civic Capacity Index:
A Tool for Community Transformation

Assess collective capacity to respond to change & challenge

Diagnose and design authentic, inclusive collaborative processes

Frame leadership development to build social cohesion, community well-being, and collective efficacy

Evaluate impact of current civic initiatives

Framework for community-driven change & resilience

Why is Civic Capacity Important?

CIVIC CAPCITY AND COVID-19 RESILIENCE

Colorado communities that scored higher on domains of community-driven leadership, as measured by the CCI, had better COVID-19 outcomes.

- Communities with higher levels of leadership, inclusion, social cohesion, and community reslience had lower death rates.

- Communities with higher levels of social control, social cohesion, and community resilience had lower COVID-19 case rates.

Thank you

ENGAGEMENT
AND EXTENSION
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY