Charting a New Course to Building Better Health Locally

Across the country, the Aetna Foundation and its partners are helping to inspire cities and counties to uncover innovative ways to build healthier communities. This mission truly comes to life through a first-of-its kind collaboration with U.S. News & World Report to create the Healthiest Communities rankings.

When it comes to improving health care, we have a big job in this country to expand our focus beyond the services we receive at a doctor’s office or hospital and also consider the social and environmental factors that have an even greater impact on our health.

More than 60 percent of a person’s life expectancy is driven by social factors.i

Limited exposure to nature and green space may have serious physical and psychological health effects.ii

More than 15 million people live in food deserts, with little to no access to healthy foods.iii

Through a new, multi-year U.S. News/Aetna Foundation collaboration, we have an opportunity to tackle these challenges by charting a different course. We can help improve the physical and economic health of the country by shifting priorities to address these critical social and environmental factors.

Healthiest Communities
The U.S. News/Aetna Foundation Healthiest Communities rankings showcase communities across America that are doing the best job of addressing important factors and improving their citizens’ health. The Healthiest Communities platform provides in-depth reporting and analysis, as well as a ranking drawn from an evaluation of nearly 3,000 counties across 10 categories:

COMMUNITY VITALITY
ECONOMY
EDUCATION
ENVIRONMENT
EQUITY
FOOD AND NUTRITION
POPULATION HEALTH
HOUSING
INFRASTRUCTURE
PUBLIC SAFETY

Data to Action
These national, yet locally-focused rankings are designed not only to identify opportunities, but also to spark dialogue. The Aetna Foundation, working with partners, will use this data to inspire change. Our combined goal is to ensure that every community in America has a Healthy Community agenda. We will share best practices and convene health experts and local leaders to help bring these health agendas to life. These rankings will be refreshed annually, providing a view into progress made year over year. The data is not the end, but the means by which—working together—we will succeed in building healthier communities.

Learn more about the Healthiest Communities rankings and this innovative U.S. News/Aetna Foundation collaboration at usnews.com/news/healthiest-communities.


National Institutes of Health: “Obesity, physical activity, and the urban environment: public health research needs.” https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1586006/


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Healthiest Communities in CONNECTICUT

CONNECTICUT's eight counties are all considered high-performing, urban communities. Five rank in the top 500 nationally, three of which also rank among the top 100 in the peer group: Tolland County, Middlesex County and Litchfield County. The state performs best overall in the Education category, particularly Education Infrastructure, which includes measures of school proximity, per-pupil expenditures and child care quality.

County Rankings and Scores

The table below shows how each of these counties scored in each of the ranking's 10 categories.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Overall Rank</th>
<th>Community Vitality</th>
<th>Equity</th>
<th>Economy</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Environment</th>
<th>Food &amp; Nutrition</th>
<th>Housing</th>
<th>Infrastructure</th>
<th>Health</th>
<th>Safety</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tolland</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>57.76</td>
<td>59.80</td>
<td>75.99</td>
<td>86.98</td>
<td>52.82</td>
<td>75.74</td>
<td>68.05</td>
<td>67.33</td>
<td>70.30</td>
<td>67.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middlesex</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>63.40</td>
<td>50.48</td>
<td>81.46</td>
<td>83.56</td>
<td>53.04</td>
<td>78.70</td>
<td>60.81</td>
<td>67.08</td>
<td>70.58</td>
<td>70.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Litchfield</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>64.08</td>
<td>69.77</td>
<td>72.11</td>
<td>77.55</td>
<td>58.10</td>
<td>85.26</td>
<td>55.32</td>
<td>57.64</td>
<td>67.15</td>
<td>68.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairfield</td>
<td>351</td>
<td>55.48</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>82.70</td>
<td>84.51</td>
<td>43.21</td>
<td>81.59</td>
<td>42.31</td>
<td>59.02</td>
<td>71.78</td>
<td>78.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New London</td>
<td>411</td>
<td>49.56</td>
<td>39.84</td>
<td>65.76</td>
<td>76.46</td>
<td>50.88</td>
<td>74.32</td>
<td>54.08</td>
<td>66.12</td>
<td>58.30</td>
<td>68.81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This data, coupled with best practices that are being collected across the country, will help catalyze the changes needed to improve health. The Aetna Foundation will work with partners, community leaders and other stakeholders to help build strong health agendas that lead to healthier communities.

*Counties received scores for each of the 80 metrics and 10 categories. Those scores were compared to other counties' and then translated to a 100-point scale, with 100 being the best score a county could receive and zero being the lowest.