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.¹

Limited exposure to nature and green space may have serious physical and psychological health effects.²

More than 15 million people live in food deserts, with little to no access to healthy foods.³

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 WEST VIRGINIA

WEST VIRGINIA’s Jefferson County ranks in the top 500 nationally and Pocahontas County ranks among the top 100 communities in the rural, up-and-coming peer group. On average, the state performs best in the Equity category, as well as in the Housing Capacity sub-category, which includes measures of affordable housing availability and household overcrowding, and the Air & Water sub-category, which includes measures of drinking water safety and airborne cancer risk.

Scores

The table below shows how Jefferson County 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>Population Health</th>
<th>Public Safety</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jefferson</td>
<td>466</td>
<td>65.61</td>
<td>78.22</td>
<td>65.08</td>
<td>46.63</td>
<td>51.74</td>
<td>65.96</td>
<td>49.25</td>
<td>46.29</td>
<td>51.51</td>
<td>74.76</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.