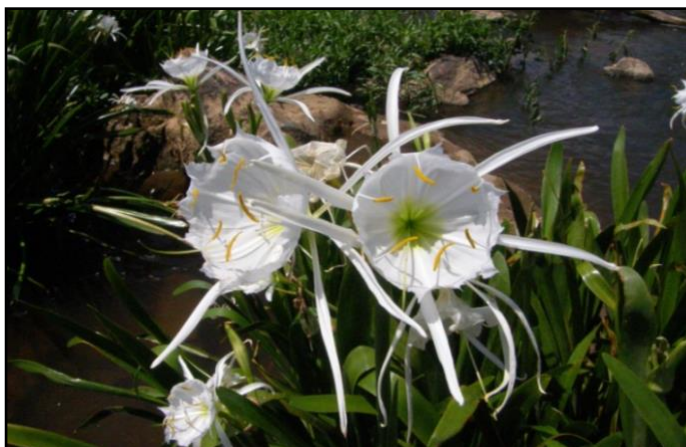# COMMUNITY INDICATORS TOOLKIT – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
Signs of Health in Lancaster & Chester Counties

Landsford Canal State Park's Rocky Shoals Spider Lily

We want to live in a place where all voices matter and where *all people have an opportunity to thrive*. And yet, in order for all people to live healthy lives, essential resources must be readily available for everyone. To address the breadth of community health factors, we not only need expertise from business, healthcare, education, local government, local neighborhoods, the faith community, and many more. As social change begins to happen, data can be used to monitor and improve the likelihood for measurable community change. *Data can also be a rallying cry* – an opportunity to bring together community partners working in silos together towards a common agenda.

In this first edition of a Community Indicators Toolkit, we are defining a healthy community using 11 broad themes and choosing local data from scientifically rigorous social science surveys that speak to the values of our two counties. These 11 Indicator themes speak to the various influential factors that shape our health. Standards were established to select measurable data within the Community Indicators Toolkit. The data chosen has meet all **FIVE CRITERIA**.

1. Collected by a national organization or a federal/state agency.
2. Collected on a frequent and systematic basis.
3. Drilled down to county, zip-code, or census-tract level.
4. Publicly accessible without any firewalls or additional fees.
5. A unique perspective that supports the vision statement of at least 1 Community Indicator Theme.

University of South Carolina Lancaster's Early Start program

DIGGING DEEPER FOR THE STORY BEHIND THE DATA

Indicator data can reveal a story of the challenges and successes of the people of Lancaster and Chester Counties. Before setting goals for the community, it's critical to make sure all partners are deeply aware and empathetic to the history of the people we intend to serve. Listed below are 60 common measures that give an indication of how far we have to go to reach our community's full aspirations.

ARTS & CIVIC ENGAGEMENT: *We envision communities where individuals and community groups can convene, identify, and address shared values, for the purposes of good governance, community development, and public artistic expression.*
- Population change in 10 years
- Social associations
- Voter registration & turnout
- Demographics of arts attendees
- Library visits
- Arts-related businesses

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION: *We envision communities that offer health and educational supports for early learning and integral development of young children.*
- 3-4 year olds enrolled in preschool
- Availability of quality childcare
- Children living poverty *
- Families where householder lacks a high school diploma
- Children failing 1st, 2nd, or 3rd grade

K12 SCHOOLS & EDUCATION: *We envision communities that offer ample support to our students and educators so that quality education and academic success can be achieved by all people.*
- 3rd grade ELA standards *
- 8th grade math standards *
- High school graduation rates *
- Population educational attainment *

TRANSITIONS TO ADULTHOOD: *We envision communities where young adult have the social and economic capacity to live, work, learn, and become engaged citizens.*
- Young people not in school nor employed
- 11th grade career readiness
- 11th grade college readiness
- Teenage pregnancies *
- High school graduates who enrolled in

- Juveniles in corrections
- Adults (ages 25+) with some college, no degree

HEALTHY ECONOMY: *We envision communities where people and businesses are willing and encouraged to work, invest, donate, and spend their resources locally.*
- Average household income *
- Residents place of work
- Households living in poverty *
- Unemployment rate *
- Living in poverty, by educational attainment
- Cost-burdened households

TRANSPORTATION ACCESS: *We envision interconnected communities where residents have a variety of safe, affordable, and reliable transportation options.*
- Workers with long commutes
- Means of transportation to work
- Households with no vehicle available
- Motor vehicle fatalities

HEALTHY LIVING: *We envision communities that are designed so that residents can easily make healthy lifestyle decisions, like eating nutritious food and being physically active.*
- Body mass index (obesity rate) *
- Residents getting any physical activity *
- Food environment index *
- Fruit & vegetable consumption *
- Excessive alcohol consumption *
- Current smokers *

GREEN SPACE, CLEAN AIR & WATER: *We envision inclusive communities that offer parks, preserve green spaces, and protect the environment for all people to enjoy the outdoors.*
- Access to recreation opportunities
- Outdoor air pollution rate
- Drinking water violations
- Recycling rates

ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE: *We envision communities where residents can easily access quality medical support and prevention services.*

- Poor physical or mental health
- Health insurance coverage
- Access to a healthcare provider
- Could not see a doctor due to cost
- Time since last routine check-up
- Emergency room visit costs
- Patient to primary care provider ratio
- Pregnant mothers with less than adequate prenatal care *
- Low birth weight babies *
- Infant mortality rate *

STRENGTHENING & SUPPORTING FAMILIES: *We envision resilient communities that offer empowering supports for family wellbeing, safe neighborhoods, and community trust.*

- Children living in areas of concentrated poverty
- Substandard housing units
- Single parent households
- Grandparent supports
- Domestic violence
- Drug overdose deaths
- Property & violent crime

FAITH COMMUNITY: *We envision communities where residents can experience a sense of belongingness and can practice their faith in ways that inspire social connectedness and transformation.*

- Regularly attending religious services

WHERE NATIONAL EVIDENCE MEETS LOCAL INNOVATION   The Community Indicator Toolkit highlights a sample of evidence-based strategies that focus on changes in health behaviors, access to clinical care, social and economic factors, or the physical environment by using Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's What Works for Health clearinghouse. The strategies listed in this Toolkit are grounded in social science theory and have shown statistically significant favorable findings in other communities across the nation.

How do we know if a strategy will work here in Lancaster and Chester Counties? We won't know until we try and learn together. This is where national evidence meets local innovation. When community leaders are deciding whether or not to implement an evidence-based strategy, it is important to consider the community's culture, priorities, their local sphere of influence, and available resources. There are a great deal of reflective questions that could be learned and should be discussed:

- To what extent is the community **ready** to adopt this strategy?
- How have we **engaged** a wide range of community partners and residents to ensure there is buy-in?
- What community **resources** (ex. volunteers, organizations, funding) are available to support the change?
- How **feasible** is it to implement this strategy into the community?
- What **barriers** (ex. physical, social, legal) exist that may hinder this potential change?

Carolina Thread Trail along Twelve Mile Creek

HOW CAN WE MEANINGFULLY WORK TOGETHER?

TAKE ACTION CYCLE: This is a great visual to understanding the step-by-step process in how to work with other residents and partners to improve your community's health.

- Collaborate with other community partners who have a shared vision for health for all people.
- Gather information (researching the data & asking residents questions) to assess needs and resources.
- Set priorities, so you can focus your resources (time, energy, funding) on what's important.
- Find the most effective strategies (policies & programs) to address these specific priorities, and then …
- Implement strategies that make sense for your community.
- Create an emphasis of continuous learning throughout the cycle by evaluating what works & what does not.

Source: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

COLLECTIVE IMPACT: Community transformation can happen when partners organize themselves in a structured manner, rather than operating in isolation. Isolated work often leads to organizations competing for the same resources. Successful collective impact initiatives are often structured with the following five conditions:

1. **COMMON AGENDA:** All partners must have a shared vision for change, a common understanding of the issue or concern, and a strongly held agreement that addressing the issue together is critical for success.

2. **SHARED MEASURES:** All partners must agree to collecting data, measuring results, and sharing these results with one another (positive or negative).

3. **MUTUALLY REINFORCING ACTIVITIES:** Working together does not necessarily mean that all partners should do the exact same thing. Rather, collaboration works best when partners are coordinating activities, programs, or policies in a way that support one another's work and supports the shared vision.

4. **CONTINUOUS COMMUNICATION:** All partners should be willing to invest the time to develop and maintain trust with one another. With enough time and consistently attending regularly held meetings, partners can genuinely appreciate each other's shared motivation behind their work.

BACKBONE SUPPORTIVE ORGANIZATION: Planning, managing, and supporting a community-wide multi-component initiative takes dedicated time and resources.

Source: Stanford Social Innovation Review