***MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU)*** *between*

*The Healthy Bourbon County Action Team and City of Uniontown*

This is an agreement between The Healthy Bourbon County Action Team and the City of Uniontown

1. **PURPOSE & SCOPE**

The purpose of this MOU is to clearly identify the roles and responsibilities of each party as they relate to partnering for alignment on plans described in the *Pathways to a Healthy Kansas (Pathways)*, a Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas (BCBSKS) initiative.

In particular, this MOU is intended to outline the implementation of the City Park Enhancement project in alignment with the Placemaking package of the Community & Social Context Pathway of the *Pathways to a Healthy Kansas (Pathways)*, a Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas (BCBSKS) initiative.

1. **BACKGROUND**

The Healthy Bourbon County Action Team was selected as a grantee for the *Pathways to a Healthy Kansas (Pathways)*, a Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas (BCBSKS) initiative in July 2016 and again in July 2022. Prior to initial award in 2016, the City of Uniontown assisted in the application process.

The *Pathways* initiative is structured in terms of “community pathways” that are designed to help the coalition take a holistic, community-wide approach to improving health outcomes by addressing the social determinants of health.

This MOU addresses shared alignment in the placemaking package of the community and social context pathway. The *Pathways* initiative defines placemaking as the shaping of a place by creatively applying arts, culture, and social context to jump-start economic development, promote community pride and morale and encourage people to be physically active.

Since 2016, The Healthy Bourbon Action Team had conducted an annual survey to examine the perceptions of Bourbon County community members about the issues of healthy eating, active living, and tobacco cessation. This survey is done in collaboration with multiple community organizations and stakeholders throughout the county. Almost half of survey respondents in the most recent community perception survey rated their community ‘unhealthy’ or ‘very unhealthy’. The qualitative analysis showed respondent’s reasons our community was unhealthy or very unhealthy, included:

Overweight/obesity: 30%

Low Income: 11%

Physical inactivity: 9%

Lack of Healthy Food Options: 9%

Poor Nutrition Choices: 8%

Annual community perception survey responders consistently report work, time, money, and childcare as key barriers for eating healthy foods and accessing physical activity.

A potential threat to growth for Bourbon County is the gradual, long-running population decline, with people moving away from rural areas that do not provide the vibrant living experiences or host attractive job opportunities. Bourbon County has seen a decrease in population since 1990. A census population of 14,948 was reported in 1990 and 14,534 in 2019 according to StatsAmerica. More importantly is the most recent pace of population decline the community is observing. In the last decade, Bourbon County population has declined 3.4%. From 2000-2010 the community saw a 1.3% decline escalate to more a than double: 2.8% decline from 2010-2017.

The placemaking effort in Bourbon County involves our population of focus who are children, low-income families, and minorities. The beneficiaries of our work are the community members who live, work, and play in Bourbon County.  Bourbon County is a rural community, a historically disenfranchised geographic area with higher rates of poverty. Poverty is a driver of poor health outcomes and there are structural inequities in place that limit opportunities for reaching full health potential.

The problems of health inequity and social injustice are complex in nature and inextricably linked to key economic indicators. The solution requires an interdisciplinary and community-based response. We believe individuals and communities experiencing health inequity first-hand are best positioned to interact with policymakers, identifying issues and developing strategies that address social determinants of poor health.

The City of Uniontown is involved in this placemaking effort because it is located in public spaces, the City Park. The city council is actively involved in the process of these projects. Through this creative placemaking project we can build community pride, increase morale, and encourage healthy behaviors. These are mutual priorities of the City of Uniontown and The Healthy Bourbon County Action Team. Other beneficiaries take the additional role in becoming partners through our efforts to shift toward a healthy culture. These entities include the worksites, healthcare providers and organizations, educational institutions, governmental entities, and more.  Industry and business leaders look for good health and education services when making location decisions.  They also want to ensure the local labor force will meet their needs.  Investment in health equity projects and initiatives has the potential to yield dividends in the form of increased labor productivity and improved quality of life for residents.

Our solution is building healthy communities by transforming the power, building trust, and encouraging community participation.  Comprehensive strategy for change includes local organizing, strategic communication, community research, creating systems, and environmental changes.

The Healthy Bourbon County Action Team is involved in this initiative because we strive to increase access to healthy food and physical activity, promote commercial tobacco cessation, enhance quality of life, and encourage economic growth. Economic stability represents an individual’s ability to access resources such as food, housing, or healthcare, as well as creating a healthy business culture to help an employer attract and retain talent, reduce absenteeism and turnover, and improve productivity. The Healthy Bourbon County Action Team is an economic support organization that focuses on community development which includes making more livable welcoming neighborhoods. We are building connections between where a person lives (e.g., housing, neighborhood, and environment) and his or her health and well-being.

1. **THE HEALTHY BOURBON COUNTY ACTION TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER THIS MOU**

The HBCAT shall undertake the following activities:

* Education on what is deemed healthy and assistance with overall implementation;
* Publicity including, but not limited to, social media posts, press releases and recognition on the BCBSKS Pathways website (bcbsks.com/Pathways) and the HBCAT’s social media pages highlighting changes made related to this initiative;
* Work with the City of Uniontown to identify how the project will positively impact low-income families with children and low-income individuals as a specific sub-population of rural residents;
* Provide tobacco-free/vaping signage for use in the project;
* Use the hashtag #BCBSKSPathways in social media promotion relating to this effort;
* Recognize financial contributions provided by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas through *Pathways to a Healthy Kansas* initiative in any signage, social media, written documentation, or other forms of communication regarding the activities outlined in this MOU; and
* Opportunities for shared expertise and interaction with peers.
1. **CITY OF UNIONTOWN RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER THIS MOU**

The City of Uniontown shall undertake the following activities:

* Promote the City Park Enhancement placemaking effort to promotion of healthy eating and/or active living;
* City Commission will review and formally approve any proposed updates or changes to public property and the placemaking project;
* Work with the HBCAT to identify how the project will positively impact low-income families with children and low-income individuals as a specific sub-population of rural residents through commitment of intentional outreach to low-income predominately African American communities;
* Install signage to promote the space being commercial tobacco free, including vaping;
* Allow public access to the space;
* Maintain lighting fixtures, benches and other permanent structures put in place through Pathways funding for at least five (5) years;
* Recognize financial contributions provided by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas through *Pathways to a Healthy Kansas* initiative in any signage, social media, written documentation or other forms of communication regarding the activities outlined in this MOU;
* Share all policies with the coalition and BCBSKS to build a portfolio of best practices;
* Use the hashtag #BCBSKSPathways in social media promotion relating to this effort; and
* Complete an Impact Report one year after grant funding is approved to share your impact, successes, challenges and other lessons learned so that BCBSKS continues to improve its work with and support of communities throughout the state. The report request will be sent via email and can be completed by logging in to the BCBS portal.
1. **FUNDING**

The City of Uniontown may participate and take advantage of the resources that fit their needs, progress, and interest. The City of Uniontown will keep the HBCAT informed on progress toward the adoption of healthy changes outlined in this agreement.

In return for the Pathways to a Healthy Community Pledge –Placemaking Package, the City of Uniontown will become eligible for implementation grant funds to accomplish the minimum requirements listed under the “City of Uniontown Responsibilities under this MOU.” We understand that to receive an implementation grant an Implementation plan and budget must be submitted to BCBSKS with the grant application.

Partners to this MOU recognize that *Pathways* must be acknowledged as it relates to the activities outlined in this MOU, with specific attribution to any financial contributions provided by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas through *Pathways to a Healthy Kansas* initiative. This includes any signage, social media, written documentation or other forms of communication regarding the activities outlined in this MOU.

HBCAT is committed to funding a minimum of $10,000 towards these projects through Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas through Pathways to a Healthy Kansas.

If the cost of the project exceeds $10,000 the city is committed to working with HBCAT and community partners to bridge the gap.

**Risk Management**

The partners to this agreement are each responsible for any liability risks for their respective operations, including activities covered in this MOU.

**Non-discrimination**

Specifically relating to the creative placemaking projects and the collaboration outlined in this MOU, partners agree to not discriminate against persons by reason of their actual or perceived age, color, disability, familial status, gender identity, genetic information, national origin or ancestry, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, veteran status or any other factor protected by law.

**Duration**

Partners agree to start the creative placemaking projects by October, 2023 when the sustainability plan is presented to the council. The City of Uniontown agrees to maintain the creative placemaking projects for at least 5 years after the sustainability plan is established.

1. **EFFECTIVE DATE AND SIGNATURE**

This MOU shall be effective upon the signature of both parties' authorized officials. The HBCAT and the City of Uniontown indicate agreement by their signatures.

**Signatures and dates**

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Jody Hoener, President/CEO

The Healthy Bourbon County Action Team City of Uniontown