



# CENTER UPDATES

Spring 2026

<https://hhs.purdue.edu/crmh/>

## COMMUNITY PROJECTS IN ACTION: FIRST DOOR HOUSING

Montgomery County's United Way takes its mission to be the "first door" for community members' needs very seriously. The First Door Program makes it easier for individuals and families in Montgomery County to get connected to essential resources, such as housing, food, healthcare, legal assistance, financial support, and more. Sherrie Lacy, the program coordinator, and lists housing insecurity as one of the county's greatest needs and emphasizes that awareness of local resources can make a life-changing difference for clients.

Doctoral and undergraduate students developed a project plan, researched local housing options, and created an outreach script before reaching out to Montgomery County landlords for rental information. The resulting spreadsheet—filled with vital, up-to-date rental details—has made navigating housing resources more accessible at the local level. The Center's students are proud to contribute meaningful work that supports the community.

## UPCOMING

### BROWN BAG SESSION 12:00 - 1:00 PM

**Wednesday, May 13**

#### Youth, Health, & Care in Rural Communities

with Dr. Yumary Ruiz  
and Kathy Martin[Register Here](#)**Wednesday, June 10**

#### Current Trends in Tobacco Use: E-cigarettes and Vaping

with Dr. Bukola Peters  
and Tammy Koger[Register Here](#)

## AT A GLANCE



### EMMA TOWNSEND

SENIOR UNDERGRAD  
Department of Public Health

Emma is graduating in May with her bachelor's degree and has worked with the Center this semester as part of her undergraduate public health internship. Her primary focus has been developing youth sexual health education materials for rural and Indigenous communities in partnership with H.O.P.E. Testing located in Oklahoma.

In the long term, Emma hopes to pursue a career as a rural physician and is deeply grateful for the experiences she has had through the Center and the perspective her public health studies have provided, insights she believes will be invaluable as she moves forward.

## ONGOING PROJECTS

### Grants & Contracts

- Flex Rural Hospital contract with Indiana Department of Health

### Community-Based Organization Projects

- Local Mobile Pantry - data collection, program evaluation, and tool development
- Montgomery Co. United Way First Door - Housing data gathering
- Montgomery Co. Health Department messaging campaign, lead poison detection, campaign evaluation
- COACH Kids youth mentoring - program evaluation and data collection
- Immigration Project, partnering with Clinton County organizations

### Pilot Grants (read more on our website)

- Dr. Michael Heinz:
  - Addressing Untreated Hearing Loss in Rural and Migrant Populations
- Dr. Bhagyashree Katare:
  - Equity in Online Food Access



2025 marked the inaugural year of Purdue's ERA (Empowering Rural Advocates) student group. The group aims to introduce students to rural career opportunities, foster connections among rural students, and create meaningful opportunities to serve local rural communities.

## FIND US ON SOCIAL MEDIA! WE'RE ON

Look for Center information and resources, plus opportunities for faculty and local partners to make connections.