

YUBA-SUTTER, CALIFORNIA OFFICIALLY DESIGNATED AS A CERTIFIED BLUE ZONES COMMUNITY

*Five-Year Population Health Initiative
Drives Dynamic Upward Trend in
Regional Well-Being*

YUBA SUTTER, CA, UNITED STATES,
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Blue Zones announced today that
Yuba-Sutter, California has achieved
certified Blue Zones Community®

designation. Certification recognizes the community's comprehensive well-being transformation achieved through the Blue Zones Project, a first-of-its-kind population health initiative that brings evidence-based best practices in built environment, policy, and social connection to participating communities.

Launched locally through the sponsorship of Adventist Health, this regional initiative reshapes everyday environments to ensure healthy habits are the easiest choices, ultimately empowering community members to lead longer, more vibrant lives.

"Supporting Blue Zones Project has been an incredibly rewarding journey for Adventist Health, and seeing Yuba-Sutter earn this official certification validates the remarkable dedication of our entire region," said Chris Champlin, Network President at Adventist Health. "By backing initiatives that modernize public spaces, improve local policies, and make well-being accessible, we are establishing a legacy of health that will benefit our community for generations to come."

Since 2021, a broad coalition of local leaders, volunteers, and community organizations across Yuba-Sutter has collaborated to achieve certification status. Yuba-Sutter's overall community well-being score improved by one point since 2022; each point increase in well-being for a population leads to approximately a two percent reduction in Emergency Department visits and hospital utilization, and approximately a one percent reduction in total health care costs—an economic return that highlights the vast scalability of these community interventions. In addition:

- Community Well-Being is up 2.8-points since 2022



- Purpose Well-Being is up 2.7-points since 2022
- The number of residents who report living in Yuba-Sutter is the perfect place for them rose nearly 16% since 2022
- Cigarette use dropped by 30% to 2.8% of the population in 2026, down from 4% in 2022
- An estimated \$8.8 million in healthcare and workforce productivity savings across the community between 2021 and 2026
- \$6+ million in grant funding generated with support from Blue Zones Project

"Yuba-Sutter's official designation as a certified Blue Zones Community stands as a powerful testament to what can be achieved when an entire community unites behind a vision of health," said Shelly Trumbo, Chief Operating Officer of Blue Zones. "More than 12,600 residents rolled up their sleeves for this work, and the results speak for themselves: community well-being is up, tobacco use is down, \$8.8 million was gained in savings, and over \$6 million in grant funding was generated for the region. Yuba-Sutter's progress — in health, in the local economy, and in bringing people together — reflects the strength of this community."

By utilizing the Blue Zones Project framework, Yuba-Sutter has transformed local environments to naturally promote regular movement, better nutrition, deep social connections, and purposeful living. Notable regional impacts include:

- Broad Civic Engagement: Over 12,645 local citizens—representing more than 15 percent of the regional population—actively participated in Blue Zones Project events, including walking groups, purpose workshops, and plant-based cooking classes. Volunteers contributed upwards of 2,740 hours, delivering an estimated \$114,350 in localized value.
- Reshaped Workplaces: Fifteen worksites, representing a combined workforce of over 3,500 personnel, adopted progressive well-being frameworks. Improvements include establishing dedicated spaces for stress reduction ("downshifting"), creating employee gardens, launching health committees, and promoting short movement breaks.
- Healthier Learning Environments: Nineteen campuses across three school districts earned Blue Zones Project Approved™ status. Key interventions featured launching student well-being ambassador programs, developing hands-on nutritional education and school gardens, and chaperoned walks to and from school through the Blue Zones Project Walking School Bus program.
- Nutritious Dining Options: Ten local eateries achieved Blue Zones Project approval by revamping menus to feature healthier ingredients, conscious portion sizes, and nutritious alternatives, resulting in at least 47 new - Blue Zones-inspired dishes across the area.
- Well-being in the Aisles: Five local grocery stores streamlined healthy shopping by spotlighting wholesome ingredients with specialized signage, hosting live cooking demonstrations, distributing healthy recipes, and introducing designated Blue Zones checkout lanes that prominently feature items like fruit, nuts, and water.
- More than 78 new community policies and plans to enhance well-being. Notable community improvements include establishing the Yuba-Sutter Food Policy Council to identify and pursue opportunities to adopt healthy food policies, Safe Streets for All planning, and the engagement

of youth advocates in advancing tobacco policy initiatives to combat an escalating vaping epidemic.

- Greater economic investment. Since 2021, Yuba-Sutter has seen more than \$6 million in follow-on grant funding to support healthy policies using Blue Zones Project data and grant application assistance.

“Attaining this certification is a massive milestone that fills our entire region with immense pride,” said Dan Flores, Sutter County Supervisor/Assistant City Manager, Marysville. “The Blue Zones Project has radically shifted how we look at urban planning and municipal policy, creating safer streets and more vibrant gathering spaces. This isn't a finish line for Yuba-Sutter; it is a solid foundation that we will continue to build upon to guarantee a thriving future.”

Going forward, many programs initiated by Blue Zones Project will continue through the support of local partners and coalition members of Live Well Yuba-Sutter. Live Well carries the legacy of Blue Zones Project Yuba-Sutter forward—channeling five years of momentum into long-term, community-led change. It builds on what the community has already achieved by bringing people and partners together, aligning efforts across systems and sectors, and supporting the conditions that allow health and well-being to grow over time.

“This incredible achievement belongs entirely to our phenomenal Project team, our sponsors at Adventist Health, and the dedicated stakeholders across our community who gave their time and energy over the last five years,” said Marni Sanders, Executive Director of Blue Zones Project Yuba-Sutter. “While this marks the successful culmination of our formal certification process, our work is far from finished. We are eager to transition these initiatives seamlessly into Live Well Yuba-Sutter, carrying this vital momentum forward to protect and enrich our community's well-being for the long haul.”

For more information and updates, please visit yubasutter.bluezonesproject.com.

About Blue Zones Project

Blue Zones Project® is a community-led well-being improvement initiative designed to make healthy choices easier through permanent changes to a city's environment, policy, and social networks. Blue Zones Project is based on research by Dan Buettner, a National Geographic Fellow and New York Times best-selling author who identified five cultures of the world—or blue zones—with the highest concentration of people living to 100 years or older. Blue Zones Project incorporates Buettner's findings and works with cities to implement policies and programs that will move a community toward optimal health and well-being. Blue Zones launched the first pilot community in 2009 in Albert Lea, MN with groundbreaking results. The model has since been applied to more than 80 communities in the United States, impacting more than 10 million citizens. Participating communities have experienced double-digit drops in obesity and tobacco use and have saved millions of dollars in healthcare costs. For more information, visit bluezones.com.

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