

Voices for Healthy Kids Timeline

In 2012, the American Heart Association and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation joined together to fund Voices for Healthy Kids, which officially launched in 2013. This is a timeline of significant events along our journey.



American Heart Association.



2013

Held Signs of Progress event to showcase promising solutions to preventing childhood obesity

Awarded first strategic campaign fund grants

Launched the Strategic Advisory Committee to advise and inform Voices for Healthy Kids strategies, continuously strengthen the initiative's approach and mission impact, and convene leaders with a diversity of expertise and perspectives to influence the broader policy and systems change ecosystem in which it operates

Commissioned 19 national message research projects to better understand how to talk about the policy changes we wanted to see and equip campaigns with the tools to make policy change possible

2014

Adopted Targeted Universalism vision statement for healthy equity

Voices for Healthy Kids grantees won first campaigns on competitive foods, early care and education, procurement, safe routes to school, school marketing, shared use, sugary drinks and water access

William H. "Bill" Roach (National Chairperson of Board of Directors, American Heart Association, 2011-2012) installed as chair of Strategic Advisory Committee

2015

Finalized Health Equity Action Plan to ensure work was focused on communities experiencing biggest disparities

Released [Feeding Ourselves](#), which surveyed and reported on the state of Native American food access and health disparities

Brought together national partners and consortia to support Voices for Healthy Kids

2016

Reached \$10 million in campaign grants awarded

American Journal of Public Health published [evaluation](#) of Voices for Healthy Kids, showing active bill enactment increased by 50% in states where grantees were located

Voices for Healthy Kids grantees won first campaigns on complete streets, physical education appropriations, and healthy drinks in kids meals

Hosted first policy summits with a focus on complete streets, early care and education, healthy food access, and physical education

Launched Action Center with 300,000 online supporters, which allowed grassroots activists to support policy change at the tribal, state, and local level

2017

Launched new tagline: Making each day healthier for all children

Achieved 125th policy win

Reached \$20 million in campaign grants awarded

Co-funded Seeds of Native Health with the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community to support innovative nutrition-based, health-focused advocacy efforts in Native American communities

Al Royse (National Chairperson of Board of Directors, American Heart Association, 2015-2017) installed as chair of Strategic Advisory Committee

2018

Reached \$25 million in campaign grants awarded

California healthy kids meal bill, the first in the nation, passed with Voices for Healthy Kids' support

Launched Innovation, Equity, and Exploration workgroups to mobilize broad expertise, external perspectives, and advocacy capacity to develop best practices and opportunities to advance Voices for Healthy Kids policy areas

British Medical Journal [highlighted](#) Voices for Healthy Kids as a multisectoral collaboration model, citing work with 140 stakeholder organizations to advance policy changes that promote healthy weight for all US children and adolescents

Organized Health Equity Roundtables to apply a health equity lens to priority policy issues

Implemented the Fertile Ground Leadership Institutes with the Shakopee Tribe to deepen understanding of the root causes of health disparities in Indian Country

Released the Health Equity Message Guide to inspire decision-makers to embed equity in policy language

Began formal arrangement with equity consultant to support grantee needs and skill-building related to integrating health equity into campaign planning

Received support from Bloomberg Philanthropies to build momentum in the fight against sugary drinks

2019

Created a new health equity vision statement and Health Equity Action Plan with partners that focused on work externally and internally to implement equity into policies and procedures

Planned for and measured health equity impact of Voices for Healthy Kids' policy levers by changing research and evaluation approaches

Improved re-granting application and processes to be less white-dominant culture focused and dramatically increased grant applications from organizations led by and serving Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino/a, American Indian, Alaska Native, Asian American, and Pacific Islander communities

Launched targeted opportunity to bolster healthy school meals policy with support of the Rockefeller Foundation

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation began focused support on preemption and protection of local democracy

2020

Funded Fertile Ground Advocacy Campaign to support Native-led advocacy efforts in nutrition and health

Reached over 5,600 total requests for technical assistance, skill-building, and planning

With onset of COVID-19 pandemic, quickly pivoted to the needs of communities and provided \$1 million in COVID-19 Rapid Response grants to organizations in 19 states, Puerto Rico and the Lummi Nation to help children and families access healthy food, health care, and income supports

Donna Arnett (National President of the American Heart Association, 2012-2013) installed as chair of Strategic Advisory Committee

Launched internal staff health equity training series and ongoing staff coaching to increase knowledge, capacity, and ability to implement strategies that create equity both within the organization and the communities we seek to impact

Created the preemption policy fund backed by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, W.K. Kellogg Foundation, and The Rockefeller Foundation

2021

Launched the Advocacy Impact Pilot to support equity-centered, community-led policy campaigns in East Baton Rouge, LA; Gulfport, MS; Tulsa, OK; and Charleston, SC

Created Health Leaders for Healthy Kids, a diverse network of health care provider organizations (diabetes, oral health, pediatrics, etc.) committed to lending their voice to local policy campaigns to reduce sugary drink consumption

Released the [Racial Equity in Public Policy Guide](#) to advance equitable policies and conversations about structural racism

Since start of the initiative, helped to secure \$4.2 billion in public appropriations to support mission-related programs and services that address the root causes of childhood obesity and health inequities

Implemented Fair Start Index to guide grant dollars to communities with highest need and opportunity

Started Equity in Grantmaking project to ensure funding is directed to organizations with diverse leadership, and grants are authentically engaging with communities of color and families with low incomes

Released Sugary Drink Messaging for Policy Change: Audience Message Guide

Established the Healthy Hydration Collaborative with over 40 organizations to inspire more equitable policies and practices and generate momentum for the movement

Circulation published [Preemption: A Threat to Building Healthy, Equitable Communities](#) with co-author from Voices for Healthy Kids

2022

Voices for Healthy Kids grantees achieved 236th policy win

Revamped grant applications to ensure funding process is more accessible and equitable

Circulation published [Strengthening US Food Policies and Programs to Promote Equity in Nutrition Security](#) with co-authors from Voices for Healthy Kids

Became the staffing support for the National Collaborative for Infant and Toddlers, supporting policy change efforts to make sure all pregnant people, infants, and toddlers can thrive

Added community-based organizations and former Voices for Healthy Kids grantees to our Strategic Advisory Committee

Established inaugural Equity and Culture Cohort to better streamline equity and culture practices across the initiative

Increased capacity to focus on prenatal-to-three issues through the generous support of the Pritzker Children's Initiative

Began Community-Based Roundtables on improving access and utilization of SNAP in Miami, Los Angeles, and Fresno, CA, with the support of Amazon

The Bainum Family Foundation supported the commission of an early childhood advocacy analysis in Florida

● 2023

Current Opinion in Pediatrics [published](#) article about state-based policies to promote early childhood health and improve equity with co-authors from Voices from Healthy Kids

Released [Finding Commonalities and Solutions with Decision-Makers Guide](#) to open a space for conversation to advance policies that benefit all communities

Secured funding from the Conrad Hilton Foundation to support advocacy on behalf of the prenatal-to-three population and our coordination of the National Collaborative for Infants and Toddlers

Voices for Healthy Kids enters the world of federal advocacy on behalf of the National Collaborative for Infants and Toddlers

Voices for Healthy Kids and American Heart Association take on paid family and medical leave as a policy issue area

Achieved 10-year milestones: reached 400 campaign wins, awarded 523 total grants totaling \$46 million, funded 464 policy campaigns, secured \$7.2 billion in public appropriations, and impacted 298,240,360 people