



American
Heart
Association®

TAKING ACTION TO PREVENT OBESITY



Robert Wood Johnson
Foundation



Raising Our Voice

Voices for Healthy Kids 2014 Progress Report

Voices for Healthy Kids Annual Progress Report

Welcome Letter from Nancy Brown



Welcome to the first Voices for Healthy Kids Progress Report. This was an exciting and important year in the movement to reduce childhood obesity. We made progress in expanding collaborative efforts to help our nation's children achieve not only a healthy weight, but also a healthy lifestyle.

Thanks to the generous support and partnership of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the inaugural year of Voices for Healthy Kids set the stage for securing a healthier future for our nation's children. We began working to shape environments that make the healthy choice the easy choice for all kids, no matter where they live.

The American Heart Association is dedicated to helping communities across the country as they strive to improve access to fresh fruits and vegetables, build more parks and pedestrian-friendly streets, and help schools and families promote healthier lifestyles. I hope you enjoy learning about our work and I encourage you to join the movement as we further our commitment to reverse the childhood obesity epidemic and improve health among all children.

Nancy Brown
Chief Executive Officer
American Heart Association

"The inaugural year of Voices for Healthy Kids set the stage for a transformation of the health of our nation's children."

Introduction

The mission of Voices for Healthy Kids is to strengthen and support state and local advocates in advancing evidence-based obesity prevention policies in order to reverse the childhood obesity epidemic.

Voices for Healthy Kids is a collaboration between the American Heart Association and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation that works to engage, organize, and mobilize people to improve the health of their communities by helping children achieve a healthy weight.

A united commitment to the future of our children's health.

Through continuation of capacity-building efforts and strategically guided, unified momentum, Voices for Healthy Kids is poised for at least 125 policy changes by 2017—changes that will result in healthier children, and a healthier future for our nation.

This growth is supported by core components of Voices for Healthy Kids, which include focused national leadership in six policy areas, a robust Strategic Campaign Fund, high impact technical assistance and training, subject matter expertise and foundational work provided by our hubs, collaboration with countless partners across the nation, and a solid management and field team that will energetically drive results.

CORE INITIATIVE COMPONENTS

- National leadership in six policy areas
- Strategic campaign fund
- Campaign execution at the national, state and local levels
- Technical assistance and training
- Subject matter expertise provided by hubs
- Collaboration with partners across the nation
- Management and field team



MORE THAN 39% OF LATINO & AFRICAN-AMERICAN CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS AGES TWO TO 19 ARE OVERWEIGHT OR OBESE, COMPARED WITH 28% OF WHITE CHILDREN.

Throughout all we do, we ensure that Voices for Healthy Kids considers those who are most affected by the challenges we seek to address; and provide additional opportunities and resources for those organizations and communities that can make an impact and may need early-stage support to support advocacy efforts. In the area of policy development, the concept of targeted universalism - using targeted strategies to reach universal goals - is an integral part of our planning and implementation.

We have the potential to impact hundreds of millions of Americans through our continued work together.

Childhood obesity is now the number one concern among parents. The nation is poised for change, the field is eager, and we are ready to raise our voice and intensify our action.

RESEARCHERS ESTIMATE 16.3% OF CHILDREN & ADOLESCENTS AGES 2 TO 19 ARE OBESE, AND 31.9% ARE OBESE OR OVERWEIGHT IN THE U.S.

THE GREATEST BURDEN OF THE EPIDEMIC IS AMONG COMMUNITIES OF COLOR.

Advocacy in Action

Engaging, Organizing and Mobilizing

Working with the Voices for Healthy Kids hub leads and other partners from the united movement, we ensure that advocates have the needed tools and technical assistance to strategically plan, advance and implement effective advocacy issue campaigns. This is accomplished by synthesizing policy research, communications, grassroots and advocacy resources already developed in addition to creating and providing resources never before available to the national movement.

Voices for Healthy Kids is organized with three integrated components:

- National leadership and coordination
- Tactical field support and strategic field consultation
- Campaign operations

VOICES FOR HEALTHY KIDS

National
Leadership
&
Coordination

Tactical
Field
Support &
Strategic
Consultation

Campaign
Operations

Infrastructure for Long-term Success

The most vital accomplishment in year one was building an infrastructure for immediate action and long-term success. Over the course of several months, we united staff, allies and experts from around the national movement, developed tools for the field, processed funding requests and awarded grants, and provided day-to-day support for grantees.



Our Progress: The Numbers

\$3.46 million

22 Proactive
Campaigns
Funded

\$301,415

5 Rapid Response
Campaigns
Funded

2,281 Toolkits Requested from Advocates

74,270

Advocacy Actions Taken
on PreventObesity.net



7

Regional
Advocacy
Trainings

250+ Advocates Trained in the Field

Collaborative Leadership with Strategic Focus

Our Model to Execute and Support Campaign Successes

Stronger Together.

Our focus is on developing policy strategies and capacity to support grantees and further unite the movement. This strategy leverages the strengths of our expert organizations, while minimizing weaknesses. We use a national partnership model to unite the American Heart Association and partners' leadership and history of winning campaigns to develop a comprehensive and decisive campaign plan, including individual plans for each target area, using evidence and current intelligence from the field.

The national partnership model is designed to:

- Drive greater alignment of national partners with the approach and policy priorities of Voices for Healthy Kids to support the short- and long-term success of the movement.
- Develop strong partnerships that create targeted health impact through policy change and implementation for populations with the highest health challenges.
- Build relationships with new and existing national partners
- that can strengthen Voices for Healthy Kids policy work and bring new policy/advocacy resources for national, state, local and tribal advocacy issue campaigns.

Our Priorities and Experts:

To reverse the childhood obesity epidemic, all young people must have opportunities to move more and eat healthy. Voices for Healthy Kids focuses our efforts in six evidence-based priority areas in order to ensure this is possible.

THE ROLE OF OUR HUBS

- Provide policy expertise to grantees
- Help build coalitions
- Provide technical assistance to field
- Communications support
- Develop evidence-based campaigns
- Address health equity

FOOD ACCESS

Expert: The Food Trust

Priority: Increasing access to affordable, healthy foods.

ACTIVE PLACES

Expert: Safe Routes to School National Partnership

Priority: Increasing access to parks, playgrounds, walking paths, bike lanes and other opportunities to be physically active.

HEALTHY DRINKS

Expert: The Rudd Center for Food Policy & Obesity

Priority: Reducing consumption of sugary beverages.

SMART SCHOOL FOODS

Expert: The Pew Charitable Trusts

Priority: Improving the nutritional quality of foods and beverages in schools.

MARKETING MATTERS

Expert: Berkeley Media Studies Group

Priority: Protecting children from marketing of unhealthy foods and beverages.

ACTIVE KIDS OUT OF SCHOOL

Expert: YMCA of the USA

Priority: Increasing children's physical activity levels when they are out of school.

Collaborative Leadership with Strategic Focus

Our Model to Execute and Support Campaign Successes

Our policy strategies provide state and local coalitions with toolkits that detail effective ways to recruit advocates and engage them on each of our strategies to ensure success at the policy level.



Voices for Healthy Kids is designed to ensure that grantees managing campaigns are supported with strategic and effective advocacy tools, which requires the best resources and expertise at their fingertips. Recognizing campaigns face numerous challenges, we develop comprehensive toolkits that include the most effective tools for advocacy as well as provide access to consultants with expertise in media advocacy, grassroots advocacy, and policy research.

In our first year, Voices for Healthy Kids released four toolkits:

ACTIVE PLACES: Unlock the Doors

HEALTHY DRINKS: Don't Sugarcoat Our Future

SMART SCHOOL FOODS: Make Food Choices an Easy "A"

FOOD ACCESS: What's in Store for Us?

**2,281 ADVOCATE
TOOLKIT REQUESTS**

Strategic Field Consultation

Building capacity in state and local coalitions to win issue advocacy campaigns is at the heart of Voices for Healthy Kids.

Technical assistance staff and partners are the go-to support system for the current funded coalitions as well as for those who are seeking funding. These experts prepare the field for action through technical assistance, training, materials and resources in our specific issues, as well as provide tactical support and consultation for campaigns.

In our first year, our team developed grantees and other state, local and tribal coalitions and advocacy organizations toward strategically targeted goals. We hosted seven Regional Advocacy Trainings to teach more than 250 advocates from 107 organizations about the initiative and to train advocates in direct action organizing.



Since its launch, the Strategic Campaign Fund has supported 22 campaigns, with more than \$3.4 million focused on multiple policy priority areas.

Strategic Campaign Funds

The Strategic Campaign Fund innovatively builds on the success of similar funds pioneered under partnerships between the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, American Heart Association and other public health partners. The Strategic Campaign Fund was created to provide top priority campaign support to strong state, local and tribal obesity policy campaigns, which often lack funds for important tactics such as public polling, phone banking, advertising, communications, and social media.

Since its launch, the Strategic Campaign Fund has supported 22 proactive campaigns, with over \$3.4 million focused on multiple policy priority areas. We anticipate policy wins to result from some of these campaigns in 2015, with others offering future results.

In our second year, the Strategic Campaign Fund will increase to \$4.3 million in proactive and reactive grants for state, local, and tribal obesity policy campaigns. The American Heart Association will commit an additional \$1.1 million in Year 2 for strategic lobbying support, totaling \$4.8 million available for grant awards during the second year.

As Voices for Healthy Kids continues to work with state, local and tribal coalitions to support public policy change, these funds will be strategically invested in order to make a game-changing impact on the childhood obesity epidemic, with particular focus on communities that are disproportionately affected.

CHANGING COMMUNITIES

Voices for Healthy Kids played a role in building capacity among grassroots organizations to sustain efforts, particularly those in underserved communities facing the greatest needs. We have already started to see policy success:

- **Minnesota** secured \$1 million in SRTS infrastructure and \$250,000 in non-infrastructure funding this past legislative session.
- The Arizona State Legislature passed Senate Bill 1336 limiting the civil liability for schools that provide access to their facilities for community recreational use.
- San Francisco now requires city-owned bicycles for low-income community use.
- Maryland passed legislation eliminating sugar-sweetened beverages from childcare centers.
- The Healthy Dine Nation Act in Navajo Nation eliminated a 5 percent sales tax on fruits, vegetables and water.
- In Pennsylvania, state transportation funding passed with \$2 million in appropriations for multi-modal programs and infrastructure.

Success in Action

Over the past year, Voices for Healthy Kids has succeeded in raising voices, changing communities and building collaboration.

PreventObesity.net

PreventObesity.net is the only national online network of people solely dedicated to reversing the childhood obesity epidemic. It connects leaders across the movement with supporters engaged in advocacy efforts to implement policies that will help reduce childhood obesity nationwide.

PreventObesity.net offers tools, services and support to the people and organizations who are working to ensure children everywhere can eat healthier and become more physically active. PreventObesity.net supports the work of Voices for Healthy Kids and is designed to maximize the advocacy reach of the American Heart Association's campaign against childhood obesity at the national, state and local levels.

In our first year, PreventObesity.net completed four campaigns.



ACTIVE PLACES: 10,802 individuals took action in the Safe Routes to School advocacy campaign *Walk the Walk, Mr. Secretary*.

HEALTHY DRINKS: 1,200 supporters voted on ways to increase youth water consumption through the *Increasing Water Intake* campaign.

SMART SCHOOL FOODS: Advocates submitted nearly 60,000 comments on The Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act because of the Food Marketing in Schools campaign *If You Can't Sell It, You Shouldn't Market It*.

FOOD ACCESS: The *Food Access Challenge* campaign educated 7,178 individuals about healthy food financing.

The weekly newsletter to over 3,500 PreventObesity.net leaders, *Inside Track*, continues to provide real-time news to the leaders of the movement and is now in alignment with the goals and priorities of the initiative.

Success in Action

REACHING ADVOCATES

We continue to build public support and a national grassroots movement through digital media channels.

The Voices for Healthy Kids media newsroom ensures we can seamlessly send and track our news releases to national reporters. In total, there have been over 60,000 views of our 26 press releases, media statements and feature stories.

Our social media accounts continue to gain traction with over 1,000 people joining us on Facebook and Twitter due to strategic engagement in national social media forums.



American Heart Association CEO Nancy Brown and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation CEO Risa Lavizzo-Mourey at Signs of Progress.

SIGNS OF PROGRESS

Voices for Healthy Kids hosted “Signs of Progress” in Washington, DC in July 2013. The event highlighted communities that have successfully addressed childhood obesity through policy efforts. Over 350 people attended the event in person and an additional 600 attended the webcast. The media tour reached roughly 2.7 million people in targeted regional markets.

ENGAGING PASSIONATE LEADERS

Voices for Healthy Kids works to convene, unite and engage with other national movement leaders for strategic advice, coalition advancement and to build sustainability within the childhood obesity advocacy movement. The Strategic Advisory Committee (SAC) functions as a national coalition with a mission to advance coordinated advocacy campaigns focused on the childhood obesity policy priorities established by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and American Heart Association. The SAC comprises 19 partner organizations:

- American Cancer Society
- Cancer Action Network
- Active Living By Design
- Berkeley Media Studies Group
- Bridging the Gap
- ChangeLab Solutions
- Healthy Eating Research
- MomsRising
- NAACP
- National Council of La Raza
- Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity
- Safe Routes to School National Partnership
- Salud! America
- The American Academy of Pediatrics
- The Food Trust
- The Notah Begay III Foundation
- The Pew Charitable Trusts
- The Praxis Project
- The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
- YMCA of the USA



OUR FUTURE

Moving forward, Voices for Healthy Kids will continue to empower communities to build a strong culture of health and achieve health equity. Our focus on collaboration, evidence-based expertise and engagement of passionate leaders will ensure that kids of all backgrounds have opportunities to access safe places to play and affordable, healthy foods.

Voices for Healthy Kids will continue to engage, organize and mobilize communities to help children achieve a healthy weight and create a health-focused culture. We are proud to partner with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and are grateful that our collaboration continues.

*"We are committed to the future of our children's health.
Every child deserves an equal opportunity to achieve a healthy weight."
- Jill Birnbaum, Executive Director, Voices for Healthy Kids*

