

Fairbanks African-American Health Initiative
Express Outreach Award
Funded By the National Network of Libraries of Medicine,
Pacific Northwest Region

Submitted by:
Alaska Health Fair
Main Office - PO Box 221267
Anchorage, Alaska 99522
907-278-0234

Phyllis Tugman-Alexander
AHF Rural Program Director
1949 Gillam Way, Suite E, Rm 414
Fairbanks, AK 99701

Phone: 907-374-6853

Fax: 907-374-6854

ahfrur@gci.net

Project Activity July 15, 2005 through January 14, 2006

Report as of 2-28-06

1. Fairbanks African-American Health Initiative (FAAHI)
Express Outreach Award

The impetus for this collaborative effort was conceived in the summer of 2005 to offer Health Information Resources to a designated population of the Greater Fairbanks Area; specifically the African-American Community. Participating Agencies included the Alaska Health Fair, State of Alaska Public Health, the JP Jones Community Development Center, the Noel Wien Library and the University of Alaska Fairbanks, Institute of Arctic Biology.

Early in the project it was determined that in order to present Health Education Information to that particular population we would need to assess which Health Education Topics that segment of the community felt was important, how currently that information is accessed, and how that information and additional resources might be made available to the community. To that end FAAHI Committee members arranged to present their request to a consortium of pastors from five predominately African-American churches who routinely meet monthly. At that meeting, and through subsequent follow-up letters, opinions about which methods of reaching African-Americans on Health Education topics were disseminated and future contact persons were identified.

Our goal was ostensibly to increase participation/ awareness in Health Education Activities within the African American Community. We had a good start on accomplishing that goal but the numbers are obviously something that will need to be built upon yearly to reach the level of participation we would like. A goal of including 500 African Americans in our combined events was not reached.

2 Fairbanks North Star Borough - encompasses 7,361 square miles and 4.7 million acres, so we like to tell Texans that size does matter, and that our borough is larger than the state of Texas. Both the city of Fairbanks and the city of North Pole are included in the Fairbanks North Star Borough population of 82,000. The City of Fairbanks (whose city limits do not include a large portion of the population who claim Fairbanks as home) population is credited with only 28,000 and the City of North Pole is credited with less than 3,000.

3. The Fairbanks Regional Public Health Center, the Noel Wien Library, The JP Jones Community Development Ctr. and the Alaska Health Fair are participating agencies in this project. We began meeting in July 2005 planning a series of focus groups, library events, and an African American Health Fair, with a follow-up event. Since that follow-up event in January 2006 the group as a whole has not met, although we cross paths frequently. It was decided that everyone would participate next year in an African-American Health Fair IF we can find a local "Site Coordinator" for the event. We did not reach our goal in the number of African American participants at any of the events we sponsored. We believe despite our best efforts, that we did not reach that population because we are not "of" that population. With one exception all the consortium members are white, and expecting our one lone African American to produce hundreds of African Americans at our events just wasn't realistic, and I wonder how much pressure she felt. We are all committed to searching for a

Site Coordinator so that we can offer at least one library event and a health fair next year whose target population will be African American.

4. Training Offered:

Library Events -

July 6th 2005 - "Medline Info Class" two hour class at the Noel Wien Library was open to all, and was attended by 30 persons primarily from the Fairbanks Regional Public Health Ctr., and the Fairbanks staff person for Alaska Health Fair.

September 19th - Focus Group #1 at the JP Jones Community Development Center. Eleven participants, 8 of whom were African American chosen from various churches to attend to brainstorm health topics they believed were most important to the community. Conducted by Dr. Elaine Drew, UAF anthropologist with the Ak. Native Health Research Department. The focus group was held at the JP Jones Community Development Center, a local community center situated in an ethnically diverse neighborhood whose mission is to serve the needs of the surrounding area which is predominantly African-American

Saturday, January 14th, 2006 - two hour event whose impetus was to draw folks in who had attended the African American Health Fair and had received their blood test results reporting their cholesterol, glucose etc. We believed that individuals would be inspired to make lifestyle changes in diet and exercise when they had their blood test results in hand, and would therefore be curious to find out more. The invitation to the library event was included in the envelope with their blood test results. Dr. Charles Steiner

was one of the presenters, a local physician who has two teenage daughters with diabetes and is easily recognizable as one of Fairbanks' best resources in diabetes and kidney disease. During his presentation he verbally and in writing recommended websites that individuals should access when seeking health education information on-line. Dr. Steiner explained to the audience of about 40, that they should not be lured onto sites other than Medline, and two others he recommended, because consumers need to know that the sites they frequent are dispensing peer reviewed information and are not selling products or services. Dietitian Sandy Burnham did an awesome presentation on "Making Fast Food Healthy" where she compared fat, calories, protein & cost of Fred Meyer deli roasted chicken, bagged salad and bread versus a burger, fries and soda meal from McDonalds. Thirty nine people participated in the "Library Scavenger Hunt" after the presentations which quizzed participants about Medline access, and locating other library resources. Of the 39 participants approximately five or six looked to be of African American descent.

5. Training Sites:

Noel Wien Library - self explanatory

JP Jones Community Development Center - located in a predominantly African American neighborhood, the JP Jones Center hosts various classes for youth and elders, and can be rented to the public.

6. Exhibits; On Saturday, November 19, 2005 an African American Health Fair was held at the JP Jones Community Development Ctr. from 8 am to 2:00 pm. Of the 40 participants who filled out

questionnaires and evaluations, ethnicity was reported as: 1 Ak. Native, 11 African American, 4 Asian Pacific, 21 Caucasian, 1 Spanish Origin, 1 "other". There were 18 Exhibitors: Alzheimers, Breast Cancer Detection Center, FNSB Public Library, Fbks. Diabetes Ctr. Fbks. Reg. Public Health, Interior Ak. Cancer Assn., Interior Com Health Ctr., Lifeline, Life Ak. Donor Services, SAFE Kids, TVC Bone Density, UAF Tanana Valley Campus Allied Health Careers Info. Hospice, Planned Parenthood, Strong Women,

7. Resource Materials:

The FAHII committee developed a Community Survey, which took longer than the Magna Carta to agree upon, and was mailed to 300 residents on the JP Jones Community Development Ctrs., newsletter mailing list. A display ad was created for the African American Health Fair and a display ad was created for the Library Even Follow-up.

8. Web sites< URL's - nada

9. Document delivery and reference services - nada

10. Approaches and interventions used; At the beginning of the project we believed that we needed to access the African American community through 5 predominantly African American churches. We did this by phoning, writing, and offering presentations at each individual church, which was a bit more labor intensive than we wanted. We discovered that regardless of whether a consortium of pastors have much in common, they seldom agree on anything. We determined that we needed to

locate honest to goodness health oriented individuals from these congregations who would volunteer at their respective churches to promote health ed activities.

11. Evaluation: We knew we could pull off numerous quality events offering health education resources and fun.....but what we couldn't do was get the number of African American participants we wanted. The events offered were all quality affairs with the best information and speakers available, but we didn't reach the numbers we'd hoped to reach.
12. Problems or barriers encountered: We were never successful in gaining access and acceptance in the African American community so our events were not well attended by our "target' population.
13. Continuation plans: Each of the participating agencies is more than willing to offer one Medline Library Event, one African American Health Fair, and one Library Event Follow up during academic year 06 -07 with the absolute condition that a local coordinator be found.
14. Impact: The impact on our local Noel Wien Library was probably negligible. Their librarians indicate the same number of African American patrons in walk through traffic this year as last year.
15. Recommendations: search for and include at least half committee members of African American ethnicity.
16. Responses to follow-up questions
 1. Original Goals & Objectives Met: We offered quality events as proposed in the original project, we were unsuccessful in getting those quality events attended by the audience we wanted.

2. Significant lessons: We definitely needed at least half of the participating committee members to be of African American descent if we hoped to reach that particular segment of our community.
3. What would you change? Increase the size and (literally) the make up of the committee to include the population we were hoping to serve.
4. Advice you'd give? If active committee members from the population you hope to reach cannot be found to participate in planning events, realistically evaluate the success you think you can have without their input.