



OBESITY

SUCCESSSES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR POPULATION-LEVEL PREVENTION AND CONTROL

2009

Success Stories

Michigan: Building Healthy Communities

Michigan's Building Healthy Communities Project is designed to improve the environment and change policies to make it easier for residents to be healthy. Local health departments were supported through funding and technical assistance to form community coalitions and develop 3-year plans for creating more opportunities for their residents to engage in healthful eating, physical activity, and tobacco-free lifestyles. Coalitions included representatives from local transportation, zoning and planning departments, law enforcement, the YMCA, hospitals, universities, nonprofit organizations, news media outlets, in addition to farmers, residents, public officials, and city engineers.

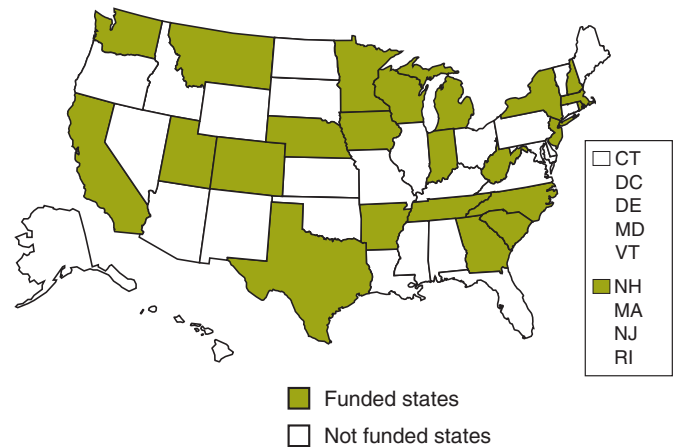
The Building Healthy Communities Project achieved significant success in making it easier for Michigan residents to be healthy by

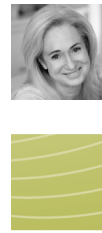
- Creating or enhancing 11 trails covering 58.6 miles.
- Enhancing 7 parks with amenities such as new equipment, benches, and lighting.
- Providing residents with 14,000 walking maps.
- Conducting 129 community fitness classes.
- Opening 5 new farmers' market locations with the ability to process Electronic Benefit Transfer capabilities for processing for food stamps.
- Creating 7 new school and community gardens.
- Distributing 5,000 coupon books to low-income seniors to redeem for fresh fruits and vegetables.

Texas: Farm to Work Delivers

In 2005, less than one quarter of Texas adults ate the minimum amount of fruits and vegetables recommended for good health. To increase access to fresh produce, the Texas Department of State Health Services Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity Prevention Program worked with the department's Building Healthy Texans Employee Wellness Program to create a Farm to Work program. This program enables employees at 10 Austin-area work sites to purchase fresh local produce, which is delivered weekly to their work site. Coordination with local farmers is handled by the Sustainable Food Center, a nonprofit organization. Participation is easy—employees order on a week-by-week basis, with no subscription required. Orders are prepaid through a secure server so no money is handled onsite. A Farm to Work tool kit was created and disseminated. Other state agencies and private companies in Texas are now implementing similar programs. *(continued on next page)*

States Funded Through CDC's Nutrition and Physical Activity and Obesity (NPAO) Cooperative Agreement Program





Employees took advantage of the program and saved money. In 1 year, 1,700 employees participated; 82,000 pounds of fresh local produce were delivered; and Central Texas farmers made \$160,000 in sales. An informal cost comparison showed that grocery store produce was more expensive than the Farm to Work produce.

California: California Convergence Partnership

Modeled after the national Convergence Partnership, the California Convergence is a statewide initiative that provides a unique opportunity not only to accelerate the movement to prevent obesity in California, but to promote learning and synergy across programs by bringing together seven separate funders—The California Endowment, Kaiser Permanente, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the California Department of Public Health, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The California Convergence partnership strategically connects existing resources, and creates an effective learning community that can take action and share information, tools, and resources across initiatives and funding streams to create healthy environments where people can thrive.

To create healthier communities across California, the California Convergence pursues the following goals:

- Shift the public and political discussion regarding obesity prevention to emphasize improving nutrition and physical activity environments.
- Accelerate local and state policy efforts to change nutrition and physical activity environments to improve health.
- Strengthen the network of leaders in California that are on the front lines in developing and implementing strategies to improve food and activity environments.
- Increase opportunities for leaders and community coalitions to build their capacity and leadership skills to support this work.

Through the California Convergence, leaders from 26 communities are working collectively to develop a common policy agenda, build a statewide communication infrastructure, influence funding strategies, and generate public revenue to support their work including the following:

- **Policy Change.** Convene local and state policy advocates to support local—and eventual statewide—adoption of high-impact policy strategies.
- **State Conference.** Bring leaders together in a statewide conference to share strategies and lessons, resources, and tools.
- **Leadership Building and Peer Networking.** Create opportunities for local leaders to learn from each other.
- **Skill Building.** Communicate policy and systems change issues to decision makers and the public.
- **Growing the Movement.** Prepare local leaders to participate in the 2009 Childhood Obesity Prevention Conference.

