

The Steps Program in Clark County, Washington

Funding Period: 2003–2008

CDC's Steps Program funds states, cities, and tribal groups to implement community-based chronic disease prevention programs to reduce the burden of obesity, diabetes, and asthma by addressing three related risk factors: physical inactivity, poor nutrition, and tobacco use. Steps-funded programs are showing what can be done locally in schools, work sites, communities, and health care settings to promote healthier lifestyles and help people make long-lasting and sustainable changes that can reduce their risk for chronic diseases.

Background

Washington's Clark County, just across the Columbia River from Portland, Oregon, is one of the fastest growing counties in the state. It covers 628 square miles in southwestern Washington and has a population of 415,000, 16% of whom are employed in the Portland metro area. Almost half (48%) of the county's residents live in unincorporated areas. The median household income is \$50,836, and almost 12% of residents live below the federal poverty level (2005 U.S. Census Bureau estimates). The target population includes adults, school-age children, and low-income families.

Spotlight on Success

- The Clark County Steps Program, in collaboration with the nation's vending industry, helped launch a new nationwide health-oriented vending program in April 2008. The new program, called Fit Pick™, includes a host of vending materials designed to educate consumers about products that meet specific nutritional standards. The program provides stickers that can be placed in front of products that meet the standards, other materials to help educate consumers, and a list of products that meet the standards. In addition to the materials created by the vending industry, the Clark County Steps team created a Web site, promotional materials, and a 65-page tool kit for vending companies and consumer sites. The Clark County initiative involves local work sites, schools, government agencies, food distributors, and the four largest vending operators in the area.
- The Steps Program helped revise the Clark County Trails and Bikeway Plan and establish long-term sustainability for building and maintaining trails and bikeways for the next 20 years. The Clark County Steps Program and its partners also created a portable, user-friendly walking guide that provides detailed information on 25 different walking routes, as well as health information, activity logs, maps, and personal success stories. Since receiving the *Walkaround* guide, users report they have gone on 3 to 5 additional trail walks, and usage of a riverfront trail has increased 36%. Read more about this successful program at www.cdc.gov/steps/success_stories/pdf/clark_county.pdf.

Community Partnerships

Community Choices, a nonprofit organization, mobilizes and coordinates the Steps initiative and works collaboratively with more than 80 organizations and 400 individuals representing schools, businesses, health care organizations, other nonprofit organizations, government agencies, and community leaders. The Steps Leadership Team includes representatives from health care systems, government agencies, schools, the YMCA, university cooperative extension service, restaurants, academic institutions, information technology companies, parks and recreation departments, health insurance plans, and low-income housing, as well as individual young people, civic planners, and community leaders.

Contact

Steps to a HealthierWA—Clark County
Community Choices
Telephone: 360-567-1087
www.stepstohealthierclarkco.org