

# The Steps Program in Santa Clara County, California

Funding Period: 2004–2009

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

The majority of Santa Clara County residents are members of racial or ethnic minority groups, who often experience disparities in access to health care and higher rates of chronic diseases. The county's population is 53% Hispanic or Latino, 24% Asian, 18% non-Hispanic white, and 3% non-Hispanic black or African American. The median household income is \$76,686, and about 8% of county residents live below the federal poverty level (2005 U.S. Census Bureau estimates). The Santa Clara County Steps Program is working with local leaders to build a healthier community through health promotion efforts in work sites, health care settings, and 66 county schools.

## Spotlight on Success

The Santa Clara County Steps Program developed and implemented a community engagement model for one Hispanic San Jose neighborhood that can be replicated in other neighborhoods. The program trained 19 local *promotores* (Spanish-speaking health workers) to use a standardized survey tool to collect information about their neighborhood's access to healthy foods and physical activity venues. After the data were analyzed, the *promotores* helped interpret and present the information to groups of neighbors, colleagues, and community members in several forums. As a result, gaining access to a neighborhood farmers' market became a community priority, and 56% of those involved in the process expressed interest in helping set up a local farmers' market. The participation of local residents in data collection, interpretation, and presentation gave the community direct access to valuable information that empowered individual involvement and served as a catalyst for personal growth and community change.

## Community Partnerships

The Steps Program in Santa Clara County partners with local government agencies and many other organizations, including Kaiser Permanente, Silicon Valley corporations, and health-related organizations in Mexico. Ongoing Steps Leadership Team meetings provide an opportunity for community partners to share information and strengthen ties.

## Contact

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