

# The Steps Program in Cochise County, Arizona

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

Cochise County is large and diverse—with a population of 126,160, it encompasses 6,215 square miles of land and approximately 28 communities including Benson, Bisbee, Douglas, Sierra Vista, Tombstone, and Willcox. Based on 2003 population estimates, nearly 28% of residents are Hispanic or Latino. The median household income is \$36,296; nearly 17% of residents live below the federal poverty level (2005 U.S. Census Bureau estimates) and about 17% also do not have health insurance. Many Cochise County communities are federally designated as Medically Underserved Areas. The Steps Program's efforts target underserved populations in predominantly rural areas that are most impacted by chronic disease. These populations include racial and ethnic minority groups, people living below the federal poverty level, adults and the elderly, and children and adolescents who are overweight or at risk for overweight.

## Spotlight on Success

The Steps Program in Cochise County has empowered parents and other local residents to advocate for increased physical activity and nutrition education in schools, day care centers, and youth centers countywide. In addition, Steps implemented the Washington State Dairy Council's Healthy Habits for Life program for woman, who traditionally purchase and prepare foods for their families—participants reported eating more than three additional servings of vegetables and two more servings of fruits each week, decreasing their whole and 2% milk consumption, increasing their 1% and skim milk consumption, and cooking more often with canola oil than with shortening and butter. Read Cochise County's success story in *The Steps Program in Action*, available at [www.cdc.gov/steps/success\\_stories/pdf/cochise.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/steps/success_stories/pdf/cochise.pdf).

## Community Partnerships

The Cochise County Steps Program is a collaborative partnership that involves 13 community organizations, 10 school districts, individual community members, and leaders from various public- and private-sector organizations. Cochise County has three Special Action Groups/Community Coalitions that are actively engaged in developing and implementing local policy and organizational practice change in support of healthy lifestyles. These coalitions comprise a variety of members from local public- and private-sector agencies, organizations, and institutions.

## Contact

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[www.co.cochise.az.us/health/healthdepartment/steps.htm](http://www.co.cochise.az.us/health/healthdepartment/steps.htm)