



Pioneering Healthier Communities

YMCA OF THE USA

Purpose

To develop a community-driven project to address the public health crisis in the United States

Target Population

All populations in the 64 participating communities

Goals

- To raise awareness and strengthen the framework for communitywide and national movements to reverse such unhealthy trends as physical inactivity and obesity
- To find cost-effective ways to educate and mobilize communities and replicate the success of other community-based initiatives
- To identify practical, replicable and sustainable tools for healthy living and informed decision making
- To build complementary local and national efforts
- To develop and initiate public policy priorities for communities, states and the nation

Years in Operation

2004 – present

Structure and Operations

All participating communities have implemented programs to reach out to their target populations. Communities must attend the national conference, build an action plan, and implement change. A training institute has also been established to provide a place where community leaders can learn from other participating communities and share ideas.⁶⁹

Specific examples include:

- Clearwater, Fla. — Changes made in local after-school programs ultimately led to state legislation requiring that all public school elementary students receive at least 150 minutes of physical education per week.
- Attleboro, Mass. — The YMCA of Attleboro worked to change zoning laws within the town to include more sidewalks in development projects, because sidewalks spur physical activity and create safe routes for children to walk to school.⁷⁰

Funding

Funding for the program has been included the President's budgets; communities also receive funding from local grants and other key partners.

For More Information

Additional information is available online:

http://www.ymca.net/activateamerica/activate_america_leadership.html