

Project Title: New Jersey Partnership for Healthy Kids-Camden

Application I.D.: 69140

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PROBLEM STATEMENT:

The New Jersey Partnership for Healthy Kids-Camden (NJPHK-C) recognizes the poor rankings of Camden's youth on many health indicators such as weight, physical activity and healthy eating. Of the ten major neighborhoods in Camden, seven reported to have 35%-50% of overweight public school students, according to Rutgers, Center for State Health Policy. It is for this reason that The New Jersey Partnership for Healthy Kids-Camden is committed and continues to demonstrate activities to advancing policy and environmental change to reverse the childhood obesity rate in the City of Camden.

PROJECT:

In 2009, the City of Camden was chosen as one of five target communities to implement New Jersey Partnership for Healthy Kids. Since its inception, New Jersey Partnership for Healthy Kids-Camden has focused on building, implementing and strengthening childhood obesity prevention strategies to support access to healthy foods and increase opportunities for safe physical activity for children in Camden. Working under the co-director leadership of the YMCA of Burlington and Camden Counties and United Way in Camden County, the Partnership has adopted a collective impact model that consists of a broad, local coalition of stakeholders to implement a comprehensive strategic plan, or common agenda, aimed at advancing policy and environmental change to reverse the childhood obesity rate in the City of Camden. Our key partner, Campbell Soup Company and its Healthy Communities Initiative, has been a vital collaborator, contributor and supporter of the success of the Partnership. Together, the Partnership and Campbell have made significant strides in providing opportunities for access to healthy foods and safe physical activity.

Mission, Vision and Core Values

The mission of the Partnership is to mobilize the Camden City community to reverse childhood obesity. Its vision is to be a key change agent and advocate to significantly improve the health and wellness of the Camden City community.

Values: NJPHK-C is committed to inspiring the Camden City community to embrace healthy living while being inclusive and respecting cultural lifestyle differences.

NJPHK-C is responsive to the needs of the Camden City community by ensuring access and affordability of healthy foods and increasing children's physical activity.

NJPHK-C is empowering Camden City families to accept responsibility for living a healthy lifestyle.

NJPHK-C is impactful by having a sharp focus, staying open to new ideas and making fact-based decisions.

The values of the Partnership were promoted throughout the 2009 planning phase and into implementation clearly demonstrating the Partnership's commitment to a healthier community while working on a common agenda with its partners.

Leadership Structure

Initially, the Partnership enrolled the Core Planning Team which consisted of numerous partners to accomplish the work in the planning phase. This group was transitioned into the Partnership Advisory Board to serve in an advisory role during implementation and to meet on a quarterly basis. An Executive Committee was established to consist of the Co-Directors, Project Manager and key partners to set direction, problem solve and monitor results on a more regular basis.

Key Partner

In February 2011, Campbell Soup Company announced the launch of an initiative with an investment of \$10 million to reduce the childhood obesity rate in Camden by 50% in 10 years. This program, branded as Campbell's Healthy Communities Initiative, is committed to 1.) increasing access to affordable, healthy foods, 2.) offering opportunities for nutrition education, 3.) increasing opportunities for physical activity and 4.) creating public will. Campbell's Healthy Communities Initiative partnered with various organizations, including the Partnership, to roll out its strategies. Additional partners included The Food Trust's Healthy Corner Store Initiative; The Food Bank of South Jersey and Coalition of Healthcare Providers to teach families and pregnant women how to make healthy and budget-wise food choices; Camden Children's Garden to convert abandoned urban lots into productive urban gardens; and the YMCA of Burlington & Camden Counties to implement the CATCH program. These efforts were

concentrated in the initial six sites of the Partnership and gradually began expanding throughout Camden City.

Objectives and Activities

Between June 2011 and May 2013, the Partnership strategically implemented its comprehensive plan with key policy and environmental change initiatives. Strategies and activities were focused in three major focus areas: school wellness, physical activity and community food access.

In Phase 1 of implementation, the Partnership was the leading collaborator in the approval and adoption of the Camden City Public School's new wellness policy which was immediately in effect throughout all 26 schools, serving approximately 13,000 students. The policy also sparked interest from the Board and its administration to expand the Breakfast-in-the-Classroom pilot program, initiated by the Partnership in 4 schools, to be fully implemented throughout the district by June 2014. The success of these two strategies was due to the strong partnership with the Camden City Public School's Administration, Aramark – its food service provider and our local Rutgers Cooperative Extension.

The Partnership also embarked on another initiative focused on increasing opportunities for safe, physical activity in the city's most underutilized assets- its parks. The Partnership, together with United Way and Campbell Soup Company, was interested in increasing recreation in the city's parks and playgrounds while recognizing the need to also address the community's overwhelming concerns about public safety. Together, we developed an action plan to hire a consultant to implement the Safe Places to Play Initiative in Northgate Park in North Camden with the goal of expanding throughout additional Camden parks. The consultant would be responsible for 1.) creating, coordinating and overseeing opportunities for safe play in parks using existing Camden program partners and 2.) connecting families to existing opportunities for healthy eating such as farmers/mobile markets, community gardens and the Healthy Corner Store Initiative. This effort secured several accomplishments such as a KaBoom! Playground which was built in Northgate Park in October 2012, a joint-use agreement with the City of Camden for use of the park and its North Camden Community Center, and the development of a Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) workgroup, partnerships with many community organizations and leveraged significant funding.

As a Fortune 500 company with considerable resources, extensive experience and substantial commitment to Camden, Campbell Soup Company was well positioned to lead the efforts to addressing the food access issue in the city. The Partnership collaborated with the company to implement its action plan to provide opportunities for affordable, accessible healthy foods through a new mobile market model, provided by Greensgrow Farms; build community gardens through a partnership with Camden Children's Garden; and provide supplemental nutrition education to the Partnership's initial pilot sites in collaboration with the Food Bank of South Jersey and The Food Trust. As one of Campbell's investments, The Food Trust's Healthy Corner Store Initiative has enrolled 22 corner stores to offer healthier options to 4 of its neighborhoods.

Objectives for Phase 2 of Implementation

As we move into the second phase of implementation, the Partnership will expand its initial efforts for greater impact. Its objectives are to:

- Improve and implement the **school wellness** policy throughout Camden City schools
- Increase **access to healthy foods** (community food access) through the existing corner store initiative
- Increase opportunities for safe **physical activity** in parks and public spaces
- Improve **access to walking and bicycling** & citywide adoption of Street Scale Improvements

School Wellness Activities

- Develop a communications strategy for awareness of the adopted Camden Public School wellness policy
- Launch a Camden Public School wellness policy awareness campaign
- Develop and implement a communications strategy for awareness of the adopted Camden Public School's Breakfast-in-the-Classroom program
- Coordinate and facilitate meetings with the leadership of at least (3) non-public schools to improve and implement its school wellness policy using Camden Public School's adopted policy as a model

Deliverables & Outcomes:

1. A communications strategy plan for implementation of wellness policy and Breakfast-in-the-Classroom for Camden Public School

2. An established Camden Public School district-wide wellness council with representation of staff from at least 50% of its 26 schools
3. Adoption of 3 additional wellness policies from non-public schools

Community Food Access Activities

- Meet with existing partners, Campbell Soup Company and The Food Trust, to identify goals for expanding the Healthy Corner Store Initiative
- Access and identify additional partners and/or resources for expansion
- Develop an action plan for leveraging the collective resources for expansion
- Execute action plan

Deliverables & Outcomes:

1. An action plan for enrollment of at least 15 additional corner stores
2. Assessment of impact of the Healthy Corner Store Initiative

Activities for Physical Activity

- Evaluate the existing Safe Places to Play Initiative in Northgate Park
- Identify (1) additional park for expansion using existing CPTED workgroup findings from CPTED park assessment
- Meet with community stakeholders in targeted neighborhood
- Develop an action plan, with leveraged resources from initial park, for implementation of initiative
- Execute action plan

Deliverables & Outcomes:

1. Evaluation of impact of Safe Places to Play Initiative
2. Action plan for expansion of initiative

Activities for Improving Access to Walking and Bicycling & Citywide Adoption of Street Scale Improvements (Complete Streets Policy)

- Convene existing NJPHK partners to improve the built environment for active transportation (walking and biking and street scale improvement).
- Conduct a walk/bike audit to assess factors that help or hinder safe walking and bicycling
- Attend the Department of Transportation and Rutgers' Voorhees Transportation Center Pedestrian Safety Conference & Training.

Deliverables & Outcomes:

1. Walk/Bike Audit
2. Attend Pedestrian Safety Conference
3. Be an advocate of the New Jersey Bike & Walk Coalition

Staffing

The Partnership will continue to be led by the United Way and the YMCA. Both co-directors bring considerable experience and expertise in mobilizing lower-income communities and successful implementation of health and human service programs. The Partnership’s full-time Project Manager will also continue to work closely with the implementation partners, the Executive Committee, and the community to assure that the goals stay top-of-mind with all stakeholders and progress is continuous.

To further support these efforts, the Partnership plans to continue working with a consultant to facilitate the implementation of the Safe Places to Play Initiative. This consultant will work closely with the Project Manager and each neighborhood to 1.) create, coordinate and oversee opportunities for safe play in public areas in Camden City (parks, playgrounds, community centers, trails) and 2.) connect families to existing opportunities for healthy eating (farmers/mobile markets, community gardeners and Healthy Corner Store Initiative).

Timeline

The following illustrates the major benchmarks for achieving each strategy.

Policy & Environmental Changes 2013-2015	Quarter 1 (July 2013- Dec 2013)	Quarter 2 (Jan 2014- July 2014)	Quarter 3 (July 2014- Dec 2014)	Quarter 4 (Jan 2015- July 2015)
Provide technical assistance to Camden City Public School/BOE for implementation of: 1. Wellness policy 2. Breakfast-in-Classroom throughout district		X		
Improve and implement a comprehensive school wellness policies in (3) non-public schools	X			
Improve access to Walking and Bicycling & Citywide Adoption of Street Scale Improvements		X		
Replicate Safe Places to Play Initiative to (1) additional parks			X	
Continue the partnership with Campbell Soup Company-Healthy Communities Initiative and The Food Trust to expand the Healthy Corner Store				X

Initiative.				
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STRATEGY:

The Partnership will focus on the following five strategies for the 2013-2015 implementation phase which are aligned with the Robert Wood Jonson Foundation’s policy priority areas to reverse childhood obesity:

- 1. Provide technical assistance to Camden City Public School/Board of Education for implementation of its wellness policy and its Breakfast-in-Classroom program throughout district.**
- 2. Improve and implement a comprehensive school wellness policy in (3) non-public schools.**
- 3. Improve access to Walking and Bicycling & Citywide Adoption of Street Scale Improvements**
- 4. Replicate Safe Places to Play Initiative to (1) additional park.**
- 5. Continue the partnership with Campbell Soup Company-Healthy Communities Initiative and The Food Trust to expand the Healthy Corner Store Initiative.**

RISK AND CHALLENGES:

Camden’s municipal government continues to face the challenges of staffing and budget constraints. Camden City faces its most urgent transition of its city police department to a metro county force. The impact of the controversial restructuring and layoff of police officers has yet to be seen or felt however; the community anticipates a long transition with a negative impact in public safety.

Physical disorder and lack in funding for upkeep and maintenance continues to be common on roads and in parks. Most residents only take their children to local parks when they can be supervised. In addition, traffic hazards, lack of sidewalks and drug activity continues to be difficulties that impede walking and bicycling. The Partnership is committed to continuing its efforts in providing a safe place for physical activity as well as engaging schools in addressing the walking/biking accessibility concerns.

Recently, the Governor has declared a state takeover of the Camden Public School district due to its underperforming academic record. The Camden Board of Education will be transitioned into an advisory role and a new superintendent will be appointed by the Governor and Secretary

of Education. Both the current board and Superintendent have been supporters of the Partnership. Since no plans have been announced of how the takeover will proceed, a potential change in leadership may force the Partnership to re-establish its relationship with the Camden Public School district.

Research Method

Our Partnership intends to use process evaluation to learn how well we are implementing the strategies planned in this proposal. We will work toward using appropriate data collection methods to assess the extent of participation, utilization, and/or intended implementation of our policy and environmental changes, with the assistance of Mary Ann Scheirer to help us plan feasible process evaluation strategies. We expect this process evaluation to be on-going through the next two implementation years. We will periodically discuss the data collected from this process evaluation with our Executive Committee in order to use this feedback for learning about strengths and weaknesses in strategy implementation. We recognize that strong on-going implementation ensures a better likelihood of achieving meaningful community change toward reducing childhood obesity.

Communications

The communications strategy for all five communities of the New Jersey Partnership for Healthy Kids supports our overall focus through the strategic development of key messages, material development, publishing, delivery methods and events to support local communities, and to inform policy makers and other stakeholders, in collaboration with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF).

Communication Objectives

- Generate greater name recognition and awareness of NJPHK goals and accomplishments with the target audiences (at least 20 media stories annually and increase brand awareness 50 percent year-over-year)
- Create a consistent brand and messaging platform to support policy and environmental change, promote local stories and keep communities connected by sharing best practices
- Build a repository of standardized communications tools, templates and learning examples to strengthen engagement of community partners, schools, city government and faith-based organizations around childhood obesity prevention

- Build public awareness through development of a focused external communications strategy that would include media and thought leadership opportunities

Target Audiences

- RWJF
- NJPHK Advisory Council
- State Legislators, local mayors, city council members and parks and recreation managers
- Strategic Partners/Resources
- Co-directors/coordinators
- Steering committee
- Community partners and faith based organizations
- School district and school administrators, athletic directors, nurses, food service
- Hospitals/healthcare
- Residents

Strategies

- Build communications platforms that connect communities to each other as well as the state program office to keep informed about successes, tools and messaging
- Disseminate consistent key messages about NJPHK to the most important targets through a variety of communications, website and promotional venues, as well as media (print, television, radio and online)

Key Messages

It's all about healthy environments - Creating healthy communities is the key to reversing the obesity epidemic.

- Ensure that all food/drink served and sold in schools meets or exceeds the most recent Dietary Guidelines for Americans
- Increase access to high-quality, affordable foods through new or improved grocery stores and healthier corner stores and bodegas
- Boost time, intensity and duration of physical activity during the school day and in out-of-school programs
- Increase physical activity by improving the “built environment” in communities

- Use pricing strategies—incentives and disincentives—to promote the purchase of healthier foods
- Reduce youth exposure to unhealthy food marketing through regulation, policy and effective industry self-regulation

Everyone has a role to play *in helping to reverse the childhood obesity epidemic*:

- **School officials** must make quality physical education and active recess a regular part of the school day, while ensuring food and drink provided in cafeterias and vending machines are healthy and nutritious
- **Government leaders** must consider how their decisions affect children's activity levels and eating habits such as: Rethinking policies not generally associated with obesity prevention—such as zoning, which helps determine which businesses move in; transportation, which affects the walkability and bikeability of public roads; land use, which influences how much property is set aside for parks and open space; and pricing strategies, which influence consumers' food purchasing decisions
- **Food and beverage industries** must look closely at the nutritional content of their products, provide nutritional info that's easy for parents and youths to find and understand, and refrain from marketing unhealthy products to children
- **Parents** must communicate to community leaders and elected officials that having access to affordable, healthy foods and safe places for their kids to walk, bike and play is important to them, so that leaders are motivated to act