

**WALKING AND BIKING TO SCHOOL
SHOULD BE EASY CHOICES.**





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Preface

Voices for Healthy Kids®, a joint initiative of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) and American Heart Association (AHA), works to help all young people in the United States eat healthier foods and be more active. Nearly one in three kids and teens is overweight or obese. By engaging, organizing, and mobilizing communities across the country, Voices for Healthy Kids aims to ensure that every child has access to healthy foods and drinks at home and in school, safe streets for biking and walking, and safe places to play after school. This toolkit is designed to help coalitions educate their communities on ways to make this vision a reality.

Voices for Healthy Kids actively supports policy changes where children live, learn, and play to reduce obesity across the country. While childhood obesity affects the entire country, it does not affect all communities equally. For this reason, Voices for Healthy Kids is committed to reaching communities that are disproportionately impacted by the epidemic. These communities include communities of color; high-poverty urban, suburban, and rural populations of all races and ethnicities; and Native Americans.

State and local policy changes are effective strategies to reverse the obesity epidemic. Public officials have both the right and the responsibility to ensure communities have access to healthy foods and safe places to be active. Our policy priorities to achieve healthier communities are:

- Improving the nutritional quality of snack foods and beverages in schools.
- Reducing consumption of sugary beverages.
- Protecting children from unhealthy food and beverage marketing.
- Increasing access to affordable healthy foods.
- Increasing access to parks, playgrounds, walking paths, bike lanes, and other opportunities to be physically active.
- Increasing and improving opportunities for kids to stay active when they are out of school.

In this toolkit, you will find tactics to help children in your community live safer, more physically active lives and, more specifically, to help you advocate that states **effectively utilize federal funding available for Safe Routes to School federal projects**. Voices for Healthy Kids is excited to offer this toolkit—as well as several others—to support communities striving to live, learn, and play in healthy environments.

In order to ensure the most successful community advocacy possible, we encourage everyone using this toolkit to engage the staff and partners of Voices for Healthy Kids. Stay connected to our work on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and on www.VoicesforHealthyKids.org, or reach us directly at VoicesforHealthyKids@heart.org. You can also join in the conversation with others engaged in the movement across the country at PreventObesity.net.



Introduction

Physical inactivity is one of the underlying causes of childhood obesity—a growing problem, with the rate of childhood obesity in the U.S. tripling since 1963.ⁱ In many cases, school neighborhoods that lack safe pathways and bike lanes prevent kids from being active on the way to or from school, eliminating a prime opportunity to incorporate physical activity into daily routines.^{ii,iii}

The federal Safe Routes to School program, established in 2005, provides funding for communities to implement infrastructure improvements and education to promote accessible, safe, and convenient walking and biking options. More recently, federal funding for Safe Routes to School programs has been reduced, and communities also must meet stronger requirements to receive funding. That's why it's particularly important for states to take full advantage of the funding that is available.

Under previous federal legislation, Safe Routes to School received its own specific funding allocation. In June 2012, Congress passed a new federal transportation bill—Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21)—which consolidated Safe Routes to School and two other walking and bicycling programs into the new Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP).^{iv} Under TAP, the total funding level for all three programs is approximately \$800 million per year,^v which is 30 percent less than the \$1.2 billion total funding allocated to them as separate programs in FY2011.^{vi} In addition to this change, communities applying for TAP funding for Safe Routes to School programs are now required to provide a 20 percent match unless a state opts to provide the matching dollars.^{vii} Finally, the new legislation also allows states the option of transferring up to half of their TAP funding allocation away from walking and bicycling, and instead move those dollars to other transportation projects.^{viii} Unless states take steps to secure federal TAP dollars for Safe Routes to School projects, the changes introduced by MAP-21 could lead to fewer dollars for healthier community design. Federal funding is particularly important in supporting Safe Routes to School initiatives in underserved urban and rural neighborhoods.

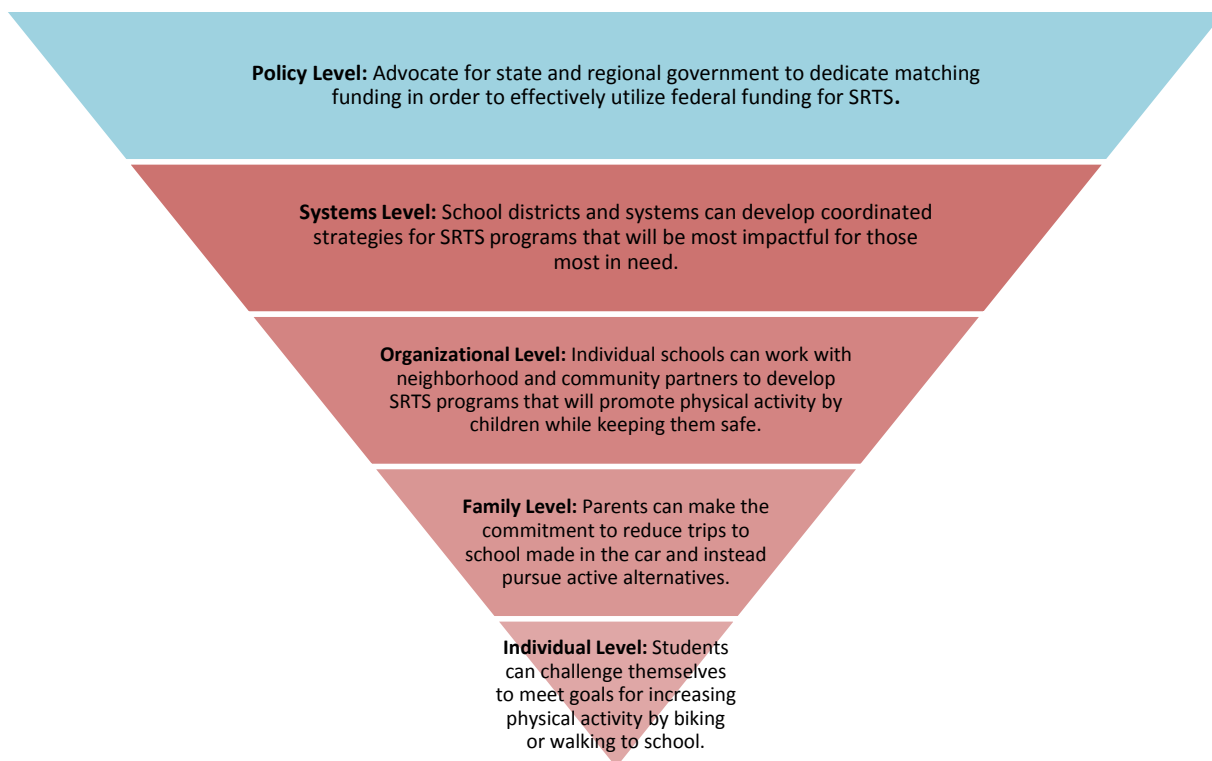
Together we can ensure the continued success and expansion of Safe Routes to School programs—particularly in underserved areas. Among the most effective approaches is ensuring that states take full advantage of relevant federal funding opportunities. However, there are other ways to engage on this critical topic at different levels.

The following list includes potential strategies that can support local community efforts to create streets that are safe for walking and bicycling to school. While this toolkit focuses mainly on policy-change strategies, there are other ways to advocate on and become involved with this issue.

1. **Policy Level:** Advocate for state and regional government to maximize use of federal funding for Safe Routes to School and dedicate matching funds in order to ensure that lower income communities can make their school routes safer.
2. **Systems Level:** School districts can develop coordinated strategies, such as school and school district travel plans or including the safety of walkers and bicyclists as a performance measure for student transportation staff, for Safe Routes to School programs to have the most impact on those most in need.
3. **Organizational Level:** Individual schools can work with neighborhood and community partners to develop Safe Routes to School programs that will promote physical activity for children that is safe and convenient for students and families.



4. **Family Level:** Families play a critical role in encouraging physical activity. Spend family time walking and bicycling to school instead of driving—it is fun for kids and parents and lets everyone get some exercise in their day.
5. **Individual Level:** Every person can make a pledge to improve their own health. Students can challenge themselves to be healthy and have fun by bicycling or walking to school.



While we encourage all of the above steps and related advocacy, this guide is focused on the changes that can be made at the Policy Level (shown in blue above).

To get started:

We have made it easy to raise awareness in your community by creating model tools about why these resources are important and the different ways to provide them. In this kit are guides to identifying and recruiting volunteers, spreading the word online, alerting local media, holding events, and meeting with state and local public officials to encourage policies that make it safer for kids to walk and bike to school.

- **Review the contents of this toolkit** and think about the types of activities that would work best in your community. What, if any, existing state or local laws are in place? Could a local school neighborhood serve as a model to share best practices with others?
- **Identify your core planning team** and think about the type of activity that will make the biggest difference for your state or community. Does your core planning team reflect the diversity of the communities most in need of safe routes to school? Would an event that features a well-known community member attract media attention? Does it make sense to activate—and educate—government leaders, schools, and community members through social media?



- **Consult the volunteers section** of this toolkit for specific tips on recruiting, engaging, and recognizing a diverse group of volunteers from communities and neighborhoods most affected by these issues who will work together with you to achieve your goals.
- **Customize and include any language/cultural translation of the sample outreach materials** included in this toolkit for your activities.

Directing federal funding to support Safe Routes to School programs and infrastructure will make it easier for children to walk or bike to school, especially in lower income communities where the need is greatest. Let us work together to teach our children to “**look both ways**”¹ by establishing safe routes to school.

¹Look both ways has been trademarked by the American Heart Association and is available for use by advocates supporting its mission only by way of an executed license agreement.



A Note on Lobbying

It is always important to understand whether any activities you are planning could fall under the IRS definition of lobbying. This is especially true if you receive a Voices for Healthy Kids grant to support your efforts because no Voices for Healthy Kids funds can be used to support lobbying. Generally, any activity or communication that takes a position on specific pending or proposed legislation—for Congress, a state legislature, a city council, or a town meeting—could be considered lobbying in some circumstances. Below are some examples of communications that may be considered lobbying, as well as those that are not.

Lobbying	Non-Lobbying
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Contact your legislator and ask him/her to support bill number XXXX.”• “Click here to sign the petition to support bill number XXXX.”• A communication to legislators that supports bills not yet introduced: “Georgia should adopt Florida’s Safe Routes to School programs.”	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Ask your legislator to support safe routes to school in Atlanta.”• “Sign the petition to show support for safe routes to school in Atlanta!”• “As a concerned Atlanta parent, I ask all my neighbors to join me in supporting safe walking and biking paths for our children.”

Look for the following icon throughout this toolkit, which identifies areas where lobbying may come into play:



When you engage in activities that may involve lobbying, consult your legal counsel, as well as the [Lobbying vs. Non-Lobbying Checklist](#) in the appendix of this toolkit, to help determine whether you need to use lobbying funds. Lobbying efforts must be supported with other funds, and these costs must be tracked separately from non-lobbying efforts. All types of activities, both lobbying and non-lobbying, can help promote healthy lifestyles in your community; however, if your ultimate goal becomes the passage of specific legislation, you will probably need unrestricted funds to conduct some of your work.

This toolkit is written for organizations that are legally able to lobby and have lobbying and non-lobbying funds available. (Public charities are able to conduct a limited amount of lobbying, while private foundations are not. Governmental entities are subject to different rules; check with your legal counsel for details.)

In this toolkit you will find important tips for understanding the distinctions between lobbying and non-lobbying activities, as well as when to use lobbying funds versus non-lobbying funds. We have provided examples to help you understand the distinctions between lobbying and non-lobbying activities so you can plan your activities strategically without violating restrictions on your non-lobbying funds. Please also be aware that some states have additional rules that may be relevant to your activities, such as registration and other requirements; this guide does not address those state rules.

Campaign Phases

There are four key phases to a campaign: recruit, engage, mobilize, and evaluate. The following section outlines each of these phases; as you plan your campaign, designate time for each step.

Note that before executing any of the tactics in this toolkit, it is important to establish how you will measure the effectiveness of your communications to increase recruitment, promote engagement, and inspire mobilization. Metrics to monitor might include: media impressions, Likes or comments on Facebook, open and click-through rates of emails, offline actions taken (such as signing up for educational opportunities or to volunteer), or media advocacy actions (such as op-ed or LTE placements).

Phase 1: Recruit

In the first phase of the campaign, lay the groundwork to ensure success, and recruit key advocates to your cause. Think about these questions: Who can be your spokespeople? Are there families in your community who would be willing to share their story through an op-ed or a letter to the editor (LTE)? Where do members of various ethnic, cultural, socio-economic, and racial groups in the community regularly congregate? What are the organizations in your community that advocate on behalf of different racial and multicultural communities? Are there any alliances with community planners or developers, chambers of commerce, doctors, nurses, public health professionals, athletic clubs and gyms, bike shops, running stores, local athletes, researchers, faith-based groups, teachers, coaches, school boards, PTAs/PTOs, or academics that could be explored? Who do you want to be your “everyday advocates,” the large group of people who speak out on the issues at hand? Do these “everyday advocates” represent the diversity of the communities most affected by the issue?

Consider reaching out to specific groups that would likely be in favor of safe paths for children to walk or bike to and from school, such as a local school or PTA/PTO. The safety and health of students is a top priority for both parents and teachers, and communicating the benefits of safe routes to school could be a good starting point in building a partnership.

For example, a low-income school in an underserved part of town might be especially interested in the construction of sidewalks and bike paths. If there is an active PTA/PTO at the school or organized faith or advocacy group in the community, work with them to communicate the benefits of safe, healthy travel options for students. The local groups may also know which teachers and parents could be strong advocates for your cause. The community’s interest in the issue may come through a concern with traffic safety for children—or it may arise out of a larger concern about safety from crime and violence in the neighborhood. Be prepared to start from the issues that resonant in the community and connect those to your goal. Organize meetings with interested parents, speak at the monthly PTA/PTO meeting, set up a booth at back-to-school night, and think of other opportunities to build relationships with this community. By reaching out to specific groups in custom ways, you can build genuine partnerships with people and organizations that support the use of federal dollars for Safe Routes to School.

Reach out to groups via available channels: social media, existing member databases, personal emails, blogs, paid advertisements, community outreach, tables at street fairs and festivals, public announcements at places of worship, etc. Provide culturally and linguistically appropriate materials as well. Cast a wide net to recruit a diverse audience that cares about your issues.



Once you determine who is on your side, start thinking about how to garner support from public officials and other important leaders—another form of recruitment is gathering the support of your local leaders. It's often most effective to do this through the advocates you recruit. In many cases, you can ask your supporters to communicate your message to their representatives or key officials. You can do that through letters, e-communications, blogs, public service announcements, LTEs, op-eds, and social media, among other tactics. Learn more about mobilization in the following pages and check the appendix of this toolkit for examples.

More information on how to implement the Recruitment Phase is found in the sections on [Potential Allies](#), [Recruitment Basics](#), and [Recognition Plan](#).

Phase 2: Engage

During this phase, your introductory/educational email, initial media outreach (both traditional and social), and event planning take place.

This is the time to start building upon your relationships. Communicate regularly with your activists, keeping them engaged, informed, and ready to take action when needed. Start working with the media—they tend to respond best to people who are organized, clear, polite, and have newsworthy things for them to write about. Media engagement should include multicultural and mainstream press. This toolkit provides introductory language for your social media and e-communications efforts directed at advocates and media.

Additionally, start working with a diverse group of spokespeople relevant to the community in which you are working. Use the media tips in this toolkit, and familiarize your spokespeople with your talking points to ensure they are confident when speaking in public or with media. When scheduling your press conferences and events, give reporters and community members ample notice.

More information on how to implement the Engagement Phase is found in the sections on [Diverse Audiences](#), [Social Media Resources](#), and [Tips for Using Social Media to Reach Journalists](#).

Phase 3: Mobilize

Now that your planning is complete, it is time to act. Reach out to your advocates, spokespeople, the media, etc., and let them know your campaign is in full swing. Keep track of your metrics of success, as well as the movement of the policy at hand, to deploy different communication methods to increase mobilization as needed.

Stay in touch with diverse community members to keep them informed and engaged. You may need them to do educational outreach at local gatherings to build popular support in the community. At other times, a social media action may be best to help bolster recruitment. Advocates may need to write letters to their legislators because a vote in the statehouse is just around the corner. (The costs of planning and conducting this last type of activity will require lobbying funds.)



In this phase, leverage the relationships you established in phase 2. By this time, you have made connections with reporters and local bloggers over the phone or via email. Communicate regularly with reporters to keep them informed and give them ideas for covering your campaign.



If you are planning media events, such as press conferences, this is the time to execute. Get your spokespeople ready to lead events, and make sure those spokespeople reflect the diversity of the audience you are trying to reach. For more details on media training, take a look at the [Media Training Tips](#) section of this toolkit. Set up opportunities for new advocates to join the cause. Let media know the event is happening and give them special incentives to cover the story, such as a behind-the-scenes press pass that grants them an interview with your spokespeople and photo opportunities.

More information on how to implement the Mobilize Phase is found in the sections on [Action Alerts](#), [The Value of Phone Outreach](#), [Hosting a Media Event](#), [Media Training Tips](#), [Why Op-Eds Matter](#), [Meeting with Legislators](#), and [Days at the Capitol](#).

Phase 4: Evaluate

Do not forget about evaluation—it is just as important as the rest of your campaign. Start by reviewing the metrics you put in place at the beginning of the campaign to help determine what worked and what did not, so you can make adjustments for your next campaign.

You may also want to see how your campaign is creating change on the ground. The best way to find out the scope and effectiveness of safe routes to school initiatives is to partner with government agencies or research institutions that can collect and analyze this data. In addition, the Safe Routes to School National Partnership releases data on the state of Safe Routes to School funding across the country. You can find that information at <http://saferoutespartnership.org/state/stateofstates>.

Share your campaign success with your advocates so you can celebrate the wins together. Advocates need to know that their efforts made a difference to the campaign, especially if they are going to help your organization or cause in the future.

Key Takeaways

- Recruiting a diverse group of advocates, especially one that represents the communities most affected by policy change, will be key to your campaign's success.
- Educate volunteers, the community, and local media about the issues that are important to you.
- Communicate regularly to keep advocates and media informed and engaged.
- Establish metrics for your campaign's success and regularly evaluate your progress.



Recruit: Potential Allies

Success will depend on generating support for safe routes to school, and working with state and local partner groups is one of the best ways to build that support. Consider the list of tips below as you begin outreach to other organizations, and consult the appendix for a detailed list of potential allies.

Who Can Help

There are many organizations working to help children achieve a healthy weight by promoting the federal funding of Safe Routes to School. While there may be organizations solely focused on providing the infrastructure needed for kids to walk or bike to school, far more groups work within broader strategies to increase physical activity in their communities. Some groups may not perfectly align with your goal, but it is still worth reaching out to them—they may be valuable partners for other programs you are pursuing or other long-term organizational goals.

Leaders in the following areas may be potential partners:

- Social justice, civil rights, and health equity
- Educational justice
- Multicultural media, e.g., African-American press, Latino/Hispanic press, and LGBT press
- Faith-based organizations
- Health and wellness
- Chambers of commerce and economic development organizations
- Multi-modal transportation (biking and walking) organizations
- Parks and recreation departments
- Local police departments and first responders
- City planning

Potential Challengers

Safe Routes to School programs present a political issue for some policymakers and associations. Support of funding for walkability and bikeability programs has drawn attention—and criticism—from some. As such, some have spoken out against continued appropriations for such programs.

Entities that may stand against expanded use of federal dollars for Safe Routes to School programs include:

- Organizations that oppose traffic calming measures
- Organizations that oppose federal spending on local community development initiatives
- Organizations that oppose federal spending on health and wellness initiatives

Although some potential allies and opponents will speak publicly, others will take a more subtle approach. Before making a decision on any potential partner or opponent, examine their goals, mission statement, programs, and activities to determine whether or not they align with your key goals and metrics.

Key Takeaways

- Partners can come from a variety of backgrounds—from faith-based groups to groups solely committed to helping children achieve a healthy weight. Cast a wide net to reach as many potential allies as possible.



- Understand your potential allies' or opponents' goals, priorities, and programs before engaging with them.

Recruit: Recruitment Basics

Deploying a campaign is not just about mobilizing your advocates to take action in support of federal funding for Safe Routes to School. It is an opportunity to draw more supporters to your cause and retain them for future campaigns to improve the health of your community. The following recruitment guidelines will help you accomplish these goals.

Note that these tips are suggestions, not requirements. Choose the approach and tactics that work best for your organization and community. Regardless of how you recruit new supporters, dedicate sufficient resources to communicating effectively with the diverse audience you hope to engage. For instance, if you are hoping to reach Latino/Hispanic audiences, consider the need for translators and translated materials; if your target group does not use the Internet, emphasize offline recruitment opportunities.

Recruiting at Events

Every event your organization initiates or attends should provide an easy way for people to join your efforts to promote the allocation of federal funding to Safe Routes to School programs in your state. There are several ways to collect information at events; a few ideas are listed below.

- **Join with your partners.** Consider joining with your partners to share a table or taking part in a larger aligned effort, such as a statewide obesity task force, where federal funding for Safe Routes to School can add value to their overall objective of increased physical activity for children.
- **Communicate in your supporters' language and about issues that matter to communities at the event.** If you do not speak the language, find another supporter who does.
- **Bring tablet computers.** Easy to use and extremely portable, tablet computers can be a simple and effective way to collect names and emails on-site.
- **Offer sign-up forms.** This option is easy and inexpensive to initiate. It's also a natural way to combine an opportunity to sign up with an opportunity to take action. For example, asking people to fill out a pre-written postcard to an elected official or other appropriate decision maker can provide a compelling reason for people to share their personal information. However, do not assume that a person filling out the form wants you to contact them; include a box they can check to receive more information. Remember that transcribing the names of those who do sign up into a computer-friendly format will take time.
 - Asking people to write their legislator about a general policy issue is not lobbying, unless the request is tied to specific legislation or a specific legislative proposal.
- **Try business card recruitment.** The less effort it takes to sign up, the more people will do so. For example, if you are hosting an event with key business leaders in your community, ask everyone to leave their business cards behind to join the cause. You may pull in more names than with a traditional sign-up form because the business card approach is so easy for the new recruit. Later, enter their contact information into your database of supporters.



Recruiting on Issues

It is important to show potential advocates that joining your cause will make a difference. Potential recruits are much more likely to take action when they believe that doing so will have an impact.

- **Expand the ask.** When recruiting, ask for more than just a name. Ask your potential advocates to take part in an action, such as signing a petition or sending a letter to their legislators about Safe Routes to School.



- Asking people to write their legislator about a general policy issue or agency decision about allocating its funding is not lobbying, unless the request to contact the legislator is tied to specific legislation or to a specific legislative proposal.
- **Address issues head-on.** Do not be afraid to use conflict or controversy when appropriate. People like to engage in topical issues.



Recruiting Online

Do not limit yourself to recruiting at in-person events only. There may be a large pool of new advocates you can reach online.

- **Engage social media friends and followers.** If you have affiliate or state online properties, use posts to ask your fans to tell their friends about your organization and the steps you are taking to ensure students don't have to choose between health and safety, or ask your followers to retweet invitations to join your efforts.
- **Add a sign-up form to Facebook.** If you add a sign-up tab to your Facebook page, fans will be able to take advocacy actions without leaving the Facebook platform.
- **Use Facebook advertising.** Advertising on Facebook can be inexpensive, targeted, and effective. Studies have shown nonprofits can effectively use this medium to encourage people to sign petitions, volunteer, and/or attend free events, as well as to generate awareness for a campaign. You can even narrow the ad's reach to the city level and localize content to improve engagement.

Recruiting via Word-of-Mouth

Are your advocates telling their friends and families about the importance of safe routes in their communities and the risks of limiting funding for bike lanes and sidewalks? Healthy living is not just a volunteer opportunity, it is a way of life—so encourage advocates to mention it to the other groups in which they participate (e.g., civic organizations, fitness classes, faith-based meetings, union meetings, etc.). Include culturally and linguistically appropriate materials for these recruitment opportunities. Again, as you approach new potential supporters, communicate in their language. If you do not speak their language, find another supporter who does.

In addition to some potential advocates, such as health care professionals and educators, there are several other groups to consider.

- **Ask parents** to get their local PTA/PTO or other parent group, to support Safe Routes to School efforts. Other parents may see the benefit of increasing access to safe ways to walk and bike for their children and become advocates for your cause.
- **Ask your neighbors** to mention Safe Routes to School at their community organization meetings. People who are involved in the community may be more dedicated to your efforts. They may even be willing to enlist the help of their entire organization in developing community Safe Routes to School programs.
- **Ask faith leaders to get involved.** Engaging leaders in the faith community is a great way to connect with community members, especially in under-resourced communities.
 - Ask local faith leaders to speak up about the needs they see in their communities—especially the lack of safe routes in their neighborhoods. Faith leaders have an important voice and platform to share the role Safe Routes to School can play in leading children in the community toward a healthy future.
- **Reach out through civic and social organizations** in your community. Ask to speak at a meeting or luncheon hosted by groups, such as the Junior League, Rotary Club, Kiwanis Club, ethnic and



mainstream chambers of commerce, and Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., as well as other ethnic and local fraternities, sororities, or organizations.

- Encourage them to share information with their members about the positive impacts of Safe Routes to School and the opportunity it presents to encourage physical activity in their communities.
- **Set up meetings** with groups who might be interested in the construction of safe routes to school, such as urban planners, road construction companies, law enforcement, and first responders. Because of their daily jobs, they may have a vested interest in improving the roads in your area.

Recruiting via Competition

Some healthy competition among your existing advocate base can help bring new followers to your organization.

- **Challenge your existing advocates** to recruit friends and family. Then, host a celebration to welcome new advocates to your organization.
- **Offer a prize** to whoever can recruit the most new friends and followers online. Create pre-written tweets and Facebook posts in appropriate languages for your community, and count shares and retweets. When possible, make sure the prize is health-related.

Recruiting in the Community

What does your target audience like to do? Instead of creating new events, meet them where they already gather.

- **Attend community festivals.** Host booths at street fairs, farmers' markets, or carnivals, and ask attendees to sign up.
- **Partner with universities.** Host a table at school fairs and encourage students to form an on-campus group in support of helping kids live safe, healthy lives. The group can work to support sidewalks, crosswalks, and bike paths in the community that help kids get to school safely.
- **Reach out to local places of worship.** Recruit members to attend local events and organize meetings through bulletin advertisements and in-person announcements. If services are held in more than one language, develop recruitment plans for those as well. Make sure that your materials are culturally appropriate and linguistically accurate.

Recruiting via Politics

Leverage the response of your state legislators to encourage advocates to recruit more friends to the cause. For example:

- **Send emails** with subject lines or topics featuring legislator opposition or support, and encourage existing advocates to recruit their friends and family. For example, "Tell Senator Jones to show his support for Safe Routes to School" or "Please thank Senator Garcia for supporting safe walking and biking routes to school."
 - This email would not be lobbying unless Sens. Jones or Garcia had bills pending in their Senates regarding Safe Routes to School—or unless it was clear that the message referred to a specific legislative proposal on this topic. Usually, general statements about Safe Routes to School are not lobbying, although urging the legislative adoption of *specific* aspects of Safe Routes to School initiatives may be.



Key Takeaways

- There are many different ways to recruit new advocates. Use the recruitment methods that are the most appropriate for building a diverse group of supporters who can best connect with the audiences you hope to engage. Make the recruitment process as easy as possible for your potential supporters. Offer different ways for them to sign up and take action.
- Have materials available in languages spoken by your potential volunteers.
- Not all potential volunteers will have regular access to the Internet, so make sure you recruit both on and offline.
- Some recruitment tactics may constitute lobbying. Make sure to check with your legal counsel before referencing specific initiatives or legislation.



Recruit: Recognition Plan

Recognition: we all want it. It is no surprise that appreciated advocates are more likely to submit an LTE, sign a petition, or attend a rally. As you conduct your campaign, recognizing your advocates for their contributions to your efforts will be crucial in gaining and retaining your support base.

Volunteer Recognition

Recognize New Volunteers

A strong campaign starts with a strong recruitment push. By creating a foundation of supporters early, you will have them ready to activate when the time comes. Consider the following to grow your base of support and recognize new advocates.

- **Small gifts branded with your organization's logo** (e.g., water bottles or USB drives) can be a reward for signing up. To stretch resources a bit further, consider offering incentives to the first 50 or 100 people who sign up on a specific day or giving prizes to advocates for recruiting the largest number of new supporters.

Recognize Existing Volunteers

Gaining new advocates is never the end of the story. It is also important to maintain good relationships with your existing supporters, ensuring they know how valuable they are to your cause. Consider offering the following:

- **Exclusive opportunities**, such as the chance to meet with your organization's leadership or serve on a volunteer advisory panel.
- **Certificates or trophies**, especially when presented at a public event.
- **Invitations** to attend volunteer after-hours receptions or trainings.

Choose the Right Time

Whether you are reaching out to new or existing advocates, take advantage of specific times of the year when engagement is traditionally high.

- **Leverage local festivals.** Consider creating recognition awards for use at local street fairs, farmers' markets, or festivals with free entry or food tickets.
- **Speak up when it is time to vote.** If the local government is voting on measures pertaining to federal funding allocations, this is a key time to recognize existing and potential advocates. Use lobbying resources, if they are available to you, to ask advocates to contact their legislators, and thank them when they do.
 - Depending on the government body involved, asking advocates to contact legislators will be grassroots lobbying, if it is a communication to the public that reflects a view on legislation and contains a call-to-action. Asking the public to contact members or staff of a state legislature, tribal government, county council, city council, or town meeting is lobbying if you refer to and reflect a view on specific legislation (or a specific legislative proposal). Importantly, contacting school board or zoning board members or staff is not lobbying, regardless of the content of the communication. Make sure you have the resources to pay for these activities and you track them appropriately.
- **Use the calendar to inspire you.** Create recognition pieces around key health observances taking place throughout the year (e.g., Walk to School Day, Bike to School Day, etc.) when you can spotlight and thank advocates for their efforts to increase access to safe walking and biking paths in your community.



Staff Recognition

Volunteers are not the only people who make a campaign a success. As you thank your volunteers for their efforts, make sure to also thank the staff members who keep the campaign running every day.

- **Celebrate staff publicly.** If you hold an annual celebration, highlight the good work the staff has done over the past year. Offering awards or opportunities to publicly acknowledge good work lets employees know their efforts have been noticed and are valued. Nominate staff (or volunteer) to be featured by PreventObesity.net.
- **Ask your strongest recruiters of new advocates to lead a call** to share their tips with other staff members.
- **Conduct a staff contest** to see which members can bring in the most new advocates over a specified period. Offer a day off or a gift card as an incentive.
- **Highlight the diversity of your staff** to demonstrate its importance in engaging all members of the community.

Key Takeaways

- Recognize and thank volunteers for their commitment to your cause.
- Reward new volunteers with small gifts to help increase sign-up rates.
- Do not forget about your staff—they deserve thanks too.



Engage: Diverse Audiences

No matter the issue or the policy goals, engaging with diverse audiences should be a core part of your campaign. This is especially true if you are working on an issue that will have a direct impact on communities outside of your own. The most successful campaigns are often the ones that speak to and engage with as many different people as possible. Priority populations who are at the greatest risk for obesity and obesity-related diseases are particularly important to engage as partners and advocates, including people living in high-poverty urban and suburban areas, and particularly African-American and Latino/Hispanic individuals, people living in high-poverty rural areas, and Native Americans.

Below are some questions designed to help you think about who you are reaching out to and how. The following are intended to be thought-starters, not an exhaustive list.

- **Who is on your team?** Take a look at your volunteer base, your advisors, and your staff. Are your teams made up of people from many different backgrounds? Do they represent the communities where you want to have the most impact—particularly if the communities are historically underserved? If not, where might be the opportunities to do more?
- **How are you recruiting and engaging?** If your teams are less diverse than they could be, consider expanding the ways you recruit and engage volunteers and staff. For instance, not everyone has access to the Internet; if your campaign is heavily based online, you may be limiting who is able to join your efforts. Pen-and-paper recruitment and offline volunteer opportunities can help more people get involved.
- **Where are you recruiting and engaging?** When it comes to getting people involved, location is just as important as technique. Are you reaching out to local faith communities and the multicultural small business community? Many faith communities have separate services in different languages. If you are not doing so already, try setting up a table at events that draw a diverse crowd or partnering with the local multicultural chamber of commerce.
- **Who are you talking to?** Make sure you are working with non-mainstream news outlets in your area. There may be newspapers, radio stations, or television networks geared toward diverse communities, particularly non-English speakers and people of color. Multicultural media coverage can both provide new and different angles on your campaign and encourage diverse audiences to get involved with your work. Ensure you have appropriate spokespeople available to speak to these media outlets.
- **Is language a barrier to access?** If there are non-English-speakers in your area, consider having your materials translated and easily accessible at events and online. If you are planning on hosting phone banks, engage bilingual volunteers. Additionally, if you are planning on setting up a table at events where people are likely to speak other languages, make sure the people staffing your booth speak those languages.
- **Do your team members feel welcome and listened to?** Getting people to sign up or take action is one thing; fostering a welcoming, affirming environment is another. Listen to what your volunteers, advisors, and staff members say about your campaign, and strive for an environment where everyone has a seat at the table.
- **Are you considering unique cultural and community perspectives?** Every culture and community has its own nuanced way of thinking and talking about issues. Try to learn what these issues are ahead of time so you can communicate about the issues with those concerns in mind. For instance, if you are supporting Safe Routes to School, the salient issues for one neighborhood might not be healthy childhood weight, but rather additional, affordable transportation options to get to and



from school. By taking the time and effort to understand these concerns in advance, you will be more likely to build trust with community members.

- **What else can you do?** Throughout your campaign, keep asking yourself the types of questions listed above. There are always opportunities to open your doors wider and expand your reach further.

Key Takeaways

- Diversity should be a core part of your campaign, from start to finish because diverse perspectives, insights, relationships, and cultural competencies can make the difference between the success and failure of campaigns.
- Language and cultural barriers can prevent people from getting involved with your campaign.
- Think strategically about where you are recruiting and engaging. It is important to go to the communities you hope to engage and not expect people to come to you.
- There are always opportunities to create a more inclusive, welcoming community.

Engage: Social Media Resources and Tips

It is going to take broad support to fully implement safe walking and biking paths and increase the amount of exercise children engage in each day. Fortunately, social media platforms allow you to share your message with a wider audience than traditional door-to-door advocacy work can. With a few clicks, you can access the right people at the right moment, making them aware of the issue and garnering their support. The following tips were created to help you extend your community of advocates online to grow support for the funding of safe, healthy ways for children to travel to and from school. National organizations may already have sample resources you can model or tailor for use in your campaign.

Using Images and Videos

Posts that include multimedia drive higher engagement rates and increased reach—people like looking and clicking on images and video. Below is a quick overview of how to best use multimedia on Facebook and Twitter.

- **Ask your advocates to sign release forms.** Photos of real-life advocates resonate with the community. Just remember that anyone you spotlight online—whether in stories, photos, or videos—must sign an authorization release form. Ask your organization for the appropriate forms.

Images

- **Choose a diverse range of people.** It is important that different groups see people who look like themselves in the images you use.
- **Only use content you own.** The images, videos, or graphics you post should either be created by your team or purchased on stock photography sites. If your organization has an existing photo library, search it to see if anything can be repurposed. Getty Images offers free non-commercial use of many of its stock images on social media and blog sites when you use its embed feature. To find these images and the restrictions around their use, visit <http://www.gettyimages.com/>.
- **Use templates.** If you do not have access to graphic design services, there are free online resources you can use, such as canva.com, which offers templates for Facebook cover pages, Facebook ads, and Twitter backgrounds, as well as free and low-cost stock images.
- **Repurpose print materials online.** The postcard, flyer, and fact sheet included in this toolkit can easily be posted or linked to on Facebook and Twitter.
 - The postcard is especially useful as a featured image to supplement your Facebook posts.
 - Invite advocates to print the flyer and post it at work or around their neighborhood.
 - Save a PDF of the fact sheet and link to it from your post, inviting advocates to read and learn more or share it with friends and family.

Videos

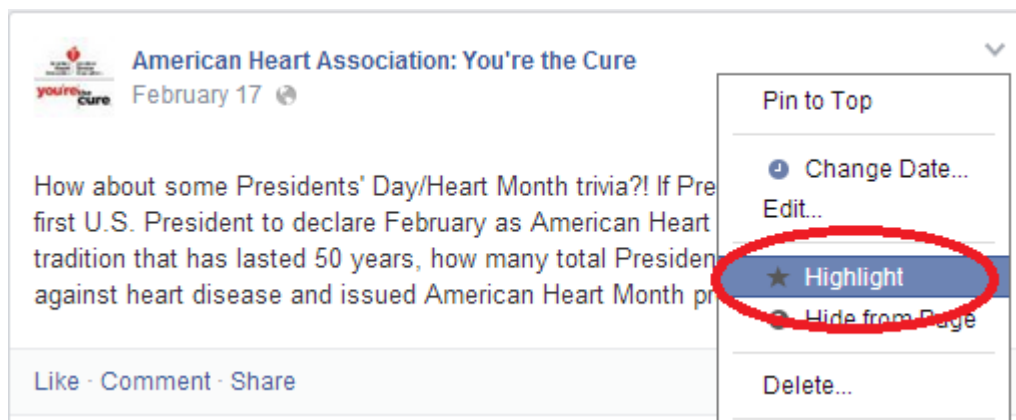
- **Highlight your advocates.** If you have access to a video camera or a smartphone, consider creating a video of advocates' stories. Ask your advocates to talk about their role in the campaign and why they support providing children with sidewalks and bike lanes to school. Produce videos in the appropriate languages spoken in the community.
 - Stories of real-life advocates can be one of the most effective measures for swaying decision makers because they represent actual constituent opinions on the policies you care about.
- **Create mini-documentaries.** Consider making a short film featuring one student who can walk or bike to school each day and is in excellent health. Contrast this student with a second student who

would like to choose these active options but doesn't have safe paths to travel to school and, as a result, is sluggish throughout the day. This can emphasize the importance of exercise for students and, in particular, the importance of building safe routes to school in each community. Keep in mind that the most viewed and shared videos are less than 90 seconds.

Facebook

Facebook can be an excellent way to engage your existing advocates and recruit new ones, especially if you already have an established presence. Below are a few tips for spreading the word on Facebook.

- **Use your existing account.** Do not create a new page just for Safe Routes to School in your community; instead, integrate the campaign into your existing Facebook page. This way, when new people "like" your page because of a desire to support more walking and biking paths to schools, they will also stay informed on your other initiatives.
 - If appropriate in your community, post messages in languages other than English on your page, or create a separate page in another language, such as Spanish, if that is more relevant to your work in the community.
- **Recruit new members right from Facebook.** Consider creating a registration app on your page so users can sign up to be a part of the effort without even leaving Facebook. You can point potential advocates to the registration app through Facebook ads and posts on your wall.
- **Highlight key posts.** Facebook allows you to select posts you would like to draw specific attention to and expand them across your page to catch your readers' eyes. See the following graphic for an example.



- **Use images to help advocates identify with your cause.** The postcard in this toolkit can be repurposed to create an image advocates can use on their own profiles. Consider using the front side of the postcard to do the following:
 - Make it your page's cover photo and ask advocates to tag themselves and their friends in the image. This way, their tags show up on their News Feeds and in their friends' notifications.
 - Encourage advocates to make the postcard their cover photo or profile picture as well. Advocates' friends will see the images on their profiles, which helps raise awareness about the issue. Give advocates a caption to go with their post that directs viewers to your site.
 - On Twitter, encourage advocates to make the postcard their banner picture so their followers will see the image.

- Image sizing is important. To ensure image clarity and prevent distortion when posting photographs on Facebook, use photographs that are 1200X900 with an aspect ratio of 4:3. This will also help you avoid unnecessary white space around your images.
- For image measurements for additional images on your profile page, see the picture below:



- **Share the message with decision makers.** Many state decision makers have an online presence, which can be an effective venue for them to hear from advocates.
 - As advocates tag themselves in your cover photo, encourage them to tag their decision makers as well. Note that some decision makers may have set their privacy to restrict this type of action.
 - Encourage advocates to tag their decision makers in their Facebook posts about bringing safe routes to schools to their communities. Check the appendix for examples of Facebook posts.

A post that tags a legislator should be considered a direct communication to that legislator, so it will be lobbying if it reflects a view on specific legislation. A post that does not tag a legislator is a public communication and will be lobbying only if it reflects a view on specific legislation and includes a call-to-action. Note that if a social media post constitutes lobbying, the staff time related to writing the post is attributable to lobbying, however small the cost of that staff time may be.



- **Ask advocates for a response.** Create posts that encourage advocates to interact, such as online quizzes.
 - Ask questions: “Do we have enough biking and walking paths in our community?”
 - Encourage story-sharing: “Have you or your child ever walked or biked to school? Did you feel safe while doing it?”
 - Hold them accountable: “How have you helped make the health of our children and safe routes to school a priority in your community?”
- **Actively manage your community.** Running a social media community successfully, particularly on Facebook, requires a long-term investment of time and energy that goes beyond posting content. You should be devoting a significant amount of time (at least 1-2 hours) every day to managing your social pages.
 - “Like” and reply to positive and constructive messages from your individual followers. This will enhance the community aspect of your page and give it a more personalized feel. Plus, replies can serve as an opportunity to share resources with your audience on an individual level.

- Answer questions to create a two-way dialogue and foster constructive discussion of your messaging.
 - Ignore, or eventually ban, people who are posting consistently negative, inflammatory, or vulgar content. Engaging with them will only exacerbate the problem.
- **Highlight partners.** There may be other community organizations that are also working toward creating healthy opportunities for children and adults.
 - Consider working with them to highlight each other's efforts in Facebook posts. That way, your mention will show up on their channels (and vice versa), helping you to reach their community for recruitment purposes.
- **Take online actions offline.** There are many creative ways to share several items in this toolkit—the poster, flyer, fact sheet, etc.—on Facebook and encourage people to distribute them in their communities.
 - Ask advocates to print the flyers and hand them out at events in their town or post them on community message bulletin boards in parks, libraries, and coffee shops.
 - Bring the action back online by asking advocates to post a picture of themselves putting up the flyers.
 - Post the decision maker fact sheet on your Facebook page so that it is available to advocates to use in meetings with decision makers. Ask them to come back to your Facebook page to report on what they are doing, and how their own meetings went.
 - In advance of offline activities, share the [Key Messages](#) with your advocates so they know how to speak about the issue.

Ad Campaigns

- **Promote your posts.** Promoted posts take highlighted posts one step further by elevating them in your fans' News Feeds. Promoted posts have a nominal cost and their benefits are far-reaching. Along with this toolkit, a suggested image for a Facebook ad has been provided. Use the image and then assign corresponding text to it, such as: "Let's show our kids the benefit of regular exercise and promote the creation of safe routes to bike or walk to school. To learn more and get involved, visit **[INSERT URL]**."
 - Promoted posts come with a range of pricing options, depending on the number of fans and people you would like to reach with your post. You will have the option to elevate your post in your fans' News Feeds or in both their News Feeds and their friends' News Feeds. Also, you can target promoted posts by age, gender, and location.
 - You can promote posts directly from your Facebook page; look in the lower right-hand corner of the post you want to elevate. Click on "Boost Post," select your dollar amount and audience reach, and then enter credit card details for payment.



- **Create an ad campaign.** You can also turn promoted posts into a wider Facebook advertising campaign, allowing you to target specific audiences in a way not feasible from your Facebook page.
 - Visit <https://www.facebook.com/ads/create>.
 - Select the kind of results you would like for your ads. For this example, “Page Post Engagement” has been selected.
 - Select your destination page (this should be your organization’s Facebook page).
 - Select the post you would like to promote or create a new post to promote.
 - Now you are ready to choose your audience. First select age and gender targeting criteria, and then type in interests. Remember to include broad interest topics to reach as wide an audience as possible.
 - For targeting based on location, workplace, behavior, school, relationship status, or language, click the appropriate button and add targeting criteria. Consider groups of people who may have a natural interest in helping children achieve a healthy weight—parents or teachers, for example—and target them based on related interests, such as local parenting groups or the PTA/PTO.
 - While you cannot select ethnicities through Facebook, you can use self-identified interests to increase the likelihood that you are reaching a specific ethnicity.
 - You can also target audiences based on whether they are already fans of your organization on Facebook.

AUDIENCE

Locations Add a country, state/province, city or ZIP

Age 13 - No max

Gender All Men Women

Languages Enter a language...

More Demographics

Interests Search interests Suggestions Browse

Behaviors Search behaviors Browse

Connections ☒ All

- ☐ Only people connected to American Heart Association: You're the Cure
- ☐ Only people not connected to American Heart Association: You're the Cure
- ☐ Advanced connection targeting

- Finally, select your budget. Even a small amount can generate results.

ACCOUNT AND CAMPAIGN Help: Campaign

Campaign ⓘ American Heart Association... - Post Engagement [Change Campaign](#)

Account Settings

These settings cannot be changed once you create your ad.

Account Currency

Account Country

Account Time Zone

Ad Set Name ⓘ

Budget ⓘ

Schedule ⓘ ☒ Run my ad set continuously starting today
☐ Set a start and end date

BIDDING AND PRICING Help: Bidding and Pricing

Bidding ⓘ

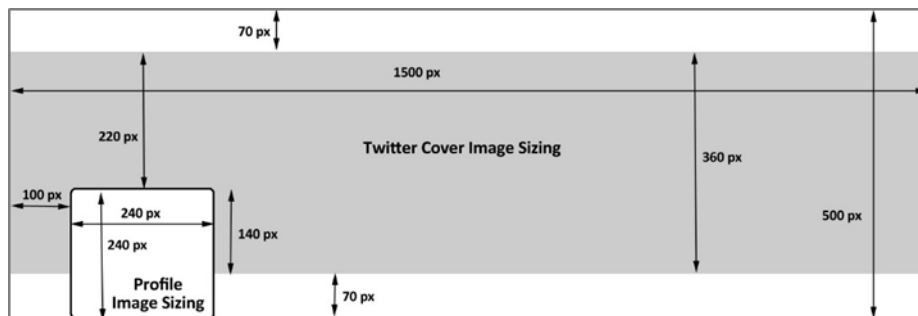
Pricing ⓘ Your bid will be optimized to get more engagement on your Page post. You will be charged every time someone is shown your ad.

[Place Order](#) [Review Order](#)

Twitter

It does not take a lot to share the message of how important safe routes to school are for a community. Even 140 characters can make a difference! Here are some tips for using Twitter to help support Safe Routes to School in your state.

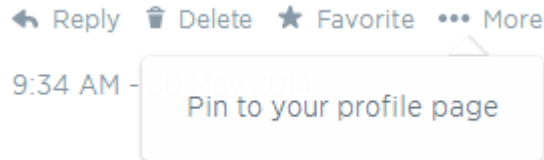
- **Set the stage with key information and creativity in your profile.** Your Twitter profile is a destination for users to learn more about your efforts with federal funding for Safe Routes to School. It is important to make use of all its features. Consider the following:
 - **Use your profile photo to identify your organization.** The recommended size for profile photos is 400x400 pixels. To avoid unwanted cropping, size your photo accordingly prior to uploading it to Twitter.



- **Develop a prominent header image** that depicts safe routes to schools, such as people biking, walking, or using a cross walk. The recommended size for header photos is 1500x500 pixels. Note that the header photo is cropped to a 2:1 aspect ratio on mobile. As with the profile photo, make sure you size your image approximately before uploading to Twitter to avoid any unwanted cropping.



- Provide a copy of your header image, correctly sized, so that your followers can use it for their header images as well. It is another way for their followers to find out about the campaign.
- **Write a concise Twitter bio**, up to 160 characters, explaining your organization's connection to Safe Routes to School, and include a call-to-action for users to get involved.
- **Pin your most important tweet** to the top of your profile timeline to capture the attention of visitors.



- **Link to relevant content.** Include hyperlinks to additional information in about a quarter of all your tweets.
 - Use links to direct followers back to the website to take action or to resources where they can learn more about the federal funding available for the creation of safe walking and biking routes to school.
- **Diversify your content.** Create a mix of tweets that both inform your followers about Safe Routes to School and encourage their support. Diversifying your information will help build a relationship between you and your followers.
 - Provide relevant news on federal funding for Safe Routes to School.
 - Mention activities or news that occurred that day related to community planning, local infrastructure needs, and other policy updates.
 - Ask followers to answer a question.
 - Share a daily fact about the importance of children establishing healthy habits early on in life.
 - Retweet interesting content or news from followers or other influencers.
 - Embed videos, images, and infographics. Infographics are one of the most shared types of content on Twitter.
 - Capitalize on real-time events. Use official event hashtags or other relevant hashtags like #SRTS.
 - Monitor followers to identify new fans and leverage potential relationships with those people/organizations. You could even ask your most engaged followers to serve as spokespeople in their community.
- **Engage with decision makers.**
 - To reach decision makers, include their Twitter handles in your informational tweets.
 - Ask followers to tweet at lawmakers, telling them to support Safe Routes to School.
 - Share research and studies with decision makers on the impact of Safe Routes to School and provide evidence of the importance of healthy travel options for children.
 - Note that including a legislator's Twitter handle in a tweet may mean the tweet is a direct communication to the legislator, so the tweet will be treated as lobbying if it reflects a view on a specific legislative proposal. This means the (small) cost of staff time for writing the tweet must be paid for with lobbying funds. Similarly, asking followers to tweet at lawmakers is grassroots lobbying, if you ask them to tweet about a



specific Safe Routes to School legislative proposal; it's not lobbying if you ask followers to tweet general information about Safe Routes to School at legislators.

- **Join the conversation.**
 - Reply to messages, questions, or ideas from followers as appropriate.
 - Focus on facts and avoid entering editorial disagreements or arguments.
 - Do not “feed the trolls”—avoid engaging professional critics or troublemakers.
- **Build your audience.**
 - Market your Twitter feed to your core audiences on other platforms, such as email.
 - Add your Twitter handle to other assets or websites (online and offline).
 - Begin to follow relevant influencers to stay plugged into the conversation and encourage these influencers to follow you as well.
 - If appropriate in your community, post messages in languages other than English on your page, or create a separate page in another language, such as Spanish, if that is more relevant to your work in the community.
 - Above all, create content that people want to share.

Key Takeaways

- Social media can be a powerful way to share your message with a broader, more diverse audience.
- People respond well to posts with multimedia, so include images and videos you own whenever possible.
- Use social media to encourage advocates to interact and support your offline activities.
- A small investment in paid advertising, such as Facebook ads, can make a positive difference for your campaign.
- By using appropriate languages you can conduct effective outreach to priority populations.



Engage: Using Social Media to Reach Journalists

With more than 6.9 million active users on Twitter every day and 552 million daily active users on Facebook, social media can serve as a powerful tool to amplify your message and reach micro-targeted audiences.

Just as consumers are increasingly turning to social media for news, so are journalists. They use it to research stories, follow trends, and interact with their own networks.

Note: while many journalists use social media for news, sometimes a phone call or an in-person meeting is better. Some journalists may want to engage in more traditional ways.

Reach Media through Social Channels

- **Start with research.** Before you begin engaging with journalists, research their backgrounds and personalize your messages, including referencing relevant past articles, and explaining why you have contacted them. Following journalists on social media can be a great research tool and a good way to initiate a relationship.
- **Try email.** Most journalists prefer to be contacted through email, not on social media. If you do not have an existing relationship with a journalist, a well-written email may be more effective than a tweet. You can also post a comment on the news outlet's webpage under the online version of the news story.
- **Do not begin with a pitch.** Though it is generally not appropriate to pitch over Twitter, you can use it to get on a journalist's radar. Start by following the reporter on Twitter and retweeting or commenting on content you find interesting.
- **Be respectful.** It is important to be mindful of journalists' time and to remember that all interactions are public. Do not mass-tweet pitches to several reporters and outlets.
- **Be careful with direct messages.** Do not ask a journalist you are not following to send you a direct message. Only people who follow one another can send each other DMs.

Sample Tweets

Below are a few sample tweets designed to build relationships with journalists and establish yourself as a thought leader on federal funding allotted for Safe Routes to School. Included below are references to specific policies demonstrating how they could fit within a tweet. Note that you can use all of these tweets for any of the policies by slightly tweaking the language. The [Key Messages](#) in the appendix can help with that.

- In response to a journalist tweeting an article on a related topic/issue: “**@[JOURNALIST]** Really interesting take on infrastructure needs, active choices, and #SRTS. Love your point on Safe Routes to School.”
- Sharing an article by a journalist: “**[QUOTE OR PARAPHRASED TEXT]** via **@[JOURNALIST]** **[LINK TO ARTICLE]** #SRTS”
- Sharing an article by the journalist and generating discussion among your followers: “Read **[ARTICLE TITLE]** via **@[JOURNALIST]** **[LINK TO ARTICLE]** It's important our children have safe AND healthy ways to get to school.”
- In response to a journalist tweeting an article on Safe Routes to School: “**@[JOURNALIST]**—Loved this piece, such an important topic! Would love to chat about our program sometime. #SRTS”



- In response to a journalist tweeting an article on the need for safe places to exercise in your community: “.@[**JOURNALIST**]—Really interesting points! Have you thought about the role of sidewalks and bike lines in reducing childhood #obesity? [**LINK TO SITE EXPLAINING PROGRAM**]”

Social Media Engagement Tips and Tricks

- Be transparent and disclose your job/purpose/association in your bio.
- Employ a conversational tone and avoid buzzwords.
- Always begin by listening to the existing conversation.
- Identify opportunities to be current, relevant, and timely.
- Be human.
- Be prepared to carry on a conversation with your followers.
- Include hyperlinks for additional information.
- Use relevant hashtags, when appropriate, to help your comments show up in larger conversations.
- Use handles of people (e.g., policymaker, organization, journalist) whose attention you are trying to garner.
- Focus on facts and avoid entering editorial disagreements or arguments.

Key Takeaways

- Begin with an email, then continue engaging with journalists on social media to build valuable media relationships.
- Make sure to research journalists’ backgrounds and tailor any messages you send to them.
- Do not start off with a pitch. Use social media to get to know journalists and engage with them, not to ask them for coverage.
- Always be transparent. Identify yourself and your campaign goals.

Mobilize: Action Alerts

The supporters in your existing database are well positioned to become your grassroots activists. By joining your email list, these individuals have already indicated they want to learn more about who you are and the issues important to you. The next step is converting their interest into a deeper level of commitment to your mission by getting your supporters to complete an action, such as signing a petition, communicating directly with policymakers and other decision makers, or attending events. Remember to develop action alerts in the relevant languages spoken in the community.

As you begin a conversation with your supporters through email, keep these goals in mind:

- **Educate them** through issue updates or updated Web content. These communications allow you to:
 - Provide advocates with information and cultivate their interest in an issue.
 - Identify the message areas that resonate best with subsets of the audience to better tailor outreach.
 - Keep individuals involved and updated during periods when critical action is not required, making it easier to engage them when the time comes.
- **Engage them in efforts** to deepen their activism through surveys, “share your story” opportunities, or social media. These activities give people actions to take that help you:
 - Learn more about what type of participation people prefer.
 - Train activists to be good stewards of issue messaging.
 - Expand your reach by amplifying your message through individuals’ social networks.
 - Reach out to diverse communities by engaging trusted messengers from those communities.
 - Show activists the importance of their participation so they are ready to respond on occasions when urgent action may be needed.
- **Activate them** with new and varied calls to action based on the way in which their unique voices can make a difference. Your advocates can reach the public by:
 - Participating in public dialogue on key issues through commenting on news articles, blog posts, or polls.
 - Recruiting new individuals to join the cause.
 - Attending public meetings, town halls, or hearings in support of your position.
 - Contacting decision makers via email, phone, postal mail, or in-person to contribute their opinions.
 - If your request reflects a view on specific legislation, asking advocates to contact their legislators will be lobbying.



Email action alerts also allow you to communicate with supporters directly, measure their interest through open rates, and track their support through clicks on the links in your email. Because email communications have the capacity to be uniquely micro-targeted to recipients, sending alerts to your audience can be one of the most powerful ways to inspire mobilization around an issue. Do not forget to send these out in all appropriate languages.

Key Takeaways

- There are many different ways to engage your volunteers over email—action alerts can educate, motivate, and activate.
- Keep advocates interested by offering updates and new and varied ways to participate.



- Surveys or requests for feedback can make your email program even stronger.
- Engage trusted messengers in reaching out to diverse communities.

Mobilize: The Value of Phone Outreach

Even in today's digital era, person-to-person contact remains one of the most effective means of relationship building. Below is an overview of how to train volunteers, as well as two different types of phone outreach: phone banks and phone patch programs.

Phone Banks

Operating a phone bank connects your organization's volunteers with potential new advocates—people you hope will want to learn more about your issues, get involved with your campaign, and act to achieve your goals. In order to host a successful phone bank, consider the recommendations below.

Recruit and Train Volunteers

- **Enlist your team.** Find people willing to make calls on a regular or semi-regular basis. Current staff members at your organization or existing volunteers are the best resources.
- **Work with partners.** You may find a need to extend your reach beyond your own staff or volunteers in ways that would be best done through partner organizations. This is often the case when trying to connect with diverse groups that have not yet engaged with your issues, and where outreach is best done by a trusted and well-known voice.
- **Identify your manager.** Designate someone from your team to manage the call center. Train them to lead the volunteers and ensure program success.
- **Train your callers.** Brief volunteers on the issues, so they can discuss these topics with callers and exercise cultural sensitivity when appropriate. Conduct a training session where they can learn your talking points and practice making calls to familiarize themselves with the process.
- **Identify any unique language needs.** Does your community include non-English speakers? If so, be sure to recruit bilingual volunteers or enlist the help of volunteer translators.

Find a Location and Supplies

- **Decide where people will call.** Before moving forward in this process, determine if you want callers to work from a centralized location. People can make calls from their homes, but without supervision they might not stick to the script and could damage potential or existing relationships. Your offices could be a good location for local, targeted calls.
- **Equip yourself.** Ensure your call center has enough lines and telephones for volunteers.
- **Set time limits and provide refreshments.** Establish how long you want the call center to be open. If it is for a long period of time, provide food and drinks to volunteers.

Create a Call List

- **Develop your list.** A call list is essential to any successful phone bank, but like all communications, it must be targeted. Target individuals based on a known or potential interest in helping children achieve a healthy weight or safe routes to school—from school officials and community leaders, to groups promoting healthy causes or working to reduce diseases like diabetes. A number of resources are available to help discover target audiences, including U.S. Census data. As you develop your list, be sure to have callers who can communicate in the relevant languages spoken in the community.
- **Start with existing advocates at your organization.** You already have their information, and they will understand why they are hearing from you because they have expressed previous interest in related issues.

- **Consider buying lists.** It is also possible to buy lists with phone numbers and other advocate information. Prices vary based on the amount of targeting and number of people on a list, but InfoUSA (www.infousa.com), Caldwell List Company (www.caldwell-list.com), and Dataman Group (www.datamangroup.com) are good resources if you wish to purchase a list.

Develop a Script

- Prepare a script and one-pagers so volunteers can have effective and informative conversations. As you develop your message, test the script with someone unfamiliar with the issue to ensure it will be understood by your audience as intended. You should also develop a list of common questions and talking points for those difficult questions your volunteers may receive. Your script should include the following information.
 - **Introduction:** Provide a brief introduction of yourself and your organization. There is no need to begin explaining the issue at this point. Ask the individual if they have time to talk about the issue.
 - **Outline the issue:** If the call recipient has the time, explain the issue and why it is important. This is the point where targeting is most important. Creating safe routes to school will affect people differently. Know the person you are talking to, and tailor the conversation accordingly.
 - **Request for assistance:** Following the explanation of the issue, ask the call recipient for another point of contact (e.g., their email, mailing address). Having this information will allow you to follow up later and provide further details about the issue.
 - **Closing:** If someone declines to hear about the issue, ask if there would be a better time to call back. Always thank them for their time.
- Below is a sample phone banking script. You may need more than one script depending on your intended reach. Feel free to customize it to include any cultural variations for particular audiences of interest, and be sure to enlist and prepare materials for your bilingual volunteers.
 - Hi [ADVOCATE NAME]. My name is [YOUR NAME], and I am calling on behalf of [YOUR ORGANIZATION].
 - We are working to make it safer for kids to walk and bike to school across the nation including in [ADVOCATE CITY]. Do you have a few minutes to talk about how Safe Routes to School will help you and your family?
 - **IF YES**
 - Great! Between 1969 and 2009, the percentage of students (ages 5-14) regularly walking or biking to school each day declined from nearly 50 percent to 13 percent. A key reason for this decline? Unsafe conditions: few sidewalks and crosswalks, no bike paths, little enforcement, and no traffic regulation. Federal funding is in place to bring safe routes to school to [COMMUNITY] and we want to be sure families and community members are aware of what they can be doing to show their children the importance of an active lifestyle.
 - The Ask: If you join us, we will keep you up-to-date on all the issues and progress being made in your area and nationally. **Will you join us in this mission?**
 - **IF YES:** Wonderful. Let me get your [EMAIL, MAILING ADDRESS, ETC.] so we can keep you updated.



- **IF NO:** Well, thanks for your time, and if you want to learn more about the program, you can visit **[WEBSITE]**. Have a great **[DAY, EVENING]**.
- **IF NO**
 - Is there a more convenient time I can call you back? (*If yes, write when to call back and make a note. If no, then skip to...*). Thanks for your time, and if you want to learn more about the program, you can visit **[WEBSITE]**. Have a great **[DAY, EVENING]**.
- **IF ANSWERING MACHINE**
 - Hi **[ADVOCATE NAME]**. My name is **[YOUR NAME]**, and I'm calling on behalf of **[YOUR ORGANIZATION]**. We're working to help improve the health of families in **[ADVOCATE CITY]** through the creation of safe routes to school, which will allow children to walk and bike safely to school.
 - *The Ask:* Please call us at **[PHONE NUMBER]** or visit our website at **[WEBSITE]** to learn more and to help support safe ways to walk and bike in **[COMMUNITY]**.
 - Thank you and have a great day!

Compile Data

- Track the data garnered from these phone calls—who you are calling, how many people you reach, how many volunteers sign up, how often people are called, etc.
 - Set standards and guidelines for recording data, and be sure volunteers are trained on the proper way to record information.
 - Create a template in Excel for volunteers to record the data. Determine what you want to know about each person. You should at least have their first name, last name, phone number (home or mobile), as well as whether they picked up or you left a message, what language was spoken, whether they wanted to talk, and whether they were supportive. If possible, try to record their email address and mailing address.

Maintain the Relationship

- Phone calls are the beginning of a relationship, not the end. To keep working with these advocates, you must follow up with them, either with another call or via email.

Phone Patches

A phone patch, as opposed to a phone bank, connects advocates with their elected officials. In order to host a phone patch program, you will work with a third-party organization that calls advocates, explains the issue, and asks if the advocates would like to be connected with their representative to voice support for a cause or issue. This is a supplemental method to the phone bank program and should target existing advocates, not new ones.

If you ask advocates to contact a legislator to support or oppose specific legislation, your phone patch calls will be considered grassroots lobbying. Make sure you budget lobbying funds to cover these costs. You can use non-lobbying funds for phone patches by avoiding references to any specific legislation, but that may dilute the impact of the calls.





Select a Vendor

Find a company that will call individuals on your behalf. Make sure to verify the vendor has the capacity to provide services in languages other than English, if needed in your community. Some companies that can assist in the program implementation include:

- [Mobile Commons](#)
- [Winning Connections](#)
- [Stones' Phones](#)
- [Strategic Consulting Group](#)

Create a Call List

As with phone banks, you will need to create a list of contacts to provide to the vendor for use during outreach.

Develop Scripts for Messages

- When individuals answer their phones, they will hear a pre-recorded message and will be connected to a representative by pressing a designated number. A script that highlights the importance of the initiative should be written to serve as this recording. There should also be an option for non-English speakers to press a number to hear the message in their language.
- An additional message could be written to record on an answering machine if the person misses the call.
 - **Script for Initial Recording**
 - Hi! I am calling on behalf of **[YOUR ORGANIZATION]**. Si quiere continuar en español, oprima el 2. Safe Routes to School is a program designed to provide safe walking and biking paths to school for our children. Federal funding is in place in **[COMMUNITY]**, but our community needs to encourage decision makers to implement these programs. If you'd like to learn more about this issue and how you can help in this effort, please press 1.
 - **Script for Leaving a Message**
 - Hi **[ADVOCATE NAME]**. My name is **[YOUR NAME]**, and I am calling on behalf of **[YOUR ORGANIZATION]**. We're working to help children achieve a healthy weight by providing safe walking and biking paths to schools in **[COMMUNITY]**. **[STATE]** has received federal funding to create safe transportation options in our community. However, it is up to us to encourage our state leaders to use this funding to build bike lanes and sidewalks so that children can safely travel to school and exercise at the same time. Please call us at **[PHONE NUMBER]** or visit our website at **[WEBSITE]** to learn more and voice your support for Safe Routes to School. Thank you and have a great day!
 - **Script for Phone Operator**
 - Hi. How are you? Thanks so much for agreeing to take the next step to support Safe Routes to School.
 - To implement this change, we need advocates to speak with their representatives and transportation officials about the importance of funding for Safe Routes to Schools. Before I connect you with your legislator, what questions can I answer for you about these policies or about the process? (*Note: Advocates will have varying degrees of knowledge about this issue so, at this point, it is a good idea to let them ask questions.*)
 - **Script for Connecting Advocates with Representatives**

- Now that you have all the information, I can connect you with your representative. Just so you are aware of the process, I will transfer you to your legislator **[LEGISLATOR NAME]**, and someone on **[HIS/HER]** staff will talk with you. You will need to tell the person who answers the phone your name, that you are a constituent, and that you support helping children achieve a healthy weight by teaching lifelong healthy habits through Safe Routes to School in **[STATE]**.
 - As written, this phone script is not lobbying, because it does not refer to a specific legislative proposal. If, instead of referring to the general initiatives of Safe Routes to School, the script urged people to tell their legislators to support specific legislation providing funds to implement Safe Routes to School laws, or another specific bill to achieve this goal, the calls would be lobbying and would need to be paid for with restricted funds.
- Note: Your phone bank operator will need to be trained to answer frequently asked questions and know where to refer people with questions he/she is unable to answer.



Record the Results

Typically, a phone patch operator will provide a daily report with the results of the program. Collect that data and keep it for your records to strengthen future outreach efforts.

Additional Things to Consider

Whether you are phone banking or phone patching, below are some tips to help your process run smoothly.

- Avoid using computer or auto-dialing systems, as some states prohibit these, and federal rules impose restrictions on autodialed calls that are sent to cell phones. Instead, have people dial numbers by hand. Hand-dialed phone banks also have a higher completion rate (50 percent compared to 15 percent with automated dialing systems, according to The Voices of America).
- Hybrid systems also exist. These systems allow you to download data to the phone so that you just hit “dial.” Volunteers can record the answers to the survey on the phone, which can then be downloaded to a computer. It also allows you to record a voicemail, so the volunteer can push a button that automatically plays your recorded message after the beep without having to stay on the line. However, keep in mind that these systems may be subject to state restrictions on auto-dialed calls, as well as the federal ban on auto-dialed calls to cell phones.
- Try to make your calls between the hours of 6 p.m. and 9 p.m. on weekdays and 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. on weekends, as these are the hours you will most likely find people at home.
- Make sure volunteers know how to react in different situations (e.g., leaving a message on a machine or speaking with a hostile individual).
- Be sure the efforts of the campaign are not limited by do-not-call lists.
 - Typically, these apply only to telemarketing sales calls. At the federal level, the do-not-call provisions do not cover calls from political organizations, charities, telephone surveyors, or companies with which a consumer has an existing business relationship.
 - Most states follow the standard set by the federal government, but state laws can vary. Check state government websites or call your lawyer to ensure compliance with these laws.





Key Takeaways

- There are two different types of telephone programs: phone banking and phone patching. Phone banking is for recruiting volunteers, while phone patching is for connecting advocates with elected officials.
- To ensure a well-organized phone bank, brainstorm all potential questions and responses volunteers may receive, and build a script to equip your volunteers with the best ways to react.
- If your community includes non-English speakers, recruit phone volunteers who speak the relevant languages.
- Consider the hours between 6 p.m. and 9 p.m. on weekdays and 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. on weekends the best time to make these calls in order to reach the highest number of people.
- Check your state's laws on phone outreach to ensure you comply with all do-not-call provisions.

Mobilize: Hosting a Media Event

Working with local media is a key way to raise awareness about your campaign, priorities, and goals. Media coverage can help you educate communities, create conversation, and recruit new advocates. But not only that; it should be a key part of your campaign strategy and message framing. To begin, you must first thoughtfully develop and carefully plan how you want to present the issue to reporters. Building relationships with media and pursuing media advocacy well in advance of hosting a media event will help to ensure that your message is understood and the cause is well-positioned by reporters.

Start by thinking about what you want to accomplish and who you want to reach. Do you have news to release, such as a report or study? If not, what is your media hook? Does the nightly news highlight city planning meetings or new infrastructure projects in your town? What about your local paper? Would you be better served by engaging with community bloggers? Consider including multicultural media in this outreach, as well as other media outlets your target audiences turn to for trusted information. Once you decide what your goals are, you can start identifying media opportunities that match.

One way to engage members of the media is by inviting them to an event. A well-run media event—one with compelling speakers, stories, clear facts, and easily explained goals—will give reporters the tools they need to amplify your story in newspapers, on air, and online. Note that the most successful events are built upon existing media relations, so thoughtfully consider the timing of your event as it fits with the rest of your media strategy.

Where and Who?

To give your message more impact, choose a location for your event that will reinforce the importance of having safe ways for children to walk and bike to school. Hold your event at a park, school, or outdoor recreation center.

Other options include a meeting room in a city hall or other municipal building, or in a place of worship where leaders are calling for more walking and biking routes to schools in their communities.

Possible speakers include:

- Legislators who support Safe Routes to School
- School board members
- Prominent business leaders who can speak on the topic
- Physicians
- Parents
- Community leaders from cities that have successfully implemented Safe Routes to School

Consider speakers who can talk persuasively about the importance of Safe Routes to School. Consider individuals who have a stake in the initiative and can speak knowledgeably on the topic or can share a compelling story. A diverse mix of speakers who can speak fluently in all languages spoken in the community and/or are familiar with other cultures will provide your media attendees with a range of perspectives on federal funding for Safe Routes to School. If you do not have any bilingual speakers, consider having a translator available to facilitate interviews with the press.

Event Tips

The following tips cover some of the basics of event hosting. However, the list below is not comprehensive—every event is different, and you will need to adapt your planning to each event’s unique requirements.

- **Establish a point of contact.** Your event point of contact should manage all logistics. This person could be a paid staff member or a trusted volunteer. Whomever you choose, make sure he or she has existing experience with event coordination and execution.
- **Send invitations.** For some media events, such as salon dinners or press conferences where you will focus on specific issues, make sure key influencers are in the room. Even if they are not speakers, their presence can lend an air of credibility to your efforts. Issue personal invitations to these influencers and follow up with them if necessary to secure their confirmation.
 - If someone on your staff has an existing relationship with these influencers, ask that person to call them on the phone or send a personal email. People are more likely to respond to messages from names they recognize.
- **Create briefing books.** Prior to the event, you will want to share briefing packets with media and key influencers who will be in attendance. Consider sharing your organization’s policy position statement on safe routes to school, the fact sheets from this toolkit, and relevant news articles. Create a list of common questions and key talking points that include responses to opposition arguments, a list of your partners, and an explanation of where your coalition receives its funding.

Media Engagement

- Research recent media stories—newspaper articles, TV segments, radio shows, etc.—to determine which media figures or outlets might be friendliest to the implementation of Safe Routes to School. Be sure to include multicultural media. Based on this research, reach out to the media you would like to cover the event.
- Think about what makes your story “newsworthy.” Reporters have several criteria for determining which stories they want to cover. It can vary depending on the nature of an issue, but the following are example “hooks” that will help you pitch your story.
 - **Timeliness:** The issue is being talked about, reported on, and/or action is being taken.
 - **Conflict or controversy:** There are strong opposing opinions.
 - **Proximity:** The issue is affecting the local community.
 - **Prominence:** Public officials or celebrities have weighed in.
 - **Significance:** A large amount of people are impacted or taking action.
 - **Human interest:** The issue is engaging because it draws emotion from the viewer, is often relatable, and is told by feature stories that really “hit home.”
 - **Bizarre:** There is a strange, odd, or unbelievable tie-in.
- Once you have established your media list, you can immediately begin pitching editorial board meetings. Since the editorial board makes significant decisions on which stories the outlet will cover, meeting with them in advance of major stories can ensure your story is not only included, but is elevated for greater reach. This work should start at least one month prior to the event.
- Distribute a media advisory to all of your selected media outlets and pitch print and radio two weeks prior to the event. While some reporters may be slow to respond to your pitch, do not be discouraged; keep following up with them until you receive a confirmation. Some will not confirm a story until the day of the event.
- Distribute a press release in the days leading up to the event and include an embargo to ensure that media adhere to your event date for releasing any new data.

- If you have secured interest from a TV station, follow up with the producer two days prior to the event and the morning of the event. Also reach out to unconfirmed print reporters two to three days prior to and the morning of the event.
- Visuals, such as a large banner or poster that are compelling and eye-catching, are great resources to bring to events to secure media coverage. Consider bringing props that demonstrate the changes you want to make, such as “before and after” images or photos of a street that has been transformed by adding bike lanes and sidewalks. Compelling visuals may encourage print media to feature your issues above the fold or on their homepage.
- Depending upon media interest, coordinate media interviews on-site before or after the event.
- Prepare an op-ed to submit to a target newspaper about the event and the news you are releasing. Take a look at the sample op-eds provided in this toolkit for ideas on how to shape yours, but also include information that is relevant to your community.

Blogger Engagement

- If you have local bloggers in your town or city, consider inviting them to the event, especially if they write about topics relevant to safe routes to school, such as childhood obesity and a lack of safe transportation options. Provide them with fact sheets and other appropriate background information.
 - With childhood obesity on the rise, communities need to encourage healthy options for kids. One of the best ways to keep kids active is to incorporate exercise into their daily routines by implementing Safe Routes to School. By creating safe ways to walk or bike, children will be able to exercise as they go to and from school—an easy choice for a healthy lifestyle.
- A post has the potential to be even more powerful when the blogger is representative of communities where these challenges exist.
- As with any other media, develop an outreach plan and engage bloggers accordingly. Make sure your outreach is personal and calls out direct reasons why that specific blogger should come to the event.
- Track confirmations/declines and shape your outreach accordingly.
- Monitor for and report on any mentions of the event by targeted bloggers, both leading up to the event and after.

Database Growth

- If your event is not media-only, set up a table on the day of your event where people can sign up to learn more about safe routes to school. Because they are attending the event, they may want to join the campaign.
 - Consider using the sign-up opportunity for a dual purpose. For example, at the end of the event, attendees may be motivated to make some sort of commitment to help encourage the building of safe walking and biking routes in their communities, and programs to promote the use of this infrastructure to meet daily exercise recommendations. Combine the sign-up with a pledge where attendees can share the specific ways they will help the cause.
 - This will also help you keep track of the types of people in your database and the specific ways in which you can engage them based on their stated interest in safe routes to school.

- As you add new members to your database, segment them into areas of interest so that you can quickly deploy customized messages or action requests based on their diversity of interest and skills.
- Transcribe the sign-up forms and upload your new advocates to your organization's database. Send them a follow-up email welcoming them to your email list, thanking them for their attendance and asking how they want to be involved in the future.

Post-Event Activities

- Leverage the event by posting the speeches, photographs, and videos to all relevant websites and social media platforms, as appropriate.
- Follow up with local influencers and potential advocates, as appropriate, to gauge their interest in further involvement.
- If there are media, including bloggers, who could not attend the event, provide them with information and an event synopsis with photos so they can cover the event retroactively.

Key Takeaways

- Start working on your event early. Between identifying diverse speakers, inviting journalists, and coordinating a run-of-show, a well-executed media event can take weeks to plan.
- To get the right people in the room, research journalists and their beats before inviting them to your event.
- Be sure to include multicultural media.
- The location of and speakers at your event are important to its success. Hold your event in a community striving for active ways for children to get to school—on foot or bike—and host compelling speakers on the subject.
- Once your event is over, follow up by making photos, speeches, and videos available online.

Mobilize: Media Training Tips

Speaking to the media can seem a bit daunting, but it is a prime opportunity to tell a compelling story that brings home the importance of having safe walking and biking routes to school. Unlike any other tactic for your campaign, an interview with key media could allow you to access a wide audience in a personal manner.

In many cases, your media team will have pitched the safe routes to school story to local media, offering your spokespeople as experts who can weigh in on the topic. Remember to reach out to media who have natural connections with the issue at hand (e.g., education reporters, community development reporters, statehouse reporters, etc.) because they are more likely to respond to your pitch. You will have a better chance of success with targeted mainstream and multicultural audiences when you create a pitch specifically targeted to those outlets.

With the appropriate preparation and practice, your speakers will become comfortable with your messaging and be able to speak articulately and passionately about the issue. The guidelines below will help you prepare speakers for success.

Choose Spokespeople

Develop a small cadre of spokespeople whose perspectives are especially important to the cause and whom the media might be interested in interviewing. Strive for diversity that represents your community and be sure to include spokespeople who can speak in other languages as it makes sense for your community.

- Community leaders, local faith leaders, health advocacy group members, and representatives from local PTA/PTO groups can help reach a variety of audiences in the community.
- Doctors who see the impact of obesity-related diseases on their patients will add credibility.
- Researchers who can share data on obesity's impact on a specific city or state will add quantifiable evidence to the story.
- Finally, top-level executives from your organization are always important faces to add to your campaign. They can speak specifically about your efforts to bring safe routes to school to your community.

Reach out to these types of spokespeople, ask if they would be interested in speaking on behalf of your organization about the need for safe options for traveling to and from school, and begin preparing them for the task.

Develop Content

Begin preparing your speakers for interviews as soon as possible. The more your speakers prepare, the more comfortable they will be and the better their delivery will be. But before you compose your responses, answer the following questions.

- **Who is your audience?** Before developing your messages, it is important to consider the audiences you will be reaching through the publication conducting the interview.
 - To what media outlet will your speaker be presenting?
 - What is the media outlet's readership or viewership?
 - What are the demographics of the readership or viewership?



- **What should you say?** Speakers will need to be armed with talking points about safe routes to school, but these core messages are just a starting point. Make your content more relevant by considering the following questions.
 - Are there specific facts you want to highlight during the interview?
 - What is the central theme you want to discuss—the core statement you return to over and over?
 - Are there any cultural sensitivities or community dynamics to be aware of when you are developing your core messages?
 - What would success look like? Provide numbers, statistics, and target goals (e.g., a 30 percent increase in kids biking and walking to school).
 - Can you make your messages more tangible? Consider adding comments about student groups that could benefit from Safe Routes to School, the opportunities for gym teachers to use this program to demonstrate lifelong healthy choices, and community leaders who are stepping up to show safety is an important part of an active lifestyle.
 - Are there other groups or individuals taking part in the interview? What are their positions likely to be, and will you have to comment on them?
 - How would you respond to the concerns of your opponents?
 - Do you need to tailor messages to specific populations or communities?
- **What matters most?** Spend some time thinking about how your speakers can best portray themselves and the issue.
 - How should the interview begin and end? The most important parts of an interview are the introduction and conclusion because they are what your audience is most likely to remember.
 - Journalists craft stories around “sound bites”—short sentences that communicate your messages quickly and boldly. It helps them keep up the pace of their story so they can keep an audience or reader engaged. When you write talking points, avoid run-on sentences and complicated language. Craft punchy lines that grab attention and tell your story passionately.
 - Are there other ways to restate the main goal of the campaign? People need to hear things at least three times to remember them, so keep bringing the messaging back to your core points.
 - Is this still relevant? Reread talking points the day before the interview to be sure the proof points are still relevant. Read the local news of the day and reference anything that is topical.
- **What questions do you expect?** Spend some time anticipating questions and developing direct responses or ways to turn the conversation back to your key message. Consider those opposition or “gotcha” questions, since reporters often want to cover both sides of the debate.
- **Where will the interview be held?** Determine in advance if your interview will be held in person, over the phone, over email, or through some other medium, so you can plan responses that fit best.

Rehearsal

No matter how familiar spokespeople are with your talking points, it is important to have them rehearse multiple times before the interview. Ask your spokespeople to rehearse your talking points in the following ways—and work alongside them as they do.



- **Read the text alone silently.** Read the content with a critical eye. Do all proof points support the overall story? Is the central theme clear?
- **Read aloud alone.** Spokespeople might be surprised to hear themselves speaking aloud, especially if it is their first time participating in an interview. Suggest to your speakers that they read aloud to themselves, and make note of places where they take natural pauses or get tripped up on words.
- **Stand and read in front of a mirror (if the interview is on television).** When spokespeople read the content aloud standing, they will begin to get a feel for their natural body movement and non-verbal cues that will help bring the content to life.
- **Stand and read in front of peers.** Gather your colleagues to listen to the spokespeople deliver their talking points. This can help increase a speaker's confidence and provides a safe place for feedback. At this point, they should be able to deliver their content without reading directly from papers.
- **Record their delivery and learn from it.** One of the best ways to rehearse is to make a video recording of your spokespeople presenting. This allows them to see what the interviewer sees and will make speakers aware of any distracting movements or phrases they may unknowingly use.
- **Rehearse in a comparable setting to where the interview will be held.** You may not be able to take your spokespeople to the actual interview location, but try to create a setting that feels similar. Spokespeople can practice their movement in this similar space, developing a sense of how to move and talk effectively when they are in the interview.

Interview Delivery

When your spokespeople arrive for the interview, they should be friendly and engaging, greeting reporters and producers confidently. This confidence is especially important if any of the spokespeople are top-level executives from your organization.

- **Own the space.** When you are on-site in the room, remind your speakers of the movements they practiced. If it is the right setting, encourage them to move around.
- **Engage the interviewer and the audience.** Remind spokespeople to maintain eye contact with the reporter as often as possible. They are the window to the viewers who are watching or listening. If there is an audience present, make sure your spokespeople speak directly to them.
- **Relax and enjoy.** By this point, your spokespeople will have mastered their text and be comfortable with their delivery, so remind them to relax and enjoy their time in the interview.
- **Say thank you.** Thank the reporter at the end and suggest meeting with them at a later date for a follow-up interview.

Key Takeaways

- Identify a core group of spokespeople who can consistently speak with the media about your campaign in all relevant languages.
- Develop smart, punchy talking points and customize them to be relevant for each interview. Prepare for those “gotcha” questions that may arise.
- Practice makes perfect—ask your spokespeople to rehearse their speeches or talking points to get comfortable with their comments before they speak with journalists.

Mobilize: Why Op-Eds Matter

Public commentary has long been one of the most powerful ways to broadly communicate ideas. You will be able to convey your campaign's essential messages to legislators, journalists, and the community through a published op-ed.

In the past few years, competition from expanded news and information sources like blogs and social media has made publication easier but competition for attention tougher. This means that you will have to offer your best thinking and most influential voices to maximize your chances of having a newspaper print your op-ed—and have people care about who you are and what you have to say.

Op-Ed Tips and Tricks

- **Choose your signer carefully.** To ensure the best chance of earning placement on a news platform or gaining people's attention, enlist a high-profile influencer to sign and submit your op-ed. Ideally, this influencer should be well-known within your community and by the audience of the publication, such as a doctor, researcher, teacher, school principal or superintendent, or politician.
- **Choose a good subject line.** Unless you have had other contacts with the editorial page editor, your subject line functions as a pitch. Be sure it communicates the seriousness and timeliness of your op-ed.
- **Ask yourself: "Who cares?"** Make sure your piece will clearly resonate with or be meaningful to the public. Start by writing from the reader's point of view, and express a clear opinion.
- **Keep things tight.** News outlets have limited space, so keep your op-ed to approximately 500 words. Some outlets have even shorter limits, while a few will accept up to 700 words, so check your paper's requirements before submitting.
- **Speak conversationally.** Avoid jargon, fancy words, and slang. Your op-ed must be comprehensible to the general public, including people with no knowledge of safe routes to school or why it might touch their lives.
- **Get to the point.** Make your key points early and often, and back them up with facts and examples.
- **Offer a short, snappy headline.** A good headline gives readers a preview of what your op-ed has to say. (Keep in mind that some news outlets will write their own headlines, regardless of what you submit.)
- **Be prepared to be edited.** Op-ed submissions are subject to revisions, editing, and fact-checking. Editors usually do NOT need your approval to make revisions or edits to accommodate space limitations, provided they do not change the context of your position. Sources for factual statements should be listed at the bottom of your op-ed to expedite review and placement processes.
- **Include your contact information.** Be sure to include your name, title, organization (as needed), email, and phone number in case the editors want to contact you.
- **Try again.** If your op-ed is rejected, send it elsewhere or publish it on your organizations' own blog. Two samples of op-eds are available in the appendix. A rational op-ed appeals to reason; an emotional version appeals to the heart.

Key Takeaways

- Choose your signer carefully. Having a local leader's signature on your op-ed can help increase its chance of being published.
- Be brief and to the point. Five hundred words is a good target.
- Op-eds can be either rational or emotional, depending on the story you want to tell.

Mobilize: Meeting with Legislators

Some advocates may be willing to visit elected officials. Whether you meet with representatives in local home offices or take a trip to the state capitol, you can have a strong impact when you can look legislators in the eye and answer their questions about the problem of a lack of safe ways for children to walk or bike to school, as well as proposed solutions. Decision makers want to know what is important to their constituents, so when your representative is available, take advantage of that time by scheduling an in-person meeting.

What follows are some tips to make the most of your meetings.

Save the Date

Making an appointment is easy—simply call your legislators and talk to the office’s scheduler. Here are a few things to keep in mind.

- Be flexible with the date and time. Legislators have busy schedules and meetings usually last 15 to 45 minutes.
- You may end up meeting with a staffer rather than a legislator. Many legislators rely heavily on staff to keep them informed and make decisions about issues.
- Choose one or two issues to discuss so you can talk about them comprehensively in even a short amount of time.
- Bring a colleague or an advocate who can also offer their insight on the issues, such as a constituent who would benefit from the change in that community—perhaps a city planner or a parent of a school-aged child. Be cognizant that bringing an advocate to demonstrate diversity can come across as a token appearance. Be sure to have a strong role for each person engaged in the meeting.
- Research your representative’s stance and voting history on the issues you plan to discuss, as well as opposing viewpoints, to help frame your talking points.

Essentials for Success

Nervous about how the conversation will go or what to say? Bring these essentials to the meeting to help it run smoothly.

- A pen or pencil to take notes during your meeting.
- A business card to leave with your representative.
- Laptops or tablets for sharing photos of areas needing improvement in your community or student and community groups showing their support for Safe Routes to School. You can also use a camera to take a picture with your legislator while you are visiting his or her office.
- A customized version of the decision maker fact sheet in this toolkit.
- A clear “ask” for the meeting—for instance, a site visit, newspaper column, or op-ed—to move the issue forward.
 - Each of these could be a non-lobbying request if your communication with the legislator focused on the policy goal of Safe Routes to School laws, and the various ways this could be achieved, rather than discussing specific legislation. If you discuss specific Safe Routes to School legislative proposals, and reflect a view on those proposals, costs related to the meeting must be paid with lobbying funds.



Make the Most of Your One-on-One

- Dress professionally when visiting your representative.
- Introduce yourself and talk about your position on the issues you are prepared to discuss.
- Share personal stories and examples to illustrate how the issues affect you and your community.
- Listen to your legislator's response and be prepared to answer questions. If you cannot answer his or her questions, jot a note down and get back to him or her.
- Even if you do not see eye to eye, always be respectful and polite.

Thank Your Legislator

- Thank your legislator in a brief note or email for taking time out of his or her very busy schedule.
- Remind them of the stories you shared, your stance on the issues you discussed, and how their actions affect people in your community.
- Based on the response to your request or "ask," determine the appropriate steps for following up with your legislator.

Key Takeaways

- Come prepared for your meeting with fact sheets, business cards, cameras, and—most importantly—a clear "ask."
- Always be respectful and polite.
- Remember to thank your legislator or member of their staff, and use this opportunity to reiterate your "ask."



Mobilize: Days at the Capitol

Individual meetings can go a long way toward making a difference with your legislator—but there is strength in numbers. If you are looking to combine a media event and a legislator meeting, you may consider hosting a day at the state capitol where advocates hold a rally and then attend scheduled meetings with decision makers.

Here are some things to think about as you plan your own day at the capitol.

Choose the Right Day

Planning a day at the capitol takes a lot of time and work—it is a large investment for one short day. Therefore, it is important to make sure you schedule the rally for when it will be most effective.

- Schedule the meeting when your issue is under review by the legislature. If you know when a vote is coming up or a particular committee is viewing the bill, law makers may be more focused on your issue. By talking to them at this point, you can grab their attention and remind them why this issue matters to you. If you talk about the legislation with a law maker and reflect a view on the bill, it will be lobbying.
 - If you choose to express a view on specific legislation in this type of meeting, make sure you have ample unrestricted dollars to cover the costs of both planning and hosting such an event. These activities will be lobbying expenses since they involve communicating directly with legislators about specific legislation.
- The legislative calendar lends itself to slightly different opportunities for meetings. Try to attend at a time when things are slower at the capitol, not at the start of a new legislative session, so that you may be able to secure more quality face-to-face time with your legislator. If there is an opportunity to connect your visit to an awareness day (e.g., Walk to School Day, Bike to School Day), this could lend emphasis to your visit.
 - If you focus your message more generally on helping children achieve a healthy weight through the implementation and promotion of safe ways to walk or bike to school, it may be possible to use non-lobbying funds for this activity. When using non-lobbying funds, you must stick to educating legislators on a policy problem, such as the lack of safe options in your community for traveling to school on foot or bike, or to asking them to weigh in on regulatory issues, such as ensuring the state Department of Transportation actually awards (or disburses) the funds available for Safe Routes to School. You can also secure legislators' general backing for your issue, obtain support for non-legislative projects like a statewide walk or bike to school day, or request a letter of support for a particular Department of Transportation grant application. Alternatively, if you want to use your visit to influence legislators to introduce or support specific Safe Routes to School legislation or a specific state budget amendment dedicating funds for Safe Routes to School projects, you must use lobbying dollars to pay for these activities.
 - During your day at the capitol, consider planning an activity or event that would attract the attention of the media.



Invite the Right People

When you schedule these types of events, remember that legislators and their staff want to hear from constituents and people who have direct experience with the issues at hand. It is important to bring advocates who will be directly affected by Safe Routes to School or have already seen the benefits of it.

And do not forget to bring people who can talk about the positive fiscal impact, perhaps a school official who has voluntarily made these changes without negative financial consequences. This can be a key point when it comes to health care and city planning, especially in under-resourced communities.

If you have existing relationships with your advocates, try to choose those who can effectively tell engaging stories that include reflect diverse perspectives.

If you plan to include youth in your day at the capitol, be sure to have signed parental permission slips and chaperones. Consider consulting legal counsel if you need assistance developing this plan.

Help Advocates Attend

- If you have the resources, make plans to help your advocates get to the capitol, especially those with financial limitations. Consider offering gas money or assistance in paying for their plane ticket. An investment to get the right people involved can help ensure a successful visit. If the capitol is within reasonable driving distance, identify who can drive and who would like or need to carpool with others.
 - Keep in mind, however, that if you are organizing a lobbying event, the travel costs also must be paid for using lobbying funds.
- If overnight travel is necessary, settle on a hotel and send out the booking information well in advance of the rally so people can get the cheapest rates (this may be another opportunity to help individuals out with the costs, if you are able). Always ask the hotel if it has group discount rates.
- Make sure your accommodations are pleasant and have sufficient space for group training meetings. They should also not be too far from the capitol. Consider visiting the hotel in advance to make sure it is suitable for your advocates. Remember, you want people coming back next year, and comfort—even modest comfort—is important.
- Ask advocates if they have any barriers to participating, such as transportation or child care, and brainstorm ways to help overcome these challenges to ensure full participation.
- Keep in mind, however, that if you are organizing a lobbying event, the travel costs also must be paid for using lobbying funds.



Create a Schedule

Plan a clear itinerary that you can distribute to advocates when they arrive; you can even place it in their hotel rooms with a welcome gift bag. An itinerary will communicate that this trip is important, purposeful, and they are going to get something out of it. On the itinerary, note the key messages for advocates, emphasize what the common “ask” is, and outline next steps for follow-up. Schedule time at the end of the day to receive immediate feedback and debrief on key conversations.

Build Time for Fun

Beyond meeting with their decision makers, this is an excellent time for advocates to connect. Connected advocates are often more committed and inspired to support the issue at hand. Although your advocates are connecting online, they may have few opportunities to connect in-person and learn from each other. Make sure to schedule intentional times for this to happen in the form of meetings and fun outings.

Create a Leave-Behind

Arm your advocates with tools that will help further drive the point home to decision makers. These could be the decision maker fact sheet in this toolkit or something else, such as a petition from advocates in their community or a symbol of the need to provide safe walking and biking routes to schools in their state. If your visit is a lobbying visit, materials you create specifically for the visit are likely to be considered lobbying materials; developing and printing the materials must be paid for with lobbying dollars. Before you create your leave-behind, check your state's gift restrictions for elected officials to confirm you are in compliance.



Follow Up with Successes

After the day at the capitol, follow up with advocates about the meetings, reporting any successful interactions or resulting legislative movement. The important thing here is to let advocates know their efforts were worth it so they will continue to be active for your cause.

Key Takeaways

- Look at the legislative calendar and pick a day that makes sense for your visit.
- Think carefully about who should be in the room, and make sure to bring people with direct experience about the issues at hand.
- Do what you can to make the process of traveling to the capitol as easy as possible for your advocates.



Appendix

Please Note: The materials provided in the following pages are meant to be general examples for you to learn from as you create your own pieces. For each tactic, please refer to the Key Messages outlined in the following pages, and craft your messages according to the specific policies most applicable to your community.



Key Messages: Pursuing Solutions to Helping Children Achieve a Healthy Weight

We have outlined the policy objectives and action items related to increasing support for federal funding for Safe Routes to Schools at the beginning of this toolkit. Take some time before starting your campaign to map out the specific objectives that are right for you, according to the policies outlined.

After you determine which specific policies and improvements to pursue, it's important to fold those solutions into the communications you produce so you can establish a congruent voice across all outreach.

Because you speak to different audiences at different times, the following are suggestions on how to speak about federal funding for Safe Routes to School and why it is important to speak to various audiences. Meanwhile, you may advocate for different solutions at different times, so we have bundled potential messaging for each policy lever together here. You can then use these messages in the various communications templates—including op-eds, action alerts, and blog posts—that follow.

Note that the allocation of federal dollars for Safe Routes to School can be a complex issue and is often different according to the state you live in. Please reference [Understanding Recent Changes to Federal Transportation Funding](#) to determine how to approach this issue in your state.

Overarching Message for Safe Routes to School: Federal Dollars

The below is your “go-to” messaging or “elevator pitch” for speaking in your community about federal funding for Safe Routes to School. Use it to succinctly communicate your mission with clarity.

Sound Bite

A sound bite should be the shortest articulation of your mission—short enough to be recorded by the media, while detailed enough to accurately explain your objectives to your community.

Sample sound bite: Every parent wants their child to be both healthy and safe, and these two things shouldn't be in question when it comes to getting to and from school. We have the resources to provide safe routes to school for our children. What are we waiting for?

Key Message

The key message is the center of your campaign. It explains the issue you are working to resolve and who you are enlisting to help you achieve that resolution.

Sample key message: Children often look to their parents, schools, and community leaders to learn how to live healthy lives. As their role models, it's up to all of us—parents, teachers, and even government officials—to look both ways and advocate for safe ways for our kids to stay healthy. Safe Routes to School programs, supported by existing federal resources, make it easy for children to build safe physical activity into their everyday lives.

Visualizing Impact



At the heart of your campaign, you want your supporters to be able to visualize the end result: a community that has been improved by their efforts. That's what the "visualizing impact" will help them do.

Sample visualizing impact: Right now, the streets of [CITY/STATE] are not as safe as they should be. There are few sidewalks and bike lanes, and few places for anyone, especially children, to actively, and safely, get from place to place. Federally funded Safe Routes to School will give us a different picture of transportation: one that is active, with bike lanes and sidewalks, so our children can get the physical activity they need.

Audience Matters: How to Message to Different Audiences

For each of the policy objectives outlined in the beginning of this toolkit, there is a corresponding audience that should be targeted in your efforts. The descriptions below outline why and how each audience can be involved in your campaign. Keeping these perspectives in mind as you communicate will help you craft language that resonates best with your audience.

Decision Makers

Why: Exercise is an important component to a healthy lifestyle and a habit best formed at a young age. Decision makers play an important role in helping to form this habit because they have the power to create community policy that supports healthy lifestyles, such as Safe Routes to School programs.

How: By pushing for the implementation of Safe Routes to School policies through federal funding and corresponding matching programs, decision makers look both ways to provide both safe and healthy options that better the future for our kids.

School Boards

Why: Learning in school extends beyond just grammar and arithmetic; students learn life lessons, including how to live active, healthy lives—and be safe while doing so.

How: Every school board can help students form healthy habits by advocating for safe routes to school and developing coordinated strategies across their district to make sure these changes have the biggest impact on those in need.

Individual Schools

Why: Schools hold incredible positions of authority in children's lives and in the community as a whole. In many cases, people look to their local schools to set the example for healthy living in the community.

How: Individual schools can look both ways by working within their communities to support Safe Routes to School programs that promote physical health. This could be in the form of PTA/PTO-sponsored community events focused on physical activity, or even individual classes that commit to walking or biking to school.

Parents

Why: Parents are in a powerful position to teach their children about the benefits of regular exercise.

How: By dedicating family time to physical activity and talking to their children about the advantages of walking or biking, parents model looking both ways by choosing safe and healthy life habits.

Individuals (Students)



Why: When communities lack walking and biking lanes, kids are asked to choose between a healthy lifestyle and a safe one. But it's crucial for students to look both ways.

How: Children can practice looking both ways by identifying active ways to get to school. If your local schools already have safe routes to school in place, students can challenge themselves to meet personal physical goals, including walking to school. If no infrastructure is in place, children can talk to their parents and other adults about where they need bike lanes and sidewalks in their community.

Specific Policies: Sample Messaging

The following paragraphs are meant to guide you as you begin to write your own content to help you achieve your policy objectives. While every group will approach policy objectives differently, these are strong examples of how you should consider messaging at each level of the pyramid.

Each example follows the same basic structure, which has proved effective in communicating campaign objectives. The structure is as follows.

1. *Context for conflict—establishes an understanding of how things should be*
2. *Conflict—describes the conflict; things are **not** as they should be*
3. *Resolution—instructs the corresponding audience in how they can resolve the conflict*

Policy makers: Policy Level

Just like a healthy breakfast, a brisk walk or bike ride can start the day off right. And when children get into the practice of regular physical activity, it sets them up for a healthier life. In some communities, bike lanes and sidewalks make it easy for children to build activity into their daily routine. But that's not the case in our community. We lack the safe infrastructure to make this ideal a reality. As a local leader, you can give our kids the chance to look both ways for a healthy and safe future.

As you may know, federal funding is available to meet this infrastructure need, but we need you to make sure those funds are spent to help our children lead better lives. I urge you to use these dollars to fund safe routes to schools and provide the necessary matching funds to see the project through. Especially in communities of great need, our children are looking to you to pave the way to a healthier and safer future.

School district leaders: Systems Level

If we want a healthy community in the future, we have to invest in our community's children today. That means looking both ways at the habits we teach them; as school leaders, it's your job to teach them healthy living, and as adults, it's your responsibility to keep them safe.

Supporting the development of safe routes to school gives you the power to raise the next generation of community leaders who know how to be both healthy and safe. The impact could be even greater if our decision makers allocated existing federal funds to help you build your Safe Routes to School programs.

Show our local decision makers how much your students need safe routes to school by incorporating walking and biking paths into your district travel plans and demonstrating the need for them through the tracking of student transportation choices. You can lead the charge, especially for those communities in great need, as our children learn to look both ways toward a healthy and safe future.

Individual school leaders: Organizational Level



The facts are clear: when children are active, they tend to perform better in the classroom. Creating safe routes to school helps children build physical activity into their everyday lives, and schools like yours can help lead the effort in communities to make walking and biking as natural for our children as looking both ways.

Whether hosting a bike to school day or designating additional crossing guards, you can demonstrate that the need for safe routes to school is real. By working with community organizations to help provide safer, healthier transportation options in the community, you can prove to our decision makers that this effort benefits not only the school, but the entire community.

Parents: Family Level

Parents have an important role to play as we look both ways for a healthier and safer future in our communities. Children watch our actions and copy what they see.

Let's join our kids in staying active, and encourage them to identify areas for walking and biking to school. In doing so, we're reinforcing that daily activity is as important as looking both ways before crossing the street.

Students: Individual Level

Have your parents ever told you to look both ways before crossing the street? It's one of the most important lessons you can learn! You see, we all feel better when we get outside and walk or bike to school, but it's important to do that safely. That's why your parents and teachers want to help you find safe places to be active in your community. You can help them by pointing out places around you where you wish there were a sidewalk or a bike lane for you to use.

And if your community already has bike lanes and sidewalks, challenge yourself to be active each day by either walking or biking to school. Forming habits like this at an early age will help you grow up into the healthy person you want to be.

Lobbying vs. Non-Lobbying Checklist

The following questions may help you determine whether your efforts might be considered lobbying under the IRS rules, and therefore, must be paid for with separate, lobbying-approved funding. Each organization's lobbying requirements (and the registration rules that may apply to them) may be slightly different, so make sure you consult your legal counsel to share your plans and address any questions. In general, the IRS lobbying rules apply to communications with members of Congress, state legislators, city council members, and potentially other elected officials and their staff. In some cases, communication with the general public is considered lobbying, too.



- ✓ Will you be communicating directly with a legislator—or to legislative branch staff, executive branch officials, or any staff involved in formulating particular legislation?

Note: Communicating with school boards and zoning boards does not qualify as lobbying.

- ✓ If so, will your communications reflect a point of view on specific legislation, such as the following?
 - Bills or ballot measures that have been introduced
 - Specific legislative proposals not yet introduced (e.g., Georgia should adopt Florida's Safe Routes to School law)
 - Budget bills

Think strategically: If you are not conveying a viewpoint on specific legislation, your communications with public officials or their staff are not lobbying. For example: telling a legislator that you want to help children achieve a healthy weight by providing sidewalks and bike lanes in your community is not lobbying, unless it is clear that you are referring to a specific legislative proposal (e.g., a piece of legislation to release funding for Safe Routes to School).

- ✓ Will you be communicating to the general public about a view on a particular ballot measure or piece of legislation—through op-eds, social media, email newsletters, advertisements, speeches, etc.?
- ✓ If so, will your communications to the general public include a call-to-action, such as the following?
 - Asking the public to contact a legislator
 - Identifying someone's legislative representative
 - Providing contact information for a legislator
 - Providing a vehicle for contacting the legislator (e.g., form email, petition)
 - Identifying a legislator's position on the legislation or identifying the legislator as sitting on the voting committee

Think strategically: In most circumstances, if communications to the general public do not include a call-to-action, they are not lobbying unless the legislation discussed is a ballot measure. For example, you may want to educate the public about the changes in transportation policy or the benefits of adopting healthy habits early in life, the communication will not be lobbying.



Sample Emotional Op-Ed

It didn't take long after my son's first steps for me to start telling him: look both ways before you cross the street. It was a valuable lesson for him to learn—one that may save his life.

Teaching him to choose a healthy lifestyle has been no different. Childhood obesity has tripled since 1963, so it's clear that as a country, and in **[STATE]**, we need to pay more attention to helping children lead healthy lives.

One common-sense place to start is in how our kids get to school. It used to be routine for kids to walk or bike to school. But today, in far too many places, kids like my son don't have safe sidewalks and bike lanes, which could serve as a natural choice for getting to school. Children should be able to jump on a bike or meet up with friends to walk to school without having to worry about getting hit by a car. If there aren't safe routes, we force our children to choose between an active lifestyle and a safe one.

If the health argument alone isn't enough to convince our leaders, our children's safety certainly should be. The numbers tell the story: from 2000 to 2006, 30 percent of traffic-related deaths among children between ages 5 and 15 happened while walking or bicycling. That horrifying statistic gives us every reason to act on building safe routes right away.

The federal government has already taken the first step, providing funding for communities to fix sidewalks and streets. The aptly named Safe Routes to School program, established in 2005, provides the funding for biking and walking paths to schools in communities around the country.

Safe Routes to School programs have proven effective nationwide. One study of more than 800 schools in DC, Florida, Oregon, and Texas found that Safe Routes to School interventions resulted in an average 31 percent increase in walking and bicycling to school over a five-year period, with up to 43 percent possible for comprehensive approaches including both infrastructure and multi-year programming.² In New York City, neighborhoods with safe routes interventions saw a 44 percent decline in school-aged pedestrian injuries during school-travel hours, while locations without Safe Routes to School interventions remained unchanged.

Despite these impressive stats, there's still work to be done: we need to make sure Safe Routes to School programs are fully funded in **[STATE]**. If not, we may not get the biking and walking paths we need, and that will impact all of us: parents, teachers, community leaders, and—of course—our children. Fortunately, we can all do something to address the need for safe walking and biking paths, and give kids like my son a healthy and safe option for getting to school.

Let's join together to make **[STATE]** safer and healthier now and in the future. Tell our leaders to support fully funded Safe Routes to School programs in our community and visit **[HYPERLINK]** to learn how else you can get involved.

The health and safety of our kids is simply too important to wait.

²Noreen McDonald, Ruth Steiner, Chanam Lee, Tori Rhoulac Smith, Xuemei Zhu and Yizhao Yang (2014). "Impact of the Safe Routes to School Program on Walking and Bicycling." *Journal of the American Planning Association*. Vol 80, Iss 2, p 153-167.

Note: In the last paragraph, we chose language that made this a non-lobbying communication. By referring to “local leaders” instead of “legislators,” the request to “Tell our leaders to support fully funded Safe Routes to School programs ...” is not a “call-to-action” under the definition of grassroots lobbying (see pg. 56; a call-to-action includes urging readers to contact their legislator). Readers could contact a legislator, or they might contact other local leaders, such as school board members or the head of the state Department of Transportation. Further, by using the general phrase “fund Safe Routes to School programs in our community” rather than referring to a specific legislative proposal, you eliminate an additional prong of the definition of grassroots lobbying: the requirement that the communication refer to specific legislation. If a legislative vote on a particular Safe Routes to School proposal was imminent, you could make a strategic decision to spend lobbying funds on an op-ed that explicitly urged readers to contact their legislators to ask them to vote for the bill. Alternatively, you could save lobbying dollars by writing an op-ed that advocates for the legislation without including a grassroots lobbying call-to-action.





Sample Rational Op-Ed

Did you know that the number of children who walk or bike to school decreased from 50 percent in 1969 to just 13 percent in 2009? Meanwhile, the number of overweight or obese children in the United States has tripled since 1963.

Coincidence? Seems unlikely.

Without adequate sidewalks, crosswalks, bike lanes, and paths to school, parents have been forced to find other ways for their children to get to school. The unintended consequence of these choices—often born out of the need to ensure children’s safety—is that kids are failing to get the regular exercise they need today, and they’re failing to learn the healthy habits that would serve them well for a lifetime.

The good news is that federal funding already exists to help **[STATE]** build safe routes to school. However, our elected officials must take steps to make sure these dollars are put toward building safe routes to schools in our communities.

The need for safe routes is clear. From 2000 to 2006, 30 percent of traffic-related deaths among children between ages 5 and 15 happened while walking or bicycling. While there are many important transportation needs in our community, are any of them more important than protecting our children?

The health imperative is no less important. We send our children to school because we want them to learn valuable lessons. Living active and healthy lives is as critical a lesson as any other, especially given the frightening rise of childhood obesity in our state.

Safe routes programs are working. A pilot program in New York showed a nearly 50 percent reduction in school-aged pedestrian injuries versus neighborhoods without safe routes to schools. And its return on investment is enviable: health care costs associated with physical inactivity decrease almost \$3 for every \$1 invested in safe walking and biking options.

We all want our kids to grow up healthy and strong, but if that’s going to happen, exercise needs to be modeled as a priority—and one that’s easy to achieve. If fully funded, Safe Routes to School programs can help us do that by providing sidewalks and bike lanes that encourage children to travel actively on the way to school. They help teach our kids how easy, even fun, it can be to build regular exercise into their everyday lives.

Join me in urging our local leaders to support fully funded Safe Routes to School programs. We do everything we can to keep our children safe in so many facets of life. Getting to and from school should be no different.

Note: In the last paragraph, we chose language that made this a non-lobbying communication. By referring to “local leaders” instead of “legislators,” the request to “join me in urging our local leaders to support fully funded Safe Routes to School programs” is not lobbying because it does not include a “call-to-action” under the definition of grassroots lobbying (see pg. 56; a call-to-action includes urging readers to contact their legislator). Readers could contact a legislator, or they might contact other local leaders, such as school board members or the head of the state Department of Transportation.





Further, by using the general phrase “support fully funded Safe Routes to School programs” rather than referring to a specific legislative proposal, we eliminate an additional prong of the definition of grassroots lobbying: the requirement that it refer to specific legislation. If a legislative vote on a Safe Routes to School proposal was imminent, you could make a strategic decision to spend lobbying funds on an op-ed that explicitly urged readers to contact their legislators to ask them to vote for the bill. Alternatively, you could save lobbying dollars by writing an op-ed that advocates for the legislation without including a grassroots lobbying call-to-action.



Action Alerts

When reaching out to your advocates about a new issue area or campaign, your first message should be educational. Instead of asking people to get involved right away, spend some time sharing the facts and making the case. Issues involving transportation funding are complex and vary around the country, so it's important that people understand the process before taking an advocacy role. By laying this groundwork, you'll ensure that people understand your campaign—and people who “get” your goals are more likely to take specific actions later, such as signing petitions or meeting with decision makers.

Issue Introduction Action Alert

Dear **[NAME]**,

When it comes to a good education, physical activity plays a major part.

It's true: studies show that children who stay active tend to perform better in the classroom. Walking or biking to school can be one of the easiest ways to help kids stay moving. But in **[STATE]**, too many parents are hesitant to allow their children to walk or bike to school—for good reason: our community infrastructure is built for cars and buses, not walking and biking. There simply aren't enough safe routes for children to get to school. **But this can be changed.**

Building safe routes to school will reshape the landscape of our community for the better. Having ample sidewalks and biking lanes will keep our kids safe on the way to school, and they'll benefit the rest of the community throughout the week.

We're working to bring safe routes to school to our community—for the health, safety, and education of our children and the benefit of our entire community. Federal funds are available to implement these programs, but local officials need to hear from people like you about the critical need to develop and implement Safe Routes to School.

Learn more at **[LINK TO INFORMATIONAL RESOURCES]** and keep an eye out for more information soon on how you can help make a difference.

Sincerely,

[ORGANIZATION LEADER OR MAIN POINT OF CONTACT]

Contact Your Legislator or Transportation Official Action Alert

If you want Safe Routes to School programs implemented in your state, your elected officials and transportation decision makers need to know that these programs are important. The following message asks supporters to send letters to their decision makers championing Safe Routes to School funding.

When state transportation officials make decisions about whether or not to use funds that are available for Safe Routes to School for that purpose, legislators can be instrumental in amplifying your message. Legislators' influence and ability to speak with other decision makers, when coupled with community support, will be far more powerful than grassroots outreach alone. It's important to reach out to both transportation agencies and legislators in order to ensure there is full funding for Safe Routes to School programs in your community.



If you are reaching out to your state's transportation agency regarding how they plan to allocate funding that is available for Safe Routes to School, then your communication will not be a lobbying expense. However, if the state legislature considers legislation that would direct the Department of Transportation's allocation of federal Safe Routes to School funds, then communications to the legislators about the bill would be lobbying. For example, if your legislature was considering a bill on funding for Safe Routes to School, then the following alert would be grassroots lobbying because it is a communication to the public that reflects a view on specific legislation and includes a call-to-action; if there were no such bill or proposal, then the alert would not be lobbying because it would not be a communication that reflects a view on a legislative proposal. In the brackets of the message below, please choose the appropriate leaders for your state.



Dear **[NAME]**,

Did you know that the number of children who walk or bike to school decreased from 50 percent in 1969 to just 13 percent in 2009? Meanwhile, the number of overweight or obese children in the United States has tripled since 1963. Coincidence? **We don't think so.**

That's why we're asking **[STATE]'s [LEGISLATORS OR TRANSPORTATION AGENCY OFFICIALS]** to fully fund Safe Routes to School programs in our community. Our children need safe, easy, and fun opportunities to build physical activity into their everyday lives, and when communities build the infrastructure for children to walk or bike to school, that's exactly what they get.

Will you send a letter to your [LEGISLATORS OR TRANSPORTATION AGENCY OFFICIALS], asking them to protect our children on the way to school? [INSERT LINK TO ACTION] It's simple, fast, and could save lives. For example, a recent study of Safe Routes to School projects in New York City found that neighborhoods with safe routes to school saw a 44 percent decline in school-aged pedestrian injury, while locations without Safe Routes to School interventions stayed the same. We want to see this kind of improvement in **[STATE]!**

Don't forget that Safe Routes to School programs are not just for children, they're for entire communities. They take an unsafe landscape, where people are unable to walk or bike, and turn it into a place that is safe and fun, allowing communities to connect over physical activity.

Safe Routes to School programs benefit the entire community. **Tell your [LEGISLATORS OR TRANSPORTATION AGENCY OFFICIALS] today! [INSERT LINK TO ACTION]**

Thank you,
[ORGANIZATION LEADER OR MAIN POINT OF CONTACT]

Subject Lines

The subject line of your email can help catch your supporters' attention and encourage them to open your email. Here are some suggested subject lines to try with your audience:

- Look both ways!



- Coincidence?
- Our kids need your help
- Reverse childhood obesity
- Safe routes to school change lives
- Help kids in our community
- Healthy kids need healthy options
- Active kids are healthy kids



Social Media Sample Messaging

The following sample messaging can help you spread the word about your campaign on Facebook and Twitter. Some examples are considered non-lobbying messages; however, others may fall under the definition of lobbying and will need to be paid for out of your lobbying funds. Be sure to include appropriate and useful links for readers to learn more or get involved.

The examples below assume the links in the tweets and Facebook postings bring users to a web page that provides information about the issue, but does not include a vehicle for users to contact their legislators. If a landing page urges users to contact their legislators about specific legislation, then a tweet or post that drives users to that landing page may itself be a lobbying communication. Due to the low cost of posting a message on social media, many organizations will choose to use their lobbying funds on social media messages that encourage supporters to contact legislators about legislation.

Twitter

Non-Lobbying Messages

- Obesity affects one in three kids in our country. Sidewalks and bike lanes help reverse this trend. #SRTS
- Kids need regular exercise, and safe routes to school provide natural opportunities to stay active. Let's bring #SRTS to **[STATE/COMMUNITY]**!
- Parents should feel safe letting their kids bike or walk to school. That's why we need #SRTS in **[STATE]**.
- Safety is a main contributor to the decline in students walking and biking to school. Let's change that with safe routes! #SRTS
- Regular exercise and healthy eating contribute to overall health, and safe routes to school in **[STATE]** would help our kids stay active.
- Walking and biking to school is on the decline. Federal funding is available to help change this. #SRTS
- We want our kids to be healthy. We want them to be safe. #SRTS

Lobbying Messages

The following tweets may be considered lobbying messages if they're sent while the legislature is considering a bill related to Safe Routes to School, or if the communication refers to a specific law or program from another state. They would not be lobbying if directed at a transportation agency.

- **@[LEGISLATOR'S NAME]**, your community wants safe and healthy options for their kids. Join them in support of Safe Routes to School.
- **@[LEGISLATOR'S NAME]**, you can help reverse childhood obesity by using federal funding for Safe Routes to School. Help **[STATE]**'s kids get active today. #SRTS
- Our kids should be able to walk or bike to school safely. **@[LEGISLATOR'S NAME]**, please dedicate federal funds to #SRTS in our community!
- We're still waiting for **@[LEGISLATOR'S NAME]** to take a stand for Safe Routes to School so **[STATE]** can get better sidewalks and bike lanes!
- What stands in the way of sidewalks and bike lanes in **[STATE]**? Funding. Tell **@[LEGISLATOR'S NAME]** to designate federal funding for #SRTS!
- Sidewalks and bike lanes can lead to more exercise and lower health care costs. Hear that, **@[LEGISLATOR'S NAME]**? Fund #SRTS





- Many thanks to @[LEGISLATOR'S NAME] for [HIS/HER] support of full federal funding for #SRTS. Our children can have a #healthy future, thanks to you.

Facebook

Non-Lobbying Messages

- Kids in [STATE] need the option to walk and bike to school to help them get the recommended amount of daily physical activity. Without safe bike lanes and sidewalks, our children miss out on a great opportunity to stay healthy.
- We need safe routes to school in [STATE]. Share this image, and ask your friends to help our kids look both ways to a safe and healthy future! **[INCLUDE SAMPLE FACEBOOK AD]**
- Our children should not have to choose between safe and healthy options for getting to school. Share this post with your friends to show your support of safe routes to school in [STATE]. **[INSERT LINK TO YOUR SITE]**
- What are safe routes to school? Why is it imperative to a safe and healthy environment for our kids? More here: **[INSERT LINK TO YOUR SITE]**
- Fun fact: For every \$1 invested in safe walking and biking options, health care costs associated with physical inactivity decrease almost \$3. Share this and tell your friends about safe routes to school! **[INCLUDE PHOTO WITH YOUR SITE LINK]**

Lobbying Messages

The following Facebook posts may be considered lobbying messages if they're sent while the legislature is considering a Safe Routes to School bill, or if the communication refers to a specific law or program from another state. They would not be lobbying if directed at a transportation agency.



- It's up to us to make sure federal funding is used for sidewalks and bike paths to school. Tell **[INSERT LEGISLATOR'S NAME]** why we need Safe Routes to School in [STATE].
- Federal funding for Safe Routes to School has decreased nationwide, and [STATE] is no exception. Without that funding, fewer children will get the daily exercise they need. But there's hope. Our legislators can direct existing federal transportation funding to the creation of safe routes to school, which will provide active and safe ways for our kids to get to school each day. Let **[INSERT LEGISLATOR'S NAME]** know we need funding for Safe Routes to School!
- With safe routes to school our children not only bike and walk to school, but learn the value of regular exercise. These lessons are crucial to the health of our children now and the health of our community in the future. Tell **[INSERT LEGISLATOR'S NAME]** to allocate vital federal funding to the creation of safe routes in our community.



Newsletter Blurbs

Newsletters can keep your advocates engaged and up-to-date about the issues that matter to your organization. If you currently send out a newsletter on a regular basis, use it as a platform to help promote your Safe Routes to School work.

Below are two sample newsletter blurbs to get you going. They should serve as teasers for the more detailed information about Safe Routes to School located on your website. Depending on the familiarity of the audience with this topic, you may want to provide some basic education on the issue.

A Clear Way Forward: Safe Routes to School (Informational)

Physical activity—one of the keys to staying healthy—has declined drastically among children over the past two decades. Kids have become sedentary, and in many cases this is because their communities do not have the infrastructure for them to exercise safely. In fact, between 1969 and 2009, the percentage of students (ages 5-14) regularly walking or biking to school each day declined from nearly 50 percent to 13 percent.³

With safe routes to school, active transportation is safer so children have more opportunities to walk and bike—and parents can rest easy, knowing their children are out of harm's way when heading to school.

Yet there is one big thing that stands in the way of our community's safe routes. And that's funding. Although funding is available, it's up to community leaders to go the extra mile to direct that funding to these projects.

Learn how **[YOUR ORGANIZATION]** is working to make sure this much-needed funding is directed to safe routes to school.

Help Our Kids! We Need Safe Routes to School in Our Community (Action)

By now it's no secret: children across **[STATE]** are facing an obesity epidemic. If our community doesn't do something about it, it's only going to get worse. For **[YOUR ORGANIZATION]**, that means advocating for safe routes to school—and the funding to make them possible. **Will you join us? [LINK TO ACTION PAGE]**

The success and impact of these programs is evident: One California study reported that walking and biking increased by as much as 200 percent among students at schools that received funding for Safe Routes to School.⁴

In **[STATE]**, we can do more to help our children stay healthy. Let's start by telling our decision makers

³ *How Children Get to School: School Travel Patterns from 1969 to 2009*. Report. National Center for Safe Routes to Schools, November 2011. Available at http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/sites/default/files/resources/NHTS_school_travel_report_2011_0.pdf.

⁴ Orenstein M, Gutierrez N, Rice T, Cooper J, and Ragland D. *Safe Routes to School Safety and Mobility Analysis*. Report to the California Legislature. UC Berkeley Traffic Safety Center, April 2007. Available at <http://repositories.cdlib.org/its/tsc/UCB-TSC-RR-2007-1>.



to use the support they have from our federal government to bring safe routes to our communities.

Take action today! [INSERT LINK TO ACTION PAGE]

Note: This blurb would be non-lobbying because it talks about supporting Safe Routes to School programs generally without referring to any specific legislative proposals. Further, this example refers only to “decision makers” (a term that includes a variety of executive branch public officials), not specifically to “legislators,” so there is no “call-to-action” under the definition of grassroots lobbying (see pg. 56).





Sample Blog Post: Letters to the Editor

FEATURED ACTION: Support safe routes to school by submitting a letter to the editor (LTE)

If your organization has its own blog, customize the post below and use it as part of your campaign. The sample post below asks advocates to write letters to the editor of a local newspaper, but you can substitute any action you would like advocates to take.

Headline: Help our children look both ways toward a healthy and safe future. Support safe routes to school by submitting a letter to the editor (LTE)

In some [STATE] communities, kids have the opportunity to walk and bike to school each day, incorporating exercise into their daily routine. Children in other areas aren't so lucky.

From a lack of safe sidewalks to busy streets with few bike lanes, there are too many obstacles preventing kids from getting to school on foot or bike. In these communities, parents and children have to choose. Do they want a safe transportation option or do they want an active route to school?

We need to show children in our community that daily physical activity should be as natural as looking both ways before crossing the street—a habit learned early in life that steers them toward a healthy future. Having sidewalks and bike lanes would be a big step in the right direction. The federal Safe Routes to School initiative, established in 2005, provides funding for communities in [STATE] to address infrastructure needs, such as sidewalks and bike paths. But there is one snag: the money needs to be allocated to Safe Routes to School programs. We need your help to make sure that happens.

Let's help our community enact Safe Routes to School. To get involved, you could:

- Post information about Safe Routes to School on your blog, Facebook, or Twitter.
- Email your friends and family and ask them to support this effort.
- Write to your key community leaders and local public officials. **[LINK TO AN ACTION ALERT]**
- Write a letter to the editor (LTE) of your local newspaper—don't forget about multicultural media in your community! Newspapers can reach thousands of people, so your LTE could help create new supporters of safe routes to school in [STATE].

If you would like to draft an LTE, here are a few tips to keep in mind:

- Visit your local newspaper's website to learn how to submit your LTE. If necessary, give your editor a call, and ask how he/she prefers to receive letters.
- Make sure you leave your name and contact information (including phone number) when you submit. The newspaper will need to contact you before publication to verify you truly submitted the letter.
- LTEs should be short. Try to keep your message around 100 words. Some newspapers may have specific length guidelines.
- Share your story! If you have a story about how choosing an active route to school helped your children perform better academically and maintain good health, consider sharing it here so you can make a personal connection from the start. A before and after story of a family or community that has made this change would be a powerful message.



- Make sure you include the purpose of your letter: to get public officials and other community leaders to support funding for Safe Routes to School so your neighborhood children can live healthfully.
- Back up your intent with facts about the Safe Routes to School program.
- Make sure to direct readers to **[YOUR WEBSITE URL]** so they can learn how they can get involved.



Understanding Recent Changes to Federal Transportation Funding

Understanding how our tax dollars end up building and maintaining the nation's transportation infrastructure can be confusing; there are many government agencies that have a role in how these funds are distributed and which projects get funded.

To help you understand this process, here is some background information about federal transportation funding and how Safe Routes to School programs are affected by new federal laws. The information below may be helpful to your team as you determine how to approach federal funding for Safe Routes to School in your state, and then develop the language around why and how you are conducting your campaign.

Background

The majority of federal funding for transportation infrastructure projects flows through state and local agencies via allocations from the U.S. Department of Transportation (US DOT). Because the source of these funds primarily comes from gasoline taxes collected from residents in each state, the federal government gives a good deal of authority to these entities to implement and maintain the infrastructure used every day.

In 2012, Congress passed the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (P.L. 112-141), also known as MAP-21 or the federal surface transportation law. MAP-21 is two-year legislation (that has since been extended) that includes the vast majority of federal policy funding allocations for infrastructure improvements and maintenance.

This law also includes changes to the way state and local transportation agencies disperse federal funds related to Safe Routes to School. This is a distinct change from the way funds were allocated before.

- **How were funds allocated before MAP-21?** Under previous federal legislation, funds were allocated specifically to create Safe Routes to School projects in communities. State agencies were responsible for using these funds specifically for Safe Routes to School; most states provided grants to local communities for these projects.
- **How are funds allocated under MAP-21?** Now, Safe Routes to School projects must compete with other types of bicycling, walking, and transportation projects for funding—there is no longer a specific set-aside just for Safe Routes to School. And, state agencies have the authority to transfer up to 50 percent of the funds into road and bridge projects. *This leaves open the possibility that federal funds meant for Safe Routes to School programs will be diverted away from their intended purpose.*
- **Are there any other major changes from MAP-21?** Under the previous Safe Routes to School program, projects could be 100 percent funded with federal money. Now, under MAP-21, only 80 percent of a project's cost can be covered by federal dollars—meaning that schools, local jurisdictions, or the state must contribute the other 20 percent of the costs. *This means that lower-income schools and communities could be left out of creating Safe Routes to School due to the financial barrier.*

Transportation Alternatives Program

The major change in funding occurs in the creation of a new program called the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), under which Safe Routes to School now operates. TAP is administered by



the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and implemented by each state department of transportation.

TAP consolidates three previous programs that funded bicycling and walking projects, trail projects, and Safe Routes to School projects into this one program, meaning that Safe Routes to School projects are no longer guaranteed a specific allocation of funds. TAP also has less money than the three previous programs did, and states may transfer up to half of the funds to other transportation uses, increasing the competition for dollars. (To read the official guidance on TAP, [click here](#).)

TAP also created a new role for metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), which are regional transportation planning agencies, in larger urban areas. MPOs that represent an area with more than 200,000 people now receive an allocation of TAP funds and are able to choose which projects are funded in their region. TAP requires both states and MPOs to hold competitions to select their grantees.

Communities must make sure they are engaging with their state and local transportation agencies to make sure they select Safe Routes to School projects for funding, and that states use all available TAP dollars without transferring it to other transportation uses.

Who to Contact

For the state portion of TAP funds, it is essential to get to know your state transportation officials to ensure that TAP funds remain in the TAP program, and that the state maximizes spending on Safe Routes to School projects. A list of state Safe Routes to School coordinators is available at <http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/program-tools/find-state-contacts> and a list of state leaders of departments of transportation is available at <http://www.transportation.org/Pages/States.aspx>.

For the MPO portion of TAP funds, since local agencies have unique budgets and project priorities, it is important to know what your community is planning and who is making those decisions to encourage support of Safe Routes to School projects. MPOs are federally funded policy-making bodies made up of representatives from local government and transportation authorities. To find the MPO for your community, visit www.planning.dot.gov/mpo.asp.

Eligible Entities to Receive TAP Funds

Under TAP, nonprofits are able to partner with an eligible entity on a TAP project, if state or local requirements permit (you will need to confirm this in your community).

[Under 23 USC 213\(c\)\(4\)\(B\)](#), the eligible entities to receive TAP funds are:

- Local governments
- Regional transportation authorities
- Transit agencies
- Natural resource or public land agencies
- School districts, local education agencies, or schools
- Tribal governments
- Any other local or regional government entity with responsibility for oversight of transportation or recreational trails (other than an MPO or a state agency) that the state determines to be eligible, consistent with the goals of subsection (c) of section 213 of title 23.

Technical Assistance

Technical assistance is available in many states to help with Safe Routes to School grants and procedures. States are not required to have a Safe Routes to School coordinator but may use TAP funds for technical assistance. Many states have designated offices that provide free technical assistance to help with grant requests and understanding the TAP process, but the resources available do vary from state to state. FHWA has issued guidance for the TAP program on its website:

www.fhwa.dot.gov/map21/guidance/guidetap.cfm.

Getting to know your state and local transportation authorities is an important step to determining whether federal funds meant for Safe Routes to School will go to those projects. Your local MPO or transportation agency should be able to help, but it is up to each community to advocate for Safe Routes to School programs and ensure the planning agencies know that the community wants these transportation alternatives.

Key Takeaways

- Funding for Safe Routes to School projects has recently changed.
- State and local transportation agencies now have the ability to use funds intended for Safe Routes to School projects for unrelated projects.
- The authority over Safe Routes to School funds varies in each community. You will need to research how your state and community disperse federal funds, and which entities have the ability to make funding decisions for these projects.
- Nonprofits may partner with entities eligible to receive TAP funds.
- Technical assistance is often available but varies from state to state.



Case Studies

The following case studies spotlight successful use of federal dollars to support Safe Routes to School programs around the country. They can help serve as models for your own program or provide inspiration for new ways to approach your work.

Using Safe Routes to School to Fight Childhood Obesity in Mississippi

Key players come together to support walking, bicycling, and other physical activity

Mississippi has long topped the list of states with the highest rates of childhood (and adult) obesity. In 2007, 44.4 percent of children ages 10 to 17 were overweight or obese.

“It’s no secret that Mississippi is the most unhealthy and obese state in the nation,” says Jay Thompson, an advocate in the state who works for the [Safe Routes to School National Partnership](#). “In the past, the culture in Mississippi has led to sedentary lifestyles. Food is often the nucleus of everything here, and the selections are rarely healthy foods. It’s typically been the culture of the South.”

To help create a healthier culture, leaders across the state are working together to promote physical activity and healthy eating. The Safe Routes to School [State Network Project](#) is one example. For more on the project, read the [Progress Report](#).

The project aims to ensure that states use federal funds for Safe Routes to School projects to provide street-scale improvements such as sidewalks and bicycle lanes, and to enact policies that promote walking, bicycling, and other physical activity, especially in low-income communities. The Safe Routes to School National Partnership manages the state network project in Mississippi and nationally. The project is funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.⁵

COORDINATING KEY PLAYERS

In 2010 and 2011, the National Partnership contracted with Bike Walk Mississippi, an advocacy group, to spend 20 hours a week attracting participants to a state network, and developing and implementing an action plan. Then, in late 2011, when the National Partnership targeted Mississippi as one of seven key states, it hired Thompson as a full-time state advocacy organizer.

The Mississippi Department of Transportation holds the purse strings for the Safe Routes to School funds, while the Mississippi State Department of Health helps identify low-income communities to focus on. Other members of the network include a children’s hospital, a children’s museum, a neighborhood association, several cities, regional planning organizations, and advocacy organizations. Chip Johnson, mayor of Hernando and a strong advocate of Safe Routes to School, is the honorary network chair. “He loves our kids and the communities, and is passionate about improving the quality of life for Mississippians. He also has a level of influence that is beyond measure throughout the state,” said Thompson.

The state network plays a key role in coordinating work on Safe Routes to School statewide. “The power

⁵ Grant ID# 58126: \$612,163 (December 1, 2006 to December 14, 2009); ID# 66261: \$1,495,078 (December 15, 2009 to December 14, 2011); and ID# 69063: \$2,999,725 (December 15, 2011 to December 15, 2014)

of getting these people together on a regular basis can't be underestimated," says Shane McNeill, director of the Department of Education's Office of Safe and Orderly Schools.

ADVOCATING SHARED USE

Born and raised in Natchez, Miss., Thompson is now a visible presence in low-income communities throughout Mississippi. He attends neighborhood association meetings to find out what people want their community to look like, and works closely with schools and churches showing them how they can play a vital role in improving the health and well-being of the community. "People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care," he says. "I'm all about rolling my sleeves up and being a visible presence in the communities I desire to see change come to."

Thompson and the Mississippi state network have assisted the Mississippi State Department of Health to develop 20 shared use agreements, in which one entity—usually a school—agrees to open playgrounds, gymnasiums, and athletic fields to the larger community. "Sharing facilities outside of the regular school day to encourage more students and their parents to live healthier, active lifestyles is a win-win for everyone," says McNeill.

The benefits of shared use agreements go well beyond the obvious, adds Thompson. "Shared use agreements provide the opportunity to increase physical activity and bring community members together. They also build cohesiveness, a sense of pride, and can improve the quality of life of the citizens." Thompson has also been appointed to the shared use selection committee to evaluate, guide and implement these agreements and to ensure that underserved communities receive the highest priority. He also assisted with the development of the Best Practices Tool Kit for Shared Use Agreements in Mississippi, whereby participating communities/schools are provided technical assistance for shared use agreements they establish.

The department of education helps identify schools in low-income communities to participate in such agreements. [KaBOOM!](#), a nonprofit that helps local volunteers build playgrounds, is providing technical assistance and is collaborating with the Mississippi network to establish a shared use agreement with the Jackson Public School District. This will allow funding for playgrounds for several schools in the district. KaBOOM! Also alerts the state network about other funding opportunities.

In July 2012, Mississippi approved House Bill 540, which authorizes local school boards to allow public use of school property during nonschool hours for recreation and sports, and limits the school boards' liability. The state network helped the department of education develop a [best practices toolkit](#) to inform everyone about the benefits of the law.

Thompson has also spearheaded shared use agreements with three churches and is close to an agreement with a local synagogue. "Many leaders in faith-based communities are becoming more vocal about healthy lifestyles and their institutions have play spaces or green spaces and even gymnasiums that are lying dormant and can benefit from shared use," he says.

For example, when the Greater Mount Bethel Baptist Church, Thompson's home church in Natchez, built a new sanctuary, the old one became a family life center. But it was only used for Sunday school and other social events.



Under a shared use agreement facilitated by Thompson, the family life center now offers a low-impact aerobics class three days a week, and hosts a community garden. Participants in the class range from children to seniors, and include Thompson's 71-year-old father. Thompson also helped connect the church with Alcorn State University, which provided technical assistance, equipment, seeds to start the community garden, and funding to get the projects started.

AWARDING PROJECT SUPPORT

In June 2013, the state department of transportation awarded \$1.5 million in federal funding for 10 Safe Routes to School projects in low-income communities in the state. Madison, for example, is using its funding to build sidewalks and add bicycle racks at schools. Thompson and the state network are helping Madison and other communities implement their projects.

The state network is also educating government agencies, advocates, and communities about Complete Streets, a state and local policy to provide safe, attractive, and comfortable access and travel for all users of roadways, including pedestrians and bicyclists. Several cities, including Hernando, approved Complete Streets ordinances in 2010, spurring Mississippi to consider a statewide policy.

MISSISSIPPI SEES PROGRESS ON CHILDHOOD OBESITY

Childhood obesity in Mississippi fell by 13.3 percentage points from 2005 to 2011—the steepest decline in the nation. While the state network began only in 2010, and the state is home to many other efforts to reduce childhood obesity, the network is clearly part of Mississippi's healthy momentum.

Project Director: Jay Thompson, (601) 885-2334; jay@saferoutespartnership.org

Safe Routes to School: Increases Physical Activity and Improves Health

Benton County, Oregon

Program Description

Benton County's Safe Routes to School program is located in the Willamette Valley in rural Oregon. The population of the county is approximately 80,000. Three school districts (Corvallis, Philomath and North Albany) within the county have been actively participating in SRTS since 2003. The Benton County SRTS program was initiated by the Benton County Healthy Weight and Lifestyle Coalition, which was supported by the Benton County Health Department's Health Promotion Unit. The coalition began by coordinating Walk to School Days in both the Corvallis and Philomath School Districts. In the 2007-08 school year, Corvallis School District, Benton County Public Works, and Philomath School District received SRTS funding through the Oregon Department of Transportation SRTS federal program for both non-infrastructure and infrastructure projects totaling \$183,089. The Corvallis School District contracted with Benton County Health Department to coordinate the SRTS education and encouragement components with Health Promotion Unit staff and interns, and the Philomath School District hired a half-time SRTS coordinator through the school district.

Integrating SRTS into Health

The SRTS program and the promotion of walking and bicycling to school are written into the Corvallis School District's wellness policy administrative rules developed in 2007. The district's wellness council has also developed goals and objectives for their 2008-09 Action Plan, which includes SRTS in the



“physical activity before and after school” section. Promotion of walking and bicycling to school is part of the Wellness Council’s new “Great Start” Initiative, to be implemented in the fall of 2008. Members of the SRTS Taskforce participate on the 20-member Wellness Council, including the Corvallis Transportation Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator, Benton County Health Promotion Unit staff, and Benton County School-Based Health program staff. The Philomath School District completed its School Wellness Policy Program and is currently working on administrative rules that will include SRTS.

Institutionalizing SRTS

The institutionalization of SRTS can be seen through the Benton County Health Departments convening of a SRTS Taskforce. Members of the Taskforce have grown to include city and county transportation officials, law enforcement, school district facility staff, bicycle advocates, school nurses, public health and city council members, and city managers. Another strong indication is the formation of the governmental Benton County Healthy Active Community Environment workgroup, made up of county department directors including Public Works, Public Health, Community Development, Parks and Open Spaces, and Sheriff’s department. The workgroup received \$45,000 from county general funds to support environmental and policy changes to improve the health of Benton County residents for the last three and half years. The SRTS project has been one of the group’s primary objectives.

Outcomes

To date, Benton County’s SRTS program has been focusing on collecting baseline information, building capacity and encouraging physical activity. The Oregon Department of Transportation-funded SRTS parent surveys and student travel surveys will be available in the 2008-09 school year for comparison to the prior year. SRTS program staff have been able to collect baseline body mass index data from the Corvallis School District Tobacco Prevention Education Prevention coordinator. Benton County Health Department has been the leading force in supporting the growth and expansion of SRTS and in building capacity among community partners through organization, coordination, and funding of the program. It has leveraged funding to support SRTS capacity building through private foundation grants, CDC Obesity Prevention funding, and local county general funds. It has used these resources to hire Oregon State University students to help coordinate the project for the last three years. In addition, Benton County staff has provided technical support to local schools to help them prepare and apply for future Oregon SRTS funding to sustain the program.



Content Articles

The following articles are examples of media coverage around the need for biking and walking lanes in communities and the importance of showing our children how to form active habits now. Read on to learn more about these programs, as well as the types of articles some journalists have written about Safe Routes to School.

Kickoff meeting set for Little Falls Safe Routes to School plan

Morris County Record

September 26, 2014

The city of Little Falls was recently awarded a technical assistance grant from the Minnesota Department of Transportation to develop Safe Routes to School (SRTS) plans for five local schools. Safe Routes to School planning provides a framework for communities to increase opportunities for children to walk and bicycle to school safely.

[Read more here.](#)

California renews commitment to Safe Routes to School, increases funding for walking and bicycling in the Active Transportation Program

Safe Routes to School National Partnership

By JeannieWW

September 27, 2013

Sacramento, CA, September 27, 2013 – Walking and bicycling infrastructure will receive a 35 percent boost in dedicated state funding through legislation signed by Governor Jerry Brown yesterday. The measure (Senate Bill 99) restructures existing pedestrian, bicycle, trails, and Safe Routes to School programs into a comprehensive Active Transportation Program, to be administered by the California Transportation Commission.

“California’s new active transportation program demonstrates our strong commitment to bicycling, walking, and other human-powered transit,” said Transportation Secretary Brian Kelly. “When Californians have more options for active transportation—including new and safer trails and pedestrian routes—it helps the state achieve greenhouse gas reduction goals while enhancing public health and safety.”

[Read more here.](#)



Index of Potential Allies

[Safe Routes to School National Partnership](#)
[Active Transportation Alliance](#)
[America Walks](#)
[American Academy of Pediatrics](#)
[American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network](#)
[Berkeley Media Studies Group](#)
[Bridging the Gap](#)
[ChangeLab Solutions](#)
[Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities](#)
[The League of American Bicyclists](#)
[MomsRising](#)
[National Association for the Advancement of Colored People \(NAACP\)](#)
[The National Center for Bicycling & Walking](#)
[National Center for Safe Routes to School](#)
[National Council of La Raza](#)
[National PTA](#)
[The Notah Begay III Foundation](#)
[PeopleForBikes](#)
[The Pew Charitable Trusts](#)
[The Praxis Project](#)
[Salud America!](#)
[Trust for America's Health](#)
[YMCA of the USA](#)

Potential Allies



Safe Routes to School National Partnership

The Safe Routes to School National Partnership's (the National Partnership) mission is to advance safe walking and bicycling to and from schools, and in daily life, to improve the health and well-being of America's children and to foster the creation of livable, sustainable communities. With a diverse staff spread across the country, the National Partnership shares its expertise and knowledge to inspire and encourage action in local communities, advancing policies that support physical activity, healthy community design, active transportation initiatives, and infrastructure improvements, especially in underserved communities.

2323 Broadway, Suite 109B
Oakland, CA 94612
(510) 342-3699
www.saferoutespartnership.org

Positioning

The National Partnership stands to support the Voices for Healthy Kids' stance on federal funding for Safe Routes to School programs based on the following.

- High impact in policy related to physical activity, childhood obesity, and public health
- Proponent of Safe Routes to School funding at the national, state, and local levels
- Activism aimed at promoting Safe Routes to School programs
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders, and the media
- Ability to reach critical target audiences, namely the Federal Highway Administration, state departments of transportation, and state and local governments
- Strength of communications channels
- Past public support for continued funding for Safe Routes to School
- Alignment of organizational mission with the American Heart Association's policy statement on using federal dollars for Safe Routes to School programs
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to Safe Routes to School programs to improve the well-being of young people and to foster healthy communities.
 - Produced a [webinar series](#) to educate advocates on the impact of MAP-21 legislation on Safe Routes to School programs
 - Compiled a [library of resources](#) for use in promoting and documenting the success and goals of the national Safe Routes to School movement
 - Ongoing participation with Voices for Healthy Kids

Media Coverage

Pedestrian safety program prevents student injuries

By Genevra Pittman

Reuters (via Chicago Tribune)

January 13, 2013

Fewer kids were injured during early morning and after school hours once new traffic lights, pedestrian signals and speed bumps were put around New York City schools, according to a new study. Those fixtures were added through the Safe Routes to School program, which received over \$600 million from the U.S. Congress in 2005 to improve kids' ability to walk and bike to schools across the country.

"Pedestrian injuries for children, while the numbers have gotten better over the past decade or so, they're still pretty dismal," said Charles DiMaggio, who worked on the new study at Columbia University in New York. As a result of Safe Routes to School, the city's Department of Transportation undertook safety improvements at the 124 New York City schools (out of a total of 1,471) with the highest injury rates in the city.



ACTIVE
TRANSPORTATION
ALLIANCE

Active Transportation Alliance

The Active Transportation Alliance (ATA) is a nonprofit advocacy organization that works to improve conditions for bicycling, walking, and transit, and engage people in healthy and active ways to get around. For nearly 25 years, ATA has led the charge for a transportation culture that values safety, health, sustainability, and choice. ATA is the regional expert that spurs Safe Routes to School programs in local communities and advocates for policies at the state level that support walkable and bikeable schools.

9 W. Hubbard Street, Suite 402

Chicago, IL 60654

(312) 427-3325

www.activetrans.org

Positioning

ATA stands to support the Voices for Healthy Kids' stance on federal funding for Safe Routes to School programs based on the following.

- High impact in policy related to biking, transportation, and public safety
- Proponent of Safe Routes to School funding at the local level
- Activism aimed at promoting Safe Routes to School programs
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders, and the media
- Ability to reach critical stakeholders, namely federal, state, and local departments of transportation

- Strength of communications channels
- Past public support for continued funding for Safe Routes to School programs
- Alignment of organizational mission with the American Heart Association's policy statement on using federal dollars for Safe Routes to School programs
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to Safe Routes to School programs, to improve the well-being of young individuals and foster healthy communities.
 - [Better Blocks](#) program works with schools, parks, and block clubs to help them address how to eliminate barriers to walking, biking, and public transit through utilizing city resources
 - Participated in the Safe Routes to School National Partnership's [State Network Project](#) since 2007 as the convening organization for the Illinois Safe Routes to School State Network
 - Offers informative courses and workshops at schools to help educate young individuals on bicycle and pedestrian safety, as well as on traffic skills
 - Created the [Schools Changing Transportation: Local Leaders Guide](#), which aids in helping school boards, local school councils, and parent groups identify obstacles to active transportation and determine solutions

Media Coverage

[Civic group proposes closing parts of 20 Chicago streets](#)

By Jon Hilkevitch

Chicago Tribune

February 12, 2014

The Active Transportation Alliance's objective is to make downtown and the neighborhoods more attractive places to live and shop, and to help residents get around easily and safely by promoting more bicycling and walking while also reducing traffic accidents, officials at the alliance said.

[Make transportation a priority](#)

By Ron Burke

Chicago Tribune

August 26, 2011

The job of all of our transportation agencies is to get people where they need to go, and to do so strategically, efficiently, cost-effectively and with minimal impact on our quality of life and natural resources. Experience shows that we cannot build our way out of congestion with expanded lanes and bypasses alone. New highways and traffic lanes inevitably fill with traffic. Transit needs to be part of the solution. Dedicating a small percentage of road space and resources to transit has the potential to significantly increase the overall toll corridor capacity, allowing more people -- not just cars -- to get to jobs, shopping and events. Transit creates jobs and increases access to those jobs, reduces household expenses, improves our environment and helps us make the best possible use of our existing roads and communities.



America Walks

America Walks serves as a coordinator, information clearinghouse, and resource provider to advance game-changing campaigns with national and local partner organizations to advance and protect walking at the national level. The mission of America Walks is to make America a great place for walking by collaborating with likeminded groups to share knowledge, advance policies, and implement effective campaigns that promote safe, convenient, and accessible walking conditions for all.

P.O. Box 10581
Portland, OR 97296
(503) 757-8342
www.americawalks.org

Positioning

America Walks stands to support the Voices for Healthy Kids' stance on federal funding for Safe Routes to School programs based on the following.

- High impact in policy related to pedestrian safety and walking infrastructure
- Proponent of Safe Routes to School funding at the national, state, and local levels
- Activism aimed at maximizing funding for Safe Routes to School programs and educating advocates about federal/state legislation that affects these programs
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders, and the media
- Ability to reach critical stakeholders, namely state departments of transportation
- Strength of communications channels
- Past public support for continued funding for Safe Routes to School programs
- Alignment of organizational mission with the American Heart Association's policy statement on using federal dollars for Safe Routes to School programs
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to legislation that affects Safe Routes to School programs at the national, state, and local levels.
 - Hosts [monthly webinar series](#) in partnership with the National Center for Safe Routes to School to share expertise on starting and running Safe Routes to School programs
 - [Walk the Hill Day](#) hub offers important information on traffic legislation affecting Safe Routes to School programs and toolkits to use during Hill briefings with policymakers

Media Coverage

[The Infrastructure of Inequality](#)

By Jana Lynott

AARP Blog

October 21, 2013

I applaud Kaiser Permanente, America Walks and the other organizers of the Walk Summit for placing equity front and center on the agenda as they build a movement toward creating environments where



walking is safe, easy and routine for people of all abilities. To begin, we, as a society, need to put pedestrian accessibility on equal footing with funding for other transportation improvements. With more than 8,000 boomers hitting retirement age every day, we cannot delay.

American Academy
of Pediatrics



DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™

American Academy of Pediatrics

The mission of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) is to attain optimal physical, mental, and social health and well-being for all infants, children, adolescents, and young adults. To accomplish this, AAP supports the professional needs of its members. AAP works to advance child health and well-being with the understanding that pediatricians are the best qualified to provide child health care.

141 Northwest Point Boulevard
Elk Grove Village, IL 60007
(847) 434-4284
www.aap.org

Positioning

AAP stands to support the Voices for Healthy Kids' stance on federal funding for Safe Routes to School programs based on the following.

- High impact in policy related to physical activity and childhood obesity
- Proponent of Safe Routes to School funding at the local level
- Activism aimed at maximizing awareness of physical activity programs in federal/state legislation
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders, and the media
- Ability to reach critical stakeholders, namely Congress and state and local governments
- Strength of communications channels
- Past public support for continued funding for Safe Routes to School programs
- Alignment of organizational mission with the American Heart Association's policy statement on using federal dollars for Safe Routes to School programs
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to Safe Routes to School programs to improve the well-being of young people and to foster healthy communities.
 - [Transportation Initiative for Children's Health](#) provides a matrix of resources to educate health professionals, communities, and states on transportation policies that promote children's health and safety in regards to injury prevention, air quality, physical activity, and built environment
 - [Institute for Healthy Childhood Weight](#) advocates for increased access to safe places for physical activity support of Safe Routes to School programs and complete streets
 - Ongoing participation with Voices for Healthy Kids

Media Coverage

[Lowellville looks to start bike-safety program, coinciding with Safe Routes to School project](#)

By Emmalee Torisk

The Vindicator
March 10, 2014

Capt. Stacy Karis readily admits that the village lacks a strong bike-safety program, but is hopeful that will soon change. By the start of the next school year, the Safe Routes to School Program, part of the Ohio Department of Transportation, will have funded the construction of a \$442,000 project designed to improve walking and biking safety and access to the Lowellville school complex, 52 Rocket Place. And perhaps by Bike Helmet Safety Week, which is May 9-18, up to 110 children in the village may also have new helmets, provided by a grant from the Ohio Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

“We just want to promote bike safety, and just get the awareness out there,” said Karis, the village’s school-resource officer. “We want to start the kids at an early age wearing them.”

Owned Media[Effectiveness of a Safe Routes to School Program in Preventing School-Aged Pedestrian Injury](#)**By Charles DiMaggio and Guohua Li****Pediatrics****January 14, 2013**

In 2005, the US Congress allocated \$612 million for a national Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program to encourage walking and bicycling to schools. We analyzed motor vehicle crash data to assess the effectiveness of SRTS interventions in reducing school-aged pedestrian injury in New York City. Using geocoded motor vehicle crash data for 168806 pedestrian injuries in New York City between 2001 and 2010, annual pedestrian injury rates per 10000 population were calculated for different age groups and for census tracts with and without SRTS interventions during school-travel hours.

During the study period, the annual rate of pedestrian injury decreased 33% among school-aged children and 14% in other age groups. The annual rate of school-aged pedestrian injury during school-travel hours decreased 44% from 8.0 injuries per 10000 population in the preintervention period (2001–2008) to 4.4 injuries per 10000 population in the postintervention period (2009–2010) in census tracts with SRTS interventions. The rate remained virtually unchanged in census tracts without SRTS interventions. Implementation of the SRTS program in New York City has contributed to a marked reduction in pedestrian injury in school-aged children.

**American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network**

The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan sister organization of the American Cancer Society. ACS CAN works to make cancer a national priority. Specifically, it advocates for better access to care, cancer prevention and early detection programs,



cancer research funding, regulation of tobacco, and better quality of life for cancer patients, and attempts to raise awareness of and reduce cancer disparities. Members include cancer survivors, caregivers, patients, volunteers, and students, including Colleges Against Cancer.

555 11th Street, NW, Suite 300
Washington, D.C. 20004
(202) 661-5727
www.acscan.org

Positioning

ACS CAN stands to support the Voices for Healthy Kids' stance on federal funding for Safe Routes to School programs based on the following.

- High impact in policy related to physical activity, childhood obesity, and public health
- Proponent of Safe Routes to School funding at the national and state levels
- Activism aimed at maximizing funding for Safe Routes to School programs and educating advocates about federal/state legislation that affects these programs
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders, and the media
- Ability to reach critical stakeholders, namely health care professionals, community leaders, and state and local governments
- Strength of communications channels
- Past public support for continued funding for Safe Routes to School programs
- Alignment of organizational mission with the American Heart Association's policy statement on using federal dollars for Safe Routes to School programs
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to Safe Routes to School programs to improve the well-being of young people and to foster healthy communities.
 - Advocated for continued funding of Safe Routes to School programs in the [federal transportation bill](#)
 - Introduced legislation in [Minnesota](#) and [California](#) to successfully establish and support a Safe Routes to School program
 - Supported the [surgeon general's call-to-action](#) on walking, including Safe Routes to School programs to promote walking
 - Ongoing participation with Voices of Healthy Kids

Media Coverage

[Franzen receives Cancer Society award](#)

By Lisa Kaczke

Sun Current

July 2, 2013

Sen. Melisa Franzen, D-Edina, has received the 2013 Rookie of the Year award from the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network. Franzen successfully advanced legislation investing in the state's Safe Routes to School program, which builds infrastructure that allows students to make exercise a part of their daily routine, according to ACS CAN.



Berkeley Media Studies Group

Berkeley Media Studies Group (BMSG) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to expanding advocates' ability to improve the systems and structures that determine health. BMSG is a project of the Public Health Institute. BMSG conducts research to learn how the media characterize health issues. Through media advocacy training and consultation, BMSG helps advocates harness lessons from that research and develop the skills they need to shape journalists' coverage of health issues so that it illuminates the need for policies that improve the places where people live, learn, work, and play.

2130 Center Street, Suite 302
Berkeley, CA 94704
(510) 204-9700
www.bmsg.org

Positioning

BMSG stands to support the Voices for Healthy Kids' stance on federal funding for Safe Routes to School programs based on the following.

- High impact in policy related to nutrition, childhood obesity, and public health
- Activism aimed at maximizing funding for Safe Routes to School programs and educating advocates about federal/state legislation that affects these programs
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders, and the media
- Ability to reach critical stakeholders, namely public health officials, community leaders, and state and local governments
- Strength of communications channels
- Past public support for Safe Routes to School programs
- Alignment of organizational mission with the American Heart Association's policy statement on using federal dollars for Safe Routes to School programs
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to Safe Routes to School programs to improve the well-being of young people and to foster healthy communities.
 - Published an [issue brief](#) that promotes walking as a means to improve community health and that calls for implementation of Safe Routes to School programs
 - Formed the [Strategic Alliance for Healthy Food and Activity Environments](#), which supports funding to improve the availability of pedestrian and bicycle access, safe walking and biking routes to school and other key destinations for children, and parks and facilities for active recreation
 - Ongoing participation with Voices for Healthy Kids

Owned Media

[Talking About: The Walkable Community](#)

Berkeley Media Studies Talking About Series

July 29, 2010



Research shows the number of people exercising is substantially higher in neighborhoods that are easy to get around by bicycle, wheelchair, public transit or on foot. A neighborhood's "walkability" is a measure of how well it encourages physical activity. We can ensure our communities make it easier for us to get to work or school, or even to run errands, by implementing smart land-use policies. Specific strategies include establishing safe routes to school.

bridging the gap

Research Informing Policies and
Practices for Healthy Youth

Bridging the Gap

Bridging the Gap (BTG) was created in 1997 to assess the impact of policies, programs, and other environmental influences on adolescent alcohol, tobacco, and illicit drug use and related outcomes. BTG examines these factors at multiple levels of social organization, including schools, communities, and states. In recognition of the high rates of obesity among children, adolescents, and adults, BTG expanded its efforts in 2003 to include research on the policies, programs, and other factors that contribute to physical activity/inactivity, dietary behaviors, and obesity.

1747 West Roosevelt Road

Chicago, IL 60608

(312) 413-2367

www.bridgingthegapresearch.org

Positioning

BTG stands to support the Voices for Healthy Kids' stance on federal funding for Safe Routes to School programs based on the following.

- High impact in policy related to diet, physical activity, obesity, and tobacco use among youth
- Proponent of Safe Routes to School funding at the national, state, and local levels
- Activism aimed at promoting Safe Routes to School programs
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders, and academia
- Ability to reach critical target audiences, namely local schools and state and local governments
- Strength of communications channels
- Past public support for continued funding for Safe Routes to School programs
- Alignment of organizational mission with the American Heart Association's policy statement on using federal dollars for Safe Routes to School programs
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to Safe Routes to School programs to improve the well-being of young people and to foster healthy communities.
 - Released [new research](#) on the effectiveness of Safe Routes to School programs
 - Published [research](#) on state laws that support Safe Routes to School programs as a way to increase physical activity
 - Ongoing participation with Voices for Healthy Kids



Owned Media

[Elementary School Participation in Safe Routes to School Programming is Associated with Higher Rates of Student Active Travel to School](#)

By Lindsey Turner

Bridging the Gap

March 2014

Financial support for staffing (i.e., crossing guards), school infrastructure such as bike racks, and street-scale improvements such as crosswalk beacons and sidewalks may help to increase students' active travel. Increased support for other SRTS technical assistance programs and SRTS strategies may also help to increase rates of active travel. Even at schools already participating in SRTS programs, opportunities still exist for substantial growth in rates of active travel with sufficient financial investment and supportive policies.

[The Impact of the Built Environment and Safe Routes to School-Related Policies on Youth Active Travel in a National Sample of Public Elementary Schools](#)

By Sandy Slater

Bridging the Gap

April 2012

We found that among schools where students walk/bike a greater presence of traffic calming infrastructure near schools increased the odds of students walking/biking to school.

These findings can help inform federal, state and local policy, such as:

- Local: community development plans (Zoning and Subdivision ordinances) and school siting plans.
- State: State-level SRTS laws
- Federal: funding for SRTS—one of the largest programs that fund biking and walking infrastructure.

Changes in the built environment require long-term planning, but they can also have lasting health effects and provide one possible solution to help combat the obesity epidemic.



ChangeLab Solutions

ChangeLab Solutions (formerly Public Health Law & Policy) believes that, to achieve the common good, everyone must have nourishing food; safe places to live and play; opportunities to bike, walk, or take transit; fresh water and clean air. Throughout the nation, ChangeLab Solutions works with neighborhoods, cities, and states to transform communities with laws and policies that create lasting change. ChangeLab's unique approach, backed by decades of research and proven results, helps the



public and private sectors make communities more livable, especially for those who are at highest risk because they have the fewest resources.

2201 Broadway, Suite 502
Oakland, CA 94612
(510) 302-3380
www.changelabsolutions.org

Positioning

ChangeLab Solutions stands to support the Voices for Healthy Kids' stance on federal funding for Safe Routes to School programs based on the following.

- High impact in policy related to childhood obesity, community development, and public health
- Proponent of Safe Routes to School funding at the national, state, and local levels
- Activism aimed at promoting Safe Routes to School programs
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders, and the media
- Ability to reach critical target audiences, namely local school districts and state and local governments
- Strength of communications channels
- Past public support for continued funding for Safe Routes to School programs
- Alignment of organizational mission with the American Heart Association's policy statement on using federal dollars for Safe Routes to School programs
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to legislation that affects Safe Routes to School programs at the national, state, and local levels.
 - Provided a [policy building tool](#) for communities looking to implement Safe Routes to School programs
 - Created [brochures](#), [webinars](#), and [talking points](#) in support of Safe Routes to School programs
 - Ongoing participation with Voices for Healthy Kids

Owned Media

[ChangeLab Solutions, Safe Routes to School National Partnership Release School District Policy Builder](#)

ChangeLab Solutions

November 2013

ChangeLab Solutions and the Safe Routes to School National Partnership released an interactive tool that allows school boards and advocates to custom-build an active transportation policy for their district. This tool walks the user through a series of policy options to help build a customized Safe Routes to School policy for school districts, which they can then download for the school board to adopt.

[Maximizing Walkability, Diversity, and Educational Equity in U.S. Schools](#)

ChangeLab Solutions

August 2013

Compared to the past, students walk and bicycle to school far less now and are also generally less physically active. Daily walking, once a traditional source of physical activity for many people, including children, has been on the decline. Even students living close to their schools are walking and biking to

school less. In 1969, 89 percent of K-8th grade students who lived within one mile of school usually walked or bicycled to school. By 2009, only 35 percent of K-8th grade students who lived within a mile of school did so. Today, 51 percent of students arrive at school in the family car and 36 percent arrive by school bus.

To reverse this trend, a vigorous movement to increase safe walking and bicycling has emerged. Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programs have helped numerous communities and school districts create walking and bicycling infrastructure improvements, as well as programs to advocate for and educate the public and families on the many benefits of walking and bicycling to school. As of summer 2012, at least 13,347 schools were participating in Safe Routes to School programs in the United States.

[Safe Routes to School: Minimizing Your Liability Risk](#)

ChangeLab Solutions

July 2010

Some schools have been reluctant to support Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programs due to concerns about being sued if an injury or problem arises. By acting responsibly and understanding the liability issues in question, schools, nonprofits, and parent groups can help students reap the health and academic benefits of SRTS programs while minimizing the risk of a lawsuit.

Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities

Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities (Healthy Kids) is a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF), whose goal is to implement healthy eating and active living policies and environmental change initiatives that support healthier communities for children and families across the United States. Healthy Kids places special emphasis on reaching children who are at highest risk for obesity on the basis of race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, and geographic location. Through the program, RWJF seeks to catalyze and support community efforts to address the causes of childhood obesity through integrated changes in policies, norms, practices, social supports, and the physical environment. Healthy Kids maintains 49 community partnerships across the country.

400 Market Street, Suite 205

Chapel Hill, NC 27516

(919) 843-2523

www.healthykidshealthycommunities.org

Positioning

Healthy Kids stands to support the Voices for Healthy Kids' stance on federal funding for Safe Routes to School programs based on the following.

- High impact in policy related to physical activity, childhood obesity, and community development
- Proponent of Safe Routes to School funding at the local level
- Activism aimed at promoting Safe Routes to School programs
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders, and the media
- Ability to reach critical stakeholders, namely school districts, community organizations, and state and local governments
- Strength of communications channels



- Past public support for continued funding for Safe Routes to School programs
- Alignment of organizational mission with the American Heart Association's policy statement on using federal dollars for Safe Routes to School programs
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to Safe Routes to School programs, to improve the well-being of young people, and to foster healthy communities.
 - Supported Safe Routes to School programs in several communities, including [Houghton County, MI](#), [Jefferson County, AL](#), and [Central Valley, CA](#)
 - Ongoing participation with Voices for Healthy Kids

Media Coverage

[Childhood obesity: Healthy kids, healthy communities](#)

By Sue Scheff

Examiner.com

June 26, 2010

Jacksonville has been chosen as one of 50 communities across the country to receive a grant to reverse the childhood obesity epidemic. Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities, made possible with a grant through the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) based out of New Jersey, will focus on “neighborhoods where obesity is exacerbated by issues like acute unemployment and poverty, crime, dangerous traffic or too few grocery stores...”

What you can expect to see in Jacksonville:

- Establishing a food policy council to make recommendations for expanding access to the city's food system.
- Connecting farmers' markets to corner stores, churches, parks sites, schools and public housing and enabling food stamps to be used to purchase fruits and vegetables at those markets.
- Establishing joint-use agreements to allow the public access to school recreation facilities outside of school hours.
- Preventing crime by designing parks and recreation sites in a way that enhances safety.

Owned Media

[Strategies Proposed by Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities Partnerships to Prevent Childhood Obesity](#)

By P. Ohri-Vachaspati et al

Preventing Chronic Disease: Public Health Research, Practice and Policy

January 12, 2014

These researchers compared CDC recommendations to those proposed by 41 grantee sites in the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities (HKHC) national program to support communities to reduce obesity through policy, systems and environmental changes. Since HKHC focuses on children aged 3 to 18, two CDC recommendations were not assessed (Category 3—encouraging breastfeeding; and Category 6—encouraging communities to organize for change).

Here is how the HKHC partnerships aligned with CDC categories:

- Thirty-one partnerships proposed strategies to promote the availability of affordable healthy food and beverages
- Four partnerships proposed strategies to support healthy food and beverage choices

- Fifteen partnerships proposed strategies to encourage physical activity or limit sedentary activity among children and youth
- Thirty-five partnerships proposed strategies to create safe communities that support physical activity



The League of American Bicyclists

The League of American Bicyclists (The League) represents bicyclists in the movement to create safer roads, stronger communities, and a bicycle-friendly America. Through information, advocacy, and promotion, The League works to celebrate and preserve the freedom cycling brings to its members everywhere. The League's mission is to lead the movement to create a bicycle-friendly America for everyone. As leaders, The League's commitment is to listen and learn, define standards, and share best practices to engage diverse communities and build a powerful, unified voice for change.

1612 K Street NW, Suite 308
 Washington, D.C. 20006
 (202) 822-1333
www.bikeleague.org

Positioning

The League stands to support the Voices for Healthy Kids' stance on federal funding for Safe Routes to School programs on the following.

- High impact in policy related to transportation, education, and health
- Proponent of Safe Routes to School funding at the national, state, and local levels
- Activism aimed at maximizing funding for Safe Routes to School programs and educating advocates about federal/state legislation that affects these programs
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders, and the media
- Ability to reach critical stakeholders, namely federal and local departments of transportation
- Strength of communications channels
- Past public support for continued funding for Safe Routes to School programs
- Alignment of organizational mission with the American Heart Association's policy statement on using federal dollars for Safe Routes to School programs
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to legislation that affects Safe Routes to School programs at the national, state, and local levels.
 - [Advocacy Resources](#) hub provides infographics, research, policy briefs, and examples of successful funding campaigns to help advocates better engage with policymakers regarding bike/pedestrian legislative issues

- [Bicycle Friendly America](#) program provides a roadmap, hands-on assistance and recognition for states, communities, universities, and business tools to make bicycling a real transportation, and recreation option for all people

Media Coverage

[Washington is most bike-friendly state for sixth year](#)

By Elizabeth Weise

USA Today

May 2, 2013

For the sixth year in a row, Washington has been named the nation's most bicycle-friendly state. Colorado and Oregon came in second and third on the yearly list that gives national bragging rights and is closely followed by the cycling community. The rankings are bestowed by the League of American Bicyclists. Begun in 2008, they are based on funding for biking legislation, bike programs and policies, infrastructure, education and planning.

[Bicycle advocates to gather in DC to 'save cycling'](#)

By Keith Laing

The Hill

March 19, 2012

"Two months ago, the Senate bill would have gutted critical funding for local bicycle projects, eliminated programs like Safe Routes to School and eroded the rights of all American cyclists," LAB President Andy Clarke said in a news release. "But tens of thousands of people called and wrote their members of Congress and their voices were heard. Now more than ever, cyclists have become a powerful, organized constituency that is redefining our streets as safe, public spaces for people, not just speeding automobiles."

MomsRising.org

MomsRising

MomsRising is a transformative online and on-the-ground multicultural organization of one million members and more than 100 aligned organizations working to increase family economic security, to end discrimination against women, and to build a nation where both businesses and families thrive. MomsRising addresses critical issues facing women, mothers, and families by mobilizing massive grassroots actions. The group strives to bring the voices and real world experiences of women straight to the nation's leaders and to amplify women's issues in the national dialogue and in the media. MomsRising also accelerates grassroots initiatives on Capitol Hill and at state capitols across the country, and is committed to holding corporations accountable for fair treatment of women and mothers, and for ensuring the safety of their products.

1010 Grayson Street, Second Floor
Berkeley, CA 94010
(917) 407-3018



www.momsrising.org

Positioning

MomsRising stands to support the Voices for Healthy Kids' stance on federal funding for Safe Routes to School programs based on the following.

- High impact in policy related to physical activity and community development
- Activism aimed at promoting physical activity and reducing childhood obesity related to Safe Routes to School programs
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders, and the media
- Ability to reach critical stakeholders, namely local school districts, parents and state and local governments
- Strength of communications channels
- Alignment of organizational mission with the American Heart Association's policy statement on using federal dollars for Safe Routes to School programs
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to encouraging communities to curb childhood obesity through Safe Routes to School.
 - Offers [strategies](#) to improve healthy living in communities that include implementation of Safe Routes to School programs
 - Ongoing participation with Voices for Healthy Kids

Owned Media

[School physical activity programs pioneered by moms, attracting attention of First Lady, expanding nationwide through innovative grants opportunity](#)

By Emily Shuford

MomsRising.org

March 25, 2013

Up until a year ago, Kara Lubin and Kathleen Tullie did not know one another. Yet these two moms share curiously similar stories. Both women held close ties to the schools in their communities, Kara as a special education teacher at Washington Elementary in Corona, CA and Kathleen as mom of two children at Memorial Elementary in Natick, MA. Kara and Kathleen also shared an enthusiasm for movement, exercise, and all its benefits. These values led each to become concerned about the lack of opportunities for exercise and active play students had access to at their schools. Determined to see a change, these two women took action. Each rallied the support of local parents and teachers to pioneer a fresh way to get kids moving: Kara launched the 100 Mile Club in 1992 and Kathleen created BOKS in 2009.

[Babes on Bikes](#)

By Anna Fahey

MomsRising.org

July 16, 2012

As Yes! Magazine reported recently, "In 1969, according to the National Center for Safe Routes to School, 48 percent of kids aged 5 to 14 regularly walked or biked to school. In 2009, it was just 13 percent." Getting kids on bikes early in life is probably one way to get a generation riding to school



again. But, as Yes! points out, “a major reason for the [dwindling numbers] is that parents don’t feel safe letting their kids bike on their own.”

Here’s a cool safety idea for older kids: Bike trains, “in which an adult chaperone rides a predetermined route, picking up children along the way.” This idea builds on the bike culture that so many parents with tots hope to instill early in their kids—health, community, stewardship.



National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) is the nation’s oldest and largest civil rights organization. The NAACP brings its voice to assist in the eradication of racial and ethnic disparities, with a focus not only on disease prevention, but on the social and environmental factors that affect health and wellness. In addition, the NAACP is engaged in the workforce development movement to increase the number of minorities represented in the medical and public health profession, and a leading presence on governmental advisory workgroups and national coalitions developed to provide counsel on cultural competency in the health care system.

4805 Mt. Hope Drive
Baltimore, MD 21215
(410) 580-5777
www.naACP.org

Positioning

NAACP stands to support the Voices for Healthy Kids’ stance on federal funding for Safe Routes to School programs based on the following.

- High impact in policy related to physical activity, childhood obesity, and public health in communities of color
- Activism aimed at raising awareness for and implementing Safe Routes to School programs
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders, and the media
- Ability to reach critical stakeholders, namely Congress, state and local departments of transportation and communities of color
- Strength of communications channels
- Past public support for continued funding for Safe Routes to School programs
- Alignment of organizational mission with the American Heart Association’s policy statement on using federal dollars for Safe Routes to School programs
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to Safe Routes to School programs, to improve the well-being of young people and to foster healthy communities.
 - [NAACP Childhood Obesity Advocacy Manual](#) endorses policies that improve community walkability as a means to curb childhood obesity
 - Member of Safe Routes to School National Partnership’s [National Active Transportation Diversity Task Force](#)

- Ongoing participation with Voices for Healthy Kids

Media Coverage

[Fighting Childhood Obesity, One Community at a Time](#)

By Shavon Arline-Bradley

Ebony

October 9, 2013

Exercise is also an important piece of the puzzle. We have got to get our kids running, jumping, playing, moving. By taking an additional 2,000 steps per day, an individual can begin the process of stopping weight gain. Our children need safe environments to facilitate exercise. We have to improve community walkability and public transportation, enhance recreational spaces, and allow for better access to school playgrounds outside of school hours.

[NAACP: A Walkable Built Environment Is a “Premier Civil Rights Issue”](#)

By Tanya Snyder

DC.StreetsBlog.org

October 4, 2013

That’s one aspect that walkability advocates often overlook when discussing improvements to make an area “safer” for pedestrians. “For us, the conversation is along the lines of ‘reclaiming the streets,’” Niiobli Armah told me. Armah is the NAACP’s manager of childhood obesity for their health and wellness initiatives. It might surprise some that the 104-year-old civil rights organization has a focus on walkable and bikeable neighborhoods. But it shouldn’t. It stems from the organization’s work on childhood obesity. Nineteen percent of black children between two and five are obese. Black high school girls are two-and-a-half times more likely to be obese than their white counterparts. “We think of health as the premier civil rights advocacy issue,” Armah said. “We advocate for the built environment so that students can have opportunities for safe physical activity in their neighborhoods.”



The National Center for Bicycling & Walking

The National Center for Bicycling & Walking (NCBW) is a resident program at Project for Public Spaces, Inc. NCBW works with local, state, and national bicycle, pedestrian, and transportation advocates to bring about changes in government policies, programs, and procedures to help create more bicycle-friendly and walkable communities. NCBW activities include providing specialized community-based workshops, consulting services in the areas of long-range planning, policy development, public involvement, route selection, planning and design guidelines for bicycle and pedestrian facilities, training programs for public health and transportation agencies, economic development, and tourism planning. The aim of NCBW’s program is to change the way communities are planned, designed, and managed to ensure that people of all ages and abilities can walk and bike easily, safely, and regularly.



1612 K Street, NW, Suite 802
Washington, D.C. 20006
(202) 223-3621
www.bikewalk.org

Positioning

NCBW stands to support the Voices for Healthy Kids' stance on federal funding for Safe Routes to School programs based on the following.

- High impact in policy related to transportation and community development
- Proponent of Safe Routes to School funding at the national, state, and local levels
- Activism aimed at maximizing funding for Safe Routes to School programs and educating advocates about federal/state legislation that affects these programs
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders, and the media
- Ability to reach critical stakeholders, namely local departments of transportation
- Past public support for continued funding for Safe Routes to School programs
- Alignment of organizational mission with the American Heart Association's policy statement on using federal dollars for Safe Routes to School programs
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to legislation that affects Safe Routes to School programs at the national, state, and local levels.
 - Offers [workshops](#) to help school faculty introduce Safe Routes to School programs into the curriculum, apply for state Safe Routes to School grants, broker community meetings to address parental concerns, and implement successful programs
 - [Pro Walk/Pro Bike/Pro Place](#) conference unites more than 1,000 planners, architects, public health professionals, real estate developers, educators, and advocates to address topics paramount to creating walkable and bikeable environments

Media Coverage

[How Smart Planning and Education Saves Pedestrians' Lives](#)

By Megan Anderle

Real Business

April 2, 2014

In the past five years, there have been fewer drivers on the road, according to a report by U.S. PIRG. Developers need to take this trend into account as they work on infrastructure, said Mark Plotz, vice president of Project for Public Spaces, the parent group of the National Center for Bicycling and Walking. "As developers look at a stretch of road, they need to think about how they can accommodate a bike lane or a multi-use trail. They need to be putting down sidewalks, and crosswalks and lighting," Plotz said. "There's a shift underway."

[Pedestrian deaths drop after three-year rise](#)

By Larry Copeland

USA Today

March 5, 2014

“I hope that we’re doing a better job of enforcing the laws, and that Complete Streets (a national effort that emphasizes streets that enable safe access for all users) is starting to take hold,” says Mark Plotz, vice president of Project for Public Spaces, parent group of the National Center for Bicycling and Walking. “But it’s too early to know.”



National Center for Safe Routes to School

Established in May 2006, the National Center for Safe Routes to School (National Center) assists states and communities in enabling and encouraging children to safely walk and bike to school. The National Center serves as the information clearinghouse for the federal Safe Routes to School program. The organization also provides technical support and resources and coordinates online registration efforts for U.S. Walk to School Day and facilitates worldwide promotion and participation. The National Center is part of the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center with funding from the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration.

730 Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard, Suite 300

Chapel Hill, NC 27599

1-866-610-SRTS

www.saferoutesinfo.org

Positioning

The National Center stands to support the Voices for Healthy Kids’ stance on federal funding for Safe Routes to School programs based on the following.

- High impact in policy related to transportation, education, and health
- Proponent of Safe Routes to School funding at the national, state, and local levels
- Activism aimed at maximizing funding for Safe Routes to School programs and educating advocates about federal/state legislation that affects these programs
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders, and the media
- Ability to reach critical stakeholders, namely federal and local departments of transportation
- Strength of communications channels
- Past public support for continued funding for Safe Routes to School programs
- Alignment of organizational mission with the American Heart Association’s policy statement on using federal dollars for Safe Routes to School programs
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to legislation that affects Safe Routes to School programs at the national, state, and local levels.
 - [Funding Portal](#) offers valuable information on Safe Routes to School, including sources of funding for programs, explanations of transportation legislation affecting program funding, and archives of successful statewide programs
 - [Program Tools](#) hub provides toolkits on how to initiate and promote Safe Routes to School programs

- [Safe Routes to School National Course](#) helps communities establish a common understanding of safe routes to school and enables them to create sound programs that are based on community conditions, best practices, and responsible use of resources

Media Coverage

[Sports Promote Healthy Weight in Teenagers](#)

By Anahad O'Connor

The New York Times

July 17, 2012

One of the government's most recent efforts to boost adolescent exercise was [a \\$100 million-a-year program called Safe Routes to School](#), which targets the way students commute. In 2001, less than 16 percent of children between 5 and 15 walked, biked or "actively" commuted to school, compared with about 50 percent of youngsters in that age range 40 years ago. Created in 2005, Safe Routes aims to boost those numbers by helping communities build more sidewalks, bike paths and other "pedestrian friendly" routes.

[Death of an Everett crossing guard hits home with peers](#)

By Martine Powers

The Boston Globe

May 26, 2012

For children on their way to school, crossing the street is usually the most dangerous part of the trip, said Nancy Pullen-Seufert, associate director of the National Center for Safe Routes to School, an organization based in North Carolina. "There are lots and lots of parents who feel comfortable sending their child to school by foot or by bicycle because they know that a crossing guard is part of a child's trip to school," Pullen-Seufert said.



National Council of La Raza

The National Council of La Raza (NCLR), the largest Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organization in the United States, works to improve opportunities for Hispanic Americans. Through its network of 300 affiliated community-based organizations, NCLR reaches millions of Hispanics each year in 41 states, Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia. NCLR develops and implements health education and prevention programs, and conducts health advocacy activities in partnership with its affiliate network to protect the health and well-being of the Latino community. NCLR is committed to advancing policies that give Latino and all American children the best opportunity to experience healthy development and sustain behaviors that contribute to success throughout life.



1126 16th Street, NW, Suite 600
Washington, D.C. 20036
(202) 785-1670
www.nclr.org

Positioning

NCLR stands to support the Voices for Healthy Kids' stance on federal funding for Safe Routes to School programs based on the following.

- High impact in policy related to education, health, and childhood obesity in the Latino community
- Proponent of Safe Routes to School funding at the state level
- Activism aimed at prioritizing funding for Safe Routes to School programs and educating advocates about federal legislation that affects these programs
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders, and the media
- Ability to reach critical stakeholders, namely Congress and Latino communities
- Strength of communications channels
- Past public support for continued funding for Safe Routes to School programs
- Alignment of organizational mission with the American Heart Association's policy statement on using federal dollars for Safe Routes to School programs
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to Safe Routes to School programs to improve the well-being of young Latino people and to foster healthy communities.
 - [Priorities](#) for federal surface transportation reauthorization include upholding the intent of programs like Safe Routes to School and requiring states to implement grant programs for pedestrian projects
 - Signed a [group letter](#) to members of the Conference Committee on Surface Transportation Reauthorization in 2012 on maintaining the Cardin-Cochran agreement from MAP-21
 - Ongoing participation with Voices for Healthy Kids

Media Coverage

[Paving the Future of Transportation Policy: What Congress Smoothed Over This Year, and Where the Potholes Remain](#)

By Catherine Singley

The Huffington Post

August 13, 2012

Like all Americans, Latino voters place jobs and the economy at the top of their list of concerns this year. The transportation sector alone directly employs more than one million Latinos. That's why NCLR was pleased that Congress reauthorized comprehensive surface transportation policy on June 30, just hours before the current extension of transportation policy was set to expire. The legislation, Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act, or MAP-21, was signed by President Obama on July 6 and will be active until September 2014.

NCLR identified four policy priorities for Latinos in transportation reauthorization:

- Improve job opportunities for Latinos in the transportation sector
- Ensure authentic community involvement in local transportation planning and decision-making
- Defend public transportation as a vital lifeline

- Promote safety for pedestrians and bikers



everychild.onevoice.®

National PTA

National PTA comprises millions of families, students, teachers, administrators, businesses, and community leaders devoted to the educational success of children and the promotion of parent involvement in schools. PTA prides itself on being a powerful voice for all children, a relevant resource for families and communities, and a strong advocate for public education. The goal of PTA's health and safety programming is to be a resource for PTA leaders in partnering with schools to create safe environments that encourage healthy, safe choices, and social and emotional support for all students.

1250 N. Pitt Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
(703) 518-1200
www.pta.org

Positioning

National PTA stands to support the Voices for Healthy Kids' stance on federal funding for Safe Routes to School programs based on the following.

- High impact in policy related to childhood health, safety, and physical activity
- Proponent of Safe Routes to School funding at the local level
- Activism aimed at maximizing fundraising and activity challenges for Safe Routes to School programs
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders, and the media
- Ability to reach critical stakeholders, namely Congress and the U.S. Public Health Service
- Strength of communications channels
- Past public support for continued funding for Safe Routes to School programs
- Alignment of organizational mission with the American Heart Association's policy statement on using federal dollars for Safe Routes to School programs
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to Safe Routes to School programs, to improve the well-being of young people and to foster healthy communities.
 - [Fire Up Your Feet](#) program encourages families to walk more to and from school while keeping track of their steps, and serves as a fundraiser for PTAs or schools
 - Open to all K-8 public, private, and charter schools located in sponsored regions, [Fire Up Your Feet Challenge Awards](#) help support Safe Routes to School programs and other school-based health and wellness initiatives
 - Produced [tips](#) for implementing successful Safe Routes to School programs
 - Includes a downloadable [toolkit](#) to support the 2013 Take Your Family to School Week theme "Safety at Home and at Play"

Media Coverage

Fire Up Your Feet Hits the Streets

By Rosie Mesterhazy

Active Living Research

November 12, 2013

Fire Up Your Feet is a program that is making great strides in getting schools and families active and moving. Fire Up Your Feet is a core program of Safe Routes to School National Partnership available to any elementary and middle school (grades k-8) nationally. Made possible in partnership with Kaiser Permanente, this program offers free resources, an online activity tracker, a school fundraising organizer, and more, all aimed at increasing physical activity before, during and after-school for students, parents, school staff and teachers. The National PTA is our family engagement partner.

In select sponsored regions, Fire Up Your Feet also offers Fall and Spring Activity Challenges aimed at promoting friendly competition to help increase physical activity. This year's Fall Activity Challenge wrapped up October 31. Cash awards of between \$200 and \$5,000 were distributed to over 148 schools across the country to help support Safe Routes to School programs and other school health and wellness initiatives.



The Notah Begay III Foundation

Created by Notah Begay, III in 2005, the Notah Begay III Foundation (NB3 Foundation) was established as an answer to an overwhelming statistic—half of all Native American children born since 2000 will develop Type 2 diabetes in their lifetime. NB3 Foundation's mission is to prevent Type 2 diabetes and its leading cause, childhood obesity, through sports and health and wellness programs that are based on proven best practices. Its holistic approach to programming and evaluation addresses Native Americans' nutrition, physical fitness, and community-building needs, with the goal of producing measurable, long-term change in the health of tribal communities.

290 Prairie Star Road
Santa Ana Pueblo, NM 87004
(505) 867-0775

www.nb3foundation.org

Positioning

NB3 Foundation stands to support the Voices for Healthy Kids' stance on federal funding for Safe Routes to School programs based on the following.

- High impact in policy related to physical activity, childhood obesity, and community development, focused on the well-being of Native American children



- Proponent of Safe Routes to School funding at the local level
- Activism aimed at raising awareness of funding for Safe Routes to School programs and promoting physical activity in Native American communities
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders, and the media
- Ability to reach critical stakeholders, namely Congress, state and local governments, and the Native American community
- Strength of communications channels
- Past public support for continued funding for Safe Routes to School programs
- Alignment of organizational mission with the American Heart Association's policy statement on using federal dollars for Safe Routes to School programs
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to curbing childhood obesity through physical activity.
 - [Partnered](#) with the Obama Administration and the Indian Health Service to launch the Let's Move! In Indian Country (LMIC) program, as part of First Lady Michelle Obama's Let's Move! Initiative
 - [Turning the Tide for Native American Children](#) report outlines the challenge of addressing childhood obesity and Type 2 diabetes through sports, health and wellness programs, healthy foods access, community leadership development, and advocacy for Native American children
 - Ongoing participation with Voices for Healthy Kids

Media Coverage

[Notah Begay III targets diabetes](#)

The Associated Press (via ESPN)

April 29, 2011

A four-time PGA Tour winner, Begay is issuing a challenge to Indian youth to follow his example by exercising every day and eating healthy.

The challenge is part of the work being done by the golfer's charity, the NB3 Foundation, which has a goal of fighting obesity and diabetes among Native-American youth. The foundation is developing programs aimed specifically at helping native youth and at encouraging more tribal leaders to set an example.

Owned Media

[Adding a Sidewalk Could Help Curb Childhood Obesity](#)

Native American Health Blog

June 21, 2010

The \$9 million in federal funding distributed to the school system through the Safe Routes to School Program will make walking and biking to school safer and more appealing for students, said district architect Robert Estrada, who put together the application for the grant money. But it can also be part of the school system's effort to fight childhood obesity by improving school lunch diets and encouraging physical activity among its students. "Twenty years ago, everybody walked to school because parents knew it was safe," Estrada said. "We're hoping to improve those numbers for kids that might live in areas where they didn't want to walk because there was traffic."



The NB3 Foundation thinks this a great initiative to help get kids moving in a safe and active way.



peopleforbikes.org™

PeopleForBikes

PeopleForBikes is the leading movement to improve bicycling in the U.S. By collaborating with millions of individual riders, businesses, community leaders, and elected officials, PeopleForBikes unites Americans to boost bicycling on a national level for results that can be seen locally. Launched in 1999 as Bikes Belong, PeopleForBikes includes both an industry coalition of bicycling suppliers and retailers, as well as a charitable foundation. By connecting the bicycle industry and individual riders, PeopleForBikes generates political clout that secures a seat at the congressional table for people who benefit from bikes. Through these efforts, federal investment in bicycling has quadrupled since the group's inception.

207 Canyon Boulevard, Suite 202

Boulder, CO 80302

www.peopleforbikes.org

Positioning

PeopleForBikes stands to support the Voices for Healthy Kids' stance on federal funding for Safe Routes to School programs based on the following.

- High impact in policy related to physical activity and biking
- Proponent of Safe Routes to School funding at the national level
- Activism aimed at supporting legislation to fund Safe Routes to School programs
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders, and the media
- Ability to reach critical stakeholders, namely local governments and biking industry leaders
- Strength of communications channels
- Past public support for continued funding for Safe Routes to School programs
- Alignment of organizational mission with the American Heart Association's policy statement on using federal dollars for Safe Routes to School programs
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to Safe Routes to School programs.
 - Provides [funding](#) to third-party organizations to build Safe Routes to School programs at the state level
 - Supported [APHA initiative](#) on "Ride American for Safe Routes"
 - Petitioned for policymakers to restore dedicated funding to Safe Routes to School programs in [California](#)
 - Founding partner and [host](#) for the Safe Routes to School National Partnership

Owned Media

[5 Ways to Bring More Bike Lanes to Your Community](#)

By Kristen Butcher and Zoe Kircos

PeopleforBikes Blog
January 23, 2014

Build Partnerships—Talk to existing bike groups in your community—this might include advocacy groups, bike clubs or people who just want to get together and ride. Find out what others are already doing and discuss ways to leverage or extend their efforts so time isn't wasted reinventing the wheel. Don't forget to reach out to other communities that benefit from safer bicycling and walking routes. For instance, if the proposed route is near a school, create widespread support of the project by partnering with Safe Routes to School programs, neighborhood groups, and local parents. Several times a year, the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition sets up a tent (above) to distribute information to residents on bicycling in the city.



The Pew Charitable Trusts

The Pew Charitable Trusts (Pew) is driven by the power of knowledge to solve today's most challenging problems. Pew applies a rigorous, analytical approach to improve public policy, inform the public, and stimulate civic life. With a long history of informing policy, Pew supports initiatives, grounded in research and evidence, which aim to improve the well-being of all Americans and help children become active, contributing members of society around the country. Pew applies a data-driven, analytical approach to developing strategies that make government more effective. The institution's initiatives have delivered results at national, state, and local levels.

One Commerce Square
 2005 Market Street, Suite 2800
 Philadelphia, PA 19103
 (215) 575-9050
www.pewtrusts.org

Positioning

Pew stands to support the Voices for Healthy Kids' stance on federal funding for Safe Routes to School programs based on the following.

- High impact in policy related to public health
- Proponent of Safe Routes to School funding at the state level
- Activism aimed at influencing policy and public health through research, including Safe Routes to School programs
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders, government, and the media
- Ability to reach critical stakeholders, namely federal, local, and state governments, and state and local school districts
- Strength of communications channels
- Alignment of organizational mission with the American Heart Association's policy statement on using federal dollars for Safe Routes to School programs

- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to research that informs public policies that address childhood obesity.
 - Published [research](#) on the role of government in combating childhood obesity
 - [Health Impact Assessment](#) project investigates ways to improve health when drafting new laws and regulations, and developing school curricula, in order to save on health-related costs
 - Ongoing participation with Voices for Healthy Kids

Media Coverage

[Childhood Obesity Target of Campaign Urging U.S. Government to Improve School Resources for Healthy Students](#)

By Susan Heavey

Reuters (via *The Huffington Post*)

May 9, 2013

A coalition of health advocacy groups on Wednesday urged the U.S. government to put more resources into school-based efforts to improve health and fight obesity among youth. The recommendations by the Healthy Schools Campaign and Trust for America's Health were backed by more than 70 groups including the American Cancer Society and the National Education Association. In a report, they urged the Department of Education to offer grants to promote healthy living initiatives, fund staff training to include wellness programs, support school efforts aimed at nutrition and exercise and track results of such programs.

Owned Media

[States Tackle Chronic Absence in Schools](#)

By Adrienne Lu

Stateline

September 16, 2013

"There's no silver bullet," said Fred Jones, legislative associate for the Alliance for Excellent Education, a nonprofit advocacy organization based in Washington that focuses on at-risk secondary school students. The key, Jones said, is to uncover the reasons behind the absences—whether the student has to care for a sick parent, feels unsafe traveling to school, or has to work to help support the family. Only then can the school intervene effectively.

Brad Strong, senior director of education policy at Children Now, a nonprofit children's organization in California, said that while school officials often agree that chronic absence is a critical issue, doing something about it is more difficult. School officials must find out whether students need mental health services, better nutrition, safe routes to school or health insurance, then tap the right people to solve those problems. "If [students] are in school, if districts do this, if schools do this, you're going to see achievement gains across the board," Strong said.



The Praxis Project

The Praxis Project is a nonprofit movement and an institution of color that supports organizing efforts and change work at the local, regional and national levels. Focused on movement building for fundamental change, the Project's mission is to build healthy communities by changing the power relationships between people of color and the institutional structures that affect their lives.

7731 Alaska Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20012
(202) 234-5921
www.thepraxisproject.org

Positioning

The Praxis Project stands to support Voices for Healthy Kids' stance on federal funding for Safe Routes to School programs based on the following.

- High impact in policy related to community health and development for communities of color
- Activism aimed at reducing childhood obesity and improving the health of communities of color through public policy
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders, and the media
- Ability to reach critical stakeholders, namely national peace, justice, and multicultural organizations
- Strength of communications channels
- Alignment of organizational mission with the American Heart Association's policy statement on using federal dollars for Safe Routes to School programs
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to programs that combat childhood obesity through local policy.
 - [Communities Creating Healthy Environments](#) provides grants to local organizations to improve access to healthy foods and safe places for children and families to play and exercise
 - [Transforming Communities](#) draws on the best practices in the development of progressive local policies to transform communities into healthy, thriving places for their residents
 - Ongoing participation with Voices for Healthy Kids

Owned Media

[Transforming Communities Creating Healthy Environments to Combat Obesity: Preliminary Evaluation Findings from Two Case Studies](#)

By Erualdo Romero González, Sandra Villanueva and Cheryl N. Grills
California Journal of Health Promotion

While there is growing faith in community organizing to influence policy as a way to improve the built environment and increase food or recreational equity, relatively little research is available examining the successes and challenges of community organizing in Latino communities attempting to reduce obesity.

Using process and outcome evaluation data, we present preliminary findings from a study of two community-based organizations that are making efforts to increase access to physical activity and access to healthy foods in predominantly Latino areas. The organizations are part of Communities Creating Healthy Environments (CCHE), a national initiative of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) to prevent childhood obesity. Both community-based organizations were able to achieve redistribution of public resources to advance their CCHE objectives. We discuss the study's implications, including the need for public policy research around obesity that examines community organizing as an intervention.

Salud America!

The RWJF Research Network to Prevent Obesity Among Latino Children

Salud America!

Salud America! is a national online network of researchers, community group leaders, decision makers, and members of the public working together to support healthy policy and environmental changes that can help reverse the Latino childhood obesity epidemic. Salud America! serves as a clearinghouse—with news, research, maps, videos, resources, and successful stories—on making healthy changes in Latino communities across the nation.

7411 John Smith Drive, Suite 1000
San Antonio, TX 78229
(210) 562-6500
www.salud-america.org

Positioning

Salud America! stands to support the Voices for Healthy Kids' stance on federal funding for Safe Routes to School programs based on the following.

- High impact in policy related to physical activity, childhood obesity, and public health
- Activism aimed at promoting Safe Routes to School programs
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders, and the media
- Ability to reach critical stakeholders, namely Latino communities, local school districts, and state and local governments
- Strength of communications channels
- Past public support for continued funding for Safe Routes to School programs
- Alignment of organizational mission with the American Heart Association's policy statement on using federal dollars for Safe Routes to School programs
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to Safe Routes to School programs, to improve the well-being of young people and to foster healthy communities.
 - Issue brief on [Active Spaces and Latino Children](#) and [infographic](#) underscore the need for safe places for Latino children to be physically active
 - Member of the [National Active Transportation Diversity Task Force](#), which assists local communities with the implementation of Safe Routes to School programs
 - Created the [Growing Healthy Change](#) website, which features a multitude of Latino-focused tools, resources, and personal stories that focus on healthy change
 - Ongoing participation with Voices for Health Kids

Media Coverage

[Salud America! Seeks to Grow a Healthy Change](#)

By Elizabeth Brotherton-Bunch

Preventobesity.net

February 6, 2014

A new interactive website unveiled on Wednesday by our friends at Salud America! aims to become a one-stop shop for advocates looking to take steps to reverse Latino childhood obesity in their communities.

The website, Growing Healthy Change, contains a wealth of Latino-focused tools, resources and personal stories that promote healthy change. Visitors can create maps to see what's happening in their neighborhood, search by specific topics, read first-hand accounts from advocates working in the field and even upload their own stories.

[Salud America working to combat obesity among Latino children](#)

By Amelie G. Ramirez

Statestman.com

December 28, 2011

This month, Salud America unveiled three major research briefs examining current evidence on Latino childhood obesity issues: the availability of healthy, affordable foods, opportunities for physical activity and the impact of food marketing on diets. These briefs can help policymakers make critical decisions in crafting policies and allocating resources to address the epidemic, and they are designed to have widespread applicability to Latino childhood obesity advocacy organizations.

Owned Media

[Increasing Out-of-School and Out-of-Class Physical Activity among Latino Children](#)

Salud America! Research Review

July 2013

The Safe Routes to School National Partnership provides resources for increasing the safety of neighborhood streets to facilitate walking and biking in underserved communities. A case study describes the implementation of the Safe Routes to School program at Maybury Elementary School in southwest Detroit (approximately 600 students, nearly 90% of whom are Latino). During the program planning phase, the school sought parent feedback and conducted “walking audits” to identify factors that may be inhibiting active transport to school. Based on these assessments, the school made improvements to decaying sidewalks and installed more street lights. By using geographic information system (GIS) maps, which are generated from several forms of computerized geographical data, and crime data for the neighborhood, the safest routes to school were identified, and a walking school bus program, led by parent volunteers, was implemented on those routes, which increased rates of active transport to school.



Trust for America's Health

Trust for America's Health (TFAH) is a non-partisan organization dedicated to saving lives by protecting the health of every community and working to make disease prevention a national priority. By focusing on prevention, protection, and communities, TFAH leads the fight to make disease prevention a national priority. TFAH conducts science-based research, issues meaningful reports that spark change, and shares best practices to improve the lives, communities, and overall health of people everywhere.

1730 M Street, NW, Suite 900
Washington, D.C. 20036
(202) 223-9870
www.healthyamericans.org

Positioning

TFAH stands to support the Voices for Healthy Kids' stance on federal funding for Safe Routes to School programs based on the following.

- High impact in policy related to community development and public health
- Proponent of Safe Routes to School funding at the national and state level
- Activism aimed at raising awareness of funding for Safe Routes to School programs and educating advocates about federal/state legislation that affects these programs
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders, and the media
- Ability to reach critical stakeholders, namely Congress and state and local governments
- Strength of communications channels
- Past public support for continued funding for Safe Routes to School programs
- Alignment of organizational mission with the American Heart Association's policy statement on using federal dollars for Safe Routes to School programs
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to Safe Routes to School programs to improve the well-being of young people and to foster healthy communities.
 - Produced [A Compendium of Proven Community-Based Prevention Programs](#), which identifies Safe Routes to School programs among the top disease prevention programs in the U.S.
 - [State Data map](#) provides state-specific public health data, including detailed information on key health indicators, public health preparedness, funding indicators, and examples of programs that work
 - Published [F as in Fat: How Obesity Affects America's Future](#) to examine strategies for addressing the obesity crisis

Media Coverage

Government programs that boost health

By Deborah Kotz
The Boston Globe
October 17, 2013

As the federal government fully reopens after a 16-day shutdown, some of us may be wondering why we didn't feel a stronger impact on our daily lives. This begs the question: do we really need all those government programs from a health standpoint? As it turns out, 79 of those public health programs—that receive federal, state, or local funding—are well worth the tax dollars spent on them because they lead to significant health improvements or prevent life-threatening illnesses or injuries. That's the finding of a report issued Thursday by the New York Academy of Medicine and the non-profit group Trust for America's Health...

4. The federal Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program.

This allocated funds for state departments of transportation to build sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and safe crossings, improve signage, and make other transportation improvements that allow children to travel more safely to school. In New York City, the annual rate of children injured while walking and biking during school-travel hours decreased 44 percent from 2001 to 2010 in areas with SRTS interventions.



YMCA (the Y) is one of the nation's leading nonprofits strengthening communities through youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility. Across the U.S., 2,700 Ys engage 21 million men, women, and children—regardless of age, income, or background—to nurture the potential of children and teens, improve the nation's health and well-being, and provide opportunities to give back and support neighbors. Anchored in more than 10,000 communities, the Y has the long-standing relationships and physical presence not just to promise, but to deliver lasting personal and social change.

101 N. Wacker Drive
Chicago, IL 60606
(800) 872-9622
www.ymca.net

Positioning

The Y supports the Voices for Healthy Kids' stance on federal funding for Safe Routes to School programs based on the following.

- High impact in policy related to physical activity, childhood obesity, and community development
- Activism aimed at promoting Safe Routes to School programs
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, including 21 million members, thought leaders, and the media
- Ability to reach critical stakeholders, namely local school districts and state and local governments
- Strength of communications channels
- Past public support for Safe Routes to School programs
- Alignment of organizational mission with the American Heart Association's policy statement on using federal dollars for Safe Routes to School programs

- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to Safe Routes to School programs, to promote a healthy lifestyle and enhance quality of life in communities.
 - [Pioneering Healthier Communities](#) empowers communities with strategies and models for creating and sustaining positive change in support of healthy living
 - [ACHIEVE](#) capitalizes on the experience and expertise of national organizations in strengthening community leadership, building capacity, and activating change
 - Ongoing participation with Voices for Healthy Kids

Media Coverage

'Walking School Bus' program aims to make kids safe

By Lalita Llerena

Fox 13 WTVT-TV

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The Tampa YMCA has started the “Walking School Bus” program to make sure kids stay safe, especially those who live in troubled neighborhoods. “They are finding the lack of sidewalks, stray dogs, vacant homes, bullying to be an issue, so having that safe passage to and from school for the kids and for their parents was critical,” said Saima Qadree, who coordinates the all-volunteer program for the YMCA.

Funded by a \$20,000 community grant arranged by the University of South Florida’s Center for Urban Transportation Research, The Florida Blue Foundation, and the YMCA “Walking School Bus” teams a trained volunteer with a group of elementary school aged kids. Every day, rain or shine, the walking bus driver accompanies each child home in a group.

ⁱ *Understanding Childhood Obesity: 2011 Statistical Sourcebook*. American Heart Association, 2011. Available at http://www.heart.org/idc/groups/heart-public/@wcm/@fc/documents/downloadable/ucm_428180.pdf.

ⁱⁱ Frank LD, Andresen MA, and Schmid TL. Obesity relationships with community design, physical activity, and time spent in cars. *American Journal of Preventative Medicine* 27.2 (2004): 87-96.

ⁱⁱⁱ McDonald NC. Active Transportation to School: Trends among U.S. Schoolchildren, 1969-2001. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 32.6 (2007): 509-516.

^{iv} “MAP-21: Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century.” U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration. Web. <<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/map21/>>.

^v “Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Guidance.” U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration, 10 Jun. 2013. Web. <<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/map21/guidance/guidetap.cfm>>.

^{vi} “Policy Background: Transportation Alternatives.” Safe Routes to School National Partnership. Web. <<http://www.saferoutespartnership.org/national/policy-background>>.

^{vii} “Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Guidance.” U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration, 10 Jun. 2013. Web. <<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/map21/guidance/guidetap.cfm>>.

^{viii} “Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Guidance.” U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration, 10 Jun. 2013. Web. <<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/map21/guidance/guidetap.cfm>>.