

Neighborhood Change Partners

The following are some of the government departments, agencies and/or representatives* that need to be involved in promoting healthy eating and physical activity environments on a neighborhood level:

- City councils
- County Board of Supervisors
- City/county engineering/construction department
- City/county department of public health
- Municipal/county transportation department
- City Parks Department and Regional park districts
- Community and Economic Development Agencies
(Community Development and Redevelopment, Planning and Zoning)
- Department of Education (School Board)

In addition to the active involvement of government, there are a number of other key sectors and institutions who have a role to play in improving neighborhood nutrition and activity environments. The cohesive scope of supporters needs to be broadened beyond the usual players in order to create a comprehensive and cross cutting strategy. Additional supporters that need to be brought in include:

- **LOCAL/STATE FOOD POLICY COUNCILS:** Expanding the agenda of these groups to a broader health message can be extremely powerful in bringing together multisectoral initiatives
- **ANTI-HUNGER/EMERGENCY FOOD GROUPS:** These groups are dominant forces at the political and community level and they need to be engaged in a broader, health based message; from calories to quality
- **ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH:** There is great potential in connecting these groups to those engaged in environmental physical activity improvements
- **PLANNING:** Although public health and planning started the same way, these two groups have not worked together. Public health people need to invest time in learning the language of planning because ultimately the health message is what is more compelling. Learning the language of planners can help public health to engage them in planning decisions that will impact a community's nutrition and physical activity access before these decisions are made
- **BUSINESS:** From banks to restaurants and other food retailers, the involvement of the private sector cannot be neglected. Private sector involvement provides an invaluable source of funding (through grants and loans) and training assistance for small businesses. The involvement of business also helps to start the conversation about the organizational practice changes needed by the businesses themselves to support neighborhood nutrition and activity environments.
- **MEDIA:** Media coverage shapes not only the public's opinion but also that of policy makers. By partnering with various media outlets, advocates can insert the environmental and policy perspective on nutrition and physical activity promotion into the public discourse.
- **SCHOOLS:** Schools are important not only due to their ability to instill a lifetime of healthy practices for their students through their own practices around nutrition and physical activity, but can also serve as important partners in establishing neighborhood changes to improve access to healthy eating and physical activity opportunities.

*The exact names of these various departments and agencies may vary somewhat by location