

# Communities Putting Prevention to Work



## NORTH LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS Obesity Prevention

***Communities Putting Prevention to Work (CPPW) is an initiative designed to make healthy living easier by promoting environmental changes at the local level. Through funding awarded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in 2010, a total of 50 communities are working to prevent obesity and tobacco use—the two leading preventable causes of death and disability.***

**“HEALTHY STUDENTS MAKE BETTER STUDENTS, AND BETTER STUDENTS MAKE HEALTHY COMMUNITIES.”**

— Heather Rhodes-Newburn, School Health Coordinator, North Little Rock School District

### Community Overview

North Little Rock, Arkansas, which is home to approximately 62,304 residents, is tackling obesity throughout the community. Approximately 35% of adults in the Little Rock-North Little Rock-Conway metropolitan area, of which North Little Rock is a principal city, are obese. Further, 37.5% of students in the North Little Rock School District are overweight or obese, which is higher than the national rate.

Obesity rates among certain populations in North Little Rock are disproportionately high. Residents earning \$20,000 or less a year reported overweight and physical inactivity—a risk factor for obesity—at a higher rate than their counterparts who earned more. Low-income residents make up a significant portion of North Little Rock’s population—roughly 16% of residents in the city live below the Federal poverty level. Certain racial and ethnic groups are also a concern, as approximately 47% of Hispanic students and 41% of black students in Arkansas are classified as either overweight or obese, rates that are significantly higher than their white peers (35.4%). In addition to obesity-prevention efforts aimed at the city’s entire population, certain initiatives target these high-risk populations.

### Community Successes

If healthy options are not available, then healthy living is not possible. With the support of the CPPW initiative, North Little Rock has implemented a variety of changes throughout the community to make healthy living easier.

To decrease the prevalence of obesity, North Little Rock:

- Approved a Complete Streets plan that will impact all future street construction projects. Complete Streets plans are designed to encourage safe street access for all users including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders.



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



"I REALLY LIKE THE IDEA  
THAT THE CITY SUPPORTS  
ITS EMPLOYEES IN THEIR  
QUEST FOR BETTER  
HEALTH."

— Employee, City of North  
Little Rock

### Community Successes *(continued)*

- Adopted Smart Growth land-use plans, which ensure the provision of more pedestrian, biking, and mass transportation options, for the redevelopment of the historic Argenta neighborhood.
- Launched the first Arkansas Certified Farmers' Market in downtown Argenta.
- Created grant funding opportunities to support existing community gardens and establish new ones. To date, six new gardens have been created. Grant recipients are expected to offer educational programs and reduced-rate memberships to community members with limited resources.



(The list above is a sample of all activities completed by the community.)

### *Fit 2 Live* Challenge Addresses Obesity

North Little Rock launched *Fit 2 Live*, an initiative aimed at engaging community leaders and organizations to improve residents' nutrition and increase their physical activity. As part of this effort, the community has established plans to implement joint-use agreements in six schools to provide individuals with increased opportunities for physical activity. Additionally, North Little Rock is expanding citywide sports and recreation programs and is focusing on developing neighborhood parks and playground activities. By providing technical assistance and other incentives to start and sustain new farmers' markets, the community is also improving residents' access to fresh, healthy foods.

### Leadership Team

The leadership team includes high-level community leaders from multiple sectors, who have the combined resources and capacity to make healthy living easier. Members of North Little Rock's leadership team are key agents for change in their community. The leadership team includes representatives from the following organizations:

- City of North Little Rock, Office of the Mayor
- Arkansas Coalition for Obesity Prevention
- Arkansas Department of Health
- City of North Little Rock, Chamber of Commerce
- North Little Rock School District

### Additional Information

For more information, please visit [www.northlittlerock.ar.gov](http://www.northlittlerock.ar.gov).