

Communities Putting Prevention to Work



LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY
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.**

“BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS AND PROVIDING ACCESS FOR PEOPLE WHO WANT TO EAT HEALTHY, BUT MAY NOT ALWAYS HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY, IS OUR GOAL, AND *HEALTHY IN A HURRY* IS HELPING TO MAKE THAT HAPPEN.”

— Steve Tarver, President and CEO, YMCA of Greater Louisville

Community Overview

Louisville, Kentucky, is tackling obesity throughout its community of 741,096 residents. On the basis of its high heart disease and diabetes rates, conditions that are closely related to obesity, Louisville was ranked the fifth-unhealthiest city in America by the American College of Sports Medicine. Approximately 21% of Kentucky children are obese, making it the third-most-obese state for children in the country.



Obesity rates are disproportionately high in 12 low-income Louisville neighborhoods, most of which are predominantly black. Many of these neighborhoods are food deserts, where affordable, healthy food is difficult to obtain. In Louisville, 72.7% of black adults are overweight or obese, which is higher than the rates of overweight and obesity among whites (61.8%) in the city, and higher than the adult rates of overweight and obesity in Kentucky and nationwide. Further, only 22.1% of black adults in Louisville report eating five or more servings of fruits or vegetables each day, which is lower than consumption rates among white adults in the city (25.9%). In addition to obesity-prevention efforts aimed at the city's entire population, certain initiatives target high-risk groups, such as the residents of these 12 low-income neighborhoods.

Community Successes

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

To decrease the prevalence of obesity, Louisville:

- Assisted Bike Louisville in updating and producing 5,000 “Louisville By Bicycle” maps. The maps include bike lanes, shared roadways, and safety tips and were distributed at local bike shops, visitor centers, libraries, and downtown hotels.
- Engaged 13 restaurants with 27 locations in a voluntary menu-labeling program that calculates nutrition information for menus and reprints them at no cost. This program was featured in the *Courier-Journal*, which has a readership of 400,000.



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— John, Louisville resident

Community Successes *(continued)*

- Opened three *Healthy in a Hurry* stores to increase the availability of fresh produce in areas designated as food deserts. One store sold \$811 worth of produce in its first week, and another boasted record sales for its first summer in the program.
- Launched *How to Win a Food Fight: Make the Healthy Choice* initiative through billboard and television commercials. Aimed at school-age children, this initiative depicts a variety of “fights” between healthy and unhealthy options, in which the healthy choice is declared the winner because of its nutritional value.
- Adopted two plans to help ensure the availability of fresh produce in local schools. The plans balance supply and demand of both in- and out-of-season local produce to ensure a guaranteed market for growers and a steady supply of fresh food for the school district, which serves approximately 100,000 students.
- Initiated the building of 27 school gardens and a greenhouse to incorporate fresh fruits and produce in Jefferson County Public School classrooms and cafeterias.
- Provided additional trails and signage for the Louisville Loop, a 100-mile bike path circling the city, to improve safety during physical activity. More than 100 people attended this *Discover the Loop* kick-off event.



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

Louisville Encourages Breastfeeding Through Improved Access and Education

Louisville is supporting efforts to encourage breastfeeding, a practice that boosts infants’ immunities against many childhood illnesses and ensures they receive key nutrients. Fourteen lactation stations in government facilities have been established so that working mothers can pump breast milk while at work. Additionally, four major birthing hospitals agreed to standardized guidelines to encourage and support breastfeeding. Finally, 192 doctors and office staff have been provided with information about the benefits of breastfeeding and how to help new mothers overcome common obstacles through “Lunch and Learn” sessions. Participants also were encouraged to refer mothers who were having trouble breastfeeding to outpatient lactation centers at four hospitals. As a result, these four centers provided counseling to 2,888 breastfeeding mothers by telephone and 649 in clinic office visits.

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 Louisville’s leadership team are key agents for change in their community. The leadership team includes representatives from the following organizations:

- Office of the Mayor, City of Louisville
- Greater Louisville YMCA
- Jefferson County Public Schools
- Louisville Metro Board of Health
- Louisville Metro Council
- Louisville Metro Department of Public Health & Wellness
- Louisville Metro Housing Authority
- Louisville Metro Parks and Cultural Affairs
- Louisville Urban League
- Transit Authority of River City
- University of Louisville School of Public Health and Information Sciences

Additional Information

For more information, please visit www.louisvilleky.gov/health or www.louisvilleky.gov/recovery.