

Changing the Health Landscape of Louisiana: Louisiana State University's High Obesity Program



University Partnership

CDC's High Obesity Program (HOP) promotes healthy eating and active living in counties/parishes that have more than 40% prevalence of adult obesity. CDC provides funds to land grant universities that work with communities —mostly in rural areas—whose residents may have less access to healthy foods and fewer opportunities to be physically active.

Louisiana State University Agricultural Center works with four parish Extension offices and their partners to:

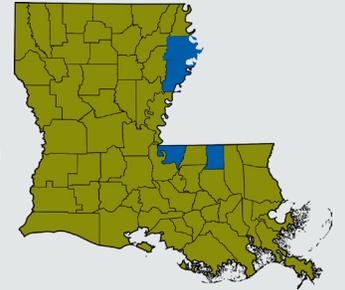
- Promote healthier food options at local retailers and hospitals.
- Create and enhance safe places for physical activity with parish government leaders and faith-based groups.

Louisiana by the Numbers*

Louisiana HOP parishes include: Madison, St. Helena, Tensas, and West Feliciana.

In these parishes:

- The estimated adult obesity prevalence ranges from 40.8% to 41.9%, well above the state adult obesity prevalence of 34.7%.
- Approximately 1 in 3 adults don't get any physical activity.
- The percentage of children enrolled in public school eligible for free and reduced lunch ranges from 46% to 94%.



*These data were obtained at the time of funding.

Programs in Action

- The Healthy Communities Coalitions partnered with five grocery and convenience stores in Madison, St. Helena, and Tensas parishes to improve access to affordable, nutritious food. The owner of a local supermarket in Madison Parish implemented a healthy check-out aisle—which provides quick access to fresh produce and healthy snacks—to encourage customers to make healthy choices.
- Madison, St. Helena, and Tensas parishes made visual enhancements to community basketball courts and parks to attract more residents to participate in physical activity.
- The St. Helena Healthy Communities Coalition re-established a weekly farmers' market, which is also accepting SNAP benefits, to improve access to fresh produce in the city of Greensburg. This town has only one grocery store with limited fresh vegetables, and the next closest store is seven miles away.



Voice from the Community

"Now when you go into grocery stores, you see buggies full of fresh fruits and vegetables versus before when you would see carts full of chips and snack items. Just to see the change and mindset and behavior of the community is a win in itself."

– Sonija Kinsey, Childhood Nutrition Supervisor for Madison Parish Program Director