

# Complete Streets Help Kansas Communities Build Safe Spaces for Physical Activity

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## SUMMARY

More than 730,500 Kansas residents in 15 counties could soon have access to improved streets, sidewalks, bike lanes, and park trails for physical activity. The Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) is building partnerships with community organizations to inform city transportation plans and promote complete streets. By adopting complete streets policies, city transportation planners can routinely design streets to make it better and safer for all residents to be active.



## CHALLENGE

In 2014, 66% of adults in Kansas were overweight or obese according to the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS). That same system showed approximately 24% of Kansas residents did not engage in physical activity in their leisure time. An unhealthy diet and a lack of physical activity can lead to excess weight gain or obesity. Obesity is a serious public health problem and is associated with some of the leading causes of death in the United States

including type 2 diabetes, heart disease, stroke, and some types of cancer.

## YOUR INVOLVEMENT IS KEY

For more information about Kansas' physical activity efforts, visit <http://www.kdheks.gov/bhp/pan/>. This project is supported by the State Public Health Actions to Prevent and Control Diabetes, Heart Disease, Obesity, and Associated Risk Factors and Promote School Health cooperative agreement (DP13-1305).

*"Now that these efforts have started to produce outcomes, Kansas is seeing a ripple effect as more communities come on board to adopt plans and strategies to improve opportunities for physical activity across the state."*

*- Kate Hoppe, Physical Activity and Nutrition Manager, KDHE*

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## SOLUTION

Regular physical activity can help prevent obesity and reduce risks associated with being overweight or obese. To promote physical activity, KDHE funded communities to promote the adoption of complete streets policies and master bicycle and pedestrian plans by educating community leaders and partnering with city planners and transportation officials. These strategies are designed to create safe access to physical activity for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders of all ages and abilities. When set up in communities, these design strategies make it easier to cross the street, walk to shops, and bicycle to work.

## RESULTS

As of August 2016, 15 counties in Kansas set up policies to improve physical activity access across the state. The Kansas University Transportation Center and other KDHE partners provided all 15 counties trainings and educational resources on the benefits of community design or active transportation strategies. These educational efforts equipped the 15 counties with the resources to make policy, system, or environmental improvements to their transportation plans. Training topics include

- Trail Development and Maintenance.
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Crossings: Overcoming Connectivity Challenges.

More than 20 communities across Kansas attended trainings. As a result, improvements were made to master bike or pedestrian plans, walk or bike to school plans, and master trail plans, among others.

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

### Contact CDC

<http://www.cdc.gov/cdc-info/requestform.html>

### Web site

<http://nccd.cdc.gov/nccdsuccessstories/>

The findings and conclusions in this success story are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official position of the funding agencies or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

## SUSTAINING SUCCESS

KDHE will continue to seek out and build strong partnerships with community organizations. For project year 2016-2017, the health department plans to provide 14 more counties in Kansas with educational resources and trainings on the benefits of improving physical activity access. Those counties will focus their efforts on complete streets initiatives, master bike or walk plans, and strengthen advisory committees on physical activity. KDHE will also partner with the Public Health Law Center, a national nonprofit law and policy organization that helps community leaders use the law to advance public health. This partnership will offer communities a number of resources to help educate others about physical activity strategies.

National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion  
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