



Healthy Communities Surveillance and Management Project

Background

Since 2009, the Healthy Communities Research Group – (GP RED, GreenPlay, Design Concepts, East Carolina University and various *Beta Site* communities), have been working together to develop and test the **Healthy Communities Surveillance and Management Toolkit™ (SMT)**. The project targets the community aspects that influence obesity and active living. The initial “alpha project” was in Bloomington, IN, with Indiana University-Bloomington, and the subsequent *Beta Sites* in South Bend, Indiana, Liberty, MO, & Arlington Heights, IL, have been successful. The methods have been integrated into a training process and toolkit that is under refinement, testing, and implementation. **Apply now to be an additional Beta Site community selected to participate.**

What is the Project about?

The Healthy Communities SMT Project helps parks, recreation, and related departments and agencies systematically assess, analyze, document, and evaluate **health factors** (such as physical activity, nutrition, transportation, social engagement, safety, and access to nature) related to the positioning of parks and recreation as a preventive community public health provider:

- **Convening Community Stakeholders and Champions** – Residents? Partners? Providers?
- **Creating a Warrant for Agency Action** – Why? Who? What is the Impact?
- **Policies, Laws, and Procedures** – What is influencing active living?
- **Fiscal Resources and Distribution** – What funds? How should they be allocated?
- **Inventory of Assets and Affordances** – Programs? Parks? Facilities? Food?

From an analysis of these elements, the project moves to creating a systems portfolio, strategic concepts for improvement, and future logic modeling for the purposes of articulation, prioritization, management, and surveillance of outcomes over time.

Opportunities for Public Parks and Recreation Agencies

- Become a Beta Site for Assessment, Surveillance, and Strategic Portfolio Development in your community – **Become a Healthy Community!**
- Position Parks and Recreation as a Community Health Provider

In order to make this project manageable for application, we are asking the communities involved to focus initially on ages 10-15, as access to this age range is generally more achievable, and this time of life is crucial for development of healthy habits and adherence to healthy lifestyles. All templates are dynamic, and other age groups can be addressed if desired.

Allied HCRG Organizations:



NC STATE UNIVERSITY

East Carolina University

Becoming a Healthy Communities “Beta- Site”

The Healthy Communities Research Group (HCRG) is now recruiting a limited number of “beta site” communities for additional testing, involvement, and benefits.

What does “Becoming a Beta-Site” mean?

The HCRG will work directly with you and your community to systematically convene, assess, analyze, document, and evaluate elements related to the positioning your parks and recreation agency as a preventive community public health provider.

To do so, we utilize the **Healthy Communities Surveillance and Management Toolkit™**, typically over a **three-year period**. You will be assigned an HCRG Project Manager that will work directly with your agency to train you and your staff, help convene relevant stakeholders, collect information on pre-provided templates and questionnaires, and compile that information into the Toolkit Portfolio. We’ll provide evidence-based literature on key health factors, along with trends and demographics for your community. After data collection, we’ll summarize and work to create reports, recommendations, and key management modeling scenarios for you to implement, and then work with your agency on evaluation over time. This will be done with your staff, and can be presented to your decision makers and partners to help align your agency as leaders in facilitating a healthy community through parks and recreation.

What does my agency need to have in place to start?

While we are continually supplementing the research funding and benefits for Beta Sites and the Toolkit implementation process, there is a necessary agency investment for the chosen Beta Sites – in time, staffing, and a financial investment to help cover some of the costs for funding for the project. You’ll need to provide:

- **A staff person** with the background and authority to be assigned as your “**Healthy Communities Project Manager**”
 - This person will need to allocate an average of approximately 5-20 hours per month during the Beta Site involvement (higher hours during Year One). They will be trained throughout the process, with a focus on assessment, setting desired outcomes, and future implementation strategies.
- **The agency will need to invest \$25K to \$75K** (depending on size and complexity) in **annual financial support** via a contract to partially offset the project costs. We strongly encourage a three year commitment to insure your community realizes the full benefit of the affiliation and documented impact. If funding is an issue, we can partner with you for grant applications or other alternative methods.
- **Basic inventory and assessment reports and materials***
 - Gathering of materials that outline your agencies policies, laws, and procedures as currently adopted
 - Completion of templates related to partnerships and alternative providers
 - A digital component-based inventory and GIS of your agency’s assets and programs that are affecting the target age group
 - Programming reports to complete the Affordances Inventory Template
 - Financial reports to help assess the allocation of resources going to these activities.

**NOTE: if your agency does not have these items easily available, the HCRG can recommend separate trainings and/or consulting services to help you gather and create the basic levels needed for the Healthy Communities Toolkit work.*

| Steps for Healthy Communities "Beta Site" Involvement | | | | | | | | | |
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| Sample Year One Project Timeline | | | | | | | | | |
| Tasks and Key Meetings | Months | | | | | | | | |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| A. Initial Discussions and Agreements | X | | | | | | | | |
| B. HC Workshop / Workbook Overview | X | | | | | | | | |
| C. Convening of stakeholder / Collection of inventory and assessment materials | | X | | | X | | | | |
| D. Additional Info collection with HCRG | | X | | | X | | | | |
| E. Creation of HC Portfolio / Strategies | | | | | X | | | | |
| F. Modeling of Future Strategies | | | | | X | | X | | |
| G. Presentations / Implementation Kick-Off | | | | | | | X | | X |

This timeline will be customized with you for your agency.

As a Healthy Communities Beta-Site, What Do We Get?

- Alignment, recognition, certification, and national celebration of your involvement as a GP RED **HCRG SMT Beta Site for a Healthy Community!**
- Drafted community-specific templates and questionnaires for information gathering, assessment, and monitoring over time.
- Assessment, tools, and strategies for future implementation – Results from the **Healthy Communities Surveillance Toolkit Portfolio™**:
 - Baseline summary of the need, warrants for action, evidence from research, and demographics from your community – What do you need?
 - Rationale to present to decision makers outlining the potential for repositioning as a catalyst for healthy people in your community.
 - The **Youth Activities and Nutrition Survey (YANS)**, if your schools will participate.
 - Analysis summaries related to your community's systems, policies, and funding.
 - Analysis and analytical mapping of your community's assets and affordances as relevant for this initiative.
 - Relevant comparative analysis to show how your agency compares to others involved around the U.S.*
 - Logic modeling Action Plans for key factors that can affect change.
 - Recommendations for immediate, short-term, and long-term strategies that will help your community become a better Healthy Community.
 - Identification of key elements that may be most appropriate for alternative funding options and partnerships.

*Note, this list of communities involved is growing over time. An ongoing tracking, networking, and comparison service is included.

Become a "Beta Site" now!

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