

Obesity and the Communities Putting Prevention to Work Initiative in New York City

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Background

In March 2010, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced that New York City, along with 43 other communities around the country, would receive funding to implement policy, systems, and environmental changes “to reduce risk factors and prevent/delay chronic disease and promote wellness in both children and adults,” as part of the [Communities Putting Prevention to Work](#) (CPPW) initiative. The initiative was launched by HHS in a press briefing held on September 17, 2009, and was developed in response to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act’s statement that “\$650M shall be provided to carry out evidence-based clinical and community-based prevention and wellness strategies authorized by the Public Health Service Act that deliver specific, measurable health outcomes that address chronic disease rates.”

CPPW is made up of four initiatives working toward the same goals: a Community Initiative, a States and Territories Policy and Environmental Change Initiative, a States Chronic Disease Self-Management Initiative, and a National Prevention Media and National Organizations Initiative. New York City received \$31.1 million in funding under the [Community Initiative](#) for work on both obesity (\$15.5 million) and tobacco (\$15.6 million).

New York City’s proposed grantee activities around obesity have been [described as follows](#):

“New York City will use multiple strategies to prevent obesity and improve health. To encourage consumption of healthy foods, the city will increase the availability of fresh produce, promote venues (e.g. farmers’ markets, mobile vendors, local bodegas) where fruits and vegetables are sold, and make produce and tap water more accessible in schools. At the same time, the city will sponsor major awareness campaigns to discourage consumption of unhealthy foods, sugar-sweetened beverages, and oversized portions. NYC will also work to set policies and create environments that reduce consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages and overly salted foods. And to get New Yorkers moving, the city will train thousands of teachers in physical education and promote “active design” by planners and architects. It will also use communication campaigns to encourage people to improve their health and protect the environment by biking, walking, and using the stairs instead of elevators.”

Additional Details

The national imperative of the CPPW funding is to bring about policy, system, and environmental changes --- rather than to implement programmatic initiatives --- that will help to improve the nation’s eating and activity for the purposes of obesity prevention. Activities that take place in New York City will complement and enhance existing efforts on the part of the NYC DOHMH. Additionally, CPPW efforts in New York will be dual-pronged in the sense that they will target both high-need areas and the city as a whole. Their primary goal will be to impact as many New Yorkers as possible while addressing health equity.

CPPW staff members in New York are now developing a more detailed plan for implementation of the local initiative. Some of the more specific activities that the CPPW funding will be devoted to initiatives that will encourage the consumption of healthy foods by:

- Expanding the usage of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) at produce-selling venues, i.e. farmers markets and Green Carts.

- Continuing the NYCDOHMH's work with bodegas
- Working with supermarkets to help them select and place fruits and vegetables strategically to increase their appeal and to extend their shelf-life.
- Working with schools to support the implementation of the Department of Education's [wellness policy](#).

The initiative will also discourage the consumption of unhealthy foods through support of media campaigns depicting the negative health effects of the consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages, which will be inspired by efforts like the agency's [Pouring on the Pounds](#) campaign.

On the physical activity front, the Initiative will be :

- Promoting “active design” by planners and architects by creating a technical assistance center to help organizations seeking support in implementing the city's [active design guidelines](#). The CPPW staff are currently in the process of hiring architecture and evaluation experts to staff the center.
- Mounting advertising campaigns to promote modes of active transit, like walking and cycling.
- Continuing communications campaigns to promote stair use (like the city's existing use of [stair prompts](#)).
- Continuing to help New York City schools meet their mandate to provide at least 120 minutes of physical education per week by training thousands of teaching staff in leading in-class physical education.

The funding will also give DOHMH an opportunity to work across goal areas by collaborating with hospitals to help them become more breastfeeding-friendly and working with both public and private organizations to help them implement the [New York City food procurement and purchasing guidelines](#) or adapt them to their needs.

Requests for Proposals

In order to help achieve the initiative's goals, the CPPW staff will also be issuing two major types of Requests for Proposals (RFPs) for which community organizations can apply. One of these will be targeted toward community-based organizations, and the other toward faith-based organizations. For the community-based organization RFPs, CPPW will be disbursing an estimated \$300,000 in funds over two years to a wide variety of organizations around the city that can work with DOHMH to help generate policy, system, and environmental changes related to obesity. The number and scope of the awards for this RFP have not yet been finalized. For the faith-based organization (FBO) RFP, nearly \$150,000 in grants will be disbursed to approximately 100 FBOs over two years to achieve lasting systems change to the physical activity and nutrition environment in FBOs. The FBO funding will be focused on developing physical activity and nutrition “champions” who might lead obesity-reducing programs or related initiatives within these organizations, like walking clubs or efforts to improve the quality of food served at social events sponsored by the organization. In both cases, the grant size will reflect the activities proposed as well as the grantee organization's reach.