Healthy Lifestyle Initiative

Process for developing a community-wide health initiative

The details of developing a community-wide health initiative will vary from community to community. Below are five steps that outline a general process for getting started.

**Step 1**: Enlist and convene leaders and members of the community to begin talking, sharing, and building a partnership. Initially, spend time answering the following questions:

*Why do we want to create this community-wide health initiative? Who needs to be a part of this? Who will serve as the catalyst and facilitator? What do we want to do? How do we go about doing it?*

Later, develop Purpose, Values, and Vision statements, along with an organizational structure that suits your particular needs.

**Step 2**: Assess the resources, needs, and desires of the community. Hold listening sessions, conduct surveys and interviews, gather data from government websites, and use other means to collect useful information about your community. Also, take time to understand both the real and perceived challenges and opportunities.

**Step 3**: Educate yourselves and learn from others. Invite guest speakers from inside and outside the community to share their expertise, search the web for information about similar initiatives in other states, and compile examples of policies and environmental change strategies that have been successful in other places.

**Step 4**: Develop an action plan with attainable, measurable goals that help change policies and environments in your community. Include plans for creating new programs or enhancing existing programs if they can 1) ultimately lead to policy and environmental changes, 2) serve as a model which can be replicated elsewhere, or 3) become sustainable and self-supporting over time. The action plan will be a reflection of the information learned, gathered, generated and shared in the steps above.

**Step 5**: Seek resources for implementing the action plan. Identify the parts of the plan
that don’t require additional resources.