

**UNLOCK THE DOORS™  
AND KEEP KIDS HEALTHY.**

**NO  
PLAYING  
AFTER  
SCHOOL  
HOURS**



# UNLOCK THE DOORS



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# UNLOCK THE DOORS



## Preface

Voices for Healthy Kids®, a joint initiative of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) and American Heart Association (AHA) works to help all young people in the United States eat healthier foods and be more active. Nearly one in three kids and teens are overweight or obese. By engaging, organizing, and mobilizing communities across the country, Voices for Healthy Kids aims to ensure that every child has access to healthy foods and drinks at home and in school, safe streets for biking and walking and safe places to play after school. This toolkit is designed to walk coalitions through the entire process of recruiting, engaging, and mobilizing volunteers as well as developing promotional activities to make this vision a reality.

There is growing evidence that kids eat more healthily and move more when there are policies in place that increase access to healthy foods and safe places to be active. It just makes sense.

Voices for Healthy Kids actively supports policy changes to reduce obesity across the country. While childhood obesity affects the entire country, it does not affect all communities equally. For this reason, Voices for Healthy Kids is committed to working with communities that are disproportionately affected by the epidemic. These communities include communities of color, high poverty urban, suburban and rural populations of all races and ethnicities, and Native Americans.

State and local policy changes are effective strategies to reverse the childhood obesity epidemic. Elected officials have both the right and responsibility to ensure communities have access to healthy foods and safe places to be active. Our policy priorities to achieve healthier communities are:

- Improving the nutritional quality of snack foods and beverages in schools.
- Reducing consumption of sugary beverages.
- Protecting children from unhealthy food and beverage marketing.
- Increasing access to affordable healthy foods.
- Increasing access to parks, playgrounds, walking paths, bike lanes, and other opportunities to be physically active.
- Increasing children’s physical activity levels when they are out of school.

In this toolkit, you will find tactics to help your community increase opportunities to be physically active. More specifically, the content will help you advocate for changes that can enable community members to use school facilities such as gyms, fields, and playgrounds. Existing liability laws often prevent such easy, shared use. Clarifying these laws can encourage more schools to open playgrounds and gyms to their communities during non-school hours. States can also provide incentive and monitoring programs that encourage wide adoption of shared use strategies. This toolkit focuses on clarifying liability; a compendium toolkit, which details tactics and messaging for incentives and local shared agreements is also available. Voices for Healthy Kids is excited to offer this toolkit—as well as several others—to support communities striving to live, learn and play in healthy environments.

In order to ensure the most successful community advocacy possible, we encourage everyone using this toolkit to engage the staff and partners of Voices for Healthy Kids. Stay connected to our work on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and on [www.VoicesforHealthyKids.org](http://www.VoicesforHealthyKids.org) or you can reach us directly at [VoicesforHealthyKids@heart.org](mailto:VoicesforHealthyKids@heart.org).



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## Introduction

Physical activity is important to reducing a number of health risks, including obesity and some types of cancer.<sup>1</sup> Yet it can be difficult for children to play or be active, especially if a community does not have many safe, convenient facilities available. Research shows that people who have parks or recreational facilities nearby exercise 38 percent more than those who do not have easy access.<sup>23</sup>

School facilities can be an excellent physical activity resource within communities. Many schools are willing to open their doors and gates after hours, offering “shared use” of running tracks, pools, gymnasiums, fitness rooms, playgrounds, and other spaces. The most innovative school districts are maximizing shared use of school facilities after school hours and offering activities to address both students’ and the communities’ needs for recreational activity spaces.<sup>4</sup>

But in many cases, unfortunately, school grounds remain off limits to youth and community programs that just need a place to operate. Liability concern is a primary barrier to opening school doors and thereby increasing physical activity.<sup>5</sup> To fix this, communities must address the concerns schools have about legal liability.

Advocates need to get involved with local government, schools, and their community to establish and promote policies that encourage, support and authorize school districts to open their recreational facilities to the community.

Shared use occurs when a school, other government body, or other organization opens up its grounds or facilities for broader community use. Oftentimes, **shared use** involves an agreement with another agency or organization, which supervises the community use or provides recreational or other programming. Another kind of shared use occurs when a district adopts an **open use policy**. In an open use policy, the district provides open, unsupervised access to the public, often limited to its outdoor facilities, allowing community use without organized programming. The hours and locations of open use may be limited.

The following list includes potential strategies that can increase shared use. While the majority of this toolkit will focus around the first strategy listed below, policy change through clarifying state liability laws, there are other ways listed to advocate and become involved with this issue, which are detailed in a complimentary toolkit.

1. **Clarify state liability laws:** More than a dozen states have acted in recent years to clarify liability laws that created barriers to schools opening their doors and gates more widely. The

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<sup>1</sup> Go AS, Mozaffarian D, Roger VL, et al. Heart Disease and Stroke Statistics—2013 Update: A Report from the American Heart Association. *Circulation* 127 (2013): e6-e245.

<sup>2</sup> Designing for Active Living Among Adults. Research Summary. Active Living Research, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2008. Available at: [http://activelivingresearch.org/files/Active\\_Adults\\_0.pdf](http://activelivingresearch.org/files/Active_Adults_0.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> Cohen DA, McKenzie TL, Sehgal A, et al. Contribution of public parks to physical activity. *American Journal of Public Health* 97.3 (2007): 509-514.

<sup>4</sup> Schneider J. “Joint-Use Facilities Where Everybody Benefits.” *Building Design + Construction*. August 2010. Available at: <http://www.bdcnetwork.com/joint-use-facilities-where-everybody-benefits>.

<sup>5</sup> Marrow MW and Frost N. *Finding Space to Play: Legal and Policy Issues Impacting Community Recreational Use of School Property*. Policy Options Brief. Public Health Law Center, April 2012. Available at: [http://publichealthlawcenter.org/sites/default/files/resources/PHLC\\_Finding%20Space%20to%20Play\\_2012.pdf](http://publichealthlawcenter.org/sites/default/files/resources/PHLC_Finding%20Space%20to%20Play_2012.pdf).



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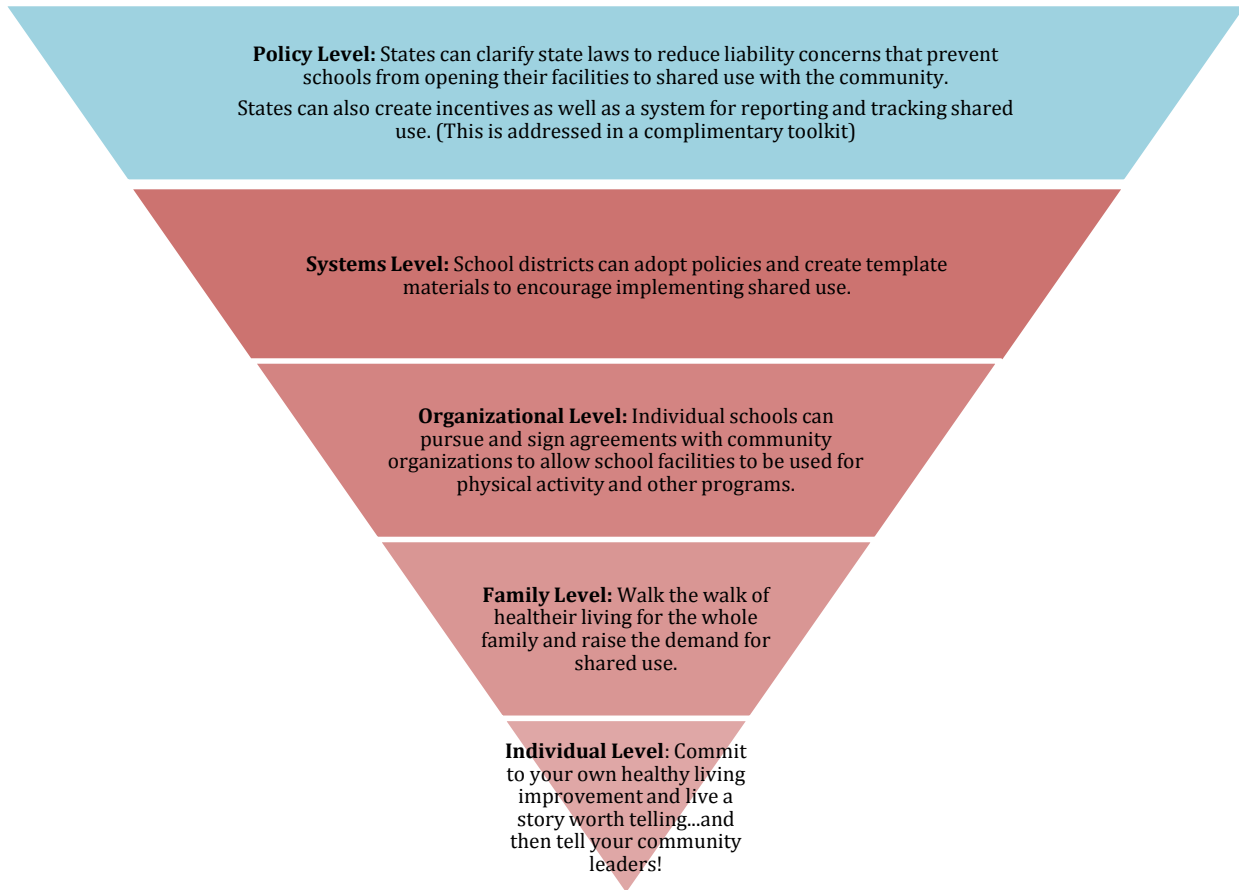


clarifications can be complex, but the outcome is simple. Advocates should partner with nonprofit advocacy organizations and legal experts to raise awareness about the issue and build the urgency for action.

2. **Create incentives and monitoring:** The effort does not end with lowering liability barriers to shared use. States, counties, cities, and towns have an important role in creating incentive programs to promote shared use, and in setting up monitoring programs so that advocates know whether an effort has been successful or if further changes are needed.
3. **Help school districts understand liability and adopt model policies:** Individual schools often find liability issues daunting because they don't have the expertise or resources to feel confident committing to shared use of their facilities. School districts can prepare their own template materials or use those accessible in the links below to help schools feel comfortable in managing liability risks. For example, the National Policy and Legal Analysis Network to Prevent Childhood Obesity (NPLAN) developed a series of [model shared use agreements](#). The Public Health Law Center also provides helpful resources [on its website](#).
4. **Engage with your school or community group:** Schools have many different concerns to handle every day. Advocates can help them understand the importance of health for academic achievement, and can make it easy for schools to support physical activity. Advocates can also work with community groups to make sure they know that they do not have to take "no" for an answer when it comes to shared use. Advocates can be critical local matchmakers and motivators.
5. **Start at home:** Parents and caregivers are essential decision-makers when it comes to the nutrition, physical activity and health needs of their children. Supply and demand can help drive increased shared use and healthy living. Parents can join family dance classes, activity nights, and other opportunities at schools to build life-long, healthy living for everyone in the family. Find out what programs currently use and want to use your local school's facilities.



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To get started:

By creating this toolkit, we have made it easy to raise awareness around the need for increased shared use of school facilities. We created the tools you need to identify and recruit volunteers, spread the word online, alert local media, hold events, and meet with local leaders.

This toolkit focuses on clarifying liability so that schools are more comfortable with opening their doors to shared use, but the tools can be helpful at any level. Your activities can be as simple or as in-depth as you want them to be, depending on your resources and those of the partners you engage to help. Even small actions can make a dramatic difference.

- **Review the contents of this toolkit** and think about the types of promotional activities that would work best in your community. What existing state laws are in place? What best practices can your state draw upon?
- **Identify your core planning team** and think about the type of promotional activity that will make the biggest difference for your community. Would an event that features a well-known policymaker attract media attention? Does it make sense to activate—and educate—government leaders and community members through social media?
- **Consult the volunteers section** of this toolkit for specific tips for recruiting, engaging, and recognizing volunteers from communities and neighborhoods most affected by these issues who will help you achieve your goals.



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- **Customize and translate the sample outreach materials** included in this toolkit as needed for your activities.

We can create more opportunities for physical activity within communities across the country by joining together to **unlock the doors™** to health.



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## A Note on Lobbying

It is always important to understand whether any activities you are planning could fall under the IRS definition of lobbying. This is especially true if you receive a Voices for Healthy Kids grant to support your efforts, because no Voices for Healthy Kids funds can be used to support lobbying. Generally, any activity or communication that takes a position on specific pending or proposed legislation—for Congress, a state legislature, a city council or a town meeting—could be considered lobbying in some circumstances. Importantly, contacting school board or zoning board members or staff is not lobbying, regardless of the content of the communication. Below are some examples of communications that may be considered lobbying or non-lobbying.

Lobbying	Non-Lobbying
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Contact your legislator, and ask him/her to support bill number XXXX.”</li> <li>• “Click here to sign the petition to support bill number XXXX.”</li> <li>• A communication to legislators that supports bills not yet introduced: “Iowa should adopt Wisconsin’s shared use law.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Ask your legislator to support more places for our children to get active!”</li> <li>• “Sign the petition to get the school board to unlock the doors to safe places to play in Jacksonville!”</li> <li>• “As a concerned Jacksonville parent, I ask all my neighbors to join me in supporting access to safe places to play for our children.”</li> </ul>

Look for the following icon throughout this toolkit, which identifies areas where lobbying may come into play:



When you engage in activities that may involve lobbying, consult your lawyer, as well as the checklist in the appendix of this toolkit, to help you determine whether you need to use lobbying funds for any of your efforts. Lobbying efforts must be supported with other funds, and these costs must be tracked separately from non-lobbying efforts. All types of activities, both lobbying and non-lobbying, can be valuable in helping to promote healthy lifestyles in your community. However, if your ultimate goal becomes the passage of legislation, you will probably need unrestricted funds to conduct some of your work.

This toolkit is written for organizations that are legally able to lobby and have lobbying and non-lobbying funds available. (Public charities are able to conduct a limited amount of lobbying, private foundations are not. Governmental entities are subject to different rules; check with your lawyer for details.)

In this toolkit you will find important tips along the way to understand the distinctions between lobbying and non-lobbying activities, as well as when to use lobbying funds versus non-lobbying funds. We have provided examples to help you understand the distinctions between lobbying and non-lobbying activities so you can plan your activities strategically, without violating restrictions on your non-lobbying funds. Please also be aware that some states have rules that may be relevant to your activities and may have registration and other requirements; this guide does not address those state rules.





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## Engagement Phases

No matter what the issue or which organization leads it, there are four key phases to each campaign: recruit, engage, mobilize, and evaluate. The plan below outlines each of these phases; as you plan your campaign, make sure you have designated time for each one of these key steps.

### Phase 1: Recruit

This first phase of the campaign is where you lay the groundwork that will ensure your success. It's where you recruit key advocates to your cause. Think about these questions: Who can be your spokespeople? Are there families in your community who would be willing to share their story through an op-ed or a letter to the editor? Where do members of various ethnic, cultural, socio-economic, and racial groups in the community regularly congregate? What are the organizations in your community that advocate on behalf of different racial and ethnic communities? Are there any alliances with community planners or developers, doctors, dietitians, nurses, researchers, school nutrition association, teachers, coaches, school boards, PTA or academics that could be explored? Who do you want to be your "everyday advocates," the large group of people who speak out about the issues at hand? Do these "everyday advocates" represent the diversity of the communities most affected by the need for policy change?

Consider reaching out to specific groups who would be in favor of shared use initiatives in your community. For example, if you are trying to unlock the doors for local community organizations, or sports leagues, reach out to the directors of those organizations to see if they want to be a part of your efforts. They may be interested in meeting with government leaders or school board administrators to discuss shared use.

On the other hand, if you're trying to promote physical activity for individuals through shared use in your community, reach out to local families. For example, you could partner with your local Parent Teacher Association (PTA), and send one of your representatives to a meeting to share your mission with parents. You could also reach out to parenting groups at churches or local parent blogs or online forums.

Some school boards may be willing to adopt shared use agreements and open use policies, which can be jointly signed by districts and community groups. School district and community leaders who are part of these agreements can help build support for a larger statewide campaign to clarify shared use liability.

Reach out to these people via all channels available to you: social media, existing member databases, personal emails, blogs, paid advertisements, community outreach, tabling at street fairs and festivals, public announcements at places of worship, etc. Be sure to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate materials, too; the wider you're able to cast your net, the more likely you are to recruit a diverse audience that cares about the changes you want to make. Stretch beyond your comfort zone.

Once you determine who is on your side, start thinking about how to garner support from public officials and other important leaders. In many cases, you will want to share your message with supporters and ask them to send a letter to their representatives or key officials. You can do that through letters, e-communications, blogs, public service announcements, letters to the editor, op-eds, social media, etc. Check the appendix of this toolkit for examples of many of these tactics.



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Finally, before you execute any of the tactics in this toolkit, make sure you establish your metrics of success. Determine how you'll measure the effectiveness of your communications: Media impressions? Likes? Comments? Open and click-through rates? Offline actions taken, such as signing up for educational opportunities or to volunteer? Set these parameters before you get started so you can measure your success throughout the campaign.

More information on how to implement the Recruitment Phase is found in the sections on [Potential Allies](#), [Recruitment Basics](#), and [Recognition Plan](#).

## Phase 2: Engage

Phase 1 is for making introductions; phase 2 is for educating. This is when your introductory/educational email, initial media outreach (both traditional and social), and event planning take place.

This is the perfect time to start building relationships. Stay in regular communication with your activists, keeping them engaged, informed, and ready to take action when you need. Start working with the media, who tend to respond best to people who are organized, clear, polite, and have newsworthy things for them to write about. Media engagement should include ethnic and mainstream press. This toolkit provides you with introductory language for your social media and e-communication efforts directed at advocates and media.

Additionally, this is the time to start working with a diverse group of spokespeople relevant to the community in which you are working. Use the media tips in this toolkit as a place to start and make sure your spokespeople are familiar with your talking points so they are confident when speaking in public or with media. Schedule your press conferences and events so that you give reporters and community members ample notice.

More information on how to implement the Engagement Phase is found in the sections on [Engaging with Diverse Audiences](#), [Social Media Resources](#), and [Tips for Using Social Media to Reach Journalists](#).

## Phase 3: Mobilize

Now that your planning is done, it's time to act. Reach out to your advocates, your spokespeople, the media, etc., and let them know your campaign is in full motion. Make sure you keep a pulse on your evaluation metrics of success so you can deploy different communication methods to increase engagement as needed.

Stay in regular touch with your diverse community members to keep them informed and engaged. During all stages, but especially this one, make sure you track the movement of the policy at hand so you know how to instruct your supporters. You may need them to do educational outreach at local gatherings to build popular support in the community. At other times, a social action may be best to help bolster recruitment. They may need to write letters to their legislators because a vote in the statehouse is just around the corner. (The costs of planning and conducting this last type of activity will require lobbying funds.)



As for media, this is the phase where you want to follow through on the relationships you established in phase 2. By this time, you've made connections over phone or email with reporters and local bloggers.



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Keep in regular touch with reporters to keep them informed, and give them ideas for covering your campaign.

If you're planning media events like press conferences, this is the time to execute. Get your spokespeople ready to lead events (for more details on media training, take a look at the Media Training Tips section of this toolkit), and make sure they reflect the diversity of the audience you're trying to reach. Set up opportunities for new advocates to sign up to join the cause. Let media know the event is happening, and give them special incentives to cover the story, like a behind-the-scenes press pass that grants them an interview with your spokesperson and photo opportunities.

More information on how to implement the Mobilizing Phase is found in the sections on [Action Alerts](#), [The Value of Phone Outreach](#), [Hosting a Media Event](#), [Media Training Tips](#), [Why Op-Eds Matter](#), [Meeting with Legislators](#), and [Days at the Capitol](#).

## Phase 4: Evaluate

Don't forget about evaluation—it's just as important as the rest of your campaign. Start by reviewing the metrics you put into place at the beginning of the campaign. That will help you determine what worked and what didn't, and will help you make changes for next time.

In whatever ways your campaign has been successful, make sure you let your advocates know so you can celebrate the wins together. Advocates need to know that their efforts meant something to the campaign, especially if they are going to return to your organization, or to the cause, to see how they can help out again.

## Key Takeaways

- Recruiting a diverse group of advocates, especially one that represents the communities most affected by the need for policy change, will be key to your initiative's success.
- Make sure to educate volunteers, the community, and local media about the issues that are important to you.
- Keep advocates and media informed and engaged by staying in touch regularly.
- Establish metrics for your campaign's success and regularly evaluate your progress.



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## Recruit: Potential Allies

Creating local support for shared use initiatives will be key to their success, and working with partner groups is one of the best ways to build that support. Consider the list of tips below as you begin outreach to other organizations, and consult the appendix for a detailed list of potential allies.

## Who Can Help

There are many organizations working to reverse childhood obesity. Some are singularly focused on shared use, while others look at broader issues, including school lunch programs and increased physical activity. While some groups may not perfectly align with your goals, it's still worth reaching out to them—they may be valuable partners for other programs you are pursuing or some of your long-term organizational goals.

Below are some suggestions for potential partners.

- Those looking to improve access to safe, public places to play and exercise
- Those committed to battling childhood obesity
- Those focused on health and wellness for low-income families
- Those focused on health and wellness for historically underserved communities
- National and local school organizations
- Groups focused on social justice and civil rights in communities of color
- Local faith leaders
- Ethnic press
- Groups focused on child welfare
- Groups focused on educational justice
- Those concerned with land use and planning

Although some potential allies will be publicly outspoken about their opinions on shared use initiatives, others will take a more subtle approach. Before making a decision on any potential partner or opponent, be sure to look at their goals, mission statement, programs, and activities.

## Key Takeaways

- Partners can come from a wide variety of backgrounds—from faith groups to groups solely committed to reducing childhood obesity. Cast a wide net to make sure you reach as many potential allies as possible.
- Make sure you understand your potential allies' or opponents' goals, priorities, and programs before engaging with them.



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## Recruit: Recruitment Basics

Deploying a campaign isn't just about mobilizing your supporters to take action or helping to solve the immediate problem of access to safe places to play. It's an opportunity to draw more supporters to your cause and hopefully retain them for future campaigns to improve the health of your community. The following recruitment guidelines will help you accomplish these goals.

Note that these tips are suggestions, not requirements. Choose the approach and tactics that work best for your organization and your community. Regardless of how you decide to recruit new supporters, make sure you dedicate sufficient resources to communicate with the diverse audience you hope to engage. For instance, if you are hoping to reach Latino audiences, consider the need for translators and translated materials; if your target group does not have access to or utilize the Internet, emphasize offline recruitment opportunities; in order to reach school decision-makers, consider connecting with leadership in schools who have successfully entered shared use agreements (or would like to open their doors to outside use).

## Recruiting at Events

Every event your organization initiates and those events you attend should include an easy way for people to join your efforts to support shared use recreational facilities in your state. There are several ways to collect information at events; a few ideas are listed below.

- **Bring tablet computers.** Easy to use and extremely portable, tablet computers can be a simple and effective way to collect names and emails on site.
- **Be sure to have the ability to speak the relevant language of the event.** If you do not speak the language find another supporter who does.
- **Offer sign-up forms.** Tried and true, this option is easy and cheap to initiate. Asking people to fill out a pre-written postcard to an elected official can provide a compelling reason for people to share their personal information. Remember that transcribing these names into a computer-friendly format will take time.
  - Asking people to write their legislator about a general policy issue is not lobbying, unless the request is tied to specific legislation or a specific legislative proposal.
- **Try business card recruitment.** The less effort it takes to sign up, the more people will do so. For example, if you're hosting an event with key business leaders in your community, ask everyone to drop their business cards behind to join the cause. You may pull in more names than with a traditional sign-up form campaign because this sign-up process is so easy.



## Recruiting around Issues

It is important to show potential advocates that joining you will make a difference. Potential recruits are much more likely to take action when they believe that doing so will have an impact.

- **Expand the ask.** When recruiting, ask for more than just a name. Ask your potential advocates to take part in an action like signing a petition or sending a letter to their legislators about shared use.
  - Asking people to write their legislator about a general policy issue is not lobbying, unless the request is tied to specific legislation or a specific legislative proposal.
- **Address issues head-on.** Don't be afraid to use conflict or controversy where appropriate. People like to engage on issues where there are strong opinions.





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## Recruiting Online

Don't limit yourself to recruiting via in-person events. There may be a large pool of new advocates you can reach online.

- **Engage social media friends and followers.** If you have affiliate or state online properties, use posts to ask your fans to tell their friends about your organization and shared use agreements, or ask your followers to retweet invitations to join your efforts.
- **Add a sign-up form to Facebook.** If you add a special tab to your Facebook page, fans will be able to take advocacy actions without leaving the Facebook platform.
- **Use Facebook advertising.** Advertising on Facebook can be inexpensive, targeted, and effective. Studies have shown nonprofits use this medium to get people to sign petitions, volunteer, and/or attend free events, as well as generate awareness for a campaign. You can even narrow the reach down to the city level and localize content to make engagement more likely.

## Recruiting via Word-of-Mouth

Are your advocates telling their friends and families about shared use agreements in their school district? Healthy living is not just a volunteer opportunity, it's a way of life—so encourage advocates to mention it at the other groups in which they participate (e.g., civic organizations, fitness classes, etc.). Be sure to include culturally and linguistically appropriate materials for these recruitment opportunities.

- **Ask parents** to get their local PTA to support shared use efforts. Other parents may see the benefit of increasing access to community school recreational facilities after hours and become advocates for your cause.
- **Ask your neighbors** to mention shared use agreements at their community organization meetings. People who are involved in the community may be more dedicated to bettering the community by increasing access to schoolyards after hours.
- **Ask faith leaders to get involved. Engaging leaders in the faith community is a great way** to connect with community members, especially in under-resourced communities.
  - Faith leaders may also have an interest in using school facilities for their church services, softball or basketball leagues or functions during the week, so shared use agreements would be beneficial to them as well.
- **Reach out through civic organizations** in your community. Ask to speak at a meeting or luncheon of the Junior League, Kiwanis Club, Delta Sigma Theta sorority or other local organizations. Emphasize the importance of shared use to having an active and healthy community and provide details on the different and important roles of the state, school district and community partners.

## Recruiting via Competition

Some healthy competition among your existing advocate base can help bring new followers to your organization.

- **Challenge your existing advocates** to recruit friends and family. Then, host a celebration to welcome new advocates to your organization.
- **Offer a prize** to whoever can recruit the most new friends and followers online. Create pre-written tweets and Facebook posts and then count shares and retweets. When possible, make sure the prize is health-related or at least does not send an unhealthy message.



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## Recruiting in the Community

What does your target audience like to do? Instead of creating new events, meet them where they currently gather.

- **Attend community festivals.** Host booths at street fairs or carnivals, and ask attendees to sign up.
- **Partner with universities.** Host a table at school fairs and encourage students to form an on-campus group in support of shared use agreements.
- **Reach out to local places of worship.** Recruit members to attend local events and organize meetings through bulletin advertisements and in-person announcements. If services are held in more than one language, develop recruitment plans for those as well. Make sure that your materials are culturally and linguistically competent.

## Recruiting via Politics

Leverage the response of your state legislators to encourage advocates to recruit more friends to the cause. For example:

- **Send emails** with subject lines or topics featuring legislator opposition or support, and encourage existing advocates to recruit their friends and family. For example, “Tell Senator Jones to help our families stay active!” or “Please thank Senator Garcia for supporting shared use initiatives!”
  - This email would not be lobbying unless “help our families stay active” clearly refers to legislation pending in Senator Garcia’s or Senator Jones’s statehouse. Usually, general statements about shared use agreements aren’t lobbying, although urging the adoption of *specific* aspects of shared use agreements may be.



## Key Takeaways

- There are many different ways to recruit new advocates. Make sure to use the recruitment methods that are the most appropriate for building a diverse group of supporters that can best connect with the audience you hope to engage.
- Make the recruitment process as easy as possible for your potential supporter. Offer different ways for them to sign up and take action.
- Not all potential volunteers will have regular access to the Internet, so make sure you recruit both on and offline.
- Some recruitment tactics may constitute lobbying. Make sure to check with your lawyers before referencing specific initiatives or legislation.



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## Recruit: Recognition Plan

Recognition: we all want it. It's no surprise that happy advocates are more likely to submit a letter to the editor, sign a petition or attend a rally. As you conduct your campaign, recognizing your advocates for their contribution to your efforts will be crucial in gaining and retaining your support base.

### Volunteer Recognition

#### Recognize New Volunteers

A strong campaign starts with a strong recruitment push. By creating a foundation of supporters early, you will have them ready to activate when the time comes. Consider the following ways to grow your base of support and recognize new advocates.

- **Small gifts branded with your organization's logo** (for example, water bottles or USB drives) can be a fun reward for signing up. To make resources stretch a bit further, consider offering incentives to the first 50 or 100 people who sign up on a specific day or giving prizes to advocates for recruiting the largest number of new supporters.

#### Recognize Existing Volunteers

Gaining new advocates is never the end of the story. It's also important to maintain a good relationship with your existing supporters, making sure they know how valuable they are to your cause. One of the best ways to show appreciation is through recognition. Consider offering the following:

- **Exclusive opportunities**, like the chance to meet with your organization's leadership or serve on a volunteer advisory panel.
- **Certificates or trophies**, especially when presented at a public event.
- **Invitations** to attend volunteer after-hours, receptions or trainings.

#### Choose the Right Time

Whether you're reaching out to new or existing advocates, we suggest taking advantage of specific times of the year when engagement is traditionally high.

- **Leverage local festivals and sporting events.** Consider creating recognition pieces around local street fairs or festivals or kids' sporting events (such as opening day of little league), with free entry or food tickets.
  - In some communities, local festivals and sporting events are held at schools – or could be if liability laws were clarified. Research local festivals in advance, and reach out to them to see if they would set up at a local school for their event if shared use laws were in place. If that is the case, they may be willing to allow you to set up a booth at their festival promoting shared use agreements as a way to help them hold their festival at schools in the future.
- **Speak up when it's time to vote.** If the local government is voting on measures pertaining to shared use agreements, this is a key time to recognize existing and potential advocates. If you have the lobbying resources to do so, asking advocates to contact their legislators to vote for the measure you care about—and then thanking the advocates when they do—is an important step.
  - Depending on the government body involved, asking advocates to contact legislators may be grassroots lobbying, because it's a communication to the public that reflects a view on legislation and contains a call to action. Asking the public to contact members or staff of a state legislature, tribal government, county council, city council, or town meeting is lobbying, if you refer to and reflect a view on specific legislation (or a specific







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legislative proposal). Importantly, contacting school board or zoning board members or staff is not lobbying, regardless of the content of the communication. Make sure you have the resources to pay for these activities and you track them appropriately.

- **Use the calendar to inspire you.** Create recognition pieces around key health observances taking place throughout the year (e.g. National Physical Fitness and Sports Month in May or National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month in September) where you spotlight and thank advocates for their efforts to improve physical activity in your community.

## Staff Recognition

Volunteers aren't the only ones who make a campaign a success. As you thank your volunteers for their efforts, make sure to also thank the staff members who keep the campaign running every day.

- **Celebrate them publically.** If you hold an annual celebration, highlight the good work the staff has done over the past year. Offering awards or opportunities to publically acknowledge good work lets employees know their work has been noticed and is valued.
- **Ask your strongest recruiters of new advocates to lead a call** or webinar, so they can share their tips with other staff members.
- **Conduct a staff contest** to see which members can bring in the most new advocates over a specified period. In return, offer a day off or a gift card as an incentive.
- **Highlight the diversity of your staff** to demonstrate its importance in engaging all parts of the community.

## Key Takeaways

- It's important to recognize and thank volunteers for their commitment to your cause.
- Rewarding new volunteers with small gifts can help increase sign-up rates.
- Don't forget about your staff—they deserve thanks too.



## Engage: Diverse Audiences

No matter the issue you're working on or the policy goals you're trying to advance, engaging with diverse audiences should be a core part of your campaign. This is especially true if you're working on an issue that will have a direct impact on communities that are different from the ones in which you or your team lives. Engaging with diverse audiences makes good sense: the most successful campaigns are often the ones that speak to and engage as many different people as possible. Priority populations (people living in high-poverty urban areas, particularly African-American and Latino; people living in high-poverty rural areas; people living in the South; and people of Tribal Nations) are particularly important to engage as partners and advocates.

Below are some questions designed to make you think about who you're reaching out to and how. The following are intended to be thought-starters, not an exhaustive list:

- **Who's on our team?** Take a look at your volunteer base, your advisors, and your staff. Are your teams made up of people from many different backgrounds? Do they represent the communities where you want to have the most impact—particularly if those communities are historically underserved? If not, where are the opportunities to do more?
- **How are we recruiting and engaging?** If your teams are less diverse than they could be, consider expanding the ways you recruit and engage volunteers. For instance, not everyone has access to the internet; if your campaign is heavily based online, you may be limiting who is able to join your efforts. Pen-and-paper recruitment and offline volunteer opportunities can help make sure more people are able to get involved.
- **Where are we recruiting and engaging?** When it comes to getting people involved, location is just as important as technique. Are you reaching out to local faith communities and the ethnic small business community? Many faith communities have separate services in different languages. If you aren't already, try tabling at events that draw a diverse crowd or partnering with the local ethnic Chamber of Commerce.
- **Who are we talking to?** Make sure you're working with non-mainstream news outlets in your area. There may be newspapers, radio stations or television networks geared toward diverse communities, particularly non-English-speakers and people of color. Ethnic media coverage can both provide new and different angles on your campaign and encourage diverse audiences to get involved with your work.
- **Is language a barrier to access?** If there are non-English-speakers in your area, consider having your materials translated and easily accessible at events and online. If you're planning on hosting phone banks, engage multilingual volunteers. And if you're planning on tabling at events where people are likely to speak another language, make sure the people staffing your booth speak those languages.
- **Do our team members feel welcome and listened to?** Getting people to sign up or take action is one thing; fostering a welcoming, affirming environment is another. Listen to what your volunteers, advisors and staff members say about your campaign, and strive for an environment where everyone has a seat at the table.
- **Are we considering unique cultural perspectives?** Every culture has their own nuanced way of thinking and talking about issues. Try to learn what these issues are ahead of time. For instance, if you are supporting shared use efforts, the salient issues for one neighborhood might not be focused on childhood obesity, but rather a neighborhood space that is safe from crime and traffic where kids can play.
- **What else can we do?** Throughout your campaign, keep asking yourself the types of questions listed above. There are always opportunities to open your doors wider and expand your reach further.



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## Key Takeaways

- Diversity should be a core part of your campaign, from start to finish.
- Language and cultural barriers can prevent people from getting involved with your campaign.
- Think strategically where you are recruiting and engaging. It is important to go to the communities you hope to engage and not expect interested parties to come to you.
- There are always opportunities to create a more inclusive, welcoming community.



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## Engage: Social Media Resources and Tips

It's going to take community support to fully implement a shared use agreement. Fortunately, social media allows you to share your message with a wider audience than traditional door-to-door grassroots work can. With a few clicks, you can access the right people at the right moment, making them aware of the issue, and garnering their support. The following tips were created to help you do just that: extend your community of advocates online to create an even bigger groundswell of support for shared use agreements. National experts may already have sample resources you can model or tailor for use in your campaign.

### Using Images and Videos

Posts with multimedia drive higher engagement rates and increased reach—people like looking and clicking on images and video. Below is a quick overview of how you can best put multimedia to use on Facebook and Twitter.

#### Images

- **Choose a diverse range of people.** It's important that different groups see people that look like themselves in the images you use.
- **Only use content you own.** The images, videos or graphics you post should be either created by your team or purchased on stock photography sites. If your organization has an existing photo library, search to see if anything can be repurposed. Getty Images offers free non-commercial use of many of its stock images on social media and blog sites when you use its' embed feature. To find these images and the restrictions around the use, visit <http://www.gettyimages.com/>.
- **Ask your advocates to sign release forms.** Photos of real-life advocates are always ideal. Just remember that anyone you spotlight online—whether in stories, photos or videos—must sign an authorization release form. Ask your organization for the appropriate forms.
- **Repurpose print materials online.** The postcard, flyer, and fact sheet included in this toolkit can easily be posted or linked to on Facebook and Twitter.
  - The postcard is especially useful as a featured image to supplement your Facebook posts.
  - Invite advocates to print the flyer and post it at work or around their neighborhood.
  - Save a PDF of the fact sheet and link to it from your post, inviting advocates to read and learn more or share it with friends and family.

#### Videos

- **Highlight your advocates.** If you have access to a video camera or even a smartphone, consider creating a video of advocate stories. Ask your advocates to talk about their role in the campaign and why they support more access to school exercise facilities after hours. Be sure to produce videos in appropriate languages spoken in the community.
  - Stories of real-life advocates can be one of the most effective measures for swaying decision makers, because they represent actual constituents' opinions on the policies you care about.
- **Create mini-documentaries.** A short film following kids in areas where there aren't shared use exercise facilities can highlight the reality of how difficult it is to play in areas without shared use agreements after hours. This can emphasize the importance of enacting shared use agreements. Keep in mind that the most viewed and shared videos are less than 90 seconds.



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## Facebook

Especially if you already have an established presence, Facebook can be an excellent way to engage your existing advocates and recruit new ones. Below are a few tips for spreading the word on Facebook.

- **Use your existing account.** Don't create a new page just for shared use agreements. This way, when new people "like" your page because of shared use, they will also stay in the loop on your other initiatives.
- **Recruit new members right from Facebook.** Consider creating a registration app on your page so users can sign up to be a part of the effort without even leaving Facebook. You can point potential advocates to the registration app through Facebook ads and posts on your wall.
- **Highlight key posts.** Facebook allows you to select posts you would like to draw specific attention to and expand them across your page to catch your readers' eyes. See the following graphics for an example.



- **Use images to help advocates identify with your cause.** The postcard in this toolkit can be repurposed to create an image advocates can use on their own profiles. Consider using the front side of the postcard to do the following:



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- Make it your page's cover photo and ask advocates to tag themselves and their friends in the image. That way, their tags show up on their newsfeed and in their friends' notifications.
- Encourage advocates to make the postcard their cover photo or profile picture as well. The advocates' friends will see the images on their profiles, helping to raise awareness about the issue. Make sure to give advocates a caption to go with their post telling viewers to go to your site to help out.
- On Twitter, encourage advocates to make the postcard their banner picture so their followers will see the image.
- **Share the message with decision makers.** Many states' decision makers have an online presence, which can be an effective venue for them to hear from advocates.
  - As advocates tag themselves in your cover photo, encourage them to tag their decision makers as well. Note that some decision makers may have set their privacy to restrict this.
  - Encourage advocates to tag their decision makers in their Facebook posts about shared use support. Check the appendix for examples of what these posts could look like.

A post that tags a legislator should be considered a direct communication to that legislator, so it will be lobbying if it reflects a view on specific legislation. A post that does not tag a legislator is a public communication and will be lobbying only if it reflects a view on specific legislation and it includes a call to action. Note that if a social media post constitutes lobbying, the staff time related to writing the post is attributable to lobbying, however small the cost of that staff time may be.



- **Ask advocates for a response.** Create posts that encourage advocates to interact.
  - Ask questions: "What do you know about shared use of schools' exercise facilities?" "Are children more active in communities with open schoolyards?"
  - Encourage story-sharing: "Does your school district leave its gates open for you to use the playground after hours?" "Would you use your school district's exercise facilities if they were open to the public after school is out?"
  - Keep them accountable: "How have you helped make shared use agreements a priority in your community?"
- **Highlight partners.** There may be other community organizations that are also working toward opening schools' exercise facilities after hours.
  - Consider working with them to highlight each other's work in Facebook posts. That way, your mention will show up on their channels (and vice versa), giving you leverage to reach their community for recruitment purposes.
- **Take online actions offline.** There are many creative ways to share several items in this toolkit—the poster, flyer, fact sheet, etc.—on Facebook and encourage people to distribute them in their communities.
  - Ask advocates to print the flyers and hand them out at events in their town or post them on community message bulletin boards in parks, libraries or coffee shops.
    - Bring the action back online by asking advocates to post a picture of themselves putting up the flyers.
  - Post the decision maker fact sheet on your Facebook page so that it is available to advocates to use in their own meetings with decision makers. And, of course, ask them to come back to the Facebook page to report on what they are doing, and how their own meetings went.

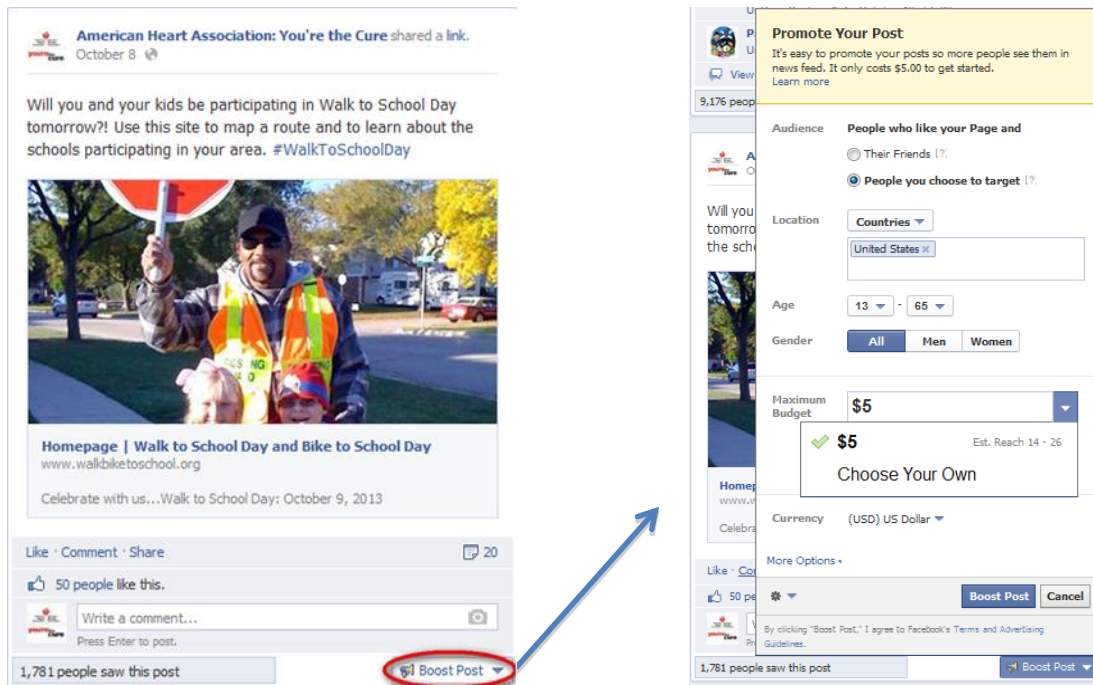


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## Ad Campaigns

- **Promote your posts.** Promoted posts take highlighted posts one step further by elevating them in your fans’ feeds. Promoted posts have a nominal cost and their benefits are far-reaching. *In this toolkit, we have provided a suggested image for a promoted post. Use the image and then assign corresponding text to it, such as: “Did you know that when schools stay open after hours, more kids stay active? 84% of kids, in fact. Yet, in [STATE], many schools close their doors after hours, and as a consequence, close the door on a safe and convenient place for children and families to play after school. To learn more and get involved, visit [INSERT URL].”*
  - Promoted posts come with a range of pricing options, depending on how many fans your page has and how many people you would like to reach with your post. You will have the option to elevate your post in your fans’ newsfeeds or in both their newsfeeds and their friends’ newsfeeds. On top of this, you can target promoted posts by age, gender and location. You can promote posts right from your Facebook page; look in the lower right-hand corner of the post you want to elevate. Click on “Boost Post,” select your dollar amount and audience reach, and then enter credit card details for payment.



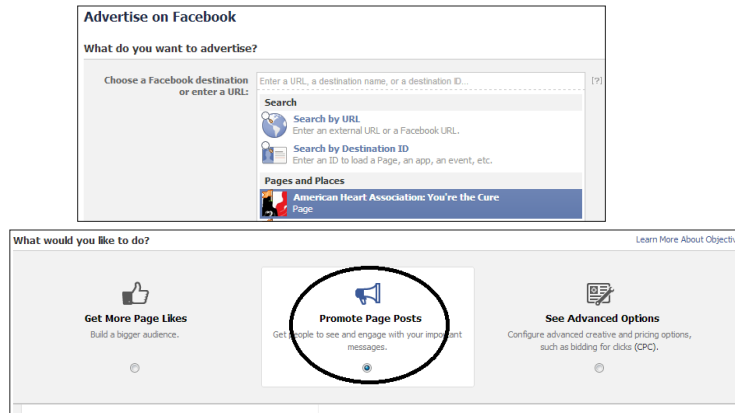
- **Create an ad campaign.** You can also turn promoted posts into a wider Facebook advertising campaign, which will allow you to target specific audiences in a way not feasible from your Facebook page.
  - Visit <https://www.facebook.com/ads/create>.
  - Select your destination page (this should be your organization’s Facebook page).



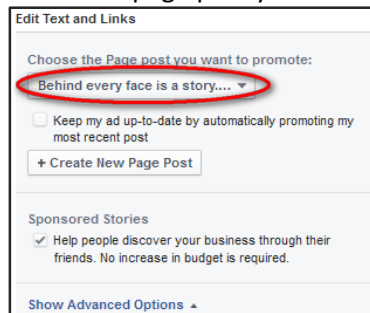
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- Select the Promoted Posts option:

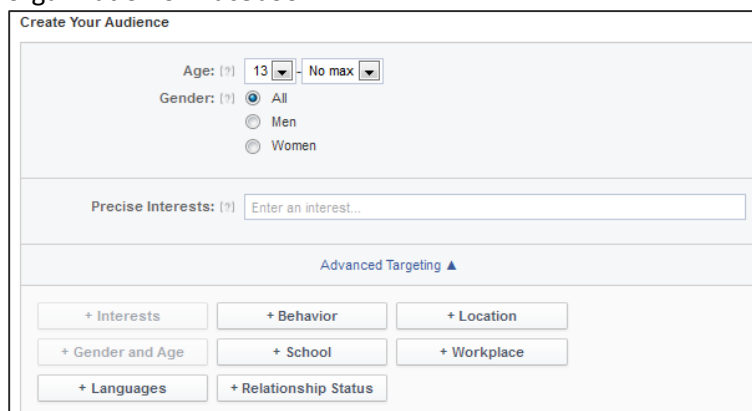


- Select the page post you would like to promote:



- Now you are ready to choose your audience. First, select age and gender targeting and then type in interests. Remember to include broad interest topics to reach as wide an audience as possible.

- For targeting based on location, workplace, behavior, school, relationship status or languages, click the appropriate button and add in targeting criteria. Consider groups of people who may have a natural interest in ending childhood obesity—parents or teachers, for example—and target them based on related interests like local parenting groups or the PTA.
- You can also target audiences based on whether they are already fans of your organization on Facebook.







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- Finally, select your budget. Even a small amount can help you get results.

Account and Campaign Help: Campaign

**Account Settings**

These settings cannot be changed once you create your ad.

Account Currency:

Account Country:

Account Time Zone:

**Campaign and Budget**

Name:

Budget:

Schedule:  Run my campaign continuously starting today  
 Set a start and end date

## Key Takeaways

- Social media can be a powerful way to share your message to a broader, more diverse audience.
- People respond well to posts with multimedia, so try to include images and video you own whenever possible.
- Use social media to encourage advocates to interact on social media channels and as a way to support your offline activities.
- A small investment in paid advertising, like Facebook ads, can make a big difference for your campaign.



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## Engage: Using Social Media to Reach Journalists

With more than 6.9 million active users on Twitter every day and 552 million daily active users on Facebook, social media can serve as a powerful tool to amplify your message and reach highly targeted audiences.

Just as consumers are increasingly turning to social media for news, so are journalists. While they use social media to follow items of personal interest and to interact with their own networks, they also use it to research stories and follow trends.

### Reach Media through Social Channels

- **Start with research.** Before you begin engaging with journalists, make sure to research their backgrounds. This will help you personalize your messages, reference relevant past articles, and explain why you have contacted them.
- **Try email, too.** Most journalists prefer to be contacted through email, not on social media. If you do not have an existing relationship with a journalist, a well-written email may be more effective than a tweet. You can also post a comment on the news outlet's webpage under the online version of the news story.
- **Don't begin with a pitch.** Though it is generally not appropriate to pitch over Twitter, you can use it to get on a journalist's radar. Start by following the reporter on Twitter and retweeting or commenting on content you find interesting.
- **Be respectful.** It is important to be mindful of journalists' time and to remember that all interactions are public. Don't mass tweet pitches to several reporters and outlets.
- **Be careful with direct messages (DMs).** Don't ask a journalist you aren't following to send you a direct message. Only people who follow one another can send each other direct messages.

### Sample Tweets

Below are a few sample tweets designed to build relationships with journalists and get on their radar as a thought leader on shared use agreements.

- In response to a journalist tweeting an article on a related topic/issue: ".@[JOURNALIST] Really interesting take on liability and #shareduse. Love your point on XYZ."
- Sharing an article by a journalist: "[INSERT QUOTE OR PARAPHRASED TEXT] via @[JOURNALIST] [LINK TO ARTICLE] #shareduse"
- Sharing an article by the journalist and generating discussion among your followers: "Read [ARTICLE TITLE] via @[JOURNALIST] [LINK TO ARTICLE]. How can we incentivize schools to unlock their doors after hours?"
- In response to a journalist tweeting an article on helping school districts understand liability: ".@[JOURNALIST] - Loved this piece, such an important topic! Would love to chat about our program sometime. [RELEVANT HASHTAG]"
- In response to a journalist tweeting an article on the need for safe places in your community: ".@[JOURNALIST] - Really interesting points! Have you thought about increased access to schools' #exercise facilities to reduce childhood #obesity? [LINK TO SITE EXPLAINING PROGRAM]"



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## Social Media Engagement Tips & Tricks

- Be transparent and disclose your job/purpose/association in your bio.
- Employ a conversational tone and avoid buzzwords.
- Always begin by listening to the existing conversation.
- Identify opportunities to be current and relevant.
- Be human.
- Be timely.
- Be prepared to carry on a conversation with your followers.
- Include hyperlinks for additional information.
- Use relevant hashtags when appropriate to help your comments show up in larger conversations.
- Use handles of people (e.g., policymaker, organization, reporter) whose attention you are trying to garner.
- Focus on facts and avoid entering in to editorial disagreements or arguments.

## Key Takeaways

- Begin with an email, then continue engaging with journalists on social media to help build valuable media relationships.
- Make sure to research journalists' backgrounds so you can tailor any messages you send to them.
- Don't start off with a pitch. Use social media to get to know journalists and engage with them, not to ask them for coverage.
- Always be transparent about identifying yourself and your campaign goals.



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## Mobilize: Action Alerts

Your existing database of supporters is perfectly positioned to become an army of grassroots activists. By joining your email list, these individuals have already indicated they want to learn more about who you are and the issues important to you. The next step is converting their interest into a deeper level of commitment to your mission—and to helping kids across America—by getting your supporters to complete an action, such as signing a petition, communicating directly with policymakers and other decision makers, or attending events. Remember to develop action alerts in the relevant languages spoken in the community.

As you begin a conversation with your supporters through email, keep these goals in mind:

- **Educate them** through issue updates or updated Web content. Communications like this allow you to:
  - Provide advocates with information, and cultivate their interest in an issue.
  - Identify the message areas that resonate best with subsets of the audience, allowing you to better tailor outreach.
  - Keep individuals engaged and updated during periods where critical action is not required, making it easier to engage them when the time comes.
- **Engage them in efforts** to deepen their activism through surveys, “share your story” opportunities or social media engagement. These activities give people actions to take that help you:
  - Learn more about what type of participation people want to have.
  - Train activists how to be good stewards of issue messages.
  - Expand your reach by amplifying your message through individuals’ social networks.
  - Show activists the importance of their participation, so they are ready to respond in times where urgent action may be needed.
- **Activate them** with new and varied calls to action based on the way their unique voices can make a difference. Your advocates can reach the public through:
  - Participation in public dialogue on key issues by commenting on news articles, blog posts or polls.
  - Recruitment of new individuals to join the cause.
  - Attendance at public meetings, town halls or hearings in support of your position.
  - Contacting decision makers via email, phone, postal mail or in person to contribute their opinions.
    - If your request reflects a view on specific legislation, asking advocates to contact their legislators will be lobbying.



Email action alerts also allow you to communicate with supporters personally, measure their interest through open rates and track their support through clicks on the links in your email. Because email communications have the capacity to be uniquely micro-targeted to recipients, sending alerts to your audience can be one of the most powerful ways to inspire mobilization around shared use agreements.

## Key Takeaways

- There are lots of different ways to engage your volunteers over email—action alerts can educate, motivate and activate.
- Keep advocates interested by offering updates and new and varied ways for them to participate.
- Surveys or requests for feedback can make your email program even stronger.



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## Mobilize: The Value of Phone Outreach

Even in today's digital era, person-to-person contact remains one of the most effective means of relationship building. Below is an overview of how to train volunteers, as well as two different types of phone outreach: phone banks and phone patch programs.

### Phone Banking

Operating a phone bank connects your organization's volunteers with new potential advocates—people you hope will want to learn more about your issues, get involved with your campaign and act to achieve your goals. In order to host a successful phone bank, make sure you address the steps below.

#### Recruit and Train Volunteers

- **Enlist your team.** Find people who would be willing to make calls on a regular or semi-regular basis. Current staff members at your organization or existing volunteers are the best resources.
- **Identify your manager.** Designate someone from your team to manage the call center. Train them to lead the volunteers and ensure program success.
- **Train your callers.** Be sure volunteers are briefed on the issues, and can discuss these topics with callers and exercise cultural sensitivity whenever appropriate. Conduct a training session where they can learn your talking points and practice making calls to familiarize themselves with the process.
- **Identify any unique language needs.** Does your community include non-native English speakers? If yes, be sure to recruit bilingual volunteers or enlist the help of volunteer translators.

#### Find a Location and Supplies

- **Decide where people will call.** Before moving forward in this process, you must determine if you want callers to work from a centralized location or not. People can make calls from their homes, but without supervision they might not stick to the script and could damage potential or existing relationships. Your offices could be a good location for local, targeted calls.
- **Equip yourself.** Make sure your call center has enough lines and telephones for volunteers.
- **Set time limits and provide refreshments.** Establish how long you want the call center to be open. If it is for a long period of time, make sure you provide food and drinks to volunteers.

#### Create a Call List

- **Develop your list.** A call list is essential to any successful phone bank, but like all communication it must be targeted. You should target individuals based on a known or potential interest in shared use liability laws parents living in areas without safe playgrounds, school principals with schools that have shared use agreements, members of coalition partner organizations, health professionals, school leaders, local health departments, etc. A number of resources are available to help discover target audiences, including U.S. Census data. As you develop your list, be sure to have callers who can communicate in the relevant languages spoken in the community.
- **Start with existing advocates at your organization.** You already have their information, and it will make sense to them when they hear from you because they have expressed previous passion for related issues.
- **Consider buying lists.** It's also possible to buy lists with phone numbers and other advocate information. Prices vary based on the amount of targeting and number of people in a list, but InfoUSA ([www.infousa.com](http://www.infousa.com)), Caldwell List Company ([www.caldwell-list.com](http://www.caldwell-list.com)) and Dataman Group ([www.datamangroup.com](http://www.datamangroup.com)) can be good resources if you wish to purchase a list.



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## Develop a Script

- Prepare a script and some one-pagers to be sure volunteers have the materials they need for effective and informative conversations. As you develop your script, you may want to try out the script on someone not familiar with the issue to ensure it will be understood by your audience in the intended way. Make sure your script includes the following information.
  - **Introduction:** Provide a brief introduction of who you are and the organization you represent. There's no need to begin explaining the issue at this point. Ask the caller if they have time to talk about the issue.
  - **Outline of the Issue:** If the caller has the time, explain the issue and why it is important. This is the point where targeting is most important. Shared use agreements and liability laws will affect people differently. Be sure you know the person you're talking to, and tailor the conversation to them.
  - **Request for Assistance:** Following the explanation of the issue, ask the advocates for another point of contact, e.g., their email or mailing address. Having this information will allow you to follow up later and provide further details about the issue.
  - **Closing:** If someone declines to hear about the issue, ask if there would be a better time to call back. And whether advocates want to speak or not, always thank them for their time.
- Below is a sample phone banking script. You may need more than one script depending on your intended reach. Feel free to customize it for your needs—to include any cultural variations for particular audiences of interest—and be sure to enlist your bilingual volunteers.
  - Hi **[ADVOCATE NAME]**. My name is **[YOUR NAME]**, and I'm calling on behalf of **[YOUR ORGANIZATION]**.
  - We're working to make it easier for schools to make their recreational facilities available for children to play and be active in **[ADVOCATE CITY]**. Do you have a few minutes to talk about how this initiative will help you and your family?
    - **IF YES**
      - Great! Children and adolescents in **[ADVOCATE AREA]** need easier access to safe, fun places to play beyond the school day and school-sponsored activities. Right now, fear of liability for property damage and injury often prevents schools from keeping their play spaces open after school. Roughly one third of children ages 2 to 19 are overweight or obese,<sup>6</sup> and about two-thirds of adolescents don't get enough physical activity each day.<sup>7 8</sup> By clarifying shared use liability laws, we can help provide a safe place for children to be active after school. Plus, research shows that students who have access to regular physical activity are more likely to perform better academically.

<sup>6</sup> Levi J, et al. *F as in Fat: How Obesity Threatens America's Future, 2013*. Issue Report. Trust for America's Health and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, August 2013. Available at: <http://healthyamericans.org/assets/files/TFAH2013FasInFatReportFinal%209.9.pdf>.

<sup>7</sup> National Association for Sport and Physical Education and American Heart Association. 2012 Shape of the Nation Report: Status of Physical Education in the USA. Publication. American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance, 2012. Available at: <http://www.aahperd.org/naspe/publications/shapeofthenation.cfm>.

<sup>8</sup> *The Obesity Epidemic and United States Students*. Issue Brief. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2007. Available at: [http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrbs/pdf/yrbs07\\_us\\_obesity.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrbs/pdf/yrbs07_us_obesity.pdf).

- **The Ask:** If you join us, we will keep you up-to-date on all the issues and progress being made in your area and nationally. **Will you join us in this mission?**
    - **IF YES:** Wonderful. Let me get your **[EMAIL, MAILING ADDRESS, ETC.]** so we can keep you updated.
    - **IF NO:** Well, thanks for your time, and if you want to learn more about the program, you can visit **[WEBSITE]**. Have a great **[DAY, EVENING]**
  - **IF NO**
    - Is there a more convenient time I can call you back? (*If yes, write when to call back and make a note. If no, then skip to...*). Thanks for your time, and if you want to learn more about the program, you can visit **[WEBSITE]**. Have a great **[DAY, EVENING]**
- **IF ANSWERING MACHINE**
  - Hi **[ADVOCATE NAME]**. My name is **[YOUR NAME]**, and I'm calling on behalf of **[YOUR ORGANIZATION]**.
  - We're working to help improve the health of families in **[ADVOCATE CITY]** by making it easier for schools to share their fields, playgrounds, and facilities after-hours, so our kids can be physically active and community groups can put them to good use.
  - **The Ask:** Please call us at **[PHONE NUMBER]** or visit our website at **[WEBSITE]** to learn more and to help ensure children can have safe places to play and be active.
  - Thank you and have a great day!

### Compile Data

- You'll want to make sure you track the data garnered from these phone calls—who you're calling, how many people are reached, how many volunteers sign up, how often people are called, etc.
  - Set standards and guidelines for recording data, and be sure volunteers are trained on the proper way to record information.
  - Consider creating a template in Excel for volunteers to record the data. Determine what you want to know about each person. You should at least have first name, last name, phone number (home or mobile), language spoken, as well as whether they picked up or you left a message and whether they wanted to talk or not. If possible, try to record their email address and mailing address.

### Maintain the Relationship

- Phone calls are the beginning of a relationship, not the end. In order to keep working with these advocates, you must follow up with them, either with another call or via email.

### Phone Patches

A phone patch, as opposed to a phone bank, connects advocates with their elected officials. In order to host a phone-patching program, you'll work with a third-party organization that calls advocates, explains the issue and asks if the advocates would like to be connected with his or her representative to voice support for a cause or issue. This is a supplemental method to the phone bank program and should target existing advocates, not new ones.



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If you ask advocates to contact a legislator to support or oppose specific legislation, your phone patch calls will be considered grassroots lobbying. Make sure you budget lobbying funds to cover these costs. You can use non-lobbying funds for phone patches by avoiding references to any specific legislation, but that may dilute the calls' impact.



## Select a Vendor

- Find a company that will call individuals on your behalf. Some companies that can assist in the program implementation include:
  - Mobile Commons
  - Winning Connections
  - Stones' Phones
  - Strategic Consulting Group

## Create a Call List

- As with phone banks, you will need to create a list of contacts to provide to the vendor. The vendor will use this list during the outreach process.

## Develop Scripts for Messages

- When individuals answer their phones, they will hear a prerecorded message and will be connected to a representative by pressing a designated number. A script that highlights the importance of the initiative should be written to serve as this recording. There should also be an option for non-English speakers to press a number to hear the message in their language.
- An additional message could be written to record on an answering machine if the person misses the call.
  - **Script for Initial Recording**
    - Hi! I'm calling on behalf of **[YOUR ORGANIZATION]**. Did you know that most children don't get the recommended amount of physical activity each day? Schools are an important piece of the solution when it comes to reversing childhood obesity, both during and after the school day. Unfortunately, too many schools lock their doors after the final bell rings, closing off access to their fields, playgrounds, tracks, and other facilities. We're working to help schools keep their grounds open after hours and make it easier for all kids in our community to be more physically active. If you'd like to learn more about this issue and how you can help this effort, please press one.
  - **Script for Leaving a Message**
    - Hi **[ADVOCATE NAME]**. My name is **[YOUR NAME]**, and I'm calling on behalf of **[YOUR ORGANIZATION]**. We're working to help improve access to school playgrounds for children and adolescents after school and on weekends, including in **[ADVOCATE CITY]**, by incentivizing schools to unlock their doors to the community after school. We'd love your help spreading the word about **[STATE]**'s shared use laws, which support after hours use of school recreational facilities. Please call us at **[PHONE NUMBER]** or visit our website at **[WEBSITE]** to learn more and to help improve access to play areas for students in **[ADVOCATE CITY OR STATE]**. Thank you and have a great day!





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- **Script for Phone Operator**
  - Hi. How are you? Thanks so much for agreeing to take the next step to help encourage safe and convenient places for kids to play to your neighborhood's schools.
  - To implement this change, we need advocates to speak with their representatives to support efforts to increase implementation of shared use agreements that allow community use of school facilities outside of school hours. *(Note: Advocates will have varying degrees of knowledge about this issue, so at this point it's good to let them ask questions.)* Before I connect you with your legislator, what questions can I answer for you about these policies or about the process?
- **Script for Connecting Advocates with Representatives**
  - Now that you have all the information, I can connect you with your representative. Just so you are aware of the process, I will transfer you to your legislator [**LEGISLATOR NAME**], and someone on [**HIS/HER**] staff will talk with you. You will need to tell the person who answers the phone your name, that you're a constituent, and that you support incentives for schools to allow their properties to be available for shared use in [**STATE**].
    - As written, this phone script is not lobbying, because it does not refer to a specific legislative proposal. If, instead of referring to the general policy of shared use, the script urged people to tell their legislators to support specific legislation on liability laws, the calls would be lobbying and would need to be paid for with restricted funds.
  - Note: Your phone bank operator will need to be trained to answer frequently asked questions and know where to refer questions he/she is unable to answer.

## Record the Results

- Typically, a phone patch operator will provide a daily report with the results of the program. Collect that data, and keep it for your records to help you strengthen future outreach efforts.

## Additional Things to Consider

Whether you're phone banking or phone patching, there are some tips to keep in mind so your process runs smoothly.

- Avoid using computer or auto dialing systems exclusively, as some states prohibit these, and federal rules restrict autodialed calls to cell phones. Instead, have people dial numbers by hand. Hand-dialed phone banks also have a higher completion rate (50 percent compared to 15 percent with automated dialing systems, according to The Voices of America).
- Hybrid systems also exist. These systems allow you to download to the phone so that you just hit "dial." Volunteers can record the answers to the survey on the phone, which can then be downloaded to a computer. It also allows you to record a voicemail, so the volunteer can push a button that automatically plays your recorded message after the beep without having to stay on the line.
- Try to make your calls between the hours of 6 p.m. and 9 p.m. on weekdays and 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. on weekends, as these are the hours you will most likely find people at home.
- Make sure volunteers know how to react in different situations (e.g., leaving a message on a machine or speaking with a hostile individual).
- Be sure the efforts of the campaign aren't limited by do-not-call lists.



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- Typically, these apply only to telemarketing sales calls. At the federal level, the do-not-call provisions do not cover calls from political organizations, charities, telephone surveyors or companies with which a consumer has an existing business relationship.
- Most states follow the standard set by the federal government, but state laws can vary. Check state government websites to ensure compliance with these laws.

## Key Takeaways

- There are two different types of telephone programs: phone banking and phone patching. Phone banking is for recruiting volunteers, while phone patching is for connecting advocates with elected officials.
- To ensure a well-organized phone bank, brainstorm all potential questions and responses volunteers may receive and build a script to equip your volunteers with the best way to react.
- If your community includes non-English speakers, make sure you recruit phone volunteers who can speak those languages.
- Consider the best time to make these calls to reach the highest number of people. The hours between 6 p.m. and 9 p.m. are recommended.
- Check your state's laws on phone outreach to ensure you're complying with all do-not-call provisions.



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## Mobilize: Hosting a Media Event

Working with local media is a key way to raise awareness about your campaign, priorities, and goals. Media coverage can help you educate communities, create conversation, and recruit new advocates. But before you can do any of these things, you must first thoughtfully develop and carefully plan how you want to present the issue to reporters. Building relationships with media and pursuing media advocacy well in advance of hosting a media event will help to ensure your message frame is understood and you are well-positioned by reporters.

Start by thinking about what you want to accomplish and who you want to reach. Do you have news to release, such as a report or study? If not, what is your media hook? Does the nightly news highlight community events at school facilities or shared use liability laws? What about in your local paper? Would you be better served by engaging with community bloggers? Be sure to include ethnic media in this outreach. Once you decide what your goals are, you can start identifying opportunities that match up with your goals.

One way to engage members of the media is by inviting them to an event. A well-run media event—one with compelling speakers, stories, clear facts, and easily explained goals—will give reporters the tools they need to amplify your story in newspapers, on-air, and online.

## Where and Who?

To make your message more impactful, choose a location for your event that will reinforce the importance of shared use. Hold your event at:

- A school that regularly opens its recreational facilities for before- and after-hour events for children or events for the whole community.
- A public location like a school or playground that closes after school hours.
- A place of worship where leaders are calling for more safe places to play for community kids.

As you structure your event, consider speakers who can talk persuasively about the importance of providing children with a safe place to play and be active. This can include executives from your organization, but don't be afraid to think beyond the obvious. Consider bringing in a local mother who wants safe playgrounds and basketball courts for her child to visit after school; a school principal who envisions better academic performance in the classrooms as a result of access to regular physical activity<sup>9</sup>; or a local doctor who can speak about the real impact shared use facilities can have on children's health and how it can help reduce childhood obesity.<sup>10 11</sup> A diverse mix of speakers who can speak in all languages used throughout the community will provide your media attendees with a range of perspectives about shared use agreements between schools and communities to address important issues, such as proper use of recreational facilities, sharing costs for maintenance, and supervision, and ultimately help school districts create policies and procedures that meet the needs of their schools and

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<sup>9</sup> Spengler JO. *Promoting Physical Activity Through Shared Use of School and Community Recreational Resources*. Research Brief. Active Living Research, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, April 2012. Available at: [http://activelivingresearch.org/files/ALR\\_Brief\\_SharedUse\\_April2012.pdf](http://activelivingresearch.org/files/ALR_Brief_SharedUse_April2012.pdf).

<sup>10</sup> *Designing for Active Living Among Adults*. Research Summary. Active Living Research, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2008. Available at: [http://www.activelivingresearch.org/files/Active\\_Adults.pdf](http://www.activelivingresearch.org/files/Active_Adults.pdf).

<sup>11</sup> Cohen DA, McKenzie TL, Sehgal A, et al. Contribution of public parks to physical activity. *American Journal of Public Health* 97.3 (2007): 509-514.



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students. Be sure to include spokespersons who are fluent in languages appropriate for your community and media outlets.

## Event Tips

The following tips cover some of the basics of event hosting. However, the list below is not comprehensive—every event is different, and you’ll need to adapt your planning to each event’s unique requirements.

- **Establish a point of contact.** Your event point of contact should manage all logistics. This person could be a paid staff member or a trusted volunteer. Whoever you choose, make sure they have existing experience with event coordination and execution.
- **Send invitations.** For some media events like salon dinners or press conferences where you will focus on specific issues, make sure key influencers are in the room. Even if they aren’t speakers, their presence can lend an air of credibility to your efforts. Make sure to issue personal invitations to these influencers, and follow up with them if necessary to secure their confirmation.
  - If someone on your staff has an existing relationship with these influencers, ask that person to try calling them on the phone or sending a personal email. People are more likely to respond to messages from names they recognize.
- **Create briefing books.** Prior to the event, you will want to share briefing packets with media and key influencers who will be in attendance. Consider sharing your organization’s policy position statement on shared school facility use, the fact sheets from this tool kit and relevant news articles.

## Media Engagement

- Research recent media stories—newspaper articles, TV segments, radio shows, etc.—to determine which media figures or outlets might be most friendly to implementation of shared use agreements and liability laws. Be sure to include ethnic media. Based on this research, you can reach out to the media you would like to cover the event.
- Once you have established your media list, you can immediately begin pitching editorial board meetings. As the editorial board makes significant decisions on media placement, meeting with them in advance of major stories can ensure your story is not only included, but is elevated for greater reach. This work should start at least one month prior to the event.
- Distribute a media advisory to all your selected media outlets and pitch print and radio two weeks out from the event. Make sure to follow up with reporters to confirm coverage and/or attendance.
- Distribute a press release in the days leading up to the event and include an embargo to ensure media adhere to your event date for releasing any new data.
- If you are planning a TV spot, follow up with the producer two days prior to the event and the morning of the event. Also reach out to unconfirmed print reporters two to three days prior to and the morning of the event.
- Depending upon media interest, coordinate media availability on-site before or after the event to facilitate media questions and interviews.
- Prepare an op-ed to submit to a target newspaper about the event and the news you are releasing. Take a look at the sample op-eds provided in this toolkit for ideas on how to shape yours, but also make sure to include information that is relevant to your community.



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## Blogger Engagement

- If you have local bloggers in your town or city, consider inviting them to the event, especially if they write about topics relevant to shared use of school facilities and liability laws and the issues it could address like childhood obesity, playground access or school budgets.
  - Consider reaching out to parents who blog about healthy living for their family. If your efforts involve encouraging your community to set the example of healthy living at home, a post from a well-known blogger could be a good help.
- As with any other media, develop an outreach plan and engage bloggers accordingly. Make sure your outreach is personal and calls out direct reasons why that specific blogger should attend.
- Track confirmations/declines, and shape your outreach accordingly.
- Monitor for and report on any mentions of the event by targeted bloggers, both leading up to the event and after.

## Database Growth

- On the day of your media event, set up a table where people can sign up to learn more about shared use liability laws. Because they are already attending the event, it's logical to assume they may want to join the campaign.
  - Consider using the sign-up opportunity for a dual purpose. For example, at the end of the event, attendees may be motivated to make some sort of commitment to help encourage shared use in their community. Combine the sign-up with a pledge where they can share the specific way they will help the cause.
    - This will also help you keep track of the types of people in your database and the specific ways you can engage them based on their stated interest in shared use initiatives.
- Transcribe the sign-up forms and upload your new advocates to your organization's database. Send them a follow-up email welcoming them to your email list, thanking them for their attendance and asking how they want to be involved in the future.

## Post-Event Activities

- Leverage the event by posting the speeches, photographs, and videos to all relevant websites and social media platforms as appropriate.
- Follow up with local influencers and potential advocates as appropriate to gauge their interest in further involvement.
- If there are media, including bloggers, who could not attend the event, provide them with information and an event synopsis with photos so they can cover the event retroactively.

## Key Takeaways

- Start working on this event early. Between identifying speakers, inviting journalists, and coordinating a run of show, a well-executed media event can take weeks to plan.
- In order to make sure you get the right people in the room, research journalists and their beats before inviting them to your event.
- Location and speakers of your event is important to its success. Hold your event in a community striving for shared use of schools with compelling speakers on the subject.
- Once your event is over, follow up by making photos, speeches, and videos available online.



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## Mobilize: Media Training Tips

Speaking to the media can seem a bit daunting, but it presents a prime opportunity to tell a compelling story that brings home shared school use agreements and the need to clarify liability laws to all audiences. Unlike any other tactic for your campaign, an interview with key media could allow you to access a wide audience in a personal manner.

In many cases, your media team will have pitched the shared use story to local media, offering your spokesperson as an expert who can weigh in on their story. Remember to reach out to media who have natural connections with the issue at hand (e.g., community development or health section reporters as well as statehouse reporters) so they're more likely respond to your pitch, and you're more likely to reach targeted mainstream and ethnic audiences.

With the appropriate preparation and practice, your speaker will become comfortable with your messaging and be able to speak articulately and passionately about the issue. The guidelines below will help you prepare a speaker for success.

## Choose Spokespeople

Develop a small cadre of spokespeople whose perspectives are especially important to the cause and who the media might be interested in interviewing. For all of these, strive for diversity that represents your community and be sure to include spokespeople who can speak in other languages as it makes sense for your community.

- Advocates without playground access or who have a safety story (especially parents and youth) can provide a personal appeal that no one else can. For example, a parent who wants his or her children to have a safe place to play after school.
- Doctors who see the impact of obesity on their patients will add an air of credibility.
- Researchers who can share data on obesity's impact on a specific city or state will add quantifiable evidence to your stories.
- Finally, top-level executives from your organization are always important faces to add to your campaign. They can speak specifically about your efforts to clarify shared use liability laws to your state.

Reach out to these types of spokespeople, ask if they would be interested in speaking on behalf of your organization about shared use agreements, and begin preparing them for the task.

## Develop Content

Begin preparing your speakers for interviews as soon as possible. The more your speakers prepare, the more comfortable they will be, the better their delivery will be, and the more effectively your message will resonate with the right audience(s). But before you compose your responses, make sure you answer the following questions.

- **Who is your audience?** Before developing your messages, it's important to consider the audience you'll be reaching through the publication conducting the interview.
  - What media outlet will your speaker be presenting to?
  - What is the media outlet's readership or viewership?
  - What are the demographics of the readership or viewership?



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- **What should you say?** Speakers will need to know your talking points about shared use, but these core messages are just a starting point. Make your content more relevant by considering the following questions.
  - Are there specific facts you want to highlight during the interview?
  - What is the central theme you want to discuss—the core statement you return to over and over?
  - What would success look like? Provide numbers, statistics, and milestones if shared school use agreements came to your state and if liability laws were clarified through state legislation.
  - Can you make your interview more tangible? Consider adding comments about specific schools in the community.
  - Are there other groups or individuals taking part in the interview? What are their positions likely to be, and will you have to comment on them?
- **What matters most?** Spend some time thinking about how your speakers can best portray themselves and the issue.
  - How should the interview begin and end? The most important parts of an interview are the introduction and conclusion, because they're what your audience is most likely to remember.
  - Are there more ways to restate the main goal of the campaign? People need to hear things at least three times to remember them, so make sure to keep bringing the messaging back to your core points.
  - Is this still relevant? Reread talking points the day before the interview to be sure the proof points are still relevant. Read local news of the day and reference anything that makes sense.
- **What questions do you expect?** Spend some time anticipating questions and developing direct responses or ways to turn the conversation back to your key message.

## Rehearsal

No matter how familiar spokespeople are with your talking points, it is important to have them rehearse multiple times before the interview. Ask your spokesperson to rehearse your talking points in the following ways, and work alongside them as they do.

- **Read the text alone silently.** Read the content with a critical eye. Do all proof points support the overall story? Is the central theme clear?
- **Read aloud alone.** Spokespeople might be surprised to hear themselves speaking aloud, especially if it is their first time participating in an interview. Watch your speakers talk and make note of places where they take natural pauses or get tripped up on words.
- **Stand and read in front of a mirror (if the interview is on television).** When spokespeople read the content aloud standing, they will begin to get a feel for their natural body movement and non-verbal cues that will help bring the content to life.
- **Stand and read in front of peers.** Gather your colleagues to listen to the spokespeople deliver their talking points. This can help increase speakers' confidence and provides a safe place for them to receive feedback. At this point, they should be able to deliver their content without reading directly from papers.



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- **Record their delivery and learn from it.** One of the best ways to rehearse is to make a video recording of your spokespeople presenting. This allows them to see what the interviewer sees and will make speakers aware of any distracting movements or phrases they may unknowingly use.
- **Rehearse in a comparable setting to where the interview will be held.** You may not be able to take your spokespeople to the actual interview location, but try to create a setting that feels similar. Spokespeople can practice their movement in this similar space, developing a sense of how to move and talk effectively when they are in the interview room.

## Interview Delivery

As your spokespeople arrive for the interview, they should be friendly and engaging, greeting reporters and producers confidently. This confidence is especially important when the spokesperson is a top-level executive from your organization.

- **Own the space.** When you are on-site in the room, remind your speakers of the movements they practiced. If it's the right setting, encourage them to move around.
- **Engage the interviewer and the audience.** Remind spokespeople to maintain eye contact with the reporter as often as possible. They are the window to the viewers who are watching or listening. If there is an audience present, make sure spokespeople speak directly to them.
- **Relax and enjoy.** By this point, your spokespeople will have mastered their text and be comfortable with their delivery, so remind them to relax and enjoy their time on stage.
- **Say thank you.** Thank the reporter at the end and suggest meeting with them at a later date for a follow-up interview.

## Key Takeaways

- Identify a core group of spokespeople who can consistently speak with the media about your campaign.
- Develop smart talking points and customize them to be relevant for each interview.
- Practice makes perfect—ask your spokespeople to rehearse their speeches or talking points to get comfortable with their comments before they speak with journalists.





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## Mobilize: Why Op-Eds Matter

Public commentary has long been one of the most powerful ways to broadly communicate ideas. By having an opinion editorial, commonly called an op-ed, published, you'll be able to convey your campaign's essential messages to legislators, journalists, and the community.

In the past few years, competition from expanded news and information sources like blogs and social media has made publication easier, but competition for attention tougher. This means that you'll have to offer your best thinking and most influential voices in order to maximize your chances of having a newspaper print your op-ed—and have people care who you are and what you have to say.

## Op-Ed Tips and Tricks

- **Choose your signer carefully.** To ensure the best chance of earning placement on a news platform or gaining people's attention, enlist a high-profile influencer to sign and submit your op-ed. Ideally, this influencer should be well known within your community and the audience of the publication, such as a doctor, researcher, teacher, school principal or superintendent or politician.
- **Ask yourself: "Who cares?"** Make sure your piece will clearly resonate with or be meaningful to the public. Start by writing from the reader's point of view.
- **Keep things tight.** News outlets have limited space, so keep your opinion editorial to 500 words or so. Some outlets have even shorter limits, while a few will accept up to 700+ words, so check your paper's requirements before submitting.
- **Speak conversationally.** Avoid jargon, fancy words and slang. Your op-ed must be comprehensible to the general public, including people with no knowledge of shared school use or related liability laws or why it might touch their lives.
- **Get to the point.** Make your key points early and often, and back them up with facts and examples.
- **Offer a short, snappy headline.** A good headline gives readers a preview of what your op-ed has to say. (Keep in mind that some news outlets will write their own headlines, regardless of what you submit.)
- **Be prepared to be edited.** Op-ed submissions are subject to revisions, editing, and fact-checking. Editors usually do NOT need your approval to make revisions or edits to accommodate space limitations, provided they do not change the context of your position. Sources for factual statements should be listed at the bottom of your op-ed to expedite review and placement processes.
- **Include your contact information.** Be sure to include your name, title, organization (as needed), email, and phone number in case the editors want to contact you.

Two samples of op-eds are available in the appendix. A rational op-ed appeals to reason; an emotional version appeals to the heart. For example, if you choose to write an op-ed encouraging government entities to sign on to shared use agreements in your community, you could ask a local lawyer to sign an op-ed on the flexibility that shared use agreements allows for schools that want to open up their doors or on the need to clarify ambiguities in existing liability law; either of these would be considered a rational op-ed. On the other hand, if your goal is to encourage families in your community to advocate for having a safe place to play, you could ask a local parent to write an emotional op-ed about how he/she wishes he/she had a safe place to take his/her children to play after school hours.



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## Key Takeaways

- Choose your signer carefully. Having a local leader's signature on your op-ed can help increase its chance of being published.
- Be brief, and keep to the point. 500 words is a good target.
- Op-eds can be either rational or emotional, depending on the story you want to tell.



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## Mobilize: Meeting with Legislators

Some advocates may be willing to visit elected officials. Whether you meet with representatives in local home offices or take a special trip to the state capitol, you can have a strong impact when you can look legislators in the eye and answer their questions about the problem of access to safe places to play in your community, as well as proposed solutions. Decision makers want to know what's important to their constituents, so when your representative is available, take advantage of that time by scheduling an in-person meeting.

Here are some helpful tips to make the most of your meetings.

### Save the Date

Making an appointment is easy—simply call your legislators, and talk to the office's scheduler. Here are a few things to keep in mind.

- Be flexible with the date and time. Legislators have busy schedules and meetings usually last 15 to 45 minutes.
- You may end up meeting with a staffer rather than a legislator, which is fine. Many legislators rely heavily on staff to keep them informed and make decisions about issues.
- Choose one to two issues to discuss so you can talk about them comprehensively in even a short amount of time.
- Feel free to bring a colleague or an advocate with you who can also offer their insight on the issues. Be cognizant that bringing an advocate to demonstrate diversity can come across as a token appearance. Be sure to have a strong role for each person engaged in the meeting.
- Research your representative's stance and voting history on the issues you plan to discuss, as well as opposing viewpoints, to help you frame your talking points.

### Essentials for Success

Nervous about how the conversation will go or what to say? Bring these essentials to the meeting to help it run smoothly.

- A pen or pencil to take notes during your meeting.
- A business card to leave with your representative.
- Cameras, so you can share photos from a school with open schoolyards or take a picture with your legislator while you're visiting his or her office.
- A customized version of the decision maker fact sheet in this toolkit.
- A clear "ask" for the meeting – for instance, a site visit, newspaper column or op-ed to move the conversation forward.

Each of these could be a non-lobbying request, if your communication with the legislator focuses on the goal of encouraging shared use policies and the various ways this could be achieved, rather than discussing specific legislation. For example, legislators need to be educated on the role school districts play in supporting schools to open their facilities for shared use outside school hours. *For more information on possible district and school actions, see the subsequent toolkit on shared use incentives and monitoring.*



### Make the Most of Your One-on-One

- Dress professionally when visiting your representative.
- Introduce yourself and talk about your position on the issues you've prepared to discuss.



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- Share personal stories and examples to illustrate how the issues affect you and your community.
- Listen to your legislator's response and be prepared to answer questions. If you can't answer his or her questions, jot a note down and get back to him or her.
- Even if you don't see eye to eye, always be respectful and polite.

## Thank Your Legislator

- After taking time out of his or her very busy schedule, your member will definitely appreciate a brief thank-you note or email.
- It's also a great opportunity to remind them of the stories you shared, your stance on the issues you discussed and how their actions affect people in your community.
- Based on the response to your request or "ask," determine what appropriate steps are for following up with your legislator.

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## Key Takeaways

- You may end up meeting with a member of your legislator's staff, which is fine. Decision makers rely heavily on feedback from their staffers, especially on policy issues.
- Come prepared for your meeting with fact sheets, business cards, cameras and—most importantly—a clear "ask" for the meeting.
- Always be respectful and polite.
- Remember to thank your legislator or a member of their staff and use this opportunity to reiterate your "ask."





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## Mobilize: Days at the Capitol

Individual meetings can go a long way toward making a difference with your legislator—but sometimes, there’s strength in numbers. If you’re looking to combine a media event and a legislator meeting, you may consider hosting a day at the state capitol where advocates hold a rally and then attend scheduled meetings with decision makers.

Here are some things to think about as you plan your own day at the capitol.

### Choose the Right Day

Planning a day at the capitol takes a lot of time and work. It’s a large investment for one short day. Therefore, it’s important to make sure you schedule the rally for when it will be most effective.

- There are certain points in the rhythm of legislation when a day at the capitol could be particularly helpful. If you know when a vote is coming up or a particular committee is viewing the legislation, legislators may be more focused on your issue. By talking to them at this point, you can grab their attention and remind them why this issue matters to you. If you talk about the legislation with a legislator and reflect a view on the bill, it will be lobbying.
  - If you choose to reflect a view on specific legislation in this type of meeting, make sure you have ample unrestricted dollars to cover both the costs of both planning and hosting such an event. These activities will be a lobbying expense, since it involves communicating directly with legislators about specific legislation.
- The legislative calendar lends itself to slightly different opportunities for meeting. Try to attend at a time when things are slower at the capitol, not at the start of a new legislative session. That way you may be able to secure more quality face-to-face time with your legislator. If there is an opportunity to connect your visit to an awareness day (for example, National Walking Day), this could give an additional emphasis to your visit.
  - If you focus your message more generally on the need for better access to safe places to play, it may be possible to use non-lobbying funds for this activity. When using non-lobbying funds, you must stick to educating legislators on the problem of the liability concerns of school districts that have declined to open up their facilities to communities resulting in closed public spaces. You can also secure legislators general backing for your issue, or obtain support for non-legislative projects like new school playgrounds or public recreational facilities, or request their support for a particular grant application to support these items. Alternatively, if you want to use your visit to influence legislators to introduce or support specific shared use legislation or appropriations to build or improve public spaces, you must use lobbying dollars to pay for these activities.



### Invite the Right People

When you schedule these types of events, remember that legislators and their staff want to hear from constituents and people with direct experience with the issues at hand. It’s important to bring advocates who have children in school or those who are deeply educated about and invested in bringing opportunities for more physical activity to children in the area. And don’t forget to bring people who can talk about the positive fiscal impact. Research has shown that people who have parks or recreational facilities nearby exercise 38% more than those who do not have easy access. One study found that 84% more kids were physically active in communities with open and supervised school-yards, than in



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communities with locked school-yards.<sup>12</sup> Increased physical activity is an important factor in reducing childhood obesity, and can be a key issue when it comes to healthcare, especially in under-resourced communities.

If you have existing relationships with your advocates, try to choose those with particularly engaging stories that include a diversity of perspectives and who can tell them well.

## Help Advocates Attend

- If you have the resources, make plans to help your advocates get to the capitol, especially those with financial limitations. Consider offering gas money or assistance in paying for their plane ticket. An investment like this, to get the right people on the front end, can help ensure a successful visit. If the capitol is within reasonable driving distance, identify who can drive and who would like or need to carpool with others.
- If overnight travel is necessary, settle on a hotel, and send out the booking information well in advance of the rally so people can get the cheapest rates (this may be another opportunity to help individuals out with the costs, if you're able). Always ask the hotel if it has group discount rates.
- Make sure your accommodations are pleasant and have sufficient space for group training meetings. They should also not be too far from the capitol so it doesn't take long to get there from the hotel. We recommend visiting the hotel in advance to make sure it's suitable for your advocates. Remember, you want people coming back next year, and comfort—even modest comfort—is important!
- Ask advocates if they have any barriers to participating, such as transportation or child care, and brainstorm ways to help overcome these issues to ensure full participation.

## Create a Schedule

Plan a clear itinerary that you distribute to advocates when they arrive; you can even place it in their hotel rooms with a gift bag to make them feel welcome. An itinerary will communicate that this trip is important, purposeful, and they are going to get something out of it. On the itinerary, note the key message for advocates and emphasize what the common ask and next steps will be for follow up. Be sure to schedule time at the end of the day to receive immediate feedback and debrief on key conversations.

## Build Time for Fun

Beyond meeting with their decision makers, this is an excellent time for advocates to connect. Connected advocates are often more committed and inspired to support the issue at hand. Although your advocates are connecting online, they may have few opportunities to connect in person so they can learn from each other. Make sure to schedule intentional times for this to happen in the form of meetings as well as fun outings.

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<sup>12</sup> Powell, L. M., S. Slater, and F. J. Chaloupka. "The relationship between community physical activity settings and race, ethnicity and socioeconomic status." *Evidenced Based Preventive Medicine*. 135-44. 21 May 2009.



# UNLOCK THE DOORS



## Create a Leave-Behind

Make sure your advocates are armed with tools that will help drive the point further home to decision makers. That could be the decision maker fact sheet in this toolkit or something more, like a petition from advocates in their community or some symbol of the need to clarify liability laws for shared use of schools in their state. If your visit is a lobbying visit, materials you create specifically for the visit are likely to be considered lobbying materials and should be supported with unrestricted resources.



## Follow up with Successes

After the day at the capitol is finished, make sure you follow up with advocates about the meetings, reporting any successful interactions or resulting legislative movement. The important thing here is to let advocates know their efforts were worth it, so they will continue to be active for your cause.

## Key Takeaways

- Look at the legislative calendar and pick a day that makes sense for your visit.
- Think carefully about who should be in the room, and make sure to bring people with direct experience about the issues at hand.
- Do what you can to make the process of traveling to the capitol as easy as possible for your advocates.



## Appendices

**Please Note:** The materials provided in the following pages are meant to be general examples for you to learn from as you create your own pieces. For each tactic, please refer to the key messages outlined below and craft your messages according to the specific policies that best apply to your community.





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## Key Messages: Pursuing Solutions to End Childhood Obesity

The policy objectives related to shared use at the beginning of this toolkit are there to help you pursue a concrete solution to ending childhood obesity that is right for your community. Take some time before starting your campaign to map out the specific objective of your efforts, according to the policies outlined.

After you have determined which specific policies and improvements make the most sense for your organization, it is important to fold those solutions into all of the communications you produce so you can establish a congruent voice across all outreach. This toolkit focuses on clarifying state liability laws and below we introduce messaging for incentives and monitoring that are further detailed in a complimentary toolkit.

You can use these messages in the various communications templates, including op-eds, action alerts and blog posts, that follow.

### Overarching Message for Shared Use

*This is the messaging thread that should connect all communications, no matter the policy objective.*

Making sure young people can be physically active is essential to helping them lead a healthy life. School facilities are great places for kids to play and be active after the last bell rings. By keeping school facilities, such as fields, playgrounds, and gyms open after hours, we are unlocking the doors to a healthy lifestyle for kids and families.

### Specific Policy Messaging

#### Clarify state liability laws

Fear of liability shouldn't stand in the way of helping our children lead active lives. But in too many cases, that's exactly what happens: schools keep their doors locked for fear that they'll be liable for potential injuries or facility damage. Our lawmakers can take simple steps to clarify liability laws to give our schools the peace of mind they need to unlock their doors outside of school hours and get our children active.

#### Create incentives for schools to open their doors

Schools do a lot with scarce resources, and even the minor time and expense required by shared use can sometimes be a hurdle. Providing incentives to schools, whether they be financial resources, technical assistance, or faster processes, can help schools overcome those barriers. We should acknowledge and reward those that lead the way in helping children be active.

#### Help school districts understand liability and adopt policies

Liability issues are deeply confusing. With so many of our schools trying to do more with less, vague concerns about potential liability may be enough to convince them to say "no" to shared use instead of "yes." Advocates and experts can help schools to understand how they can minimize liability risk while maximizing benefits for children. When schools adopt shared use policies or agreements that have tested provisions and protections, they can limit their liability and unlock their doors. No school needs to



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start this process from scratch. Collaboration and partnerships will allow schools to learn from others' experiences and replicate what works.

## Engage with your school or community group

There are many important factors to academic achievement, and being healthy is one of them. Kids who are more active tend to do better in the classroom. Shared use agreements are one key way that schools can help young people be active, but do your school administrators know that? Working with community group such as a boys and girls club can help them understand the importance of physical activity and ask them to unlock the doors for activities after the last bell rings.

## Start at home

Children should be able to stay after school to play on the playground and run around the track. Families need to be part of the solution. Parents and children are critical advocates in their schools and communities. Stressing the importance of shared use agreements to school and community leaders as well as friends, neighbors and other parents and students is an essential step to building awareness and building community need.

\*A subsequent toolkit will address individual school agreements, incentives and monitoring in more detail.



## Lobbying vs. Non-Lobbying Checklist

The following questions may help you determine whether your efforts might be considered lobbying under the IRS rules and therefore must be paid for with separate, lobbying-approved funding. Each organization's lobbying requirements (and the registration rules that may apply to them) may be slightly different, so make sure you consult your lawyer to share your plans and address any questions. In general, the IRS lobbying rules apply to communications with members of Congress, state legislators, city council members, and potentially other elected officials and their staff. In some cases, communication with the general public is considered lobbying too.

- ✓ Will you be communicating directly with a legislator—or to legislative branch staff, executive branch officials or any staff involved in formulating particular legislation?  
*Note:* Communicating with school boards and zoning boards does not qualify as lobbying.
  
- ✓ If so, will your communications reflect a point of view on specific legislation, such as the following?
  - Bills or ballot measures that have been introduced
  - Specific legislative proposals not yet introduced (e.g., “Iowa should adopt Wisconsin’s shared use law”)
  - Budget bills  
*Think strategically:* If you are not conveying a viewpoint on specific legislation, your communications with public officials or their staff are not lobbying. For example: telling a legislator that you want to promote shared use agreements in the community is not a form of lobbying unless your comments are in reference to a specific pending or proposed shared use legislation.
  
- ✓ Will you be communicating to the general public about a view on a particular ballot measure or piece of legislation—through op-eds, social media, email newsletters, advertisements, speeches, etc.?
  
- ✓ If so, will your communications to the general public include a call to action, such as the following?
  - Asking the public to contact a legislator
  - Identifying someone’s legislative representative
  - Providing contact information for a legislator
  - Providing a vehicle for contacting the legislator (e.g., form email, petition)
  - Identifying a legislator’s position on the legislation or identifying the legislator as sitting on the voting committee
    - *Think strategically:* In most circumstances, if communications to the general public do not include a call to action, they are not lobbying unless the legislation discussed is a ballot measure. For example, if you talk about the benefits of a clarification of liability laws pending in the legislature, without asking readers to contact their legislators (or any other form of a call to action), the communication will not be lobbying.



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## Sample Emotional Op-Ed

When I was a kid, I spent every afternoon and evening outdoors. Once that last school bell rang, it meant games of tag on the school playground, capture the flag throughout my neighborhood, and bicycle races with my friends. Now that I have my own child, I realize how drastically things have changed. It seems that every day before I take my son to school in the morning and after I pick him up in the afternoon, the opportunities for play and exercise are so limited, he hardly gets half the physical activity I did as a child. I have to admit, I'm growing concerned about his physical health.

As it turns out, my concerns are valid. I hear that obesity rates are on the rise; that it affects nearly one-third of children in America. I want my son to get more exercise, but it's just not as easy as it used to be. Our neighborhood just doesn't have safe and well-maintained places for my son to play. Frankly, I'm concerned about children across our entire state, especially those in low-income and rural communities, where kids like my son, and adults too, are finding themselves without easy access to places to run, play, and stay active.

I've also heard that there may be a solution for my child and so many others in [STATE]. Some innovative communities across the country are looking to schools to become those much-needed places to play. School districts and community organizations are forming shared use agreements that allow schools to stay open during non-school day hours so families can play and exercise. Open school facilities give children the opportunity to be more active. They can easily play tag, run on the playground or even start a pickup game of basketball after school, and parents can spend time with their kids and get active at the same time. That is what I want for my son—opportunities for him to grow up strong, with healthy habits in place that will carry him through his life. Isn't that what we all want for our children?

Neighbors, fellow parents, it's up to us to make sure our children get the physical activity they need. It's up to us to help change whether or not schools are being used after hours to help communities stay active. Join me in standing up for the health of our children and support shared access to schools' recreational facilities, and tell your local leaders to make it easier for us to play and be active. **[INSERT LINK HERE]**.

**Note:** In the last paragraph, we chose language that made this a non-lobbying communication. By referring to "local leaders" instead of "legislators," the request is not a "call to action" under the definition of lobbying (see pg. 51). Further, there is no mention of specific legislation. If a legislative vote were imminent, and you had the unrestricted funds to do so, you could make a strategic decision to spend lobbying funds on an op-ed that explicitly urged readers to contact their legislators to ask them to vote for the bill. Alternatively, you could save lobbying dollars by writing an op-ed like the above, which advocates for expanding shared use without including a call to action, or even by writing one that advocates for specific legislation on shared use but contains no call to action.





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## Sample Rational Op-Ed

Many young people in America struggle to stay active. Too often, their local community does not help, presenting too few safe, convenient places to play and run around. Lower-income families, especially those in predominantly Latino or African American neighborhoods, are often hit the hardest by such barriers. In part because of these limited options to be active, the rates of severe obesity are particularly high among Hispanic boys (9 percent) and non-Hispanic Black girls (12.6 percent) when compared to non-Hispanic white, non-Hispanic Black, and Hispanic children.<sup>13</sup> These children are at risk of growing up into adults with coronary heart disease, stroke, hypertension, obesity or even some types of cancer.<sup>14</sup>

But there's a solution to these issues: shared use of school recreational facilities. Nearly 84 percent of children are more active in areas with open and supervised schoolyards than they would be in communities with closed facilities.<sup>15</sup> Right now, some of the most innovative communities across the country are taking our nation's obesity problem into their own hands by opening their schoolyards after hours to allow families to be active and play together.

Shared use agreements allow school districts and communities to address shared use of school facilities, which are often excellent resources for recreation and exercise in areas of limited availability, including lower-income or rural communities. And these agreements have widespread benefits in other areas, too. In addition to giving children the opportunity to be more active,<sup>16</sup> open schoolyards allow parents like those in my school district to spend quality time with their children while staying healthy and fit themselves.

Despite the benefits of opening schoolyards during non-school hours, some school districts have declined to do so because unclear liability laws make it difficult for them to assess their liability if they enter into a shared use agreement. Laws that clearly address school district liability and incentivize schools to share their facilities enable more schools and community organizations to form shared use partnerships that benefit everyone. These agreements allow organizations to overcome school district concerns and share costs and responsibilities of opening school recreational facilities to the public after school hours.

Our children's futures are heavily dependent on their health, and we cannot afford to turn children and their families away from gyms and playgrounds after school anymore. Shared use agreements are a win for school districts, community organizations and, most important, our families' health. Will you stand with me and support shared access to schools in [STATE] today?

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<sup>13</sup>Wang Y, et al. Trends and racial/ethnic disparities in severe obesity among US children and adolescents, 1976-2006. *Int J Pediatr Obes* 6.1 (2011): 12-20.

<sup>14</sup> Spengler JO. *Promoting Physical Activity Through Shared use of School and Community Recreational Resources*. Research Brief. Active Living Research, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, April 2012. Available at: [http://activelivingresearch.org/files/ALR\\_Brief\\_SharedUse\\_April2012.pdf](http://activelivingresearch.org/files/ALR_Brief_SharedUse_April2012.pdf).

<sup>15</sup> Farley T, Meriwether R, Baker E, Watkins L, Johnson C, Webber L. Safe place spaces to promote physical activity in inner-city children. Results from a pilot study of an environmental intervention. *Am J Pub Health*. 2007; 97:1625-1631.

<sup>16</sup> Farley T, Meriwether R, Baker E, et al. Safe place spaces to promote physical activity in inner-city children: results from a pilot study of an environmental intervention. *American Journal of Public Health* 97.9 (2007): 1625-1631.



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**Note:** This is not lobbying because there is no call to action. In the second-to-last paragraph, if it said, “It’s time for **[STATE]** to adopt Wisconsin’s shared use law,” that would be a reference to specific legislation (as a “specific legislative proposal”). But even if it referred to specific legislation, it would only become lobbying if a call to action (e.g., “Call your state senator”) were added to the op-ed.





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## Action Alerts

When reaching out to your advocates about a new issue area or campaign, your first message should be educational. Instead of asking people to get involved right away, spend some time sharing the facts. By laying this groundwork, you'll ensure that people understand your campaign—and people who “get” your goals are more likely to take specific actions later, like signing petitions or meeting with decision makers. Please note: These materials should be translated into the languages that are relevant in your community.

### Issue Introduction Action Alert

Dear **[NAME]**,

Staying active isn't easy, and without access to playgrounds, tracks, and basketball courts in neighborhoods across the country, many children and adolescents aren't getting enough physical activity each day. To make up for this, some areas across the country have found a solution that works: shared use of school recreational facilities after hours.

**Click here now to sign up and be a part of opening schools' doors to the public after the last bell. [LINK TO INFORMATIONAL RESOURCES]**

Schools can provide safe, convenient places for children to play and be active. If they keep their play spaces open after the last bell rings, school districts, local governments, and community-based organizations could share costs and responsibilities of operating the facility and effectively manage the potential liabilities. These agreements would also give families access to a free, convenient place to be active, especially in communities that lack safe, accessible plants to play

Nearly one-third of young people ages of 2 to 19 are overweight or obese.<sup>17</sup> Many lower-income communities do not have parks and playgrounds nearby, so we need other solutions. Shared use agreements can be just what **[STATE]** needs to help reduce childhood obesity and give children and adolescents the places they need to stay active.

Finding a place to play and get active after school shouldn't be hard for **[STATE'S]** children and adolescents. **Please join us in our effort to bring shared use agreements to your community.**

Thank you,  
**[ORGANIZATION LEADER OR MAIN POINT OF CONTACT]**

### Contact Your Legislator Action Alert

If you want shared use agreements implemented in your state and legislative change is needed to make that possible, your elected officials need to know these programs are important to their constituents. The following message asks supporters to send letters to their representatives encouraging them to support shared use of schools' recreational facilities.

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<sup>17</sup> Levi J, et al. *F as in Fat: How Obesity Threatens America's Future*, 2013. Issue Report. Trust for America's Health and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, August 2013. Available at: <http://healthyamericans.org/assets/files/TFAH2013FasInFatReportFinal%209.9.pdf>.



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If shared use liability legislation is pending in the legislature, the following alert would be grassroots lobbying because it is a communication to the public that reflects a view on specific legislation and includes a call to action. If there is no pending bill and the email is simply asking legislators to support a sensible policy, then it would not be lobbying and you could use non-lobbying dollars to pay for all related costs.

Dear **[NAME]**,

We're writing to you today because there's an opportunity to promote physical activity for students across **[STATE]** after school lets out—and your support could be crucial.

As our nation faces an ongoing childhood and adolescent obesity epidemic, **[STATE]**'s schools could help get more people active. In fact, across the country school districts and community organizations such as soccer and running clubs, are establishing shared use agreements to give the public access to schools' gyms, tracks, and playgrounds beyond school hours.

**Stand with us to support opening schools' play areas to the public after hours. [Standard ask] OR Stand with us to support [BILL NAME]. [Lobbying ask] [INSERT LINK TO ACTION]**

The most innovative communities are taking advantage of shared use of school recreational facilities to address health needs of students and their local communities, and they're having an impact. In fact, research finds 84 percent more kids were physically active in communities with open and supervised schoolyards than in communities with schoolyards that were off limits.<sup>18</sup>

Help us make sure communities and schools across the country work together to implement shared use by asking your lawmaker to stand with us. **Click here to take action today! [REPEAT LINK TO ACTION]**

Thank you,

**[ORGANIZATION LEADER OR MAIN POINT OF CONTACT]**

## Subject Lines

The subject line on your email can help catch your supporters' attention and encourage them to open your email. Here are some suggested subject lines to try with your audience:

- Every community needs places to get active
- You can help kids find safe places to play
- We need your help
- Take action: support shared use of schools
- Update on childhood obesity
- New ways to end childhood obesity
- Should schools open doors after hours?

<sup>18</sup> Farley T, Meriwether R, Baker E, et al. Safe place spaces to promote physical activity in inner-city children: results from a pilot study of an environmental intervention. *American Journal of Public Health* 97.9 (2007): 1625-1631.





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## Social Media Sample Messaging

The following sample messaging can help you spread the word about your campaign on Facebook and Twitter. Some examples are considered non-lobbying messages; however, others may fall under the definition of lobbying and will need to be paid for out of your lobbying funds.

### Twitter

#### Non-Lobbying Messages

- 65% of #kids don't get recommended amount of physical activity. Help them access safe/convenient play areas: **[INSERT LINK]** #shareduse
- How can #schools help students be active in **[STATE]**? Share their use **[INSERT LINK]** #shareduse
- Learn how **[INSERT SCHOOL NAME]** is opening its doors to safe recreational facilities. **[INSERT LINK TO SCHOOL'S PROGRAM INFORMATION]**. Bring the same to **[STATE]** schools. #shareduse
- DYK students with access to opened #schoolyards are more active & may get better grades? Learn why: **[INSERT LINK TO STUDY]** #shareduse
- #shareduse of school facilities can help keep our children healthy. Here's how: **[INSERT LINK]** #shareduse
- Do you support children having safe and convenient playgrounds and being more active? Take a stand: **[INSERT LINK]** #shareduse
- What is #shareduse and how can it help **[STATE]** schools and families? Learn more today: **[INSERT LINK]**
- #Childhood #obesity is on the rise! Let's help make physical activity accessible for all families. **[INSERT LINK]** #shareduse
- The rate of severe obesity is highest for Hispanic boys and non-Hispanic black girls. It's time to do something about it: **[LINK TO ORGANIZATION WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION TO TAKE ACTION]** #shareduse
- Our low-income, preschool-aged children are facing increasing obesity rates, and they need our help. Learn more: **[LINK TO ORGANIZATION WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION TO TAKE ACTION]** #shareduse
- When schools open their grounds, activity rises and communities get healthier. Make this a reality in your community: **[LINK TO ORGANIZATION WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION TO TAKE ACTION]** #shareduse
- Schools can be an important part of ending childhood obesity during and after hours. Learn how here: **[LINK TO ORGANIZATION WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION TO TAKE ACTION]** #shareduse

#### Lobbying Messages

The following tweets may be considered lobbying messages if they're sent while the legislature is considering a bill related to shared use agreements, or if the communication refers to a specific law or program from another state:



- .@[**INSERT LAWMAKER'S TWITTER HANDLE**] please support opening school facilities to our communities & make physical activity accessible for all. #shareduse
- .@[**INSERT LAWMAKER'S TWITTER HANDLE**], active #children become #healthy adults. Support shared use schools for safe places to play: **[INSERT LINK]** #shareduse



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## Facebook

### Non-Lobbying Messages

- The overall prevalence of obesity among low-income, preschool-aged children increased from 12.4% in 1998 to 14.5% in 2003 to 14.6% in 2008. Now is the time to work together for a shared solution. **[LINK TO ORGANIZATION WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION TO TAKE ACTION]**
- More than 84% of kids are more physically active when school facilities stay open after hours. Yet today, some schools are forced to close their doors for many reasons, including liability risks. Programs that make it easier for schools to stay open, called shared use agreements, put the keys back in the community’s hands. Together we can help children and families get out and play. **[LINK TO ORGANIZATION WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION ON TAKING ACTION]**
- Do you know how many children in **[STATE]** don’t have access to safe play facilities? Now is the time to encourage, support, and authorize school districts to open their exercise facilities to our communities and help make physical activity accessible for all families. Here’s how: **[LINK TO ORGANIZATION WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION TO TAKE ACTION]**
- Children deserve to have a safe and convenient place that allows to them to be active, and school districts should not have to worry about excessive legal liability if they provide this safe resource to families. Find out how you can support shared use of schools’ recreational facilities and join the cause! **[LINK TO ORGANIZATION WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION TO TAKE ACTION]**
- Shared use agreements are a win for school districts, community organizations and most importantly our families’ health. Find out why and stand with me to support shared access to schools in **[STATE]** today. **[LINK TO ORGANIZATION WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION TO TAKE ACTION]**
- It is time EVERY community leans on their school system to support physical activity by opening school recreational facilities to the families that need them so badly. Support shared use of school facilities in **[STATE]**! **[LINK TO ORGANIZATION WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION TO TAKE ACTION]**
- We support shared use of schools’ recreational facilities because all children deserve to have safe place to be active and improve their health. Tell us why you support shared use agreements and join the cause! **[LINK TO ORGANIZATION WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION TO TAKE ACTION]**

### Lobbying Messages

The following Facebook posts are considered lobbying messages if they’re sent while the legislature is considering a bill related to shared use agreements, or if the communication refers to a specific law or program from another state:



- School districts have the opportunity to address childhood obesity and improve the health of kids throughout **[STATE]**. Send a letter to **[INSERT LAWMAKER’S NAME]** to encourage, support and authorize school districts to open their recreational facilities to our communities and help make physical activity accessible for all families.
- With a third of children in the U.S. between the ages of 2 and 19 overweight or obese, our children could be at risk of future coronary heart disease, stroke, hypertension, obesity and some types of cancer. **[INSERT LAWMAKER’S NAME]**, shared use of school recreational facilities could be an answer. **[LINK TO FACT SHEET/WEBSITE WITH MORE INFORMATION AND EXAMPLES OF SHARE USE AGREEMENTS]**
- Our children’s futures are heavily dependent on their health, and we cannot afford to turn children and their families away from playgrounds after school. Innovative school districts across the country are taking matters into their own hands by opening their schoolyards after hours to allow families to



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get active together. **[INSERT LAWMAKER'S NAME]**, Shouldn't we do the same? **[INSERT LINK TO ORGANIZATION WEBSITE]**



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## Newsletter Blurbs

Newsletters can keep your advocates engaged and up to date about the issues that matter to your organization. If you currently send out a newsletter on a regular basis, use it as a platform to help promote your shared use agreements work.

Below are two sample newsletter blurbs to get you going. They should serve as teasers to longer, more detailed information about shared use school facilities located on your website. Depending on your familiarity of your audience with this topic, you may want to provide some basic education on the issue of shared use and shared use liability agreements.

### Are You Clear on Shared Use Agreements? (informational)

Shared use agreements allow school districts and communities to address shared use of schools' facilities, which are often excellent resources for recreation and physical activity in areas of limited availability, like lower-income or rural communities.

One of the leading reasons cited by schools for not making their facilities available is the fear of liability. Some states have already passed laws to address this concern. The truth is if a school district maintains its property, is insured and requires community groups to have insurance, they have minimized this liability.

Many innovative school districts are maximizing shared use of school recreation facilities to address the health needs of students and the communities, but there is more work to be done to ensure that all families have access to convenient and safe school facilities, such as tracks, gymnasiums, fields, and playgrounds.

**Learn more about shared use of school recreational facilities today.**

### Join the cause for safe recreational facilities! (advocacy)

Today, many children in America are overweight or obese and more than 65 percent of adolescents are not getting the recommended amount of physical activity each day. School districts and communities can help change this by providing safe and convenient recreational facilities beyond the school day through shared use agreements.

Shared use agreements allow school districts and communities to address joint-use of school facilities, which are often excellent resources for recreation and physical activity in areas of limited availability, like lower-income or rural communities. Through the agreements, school facilities are able to provide much-needed recreational areas to the community at little or no extra cost to the school systems while working through details such as coordinating scheduling and staffing, handling maintenance, and the possibility of injury.

**Let's help make physical activity easy and accessible for all kids. Support shared use of school facilities!**

Many states already limit the liability of school districts for recreational facility use, but now is the time to be clear about if those protections exist outside of school hours and school use. State legislation



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should allow schools to manage their liabilities while providing families with access to safe and convenient school recreational facilities beyond school hours and activities. Let's help make physical activity accessible for all families.

Learn more about shared use of school exercise facilities today and how you can help make physical activity accessible for all families.

**Join us in this important effort. Take action today!**

**Note:** This blurb would be non-lobbying, because it talks about supporting programs generally without referring to any specific programs. However, if the legislature were considering a bill on the topic, it is considered a communication to the public that reflects a view on specific legislation and includes a call to action—and thus would be lobbying.





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## Sample Blog Post: Letters to the Editor

If your organization has its own blog, customize the post below and use it as part of your campaign. The sample post below asks advocates to write letters to the editor of a local newspaper, but you can substitute any action you'd like advocates to take.

### FEATURED ACTION: Help families get active and support shared use agreements by submitting a letter to the editor (LTE)

Most kids would probably agree that recess is one of the highlights of their day. It's a time to play, jump, run and simply be a kid. And more importantly, when kids play at recess they get to have fun in a safe environment. Today, 65% of children do not get the recommended amount of physical activity for multiple reasons including not having access to safe playgrounds and facilities when the school day is over. But that can change.

Schools across the country have opened their playgrounds, tracks, basketball courts, gyms, fields, and more to provide communities with a safe place to have fun and be active. Shared use agreements of these school play spaces offer an opportunity to help address an important problem affecting our families—childhood obesity. However, many school districts are hesitant to consider shared use agreements because they're concerned about liability.

There are ways to limit school districts' liability, so long as the property is maintained and insured and agreements require community groups to have insurance. Many states already limit the liability of school districts, but it is not always clear that those protections for recreational use of school facilities exist outside of school hours and school use. We need your help to make sure that state legislation in **[STATE]** clearly allows schools to manage their liabilities while providing our community with more access to recreational facilities.

Let's help our community enact a shared use agreement. To get involved, you could:

- Post information about shared use on your blog, Facebook or Twitter, or email your friends and family and ask them to support this effort.
- Write to your key community leaders and public officials. **[LINK TO AN ACTION ALERT]**
- Write a letter to the editor (LTE) of our local newspaper—don't forget about ethnic media in your community! It has the chance to reach hundreds, if not thousands of people—and it'll help create new supporters for shared use in **[STATE]**.

If you'd like to draft an LTE, we've provided an outline below to help you get started. Before you start writing, here are a few tips to keep in mind:

- Visit your local newspaper's website to learn how to submit your LTE. If necessary, give your editor a call and ask how he/she prefers to receive letters.
- Make sure you leave your name and contact information (including phone number) when you submit. The newspaper will need to contact you before publication to verify you truly submitted the letter.
- LTEs should be short. Try to keep your message around 100 words. Some newspapers may have specific length guidelines.
- Share your story! If you have a story about staying active or why our students need physical activity to perform better academically and maintain good health, consider sharing it here so you can make



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a personal connection from the start. A before and after story of a community that has made this change would be a powerful message.

- Make sure you include the purpose of your letter: to get public officials and other community leaders to support shared use agreements.
- Back up your intent with facts about shared use.
- Make sure to direct readers to **[YOUR WEBSITE URL]** so they can learn how they can get involved.



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## Case Studies

The following case studies spotlight successful shared use agreements around the country. They can help serve as models for your own program or provide inspiration for new ways to approach your work.

### Schools as the Center of the Community

**Who:** Dayton Public Schools

**What:** Neighborhood School Centers

**When:** Since 2006

**Where:** Montgomery County, Ohio

**Why:** To bring together community members, local organizations and businesses to provide opportunities and services for the public utilizing school facilities as a community hub.

Teresa Wendell is passionate about her job as a site coordinator for the [Neighborhood School Centers](#) project with Dayton Public Schools, and she recognizes the significance of her day-to-day work for the school and the community. In her full-time role at Kiser PreK-8 School in urban Dayton, Wendell brings school administrators and educators together with community members, local organizations and businesses to provide opportunities and services for the public, utilizing school facilities as a community hub. She builds relationships, makes connections, and engages the community.

“Several years ago when the school district wanted to pass a levy, this project was a commitment from the school district to the citizens of Dayton that neighborhood schools would be available for community usage. There are five neighborhood schools and everybody kind of does their own thing depending on the unique needs to support the individual neighborhoods.”

Dayton Public Schools has been intentional about its commitment to support these five urban communities with a focus on expanding shared use of all school facilities. For the past eight years, each of the five neighborhood schools has had a site coordinator stationed in the building working with the district and many outside partners to reimagine the role of the neighborhood school as the hub in the community. The result is more connected communities, a litany of programs that benefit the well-being of kids and adults, and a flexible approach to utilizing school facilities in productive ways after school hours.

Key project partners are Montgomery County, City of Dayton, United Way, and the Fitz Center for Leadership in Community—all of which provide some program guidance, administration and funding. Major funding sources and individual school partners includes a long list of Dayton organizations that are all committed to helping revitalize community schools. Each center is anchored with one or two key partnerships with organizations such as the Salvation Army, East-End Community Services, Good Samaritan Hospital and the YMCA of Greater Dayton. This formula seems to be working, noted Wendell, but it’s the flexibility to nurture and grow any appropriate partnerships that gives the program real potential. “Each partner has strengths and weaknesses,” she said, “and each community has different needs. The hope is to identify the needs, and find the best partners and programs.”

Shared use of recreational facilities and programs that target kid’s health and fitness is a critical component of the community center vision. One success story at Kiser Elementary is a partnership with the Greater Dayton YMCA and the United States Soccer Foundation. This program brings together sport and nutrition with a kid-friendly and engaging approach. “It’s a 12-week program in the fall and the





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spring, which utilizes nutrition sciences using soccer as the hook. So, for example, one soccer session will be about dairy and we'll talk about milk, but the activity will use the soccer ball with a game called milking the cow."

Another impactful program is the weekly 'Family Café' produced in partnership with a local church that focuses on tutoring for children and ESL training for adults. This type of engagement is key, according to Wendell, as it increases parent involvement and creates an environment where she can introduce other services. "This is the time that we educate our parents on healthy foods, the importance of wellness and physical fitness, and why immunizations are important. It's just one of these cool things where the planets line up and everything moves forward."

For Wendell, success cannot only be measured by the amount of programs produced and the number of participants. The real impact is in seeing the community come together and move forward with a united mindset—and having one interaction go full circle and show itself down the road in individual, family and community improvement. Providing access to facilities and programs that support good health and self-improvement plants a seed, she adds, and so much progress is made when people are given the opportunity to come together, participate and make connections. As Wendell and the other site coordinators learn about the community, the community learns about itself as a collective unit, and the school becomes a place that brings it all together. "It's amazing to see the springboard take shape into other things," said Wendell. "What we do becomes this amazing organic growth."

You can learn more about the Neighborhood School Centers pilot on the [Dayton Public Schools website](#).

## Oklahoma Shared Use Project - Clarifying Liability Laws through State Legislation

Schools across the state have long served as hubs of activity, connecting families and creating a powerful sense of community pride for Oklahomans. Cafeterias where children gather during the day to nourish their bodies transformed into meeting spaces for little league sign up night for thousands of aspiring student athletes. Playgrounds, and soccer fields, tennis courts and high school tracks transformed from PE classrooms by day to spaces where families could play and be active together by night. And classrooms used to teach reading, writing and arithmetic during the day kept their lights on and doors unlocked after school to serve as meeting spaces for community groups like The Boy Scouts, Campfire and Girl Scouts to teach critical life and leadership skills to Oklahoma's future leaders.

However, faced with strained budgets, schools have begun to lock their doors and turn off their lights at nights and on the weekend—fearful the expense of potential lawsuits and property damage will cripple their ability to perform their most basic and vital function—educating every Oklahoma child.

Understanding the important value and sense of community schools bring to Oklahoma towns and the important role they play in helping shape a healthier Oklahoma, The Oklahoma Fit Kids Coalition and the American Heart Association joined forces in the fall of 2011 to work on the Oklahoma Shared Use Project with the goal of turning Oklahoma schools into community hubs once again.

Senate Bill 1882, authored by Senator Greg Treat of Edmond and Representative Fred Jordan of Tulsa, became one of the first bills signed into law in the 2012 legislative session and went into effect November 1, 2012.



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An implementation toolkit, “[The Shared Use Project](#),” was developed to give community members the tools they need to create successful shared use agreements between community groups and schools. The facts surrounding Oklahoma’s health drives the urgency of the implementation of the Shared Use Project—raising awareness about the law and how it can be a roadmap to creating healthier and more active communities across our state.

And, statistics tell us people with access to recreation facilities exercise 38 percent more than people without similar access. Unfortunately, when schools lock their doors and turn their lights out in makes it harder for Oklahomans wanting to make the choice to be active to actually do so. The Shared Use Project teaches Oklahomans how to encourage schools to keep their doors open and their lights on too.

For more information, watch “Shared Use Project” by James Harber: <http://vimeo.com/48846951>



## Content Article

The following article is an example of media coverage around shared use agreements. Read on to learn more about these programs, as well as the types of articles some journalists have written about shared use.

### CDC: Opening schools after hours improves community health

**By Brian Krans**

**June 3, 2013**

Los Angeles schools open their grounds for after-hours exercise to improve the health of at-risk populations, while other cities like Oakland are using their campuses as more than just playgrounds.

Turning schools into community centers in their off hours can improve neighborhood health and help combat obesity, according to a study by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Beginning in 2010, seven Los Angeles county schools entered into joint-use agreements with their communities to open school grounds for physical activity when classes weren't in session. Community activities included swimming, aerobics, golf, fitness video game play, tennis, and walking clubs.

Read the full article here: <http://www.healthline.com/health-news/policy-schools-become-community-centers-after-hours-060313>



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## Potential Allies



### Safe Routes to School National Partnership

The Safe Routes to School (National Partnership's mission is to advance safe walking and bicycling to and from schools, and in daily life, to improve the health and well-being of America's children and to foster the creation of livable, sustainable communities. Specifically, in developing a national learning network to share best practices among advocates for advancing street-scale improvements and shared use agreements that develop opportunities for cities and schools to collaborate on creating safe places for kids to play and engage in healthy physical activity.

P.O. Box 663  
Fairfax, CA 94978  
(415) 454-7430

[www.saferoutespartnership.org](http://www.saferoutespartnership.org)

### Positioning

The Safe Routes to School National Partnership stands to support Voices for Healthy Kids' stance on shared use based on the following:

- High impact in physical activity, childhood obesity, and public health
- Involved in activism aimed at promoting Shared use agreements between public schools and local government agencies
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders, and the media
- Ability to impact critical target audiences, namely local school districts and state and local governments
- Strength of communication channels
- Past public support of shared use agreements
- Alignment of organizational mission with American Heart Association's policy statement on shared use agreements
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to shared use agreements and combatting childhood obesity through physical activity
  - Maintains the [National Learning Network Library on Physical Activity, Health and the Built Environment](#), which features state policies, [best practices](#), and [local success stories for Shared use](#)
  - Hosted a monthly technical assistance [webinar series](#) on shared use, complete with audio recording, slides, and downloadable resources



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## Owned Media

### [Shared use and Street Scale Policies In Action](#)

By Margaux Mennesson

Safe Routes to School National Partnership

July 10, 2013

Voices for Healthy Kids, a collaboration between the American Heart Association and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, is an initiative that aims to engage, organize, and mobilize people to improve the health of their communities and reverse the childhood obesity epidemic. The initiative has six key strategy areas, and the Safe Routes to School National Partnership will focus on increasing physical activity through shared use and street-scale improvements through Voices for Healthy Kids: Active Places.



Active Living  
**RESEARCH**

## Active Living Research

Active Living Research (ALR) provides action-oriented research results that address the root causes of childhood obesity and physical inactivity. With a focus on communities, active transportation, schools, and parks and recreation, ALR works with advocates, practitioners, policymakers, and other organizations interested in reversing the childhood obesity epidemic and promoting active living. ALR is administered by the University of California, San Diego and led by a trans-disciplinary program team with background in public health, planning, transportation, and parks and recreation.

University of California, San Diego

3900 Fifth Ave., Suite 310

San Diego, CA 92103

(619) 260-5534

[www.activelivingresearch.org](http://www.activelivingresearch.org)

## Positioning

ALR stands to support the Voices for Healthy Kids' stance on shared use based on the following:

- High impact in policy related to childhood obesity, physical activity, and public health
- Involved in activism aimed at promoting shared use agreements between public schools and local government agencies
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders, and the media
- Ability to impact critical stakeholders, namely state and local departments of health
- Strength of communication channels
- Past public support of shared use agreements
- Alignment of organizational mission with the Voices for Healthy Kids policy statement on shared use agreements



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- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to shared use agreements and curbing childhood obesity through physical activity
  - [Shared Use of School Facilities: A Systematic Observation of Facility Use and Physical Activity](#) study compares facility use of physical activity settings in schools with shared use to use of physical activity settings in schools without shared use agreements to examine whether a shared use policy is predictive of a child's likelihood to engage in moderate and vigorous physical activity
  - [Shared Use - Introduction and Practical Guide](#) webinar explains the basics of shared use agreements, offers tips for reaching out to schools and governments to create them and provides insight into navigating local laws and regulations to properly craft them

## Owned Media

### [Addressing Challenges to the Shared Use of School Recreational Facilities](#)

By J.O. Spengler

Journal of Physical Education, Recreation & Dance

November 2011

The shared use of school recreational facilities holds the potential to offer activity opportunities for many people, especially those in low-income, minority and under-resourced communities. School facilities are usually easily accessible and offer safe, free or low cost and convenient recreation and sport opportunities. However, a number of barriers - including fear of liability, maintenance issues, vandalism and crime concerns, scheduling conflicts and costs of operation - exist that are keeping facilities from being shared. The purpose of this article is to discuss the benefits of shared use of school recreational facilities with partner organizations and to provide examples of such partnerships, potential barriers and recommendations for addressing challenges. This article describes the creative process that led to this work's success.



## America Walks

America Walks serves as a coordinator, information clearinghouse, and resource provider to advance game-changing campaigns with national and local partner organizations to advance and protect walking at the national level. The mission of America Walks is to make America a great place for walking by collaborating with likeminded groups to share knowledge, advance policies and implement effective campaigns that promote safe, convenient and accessible walking conditions for all.

P.O. Box 10581

Portland, OR 97296

(503) 757-8342

[www.americawalks.org](http://www.americawalks.org)



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## Positioning

America Walks stands to support Voices for Healthy Kids' stance on shared use based on the following:

- High impact in physical activity and community development
- Involved in activism aimed at promoting Shared use agreements between public schools and local government agencies
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders, and the media
- Ability to impact critical target audiences, namely state departments of transportation
- Strength of communication channels
- Past public support of shared use agreements
- Alignment of organizational mission with American Heart Association's policy statement on shared use agreements
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to shared use agreements and curbing childhood obesity through physical activity
  - Promoted the [Everybody Walk!](#) collaborative letter writing campaign calling for improved access to parks and green spaces and development of shared use agreements
  - Convened a [webinar series](#) on the topic of shared use agreements between schools and parks

## Media Coverage

### [The Infrastructure of Inequality](#)

By Jana Lynott

AARP Blog

October 21, 2013

I applaud Kaiser Permanente, America Walks and the other organizers of the Walk Summit for placing equity front and center on the agenda as they build a movement toward creating environments where walking is safe, easy and routine for people of all abilities. To begin, we, as a society, need to put pedestrian accessibility on equal footing with funding for other transportation improvements. With more than 8,000 boomers hitting retirement age every day, we cannot delay.

American Academy  
of Pediatrics



DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™

## American Academy of Pediatrics

The mission of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) is to attain optimal physical, mental and social health and well-being for all infants, children, adolescents and young adults. To accomplish this, AAP supports the professional needs of its members. AAP works to advance child health and well-being with the understanding that pediatricians are the best qualified to provide child health care.

141 Northwest Point Blvd.

Elk Grove Village, IL 60007

(847) 434-4284

[www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org)





## Positioning

AAP stands to support Voices for Healthy Kids' stance on shared use based on the following:

- High impact in childhood obesity, physical activity, and community development
- Involved in activism aimed at promoting Shared use agreements between public schools and local government agencies
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders, and the media
- Ability to impact critical target audiences, namely local physicians and state and local governments
- Strength of communication channels
- Past public support of shared use agreements
- Alignment of organizational mission with American Heart Association's policy statement on shared use agreements
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to shared use agreements and combatting childhood obesity through physical activity
  - [Increased Access to Safe and Attractive Places for Physical Activity](#) initiative is designed to increase access to facilities for physical activity in communities, including school facilities and community centers by extending hours

## Press Releases

[American Academy of Pediatrics Writes a Prescription That Can't Be Filled](#)

Prevention Institute Press Release (via Reuters)

June 11, 2009

"While much of the obesity discussion has centered on food, the Academy found that children cannot access safe places where they can be active," explains Dr. Richard Jackson, a consultant on the AAP policy statement and chair of the UCLA Department of Environment Health Sciences. "The Academy's landmark recommendation addresses this reality head-on and encourages physicians and parents to advocate for better access to playgrounds, parks and green spaces."

## Journal Publications

[Active Healthy Living: Prevention of Childhood Obesity Through Increased Physical Activity](#)

*Pediatrics*

May 1, 2006

The statement argues for increases access to school grounds after hours to promote physical activity in school children. The statement outlines strategies that health care providers and officials can use to encourage increased physical activity for children and teenagers.

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## American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network

The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan sister organization to the American Cancer Society. ACS CAN works to make cancer a national priority. Specifically, it advocates for better access to care, cancer prevention and early detection programs, cancer research funding, regulation of tobacco, better quality of life for cancer patients, and attempts to raise awareness of and reduce cancer disparities. Members include cancer survivors, caregivers, patients, volunteers and students, including Colleges Against Cancer.

555 11<sup>th</sup> Street, NW, Suite 300  
Washington, D.C. 20004  
(202) 661-5727  
[www.acscan.org](http://www.acscan.org)

## Positioning

The ACS CAN stands to support Voices for Healthy Kids' stance on shared use based on the following:

- High impact in cancer prevention, nutrition, and childhood obesity
- Involved in activism aimed at promoting shared use agreements between public schools and local government agencies
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders, and policymakers
- Ability to impact critical target audiences, namely state Departments of Education
- Strength of communication channels
- Past public support of shared use agreements
- Alignment of organizational mission with AHA's policy statement on shared use agreements
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to shared use agreements and curbing childhood obesity through physical activity
  - [How Do You Measure Up?](#) state legislative progress report address the need for shared use to teach youth the importance of healthy lifestyles
  - Worked with the [Public Health Law Center](#) to speak on the importance of shared use
  - Coordinated successful shared use campaigns in [Rhode Island](#) and [Mississippi](#)

## Press Releases

[Vermont legislative session ends with progress on cancer fighting measures](#)

American Cancer Society News Release (via VTDigger.com)

June 6, 2013

To address the obesity epidemic in Vermont, ACS CAN advocated for a penny-per-ounce excise tax on sugar-sweetened beverages. The tax was voted favorably out of the House Health Care Committee but was defeated in the House Ways and Means Committee by a close margin of a 6 -5 vote. The organization will continue its efforts in the next legislative session, along with advocating for shared use



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agreements in Vermont schools which encourage districts to make school property available to community members outside the school day for non-school recreational activities.

“ACS CAN will continue to champion the importance of reducing the consumption of sugary beverages and fight for shared use agreements as measures to prevent obesity, a preventable cause of cancer,” said Grant.



## Berkeley Media Studies Group

Berkeley Media Studies Group (BMSG) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to expanding advocates' ability to improve the systems and structures that determine health. BMSG is a project of the Public Health Institute. BMSG conducts research to learn how the media characterize health issues. Through media advocacy training and consultation, BMSG helps advocates harness lessons from that research and develop the skills they need to shape journalists' coverage of health issues so that it illuminates the need for policies that improve the places where people live, learn, work and play.

2130 Center Street, Suite 302  
Berkeley, CA 94704  
(510)204-9700  
[www.bmsg.org](http://www.bmsg.org)

## Positioning

BMSG stands to support Voices for Healthy Kids' stance on shared use based on the following:

- High impact in children's health, family health, and eating and recreational environments
- Involved in activism aimed at raising awareness of health issues and improving community health systems
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders, and the media
- Ability to impact critical target audiences, namely local school districts and local governments
- Strength of communication channels
- Past public support of shared use agreements
- Alignment of organizational mission with American Heart Association's policy statement on shared use agreements
- Relevant research and activism to increase the use of shared use Agreements
  - [Partnership for Joint Use](#) research report speaks to the need for expanded use of public school infrastructure to benefit students and communities

## Public Statements

[Talking about: Joint use](#)

Berkeley Media Studies Group  
July 30, 2010



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The research is clear: the more active children are, the healthier they will be now and when they grow up. Yet certain places make physical activity harder instead of easier. Experts know that where we live, work and play — the physical environment itself — determines, to a large degree, whether we will be healthy.

Too often, kids find the gate to their school's blacktop or basketball court locked after school hours, locking them out of opportunities to be active. Closing off recreational facilities after school leaves many children and families struggling to incorporate physical activity into their daily routines. They may live in an area without a safe park nearby or be unable to afford exercise equipment or a gym membership. Joint use agreements can help address these problems. Joint use makes physical activity easier by providing kids and adults alike with safe, conveniently located and inviting places to exercise and play. Besides making sense from a health perspective, joint use agreements make sense financially because they build upon assets a community already has. Sharing existing space is cheaper and more efficient than duplicating the same facilities in other parts of the community.

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## bridging the gap

Research Informing Policies and  
Practices for Healthy Youth

### Bridging the Gap (University of Illinois at Chicago)

Bridging the Gap (BTG) was created in 1997 to assess the impact of policies, programs and other environmental influences on adolescent alcohol, tobacco and illicit drug use and related outcomes. BTG examines these factors at multiple levels of social organization, including schools, communities and states. In recognition of the high rates of obesity among children, adolescents and adults, BTG expanded its efforts in 2003 to include research on the policies, programs and other factors that contribute to physical activity/inactivity, dietary behaviors and obesity.

1747 West Roosevelt Road  
Chicago, IL 60608  
(312) 413-2367  
[www.bridgingthegapresearch.org](http://www.bridgingthegapresearch.org)

### Positioning

BTG stands to support Voices for Healthy Kids' stance on shared use based on the following:

- High impact in diet, physical activity, obesity, and tobacco use among youth
- Involved in activism aimed at promoting shared use agreements between public schools and local government agencies
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders, and academia
- Ability to impact critical target audiences, namely local schools and state and local governments
- Past public support of shared use agreements
- Alignment of organizational mission with American Heart Association's policy statement on shared use agreements
- Relevant research and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to the importance of physical activity and local cooperation for shared use recreation areas



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- [BTG Research Brief from March 2012](#) speaks to the importance of using local land to facilitate physical activity
- [BTG Community Obesity Measures Project](#) focuses on policy and environmental factors likely to be important determinants of healthy eating, physical activity and obesity among youth

## Research Publications

### [Joint Use Agreements: Creating opportunities for physical activity](#)

Bridging the Gap Research Brief

February 2012

Today, two-thirds of adults and nearly one-third of children and teens in the United States are overweight or obese—and lack of physical activity is a leading contributor to the epidemic. Providing access to recreational facilities is a critical strategy for helping people of all ages be more active. Having access to parks and recreational facilities is associated with lower body mass index among children and increased physical activity among adults. Research also shows that families and children who live in lower-income communities and communities with higher proportions of Black, Latino or other racial and ethnic populations at high risk for obesity have significantly less access to recreational facilities than those in higher-income or predominately White communities.

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## Center for Cities + Schools

Center for Cities + Schools (CC+S), an interdisciplinary initiative between UC Berkeley's Graduate School of Education and the College of Environmental Design, is a policy research and technical assistance center that works to promote high-quality education as an essential component of urban and metropolitan vitality to create equitable, healthy and sustainable communities for all. CC+S focuses on the value-add of policymakers and young people working together across sectors to define healthy schools and build healthy, empowered communities. CC+S envisions a world where all young people thrive in healthy and opportunity-rich neighborhoods and school environments.

Institute of Urban and Regional Development  
University of California  
316 Wurster Hall, Suite 1870  
Berkeley, CA 94720  
[citiesandschools.berkeley.edu](http://citiesandschools.berkeley.edu)

## Positioning

CC+S stands to support the Voices for Healthy Kids' stance on shared use based on the following:

- High impact in policy related to education, community development, and social change



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- Involved in activism aimed at promoting shared use agreements between public schools and local government agencies
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders, and the media
- Ability to impact critical stakeholders, namely the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Strength of communication channels
- Past public support of shared use agreements
- Alignment of organizational mission with the Voices for Healthy Kids policy statement on shared use agreements
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to shared use agreements and curbing childhood obesity through physical activity
  - [Opportunity-Rich Schools and Sustainable Communities](#) report examines the link between education and sustainable communities and provides strategies to align quality education with innovations in city planning and development
  - [Partnerships for Joint Use](#) research report examines existing joint-use agreements throughout the nation to identify best practices for their implementation

## Media Coverage

[California Booms with FivePoint New Schools: Real Estate](#)

By John Gittelsohn

Bloomberg News

May 12, 2014

Last year, the number of new-school projects fell to 120 statewide from a decade peak of 1,147 in 2008, before the impacts of the housing crash hit the economy, according to the California Office of Public School Construction. District construction regulations and planning processes often frustrate developer efforts to provide schools as fast as they want, said Jeffrey Vincent, deputy director at the Center for Cities and Schools at the University of California, Berkeley. “I love school districts, but they’re not always quick and nimble,” Vincent said in a telephone interview.



## ChangeLab Solutions

ChangeLab Solutions (formerly Public Health Law & Policy) believes that, to achieve the common good, everyone must have nourishing food; safe places to live and play; opportunities to bike, walk or take transit; fresh water and clean air. Throughout the nation, ChangeLab Solutions works with neighborhoods, cities and states to transform communities with laws and policies that create lasting change. ChangeLab’s unique approach, backed by decades of research and proven results, helps the public and private sectors make communities more livable, especially for those who are at highest risk because they have the fewest resources.



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2201 Broadway, Suite 502  
Oakland CA 94612  
(510) 302-3380  
[www.changelabsolutions.org](http://www.changelabsolutions.org)

## Positioning

ChangeLab Solutions stands to support Voices for Healthy Kids' stance on shared use based on the following:

- High impact in childhood obesity, community development, and public policy
- Involved in activism aimed at promoting shared use agreements between public schools and local government agencies
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders, and the media
- Ability to impact critical target audiences, namely local school districts and state and local governments
- Past public support of shared use agreements
- Alignment of organizational mission with American Heart Association's policy statement on shared use agreements
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to the promotion of shared use agreements
  - [Model Joint Use Agreement Resources](#) provide downloadable templates for joint use agreements and offer case studies for successful Shared use programs
  - [National Policy & Legal Analysis Network to Prevent Childhood Obesity](#) (NPLAN) is a project funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation that helps communities become healthier places for children to grow and thrive

## Public Statements

### [Opening School Grounds to the Community After Hours](#)

ChangeLab Solutions  
May 30, 2012

In recent years, increasing access to recreational facilities that already exist at schools has emerged as one of the most promising strategies for building more opportunities for activity into neighborhoods. This promise is rooted in the realization that even the most poorly designed and underserved neighborhoods include schools. In an era of never-ending budget shortfalls, maximizing access to existing facilities – rather than trying to construct new ones – is the most efficient and economical use of public resources.

---

## Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities

Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities (Healthy Kids) is a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF), whose goal is to implement healthy eating and active living policies, and environmental-change initiatives that support healthier communities for children and families across the United States. Healthy Kids places special emphasis on reaching children who are at highest risk for obesity on the basis of race, ethnicity, socio-economic status and geographic location. Through the program, RWJF seeks to catalyze and support community efforts to address the causes of childhood



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obesity through integrated changes in policies, norms, practices, social supports and the physical environment. Healthy Kids maintains 49 community partnerships across the country.

400 Market Street, Suite 205  
Chapel Hill, NC 27516  
(919) 843-2523  
[www.healthykidshealthycommunities.org](http://www.healthykidshealthycommunities.org)

## Positioning

Healthy Kids stands to support Voices for Healthy Kids' stance on shared use based on the following:

- High impact in physical activity, childhood obesity, and community development
- Involved in activism aimed at increasing shared recreation facilities and promoting physical activity
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders, and the media
- Ability to impact critical target audiences, namely school districts, community organizations, and state and local governments
- Strength of communication channels
- Past public support of shared use agreements
- Alignment of organizational mission with American Heart Association's policy statement on shared use agreements
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to the promotion of shared use agreements
  - Promotes joint-use agreements in communities like [Central Valley, CA](#) that use school yards after-hours to promote physical activity
  - Conducts research on [creating environments and policies](#) in communities to promote physical activity for children and their families

## Media Coverage

[Childhood obesity: Healthy kids, healthy communities](#)

By Sue Scheff  
Examiner.com  
June 26, 2010

Jacksonville has been chosen as one of 50 communities across the country to receive a grant to reverse the childhood obesity epidemic. Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities, made possible with a grant through the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) based out of New Jersey, will focus on "neighborhoods where obesity is exacerbated by issues like acute unemployment and poverty, crime, dangerous traffic or too few grocery stores..."

What you can expect to see in Jacksonville:

- Establishing a food policy council to make recommendations for expanding access to the city's food system.
- Connecting farmers' markets to corner stores, churches, parks sites, schools and public housing and enabling food stamps to be used to purchase fruits and vegetables at those markets.
- Establishing joint-use agreements to allow the public access to school recreation facilities outside of school hours.
- Preventing crime by designing parks and recreation sites in a way that enhances safety.





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## KaBOOM!

KaBOOM! is a national non-profit dedicated to saving play for America's children. Its mission is to create play spaces through the participation and leadership of communities. It works to:

- Construct innovative, kid-inspired play spaces, using a community-build model that improves the well-being of the children as well as their neighborhoods.
- Share the knowledge and tools needed for anyone to find, improve, and/or build playgrounds on their own.
- Build a broad movement driven by research, analysis, policy, and community engagement.

4301 Connecticut Avenue, NW  
Suite ML-1  
Washington, D.C. 20008  
(202) 659-0215  
[www.kaboom.org](http://www.kaboom.org)

## Positioning

KaBOOM! stands to support Voices for Healthy Kids' stance on shared use based on the following:

- High impact in physical activity and community development
- Involved in activism aimed at promoting shared use agreements between public schools and local government agencies
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders, and the media
- Ability to impact critical target audiences, namely local school districts, and state and local governments
- Strength of communication channels
- Past public support of shared use agreements
- Alignment of organizational mission with American Heart Association's policy statement on shared use agreements
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to shared use agreements and promoting physical activity in children
  - [Provides](#) joint use agreement grants to community organizations to support the building of play spaces
  - Publishes [case studies and best practices](#) for shared use of community spaces where children can play and be active
  - Developed [tips](#) for parents and schools about how to save and promote playtime at school



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## Media Coverage

[Nonprofit creates a boom in playgrounds](#)

By Amanda Marrazzo

*Chicago Tribune*

November 14, 2012

"We are dedicated to saving play," Vietti said. "We believe in the community-built model, involving local residents in not only the construction but in the planning for the playground. It creates community."

The organization is called KaBOOM to reflect "that explosion of energy and excitement stemming from communities bonding together for a common cause," Vietti said.

## Owned Media

[Wordless Wednesday: This is NOT a public playground](#)

By Kerala Taylor

KaBOOM! Blog

March 21, 2012

Signs like this make us sad. Why should a perfectly good playground sit unused?

If there's a playground in your community that's all locked up, download our Joint Use Toolkit to learn how you can open it to the public after hours and on weekends.



## MomsRising

MomsRising is a transformative online and on-the-ground multicultural organization of one million members and more than one hundred aligned organizations working to increase family economic security, to end discrimination against women and mothers, and to build a nation where both businesses and families can thrive. MomsRising addresses critical issues facing women, mothers and families, by mobilizing massive grassroots actions. The group strives to bring the voices and real world experiences of women and mothers straight to the nation's leaders, and to amplify women's issues in the national dialogue and in the media. MomsRising also accelerates grassroots initiatives on Capitol Hill and at state capitols across the country and is committed to holding corporations accountable for fair treatment of women and mothers, and for ensuring the safety of their products.

1010 Grayson Street, Second Floor

Berkeley, CA 94010

(917) 407.3018

[www.momsrising.org](http://www.momsrising.org)

## Positioning

MomsRising stands to support Voices for Healthy Kids' stance on shared use based on the following:

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- High impact in childhood physical activity, nutrition, and public policy at the community level
- Involved in activism aimed at promoting physical activity
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders, and the media
- Ability to impact critical target audiences, namely local school districts and state and local governments
- Strength of communication channels
- Alignment of organizational mission with American Heart Association's policy statement on shared use agreements
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to curbing childhood obesity through physical activity
  - [Expressed](#) support of efforts to bolster school physical activity programs with support from the First Lady's "Let's Move! Active Schools" campaign

## Owned Media

[School physical activity programs pioneered by moms, attracting attention of First Lady, expanding nationwide through innovative grants opportunity](#)

By Emily Shuford

MomsRising.org

March 25, 2013

Up until a year ago, Kara Lubin and Kathleen Tullie did not know one another. Yet these two moms share curiously similar stories. Both women held close ties to the schools in their communities, Kara as a special education teacher at Washington Elementary in Corona, CA and Kathleen as mom of two children at Memorial Elementary in Natick, MA. Kara and Kathleen also shared an enthusiasm for movement, exercise, and all its benefits. These values led each to become concerned about the lack of opportunities for exercise and active play students had access to at their schools. Determined to see a change, these two women took action. Each rallied the support of local parents and teachers to pioneer a fresh way to get kids moving: Kara launched the 100 Mile Club in 1992 and Kathleen created BOKS in 2009.



## National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) is the nation's oldest and largest civil rights organization. The NAACP brings its voice to assist in the eradication of racial and ethnic disparities, with a focus not only on disease prevention, but on the social and environmental factors that affect health and wellness. In addition, the NAACP is engaged in the workforce development movement to increase the number of minorities represented in the medical and public health profession, and a leading presence on governmental advisory workgroups and national coalitions developed to provide counsel on cultural competency in the health care system.

4805 Mt. Hope Drive



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Baltimore, MD 21215

(410) 580-5777

[www.naacp.org](http://www.naacp.org)

## Positioning

NAACP stands to support Voices for Healthy Kids' stance on shared use based on the following:

- High impact in community development and combatting racial and ethnic health disparities
- Involved in activism aimed at promoting healthy lifestyles and physical activity, specifically in communities of color
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders, and the media
- Ability to impact critical target audiences, namely Congress, the FDA and communities of color
- Strength of communication channels
- Past public support of shared use agreements
- Alignment of organizational mission with American Heart Association's policy statement on shared use agreements
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to the promotion of shared use agreements
  - National health agenda addresses [childhood obesity](#) and [health disparities](#) in communities of color
  - [NAACP Childhood Obesity Advocacy Manual](#) endorses joint use agreements that allow school facilities to be used by the community after hours

## Media Coverage

[Fighting Childhood Obesity, One Community at a Time](#)

By Shavon Arline-Bradley

Senior Director of Health Programs, NAACP

*Ebony*

October 9, 2013

Exercise is also an important piece of the puzzle. We have got to get our kids running, jumping, playing, moving. By taking an additional 2,000 steps per day, an individual can begin the process of stopping weight gain. Our children need safe environments to facilitate exercise. We have to improve community walkability and public transportation, enhance recreational spaces, and allow for better access to school playgrounds outside of school hours.

## Published Resources

[NAACP Childhood Obesity Advocacy Manual](#)

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

For the first time in U.S. history, the current generation of young people could be the first to live sicker and die younger than their parents' generation. Childhood obesity is plaguing African-American populations at a rate that is disproportionately higher than the rest of the country. The NAACP is focusing on three policy areas to address the root causes of childhood obesity.

- Built environment: The need to improve community walkability and public transportation, enhance recreational spaces, and allow for better access to school playgrounds outside of school hours.



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- Food environments: Communities need better access to healthy, affordable foods in corner stores and local grocery stores.
  - School-based policies: Schools must emphasize increased physical activity during the school day and provide more nutritious school foods and drinks, including what is available at meals, in vending machines, and at concessions.
- 



## National Council of La Raza

The National Council of La Raza (NCLR), the largest Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organization in the United States, works to improve opportunities for Hispanic Americans. Through its network of 300 affiliated community-based organizations, NCLR reaches millions of Hispanics each year in 41 states, Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia. NCLR develops and implements health education and prevention programs and conducts health advocacy activities in partnership with its affiliate network to protect the health and well-being of the Latino community. NCLR is committed to advancing policies that give Latino and all American children the best opportunity to experience healthy development and sustain behaviors that contribute to success throughout life.

1126 16th Street, NW, Suite 600  
Washington, D.C. 20036-4845  
(202) 785-1670  
[www.nclr.org](http://www.nclr.org)



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## Positioning

NCLR stands to support Voices for Healthy Kids' stance on shared use based on the following:

- High impact in education, health and childhood obesity in the Latino community
- Involved in activism aimed at promoting healthy lifestyles and physical activity, specifically in Latino communities
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders, and the media
- Ability to impact critical target audiences, namely Congress and Latino communities
- Strength of communication channels
- Past public support of shared use agreements
- Alignment of organizational mission with American Heart Association's policy statement on shared use agreements
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to curbing childhood obesity through physical activity
  - [Healthy Kids, Healthy Schools](#) program works to combat childhood obesity in the Latino community by promoting healthy behaviors and implementing culturally adapted community based programs
  - Promotes shared use agreements through the [Hispanic Education Coalition](#)

## Media Coverage

[NCLR Conference tries to tackle it all](#)

By Michael Lopez

Latinzine, MSN Latino

July 31, 2013

From childhood obesity to Latino buying power and the DREAM Act, the annual gathering of the National Council of la Raza took on most of the community's big issues. The annual gathering of the National Council of la Raza (NCLR), which came to an end recently in New Orleans, was a star-studded event that included media celebrities, political figures and corporate leaders. First Lady Michelle Obama was one of the event's headliners. The official White House site made mention of the conference this week, highlighting Mrs. Obama's lecture. Speaking to a crowd of 1,800 attendees, she focused on health and the importance of monitoring childhood obesity in the Latino community.



*everychild.onevoice.*<sup>®</sup>

## National PTA

National PTA comprises millions of families, students, teachers, administrators, businesses and community leaders devoted to the educational success of children and the promotion of parent involvement in schools. PTA prides itself on being a powerful voice for all children, a relevant resource for families and communities and a strong advocate for public education. The goal of PTA's health and



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safety programming is to be a resource for PTA leaders in partnering with schools to create safe environments that encourage healthy, safe choices and social and emotional support for all students.

1250 N. Pitt Street  
Alexandria, Virginia 22314  
(703) 518-1200  
[www.pta.org](http://www.pta.org)

## **Positioning**

National PTA stands to support Voices for Healthy Kids' stance on shared use based on the following:

- High impact in childhood health, safety and education
- Involved in activism aimed at promoting shared use agreements between public schools and local government agencies
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders, and the media
- Ability to impact critical target audiences, namely Congress and the U.S. Public Health Service
- Strength of communication channels
- Past public support of shared use agreements
- Alignment of organizational mission with American Heart Association's policy statement on shared use agreements
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to curbing childhood obesity through physical activity
  - [Healthy Habits Program](#), in collaboration with the National Education Association and the Center for Disease Control, provides teachers and parents with resources to help support student health and wellbeing
  - Co-signed a letter to the Surgeon General that advocates for the creation of more play spaces through shared use agreements

## **Public Statements**

[Local Wellness Policies in the Child Nutrition Act](#)

National PTA Issue Brief  
January 2011

PTA and its coalition partners fought successfully for the inclusion of language mandating the creation of local school wellness policies in the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004. These wellness policies gave parents, students, school nutrition representatives, school board members, school administrators, and the general public the opportunity to formulate local policies that are tailored to the specific needs and of their communities.

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## The Notah Begay III Foundation

Created by Notah Begay, III in 2005, the Notah Begay III Foundation (NB3 Foundation) was established as an answer to an overwhelming statistic – one in two Native American children born since 2000 will develop Type 2 diabetes in their lifetime. The Foundation’s mission is to prevent Type 2 diabetes and its leading cause, childhood obesity, through sports and health and wellness programs that are based on proven best practices. This holistic approach to programming and evaluation addresses Native Americans’ nutrition, physical fitness and community-building needs, with the goal of producing measurable, long-term change in the health of tribal communities.

290 Prairie Star Road  
Santa Ana Pueblo, NM 87004  
(505) 867-0775  
[www.nb3foundation.org](http://www.nb3foundation.org)

## Positioning

The NB3 Foundation stands to support Voices for Healthy Kids’ stance on shared use based on the following:

- High impact in physical activity, childhood obesity and community development, focused on the well-being of Native American children
- Involved in activism aimed at promoting physical activity in Native American communities
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders, and the media
- Ability to impact critical target audiences, namely Congress and state and local governments
- Strength of communication channels
- Alignment of organizational mission with American Heart Association’s policy statement on shared use agreements
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to shared use agreements and curbing childhood obesity through physical activity
  - [Partnered](#) with the Obama Administration and the Indian Health Service to launch the Let’s Move! In Indian Country (LMIC) program, as part of First Lady Michelle Obama’s Let’s Move! initiative
  - [Turning the Tide for Native American Children](#) report outlines the challenge of addressing childhood obesity and Type 2 diabetes through sports, health and wellness programs, healthy foods access, community leadership development and advocacy for Native American children
  - [Soccer Program](#) and [Golf Program](#) seek to promote physical fitness and well-being among Native American youths with an overarching goal of reducing obesity and Type 2 diabetes





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## Media Coverage

### [Notah Begay III targets diabetes](#)

The Associated Press (via ESPN)  
April 29, 2011

A four-time PGA Tour winner, Begay is issuing a challenge to Indian youth to follow his example by exercising every day and eating healthy.

The challenge is part of the work being done by the golfer's charity, the NB3 Foundation, which has a goal of fighting obesity and diabetes among Native-American youth. The foundation is developing programs aimed specifically at helping native youth and at encouraging more tribal leaders to set an example.



peopleforbikes.org™

## PeopleForBikes

PeopleForBikes is the leading movement to improve bicycling in the U.S. By collaborating with millions of individual riders, businesses, community leaders and elected officials, PeopleForBikes unites Americans to boost bicycling on a national level for results that can be seen locally. Launched in 1999 as Bikes Belong, PeopleForBikes includes both an industry coalition of bicycling suppliers and retailers, as well as a charitable foundation. By connecting the bicycle industry and individual riders, PeopleForBikes generates political clout that secures a seat at the congressional table for people who benefit from bikes. Through these efforts, federal investment in bicycling has quadrupled since the group's inception.

207 Canyon Blvd., Suite 202  
Boulder, CO 80302  
[www.peopleforbikes.org](http://www.peopleforbikes.org)  
(Phone number N/A)

## Positioning

PeopleForBikes stands to support Voices for Healthy Kids' stance on shared use based on the following:

- High impact in physical activity and biking
- Involved in activism aimed at promoting shared use agreements between public parks and local government agencies
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders, and the media
- Ability to impact critical target audiences, namely local governments and biking industry leaders
- Strength of communication channels
- Past public support of Shared use agreements
- Alignment of organizational mission with American Heart Association's policy statement on shared use agreements
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to shared use agreements



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- [Government relations team](#) works to promote biking-friendly legislation and maximize federal funding of bike-friendly initiatives
- [Community Grant Program](#) provides funding for important and influential projects that leverage federal funding and build momentum for bicycling in communities across the U.S.

## Media Coverage

### [Better bike lanes on the rise](#)

By Jay Holick

*The Times Union*

October 19, 2013

Early in 2012, PeopleForBikes launched the Green Lane Project to champion these innovative facilities. Why? Because they turn a busy street into a place where more people are comfortable riding. Protected bike lanes help remove barriers that dissuade people from hopping on a bike to visit friends, get to school or work, or cruise to the neighborhood frozen yogurt place. That's good news for everyone—whether you are seasoned rider or new to bicycling.

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## The Pew Charitable Trusts

The Pew Charitable Trusts helps states ensure that all foods served in U.S. schools are healthy. With a long history of informing policy, Pew supports states in improving the nutrition of meals, snacks and beverages available to students across the country. Pew applies a data-driven, analytical approach to developing strategies that make government more effective. The institution's initiatives have delivered results at national, state and local levels.

One Commerce Square  
2005 Market Street, Suite 2800  
Philadelphia, PA 19103-7077  
(215) 575-9050  
Fax: (215) 575-4939

Washington, DC  
901 E St. NW  
Washington, DC 20004-2008  
Tel: (202) 552-2000  
Fax: (202) 552-2299  
[www.pewtrusts.org](http://www.pewtrusts.org)



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## Positioning

The Pew Charitable Trusts stands to support Voices for Healthy Kids' stance on shared use based on the following:

- High impact in public health and policy
- Involved in activism aimed at influencing policy and public health through research
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders, and the media
- Ability to impact critical target audiences, namely local school districts and state and local governments
- Strength of communication channels
- Alignment of organizational mission with American Heart Association's policy statement on shared use agreements
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to research that informs public policies that address childhood obesity
  - Published [research](#) on the role of government in combatting childhood obesity
  - [Health Impact Assessment](#) project investigates ways to improve health when drafting new laws and regulations and developing school curricula, in order to save on health-related costs

## Media Coverage

[Childhood Obesity Target Of Campaign Urging U.S. Government To Improve School Resources For Healthy Students](#)

By Susan Heavey

Reuters (via The Huffington Post)

May 9, 2013

A coalition of health advocacy groups on Wednesday urged the U.S. government to put more resources into school-based efforts to improve health and fight obesity among youth. The recommendations by the Healthy Schools Campaign and Trust for America's Health were backed by more than 70 groups including the American Cancer Society and the National Education Association. In a report, they urged the Department of Education to offer grants to promote healthy living initiatives, fund staff training to include wellness programs, support school efforts aimed at nutrition and exercise and track results of such programs.



## The Praxis Project

The Praxis Project is a nonprofit movement support intermediary and an institution of color that supports organizing efforts and change work at local, regional and national levels. Focused on movement building for fundamental change, the Project's mission is to build healthy communities by changing the power relationships between people of color and the institutional structures that affect their lives.



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7731 Alaska Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20012

(202) 234-5921

[www.thepraxisproject.org](http://www.thepraxisproject.org)

## Positioning

The Praxis Project stands to support Voices for Healthy Kids' stance on shared use based on the following:

- High impact in community health and development for communities of color
- Involved in activism aimed at reducing childhood obesity and improving the health of communities of color through public policy
- Past public support of shared use agreements
- Alignment of organizational mission with American Heart Association's policy statement on shared use agreements
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to shared use agreements and curbing childhood obesity through physical activity
  - [Communities Creating Healthy Environments](#) provides grants to local organizations to improve access to healthy foods and safe places for children and families to play and exercise
  - [Transforming Communities](#) project draws on best practices in the development of progressive local policies to transform communities into healthy, thriving places for its residents

## Press Releases

### [Communities Ramp Up Efforts to Address Childhood Obesity](#)

The Praxis Project

May 25, 2011

Twelve community advocacy organizations across the country have been awarded grants totaling \$3 million from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) to create healthier communities in neighborhoods with limited access to healthy foods and safe places to play. Each of the 12 organizations will receive up to \$250,000 over three years through Communities Creating Healthy Environments (CCHE), an RWJF national program that helps advance the Foundation's efforts to reverse the childhood obesity epidemic by 2015. The organizations are leaders on a wide range of social justice issues, including workers' rights, education and climate change. Groups funded through the CCHE program will leverage their organizing savvy to build public support for policy changes that will help families lead healthier lives.

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## Prevention Institute

Prevention Institute is committed to preventing illness and injury, to fostering health and social equity and to building momentum for community prevention as a component of a quality health system. Prevention Institute synthesizes research and practice; develops prevention tools and frameworks; helps design and guide interdisciplinary partnerships; and conducts training and strategic consultation with government, foundations and community-based organizations nationwide and internationally.

221 Oak Street  
Oakland, CA 94607  
(510) 444-7738  
[www.preventioninstitute.org](http://www.preventioninstitute.org)

## Positioning

Prevention Institute stands to support the Voices for Healthy Kids' stance on shared use based on the following:

- High impact in policy related to community prevention and public health
- Involved in activism aimed at promoting shared use agreements between public schools and local government agencies
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders, and the media
- Ability to impact critical stakeholders, namely local governments and national public health advocacy organizations
- Strength of communication channels
- Past public support of shared use agreements
- Alignment of organizational mission with the Voices for Healthy Kids policy statement on shared use agreements
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to shared use agreements and curbing childhood obesity through physical activity
  - [Environmental Nutrition and Activity Community Tool \(ENACT\)](#) provides research and strategies to develop better food and activity environments at the local level
  - [ENACT Local Policy Database](#) provides concrete examples of activity-centered policies that have been implemented at the local level, including exact language
  - [Joint-use Statewide Taskforce](#) provides fact sheets, advocacy and implementation tools, talking points, success stories and joint-use agreement locators

## Owned Media

[New Joint Use Profiles Highlight Community Successes](#)

Strategic Alliance  
Spring 2013



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Communities across the state are working tirelessly to create safe places for play and activity. In challenging economic times, solutions that maximize the use of existing resources and bring together residents, schools and health advocates are essential to improving healthy environments. Joint Use - or shared use of community assets like schools, playgrounds and parks - is a way to keep costs down and communities healthy. Jointuse.org is excited to announce the release of community profiles that highlight the successes and describe the unique conditions, challenges and barriers of rural, urban and suburban communities across California.

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## **Salud America!**

The RWJF Research Network to Prevent Obesity Among Latino Children

### Salud America! (UT Health Science Center San Antonio)

Salud America! is a national online network of researchers, community group leaders, decision-makers, and members of the public working together to support healthy policy and environmental changes that can help reverse the Latino childhood obesity epidemic. Salud America! serves as a clearinghouse—with news, research, maps, videos, resources, and successful stories of change—on making healthy changes in Latino communities across the nation.

7411 John Smith, Suite 1000  
San Antonio, TX 78229  
(210) 562-6500  
<https://salud-america.org/>

### Positioning

Salud America! stands to support Voices for Healthy Kids' stance on shared use based on the following:

- High impact in physical activity, childhood obesity, nutrition and community development
- Involved in activism aimed at promoting Shared use agreements between public schools and local government agencies
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders, and the media
- Ability to impact critical target audiences, namely Latino communities, local school districts and state and local governments
- Strength of communication channels
- Past public support of shared use agreements
- Alignment of organizational mission with American Heart Association's policy statement on shared use agreements
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to shared use agreements and curbing childhood obesity through physical activity
  - Produced a research brief on [shared use agreements](#) to support physical activity in Latino communities
  - Issue Brief on [Active Spaces and Latino Children](#) and [infographic](#) underscore the need for safe places for Latino children to be physically active



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## Media Coverage

### [Playgrounds seen as key to maintain child health](#)

By Daniella Diaz

Express News

July 27, 2013

Obesity — which has been linked to diabetes, heart disease and other health issues — affects 43.6 percent of Hispanic children and 15.6 percent of Anglo kids nationwide, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. An important first step to combat it would be for more schools to leave their outdoor facilities open, said Amelie Ramirez, who directs the Institute of Health Promotion Research at the UT Health Science Center, which includes the nonprofit group Salud America that conducted the study.

### [Research: Latino kids lack access to safe ‘active spaces’](#)

By HSC News Staff

HSC News

July 10, 2013

Research from Salud America! Found that 81 percent of Latino neighborhoods did not have a recreational facility, compared with 38 percent of white neighborhoods. Fewer schools provided public access to their physical activity facilities in 2006 (29 percent) than did in 2000 (35 percent). Shared-use agreements—formal contracts between entities that outline terms for sharing public spaces for physical activity—have increased access to active spaces in Latino communities.

### [Report: Latino Children Need More “Active Spaces”](#)

By Katherine Leal Unmuth

Latino ED Beat

July 5, 2013

Studies by Salud America! suggest shared-use agreements are one solution to get children to maintain a healthy weight. These agreements can often take place between schools and cities. Safety also can be a key concern. For this reason the study suggests street improvements such as fixing sidewalks and adding bike lanes.



## YMCA of the USA

The Y is one of the nation’s leading nonprofits strengthening communities through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. Across the U.S., 2,700 Ys engage 21 million men, women and children – regardless of age, income or background – to nurture the potential of children and teens,



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improve the nation's health and well-being, and provide opportunities to give back and support neighbors. Anchored in more than 10,000 communities, the Y has the long-standing relationships and physical presence not just to promise, but to deliver, lasting personal and social change.

101 N. Wacker Drive  
Chicago, IL 60606  
(800) 872-9622  
[www.ymca.net](http://www.ymca.net)

## Positioning

The Y stands to support Voices for Healthy Kids' stance on shared use based on the following:

- High impact in physical activity, childhood obesity, and community development
- Involved in activism aimed at increasing the number of shared recreation facilities and promoting physical activity
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, including 21 million members, thought leaders and the media
- Strong partnerships with and the ability to impact critical target audiences, namely local school districts and state and local governments
- Strength of communication channels
- Past public support and success on securing hundreds of shared use agreements to expand access to places and spaces for physical activity
- Alignment of organizational mission with American Heart Association's policy statement on shared use agreements
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to the promotion of shared use agreements
  - Active Living Strategies (accessed [here](#) and [here](#)) support policies that increase facilities for physical activity in communities, including school facilities after hours
  - Partners with local school districts to improve access and physical activity (example from Kentucky [here](#))

## Media Coverage

### [San Diego High Schools Will Share New Pools With Community](#)

By Kyla Calvert  
KPBS  
May 29, 2013

San Diego Unified trustees voted Tuesday to build the district's first 10 publicly funded school swimming pools as joint-use facilities. Proposition Z funds will pay for pool construction and high school teams will get priority to use them. But an outside group such as the YMCA will operate and maintain the pools.

### [Y.M.C.A. Adopting Health Policies for Youth](#)

By Sheryl Gay Stolberg  
*The New York Times*  
November 29, 2011





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The Y.M.C.A., one of the nation’s largest child-care providers, intends to announce Wednesday that it is adopting new “healthy living standards,” including offering fruits, vegetables and water at snack time, increasing the amount of exercise and limiting video games and television for youngsters in its programs.

## Published Research and Resources

[Pioneering Healthier Communities Lessons and Learning Practices](#)

YMCA of the USA – Healthier Communities Initiatives

If you’re lucky, leaders will emerge from those who are most passionate about a cause and go out on their own to set and achieve goals. In most situations, leaders evolve over time. Providing guidance, encouragement, and opportunities for small wins sometimes creates the necessary confidence for someone to step into a leadership role. Because the Y relies so heavily on its volunteers and coalition partners to implement and bring about change, we are almost conditioned to “ease up on the reins” and let others discover their potential. Our PHC activities have provided many opportunities for those who are passionate about health and well-being to become engaged in new and non-traditional ways (edible gardens, Safe Routes to School, trail ways). PHC has opened a door for people to become involved in ways that are deeply relevant to them.