GIVING KIDS A BETTER PATH TO EDUCATION STARTS WITH A SAFE ROUTE TO SCHOOL.
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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 help coalitions educate their communities on ways to make this vision a reality.

There is growing evidence that kids eat healthier 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 where children live, learn and play 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 reaching 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 obesity epidemic. Public 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 children in your community live safer, more physically active lives and, more specifically, to advocate for state policies that promote Safe Routes to School programs and infrastructure. 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 or you can reach us directly at VoicesforHealthyKids@heart.org. You can also join in the conversation with others engaged in the movement across the country at preventobesity.net.
Introduction
Childhood obesity rates have grown dramatically over the last several decades—doubling since 1963—and physical inactivity is one of the key underlying causes.¹ In many areas, school neighborhoods lack safe pathways and bike lanes that prevent kids from being active on the way to school, eliminating a prime opportunity to incorporate physical activity into daily routines.²,³

The federal Safe Routes to School program, established in 2005, provides funding for communities to adopt infrastructure improvements and conduct educational programs to promote accessible, safe and convenient walking and biking options. But with less federal funding now available to allocate to each program, state and local action is needed more than ever.

Together we can ensure the continued success and expansion of Safe Routes to School programs—particularly in underserved areas. Among the most effective approaches is advocating for state government appropriations to match and/or supplement federal funds (a complimentary toolkit is being developed to provide more details on federal funding for Safe Routes to School programs). However, there are other ways to engage on this critical priority at different levels.

The following list includes potential strategies that can increase support for Safe Routes to School programs and infrastructure projects. Below the list is a chart illustrating how the strategies can work together. The majority of this toolkit will focus on policy changes related to state appropriations, but there are other ways to advocate and become involved with this issue.

1. Advocate for state appropriations that fund Safe Routes to Schools programs, particularly targeting communities most in need: Safe Routes to Schools programs can only benefit those children that the programs can reach. Federal funds are a strong start, but to reach as many children as needed, state-level investments and buy-in are critical as well.
2. Community-level action: Safe Routes to Schools initiatives will only benefit children when school districts and local jurisdictions support programs and pursue funding to encourage more physically active communities. This also will help create the demand for funded programs, as well as establish best practices and a track record of success.
3. Schools as leaders: Providing bicycling skills trainings and pedestrian safety programs, installing bike racks, creating walking school buses where a group of children walk to school with one or more adults, and developing incentive programs for active transportation are examples of ways schools can motivate their students to use active modes of transportation on the way to and from school.
4. Starting at home: Families play a critical role in encouraging physical activity. Spend family time walking and bicycling to school instead of driving—it is fun for kids and lets everyone get some exercise as part of their day.

5. **Individual pledge**: Every person can make a pledge to improve his or her own health by bicycling or walking for daily travel. We often choose our travel patterns based on habit—get in the habit of walking or bicycling for short trips.

![Diagram]

- **Policy Level**: Advocate for state appropriations that fund safe routes to schools programs, particularly targeting communities most in need.
- **Systems Level**: School districts and systems can pursue safe routes funding and policy to encourage more physically active students.
- **Organizational Level**: Schools can motivate their students to use active modes of transportation to and from school.
- **Family Level**: Make the commitment to reduce trips to school made in the car, and instead pursue active alternatives.
- **Individual Level**: Kids choose to increase physical activity by bicycling or walking to school.

To get started:

We have made it easy to raise awareness in your community by creating model tools about why these resources are important and the different ways to provide them. In this kit are guides to identifying and recruiting volunteers, spreading the word online, alerting local media, holding events, and meeting with state and local public officials to encourage policies that make it safer for kids to walk and bike to school.

- **Review the contents of this toolkit** and think about the types of activities that would work best in your community. What, if any, existing state or local laws are in place? Could a local school neighborhood serve as a model to share best practices with others?
- **Identify your core planning team** and think about the type of activity that will make the biggest difference for your state or community. Does your core planning team reflect the diversity of the communities most in need of safe routes to school? Would an event that features a well-known community member attract media attention? Does it make sense to activate—and educate—government leaders (including planning, public safety, and transportation officials), schools and community members through social media?
- **Consult the volunteers section** of this toolkit for specific tips for recruiting, engaging and recognizing a diverse group of volunteers from communities and neighborhoods most impacted by these issues who will help you achieve your goals.
- **Customize and translate the sample outreach materials** included in this toolkit for your activities.
Increasing state-level funding to support Safe Routes to School programs and infrastructure will help make it easier for communities to support children in walking or biking to school. Let’s work together to teach our children to “look both ways™” by establishing Safe Routes to School.
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 (VFHK) grant to support your efforts, because no VFHK 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. Below are some examples of communications that may be considered lobbying or non-lobbying.

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<th>Non-Lobbying</th>
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<td>• “Contact your legislator and ask him/her to support bill number XXXX.”</td>
<td>• “Ask your legislator to support safe routes to school for our children!”</td>
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<tr>
<td>• “Click here to sign the petition to support bill number XXXX.”</td>
<td>• “Sign the petition for safe routes to school in Atlanta!”</td>
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<td>• A communication to legislators that supports bills not yet introduced: “Georgia should adopt Florida’s Safe Routes to School programs.”</td>
<td>• “As a concerned Atlanta parent, I ask all my neighbors to join me in supporting safe routes to school for our children.”</td>
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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.)

Along the way in this toolkit you will find important tips 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.
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 developers, doctors, dietitians, nurses, researchers, school nutrition association, teachers, PTA or academics that could be explored? You should also consider connecting with planners, zoning officials, public safety officials, school crossing guards, and students who want to walk or bike to school. Who do you want to be your “everyday advocates,” the large group of people who speaks 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 audiences that would be interested in building Safe Routes to Schools in your community. For example, try to enlist the help of parents in your school community or neighborhood. Parents can both lead this initiative in their own home by choosing to walk their kids to school and be ambassadors for your cause throughout the school district and state. Alternatively, local developers who are interested in bettering community infrastructure would help fortify the economic argument for spending money on Safe Routes to School.

Reach out to these people via all channels available to you: social media, existing member databases, personal emails, blogs, paid advertisements, community outreach, tables 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.

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.

Keep 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 have made connections over phone or email with reporters and local bloggers. 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 and make sure they reflect the diversity of the audience you’re trying to reach. For more details on media training, take a look at the Media Training Tips section of this toolkit. 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. To learn more about planning a media event, check the Hosting a Media Event section of the toolkit.
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 taking a look at the metrics you put into place at the beginning of the campaign. That will help you determine what worked and what didn’t, and 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 in regular touch with advocates and the media.
- Define metrics for your campaign’s success and regularly evaluate your progress.
Recruit: Potential Allies

In order to ensure that the Safe Routes to School guidelines are implemented nationwide, local support with like-minded allies will be important. As you begin outreach to other organizations to build support, we pulled together the below list of helpful tips to keep in mind, followed by a list of potential allies.

Who Can Help

There are a number of organizations that are working to provide children and their families with safe routes to and from schools. These organizations vary widely, both in terms of their mission and level of sophistication. Some groups are singularly focused on establishing Safe Routes to School programs, while others focus on broader issues, such as childhood obesity prevention, public safety, transportation legislation, zoning and planning, bicycle advocacy, and community development. While these groups may not perfectly align with the goals of Safe Routes to Schools guidelines, it may be worth considering them as potential allies, as you may ultimately share similar long-term goals around issues pertaining to Safe Routes to Schools.

Below are some suggestions for potential partners.

- Groups focused on social justice and civil rights in communities of color
- Local faith leaders
- Those looking to improve access to safe, public places for children to walk and bike
- Those focused on transportation legislation reform
- Those focused on community development, health and wellness in historically underserved communities
- National and local school organizations
- Ethnic press
- Local faith leaders
- Groups committed to reducing childhood obesity
- Groups focused on child welfare
- Ethnic and mainstream Chambers of Commerce
- Groups working on economic development
- Groups focused on educational justice
- Community planners

Potential Challenges

Safe Routes to School programs present a political issue for some policymakers. Support for funding of walkability and bikeability programs has drawn attention—and criticism—from some who feel that local issues should be dealt with by local governments, and not draw upon federal funding streams. As such, some have spoken out against continued appropriations for such programs.

Individuals who may stand against local efforts include:

- Local real estate developers who may have other business objectives for land use
- Community organizations vying for use of same space
- Community organizations in opposition of federally funded infrastructure programs

While some of these groups are publicly outspoken, others have taken a more subtle approach. Before approaching any organization, it is important not only to look at their legislative agendas but to also
review their policy statements and activities to ensure they have not undertaken efforts to derail Safe Routes to School programs.

**Key Takeaways**

- Make sure to reach out to local groups focused on community development and transportation legislation reform—their voices and support will be key to your success.
- Partners can come from a wide variety of backgrounds. Cast a wide net to make sure you reach as many potential allies as possible.
- Take a close look at your potential partners’ or opponents’ goals, priorities and programs before engaging with them.
Recruit: Recruitment Basics

Deploying a campaign isn’t just about mobilizing your supporters to take action or creating safe walking and biking routes in your community. 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 acknowledge the diverse needs of the 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.

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 the creation of Safe Routes to School 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 or other appropriate decision maker 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 leave their business cards behind to join the cause. You may pull in more names than with a traditional sign-up form campaign because a business card approach 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, such as signing a petition or sending a letter to their legislators encouraging Safe Routes to School.
  - 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.
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 the Safe Routes to School initiative, 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 that 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 the positive impact of Safe Routes to School? Healthy living is not just a volunteer opportunity, it is 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 bring a Safe Routes to School program to the local PTA. Other parents may see the benefit of enhancing walking and biking paths to school and become advocates for your cause.
- **Ask professionals** to mention Safe Routes to School to the regional Chamber of Commerce. A business-minded group may see an economic benefit to creating walking and biking paths in the area.
- **Ask faith leaders** to get involved. Leaders of the faith community are a great way to connect with community members, especially in under-resourced communities.
- **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.
  - Some of these organizations focus on programs for children in the community. For those that do, encourage them to sponsor a bike share program throughout the community, donate bike racks and bike locks to schools or facilitate a pedestrian or bike safety program.

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.

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 a Safe Routes to School club.

• **Reach out to local places of worship.** Recruit members to attend local events and organize meetings through bulletin advertisements and in-person announcements.

**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 legislators’ support, opposition, or failure to take a position—and encourage existing advocates to recruit their friends and family. For example, “We need more people to tell Senator Jones that we care about the health and safety of our children, and we need safe walking and biking routes for them to use!” or “Please thank Senator Garcia for supporting safe walking and biking routes to schools!”
  
  o This email would not be lobbying unless “safe walking and biking routes” clearly refers to legislation pending in Senator Jones’s or Senator Garcia’s statehouse. Usually, general statements about improving walking and biking routes aren’t lobbying, although urging the adoption of *specific* aspects of Safe Routes to Schools initiatives may be.

**Key Takeaways**

• There are many different ways to recruit new advocates. If you’re not having luck with one method, try another.

• 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.

• Be sure to have materials translated to languages spoken by your potential volunteers.
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 give prizes to advocates for recruiting the largest number of new supporters.
- Recognize students and families who have taken a pledge to bike or walk for their daily travel. Consider these recognition opportunities:
  - Student-award: Work with your local PTA to develop a school-wide incentive program for students to incorporate walking into their daily lives. For example, highlight or award the student who has taken the most steps over a certain period of time. Building this into a school assembly or pep rally can be a helpful way to spread the excitement about the program.

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. Consider creating recognition pieces around local street fairs or festivals, like free entry or food tickets.
- Speak up when it’s time to vote. If the local government is voting on measures pertaining to Safe Routes to School, 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 measures you care about—and then thanking the advocates when they do—is an important step.
  - This will be grassroots lobbying, because it’s a communication to the public that reflects a view on legislation and contains a call to action. Make sure you have the resources to pay for these activities and track them appropriately.
- Use the calendar to inspire you. Create recognition pieces around key health observances taking place throughout the year (e.g. Walk to School Day in October or National Childhood Obesity
Awareness Month in September) where you spotlight and thank advocates for their efforts to improve community health.

- Ask schools to endorse “Ride Your Bike to School Day,” when neighborhood kids from all around the school district gather before school and ride their bikes together.
  - This may not be possible for some communities where the need for safe routes is especially dire and a safe route for students to ride bikes to school doesn’t exist. In this case, a neighboring school district could use “Ride Your Bike to School Day” as a media opportunity to promote the need for safe routes for students in another school district and highlight the need for safe routes to school, as well as the disparities that exist between communities.

**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 efforts have been noticed and are 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 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 and suburban areas, particularly African-American and Latino; people living in high-poverty rural areas; and people living in 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 leaders and advocates representing priority populations? Do they represent the communities where you want to have the most impact—particularly if those communities are historically underserved? If not, where may be 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 having a presence or table at events that draw a diverse crowd or partnering with a 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 towards 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 bilingual volunteers. And if you’re planning on having a presence at events where people are likely to speak another language, make sure you have people staffing your table or booth who 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 and community perspectives?** Every culture and community has its 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 walk to school efforts, the salient issues for one neighborhood might not be focused on childhood obesity, but rather a neighborhood safe from crime where kids can walk or bike to school.
• **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.

**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.
- There are always opportunities to create a more inclusive, welcoming community.
Engage: Social Media Resources and Tips

It’s going to take community support to bring safe walking and biking routes to school in your area. Fortunately, social media platforms allow 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 Safe Routes to School. National experts may already have example 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.
- **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 advocates’ stories. Ask your advocates to talk about their role in the campaign and why they support the creation of Safe Routes to School in their community. 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. Consider including stories from kids who would benefit from having safe routes to bike or walk to school, which could be particularly impactful.
- **Create mini-documentaries.** A short film (keep in mind that the most viewed and shared videos are less than 90 seconds) following a child navigating his or her way to school, and the barriers faced along the way can illustrate the reality of hazardous walking and biking routes. This can emphasize the importance of enacting Safe Routes to School policies to ensure the health, safety and well-being of children.
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 Safe Routes to School. This way, when new people “like” your page because of this campaign, 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:
  o 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.
  o 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, which tells viewers to go to your site to help out.
  o 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.
  o 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.
  o Encourage advocates to tag their decision makers in their Facebook posts about ensuring that kids have safe routes to walk or bike to school. 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, including the use of online quizzes.
  o Ask questions: “Did you know that children should get 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity each day? Can you guess the percentage of youth that are overweight or obese in the U.S.?”
  o Encourage story-sharing: “How do your kids get to and from school every day? Tell us how you got to school when you were growing up. What would you change to encourage kids today to be more active?”
  o Keep them accountable: “How have you helped to bring safe routes for kids to walk or bike to school in your community?”

• **Highlight partners.** There may be other community organizations that are also working to bring safe routes to communities.
  o 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 opportunities 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.

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: “The road to a better education really does start with Safe Routes to School. Let’s bring them to [STATE] so our children can walk or bike to school, helping them build active and healthy lifestyles.”*
- 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.
  
  o Visit [https://www.facebook.com/ads/create](https://www.facebook.com/ads/create).
  o Select your destination page (this should be your organization’s Facebook page).
  o Select the Promoted Posts option:

  ![Advertise on Facebook](Image)

  ![What would you like to do?](Image)

  ![Choose the page post you want to promote](Image)

  o Select the page post you would like to promote:

  ![Choose the page post you want to promote](Image)

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

Key Takeaways

- Social media can be a powerful way to get people involved in your campaign.
- People respond well to posts with multimedia, so try to include images and video whenever possible.
- A small investment in paid advertising, like Facebook ads, can make a big difference for your campaign.
- By selecting appropriate languages you can do effective outreach to priority populations.
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 a 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 child health, and specifically safe routes initiatives.

- In response to a journalist tweeting about an article on how communities can increase crosswalks and put in bike lanes to make Safe Routes to Schools: “@[JOURNALIST] Really interesting take on #saferoutes. Love your point about XXX.”
- Sharing an article by a journalist: “[INSERT QUOTE OR PARAPHRASED TEXT] via @[JOURNALIST] [LINK TO ARTICLE] #saferoutes.”
- Sharing an article by the journalist that generates discussion among your followers about state Safe Routes to School initiatives: “Read [ARTICLE TITLE] via @[JOURNALIST] [LINK TO ARTICLE]. How can we ensure our kids get the physical activity they need?”
- In response to a journalist tweeting an article on helping children pledge to be active before and after the school day: “@[JOURNALIST] Loved this piece on an important topic! Would love to tell you more about our program. #SRTS”
- In response to a journalist tweeting an article on a lack of sidewalks and bike lanes in our neighborhoods: “@[JOURNALIST] Great points! What about funding state/local programs similar to [LINK TO SITE]?”

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 into editorial disagreements or arguments.

**Key Takeaways**
- Engaging with journalists on social media can help build valuable media relationships.
- Don’t start off with a pitch. Use social media to get to know journalists, not to ask them for coverage.
- Always be transparent about identifying yourself and your campaign goals.
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.

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. Think of ways to engage your newly recruited diverse audiences.
  - Keep individuals involved and updated during periods where critical action is not required, making it easier to engage them when the time comes.

- **Engage them in opportunities** to deepen their activism through surveys, “share your story” opportunities or social media engagement. These activities give individuals 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.
  - Reach out to diverse communities by engaging trusted messengers from those communities.
  - Show activists the importance of their participation, so they are ready to respond on occasions when 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 Safe Routes to School initiatives.
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 new and varied ways for them to participate.
- Surveys or requests for feedback can make your email program even stronger.
- Engage trusted messengers in reaching out to diverse communities.
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, 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 child health and safety—those living in neighborhoods with minimal safe walking and biking routes, past attendees at healthy living events, 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.
- **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), Caldwell List Company (www.caldwell-list.com) and Dataman Group (www.datamangroup.com) can be good resources if you wish to purchase a list.
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 message, you should test the script with someone unfamiliar with the issue to ensure it will be understood by your audience as intended. 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. Creating safe routes 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 and prepare materials for 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 safer for kids to walk and bike to school across the nation including in [ADVOCATE CITY/STATE]. Do you have a few minutes to talk about how this initiative will help those children in your community?
    - **IF YES**
      - Great! Safe Routes to School aims to enhance safety programs and walking and biking infrastructure, so that more kids will be able to get to and from school safely and actively. The number of kids regularly walking or biking to school has declined drastically over the last 50 years. And unsafe conditions are often cited as the primary reason for this decline.
      - **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 make it safer for kids to walk and bike to school across the nation, including in [ADVOCATE CITY/STATE].
  - *The Ask:* We’d love your help to enhance safety programs and walking and biking infrastructure, so that more kids will be able to get to and from school safely and actively. Please call us at [PHONE NUMBER] or visit our website at [WEBSITE] to learn more and improve the lives of the many kids who lack Safe Routes to School in their community.
  - 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), as well as whether they picked up or you left a message, whether they wanted to talk or not and whether they were supportive or not. You should also indicate their language preference. 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.

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
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.
  o Script for Initial Recording
    ▪ Hi! I’m calling on behalf of [YOUR ORGANIZATION]. Si quiere continuar en español oprima el 2. Our nation is in the midst of an obesity crisis. The childhood obesity rate in the U.S. has tripled since 1963, and one of the underlying causes is too little physical activity. We’re working to change this by bringing safe walking and biking routes to communities so that kids can get to and from school safely and actively. If you’d like to learn more about this issue and how you can help this effort, please press one.
  o 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 bring safe walking and biking routes to [ADVOCATE CITY] so that our kids can get to and from school safely—and actively. We’d love your help in advancing Safe Routes to School by asking our representatives to support this effort. Please call us at [PHONE NUMBER] or visit our website at [WEBSITE] to learn more and improve the lives of those kids who lack safe pathways and bike lanes in their community. Thank you and have a great day!
  o Script for Phone Operator
    ▪ Hi. How are you? Thanks so much for agreeing to take the next step to help bring Safe Routes to School to your community.
    ▪ To implement this change, we need advocates to speak with their representatives in support of programs and infrastructure that make it safer for kids to walk and bike to school. (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?
  o 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 providing our children in [STATE] with safe routes to school.
• As written, this phone script is not lobbying, because it does not refer to a specific legislative proposal. Instead, it simply refers to the general policy of “providing students with safe routes to school.” But the calls would be lobbying—and the costs would need to be paid using funds available for lobbying—if the script had urged people to tell their legislators to support “legislation to fund the Safe Routes to School program,” or if “Safe Routes to School” was a line item in the Department of Transportation budget bill.

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, 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.
  o 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.
  o 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.
• If your community has non-English speakers, make sure you recruit phone volunteers who can speak those languages.
• Check your state’s laws on phone outreach to ensure you’re complying with all do-not-call provisions.
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 Safe Routes to School 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? Do you want your Safe Routes to School efforts to appear on the nightly news? 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, and to consider other media outlets your target audiences turn to for trusted information. Once you decide what your goal is, 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?

Hold your event in a neighborhood in need of infrastructure improvements or somewhere people are actively working to expand Safe Routes to School. Choose a public location such as a school auditorium or outdoor grounds, the local Chamber of Commerce or a recreational facility for children (e.g., YMCA playground or blacktop). Other options include a meeting room in a city hall or other municipal building, or in a place of worship where leaders are calling for Safe Routes to School for their community.

As you structure your event, consider speakers who can talk persuasively about the importance of creating Safe Routes to School and the role this plays in nurturing the health of future generations. 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 her child to walk to school but fears for his or her safety, or a local doctor who can speak about the real impact increased physical activity (like walking and biking to school) could have on a community’s health. A diverse mix of speakers who can speak fluently in all languages spoken in the community will provide your media attendees with a range of perspectives about Safe Routes to School and the importance of bringing this sort of infrastructure to every community in America.

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 (POC) should manage all logistics. This person could be a paid staff member or a trusted volunteer. Whoever you choose, make sure they have experience with event coordination and execution.
- **Send invitations.** For some media events, such as 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 packets.** 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 Safe Routes to School, the fact sheets from this toolkit 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 Safe Routes to School initiatives. Be sure to include ethnic media. Based on this research, you can intentionally 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.

### 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 safe routes like childhood obesity, community enhancements, children’s health, public safety or transportation developments. Provide them with fact sheets and other appropriate background information.
  - Consider reaching out to parents who blog about healthy activities families can do together or bloggers that write about changes going on in your area. If your efforts involve encouraging your community to set the example for healthy living at home and teaching children to make safe and active choices on how they get to and from school, a post from a well-known blogger could go a long way to help your efforts. Or if your efforts involve seeking funding for infrastructure, a post from a blogger who keeps a pulse on community changes and is supportive of the new routes can be helpful as well.
  - A post has the potential to be even more powerful when the blogger is representatives of communities where these challenges exist.
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 come to the event.

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 Safe Routes to School. 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 Safe Routes to Schools initiatives 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 safe routes initiatives.

Transcribe the sign-up forms and upload your new advocates to your organization’s database. Send them a follow-up e-mail 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 early. Between identifying diverse 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.
- Once your event is over, follow up by making photos, speeches and videos available online.
Mobilize: Media Training Tips

Training an advocate on speaking to the media presents a prime opportunity to tell a compelling story on Safe Routes to School that resonates with 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 Safe Routes to School 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., health, transportation, education or community development 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 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 these, strive for diversity that represents your community and be sure to include spokespeople who can speak on your behalf in other languages as it makes sense for the community.

- Advocates with stories about living in neighborhoods that lack safe pathways and bike lanes for children—and adults alike—can provide a personal appeal that no one else can. For example, teachers or principals who believe their students might perform better in the classroom if they are active on the way to school, or a mother who lives close to a school but must drive her children to school because there are no safe pathways for walking and biking.
- Doctors who see the impact of decreased physical activity on their patients will add 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 bring safe routes for kids to walk and bike to school to your state.

Reach out to these types of spokespeople, ask if they would be interested in speaking on behalf of your organization about the importance of Safe Routes to School, 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. 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?
• **What should you say?** Speakers will need to know your talking points on Safe Routes to School, but these core messages are just a starting point. Make your content more relevant by considering the following questions.
  o Are there specific facts you want to highlight during the interview?
  o What is the central theme you want to discuss—the core statement you return to over and over?
  o Be aware of any cultural sensitivities or community dynamics in developing your core messages.
  o What would success look like? Provide numbers, statistics and milestones if increased Safe Routes to School were in your state.
  o Can you make your interview more tangible? Consider adding comments about specific communities.
  o 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.
  o 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.
  o 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.
  o 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. Be sure to consider those opposition or “gotcha” questions since reporters often want both sides of the debate.

**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. Be sure to let your spokespeople know what the most appropriate attire is given the media format and interview location.

• **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.
- **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 diverse core group of spokespeople who can consistently speak with the media about your campaign in all relevant languages.

- 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 before they speak with journalists.
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, sports coach or politician. Also consider that the influencers in the part of the community most impacted by the issue may or may not be the right messenger for an op-ed to all audiences.

- **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 who may not be familiar with state appropriations.

- **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 about building safe sidewalks and putting in crosswalks around your neighborhood, you could ask a local safety official to sign the op-ed; this could add credibility to the safety argument for your initiative in the community and would be considered a rational op-ed. One the other hand, if your goal is to encourage families in your community to support Safe Routes to School, ask a mother to pen an op-ed about how she doesn’t feel her community is safe enough for her children to walk or bike to school. This would be considered an emotional op-ed.
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.
Meeting with Legislators
Some all-star advocates may be ready to take their engagement to the next step by visiting 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 problems presented by barriers to safe walking and biking 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 in depth even in a short amount of time.
- Feel free to bring a colleague or an advocate with you who can also offer his/her 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 legislator’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 appropriate photos from a local underserved community 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 focused on the policy goal of making it safer for children and their families to walk or bike to school, and the various ways this could be achieved, rather than discussing specific legislative proposals, such as appropriations for funding Safe Routes to School projects.

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.
• 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 Representative
• 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.

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.
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, 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 refer to specific legislation in this type of meeting, make sure you have ample unrestricted dollars to cover both the costs of planning and hosting such an event. These activities will be lobbying expenses, since they involve 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 you focus your message more generally on the need for children to have a safe means to walk or bike to school, 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 unsafe routes to school, securing their general backing for your issue or obtaining support for non-legislative projects that improve physical activity for children in underserved areas, such as allocation of already-appropriated Department of Transportation dollars. Alternatively, if you want to use your visit to influence legislators to introduce or support a bill that allocates state-level funding for Safe Routes to School, you must use lobbying dollars to pay for those activities.
  - During your day at the capitol, consider planning an activity or event that would attract the attention of the media to your issue.

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 experience with child health, parents, or those who are deeply educated about and invested in bringing safe routes to schools in the area. And don’t forget to bring people who can talk about the positive fiscal impact. This can be a key issue when it comes to creating safe routes to schools, 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.
If you plan to include youth in your day at the capitol, be sure to have signed parental permission slips and chaperones. Consider consulting legal counsel if you need assistance developing this tool.

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.

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 create or enhance Safe Routes to School in their state. If your visit is a lobbying visit, the 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 appendices are meant to be general examples for you to learn from as you create your own pieces. Therefore, please refer to the key messages outlined on the next page and craft your messages according to the specific policies that best apply to your community. Remember to carefully plan the use of your lobbying funds. The lobbying checklist (pg. 50) that follows the key messages will help you determine what is lobbying and what is non-lobbying when writing your communications.
Key Messages: Pursuing Solutions to Ending Childhood Obesity

While it is easy to focus on the challenges and problems that face our children today, it is critical to remain solutions-oriented and put forward plans that will have a tangible, positive impact. That’s why the policy objectives and action items related to increasing access to safe pathways and bike lanes to and from school at the beginning of this toolkit are so valuable—they will 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 to pursue, it’s important to fold those solutions in all of the communications you produce so you can establish a congruent voice across all outreach.

Because you may advocate for different solutions at different times, we have bundled potential messaging for each policy lever together here. You can then use these messages in the various communications templates, including op-eds, action alerts and blog posts, that follow.

Overarching Message for Safe Routes to School
This is the messaging thread that should connect all communications, no matter the policy objective.

Schools teach our children a lot of valuable lessons. But what lessons are we teaching them on the way to and from school? In many communities, a lack of sidewalks, bike paths and other safe routes to school leave far too many kids with poor options. Walking or biking to and from school safely is a great way for kids to be active each day.

By ensuring our children have a safe route to bike or walk to school, we are protecting them and building healthy habits that can last a lifetime. When we look both ways at the importance of Safe Routes to School, we look out for what’s best for our kids.

Specific Policy Messaging

1. Advocate for increased state appropriations that fund Safe Routes to Schools program
   A quick walk down the road or a bike ride around the block is great way for kids to be active and healthy—particularly when they are going to and from school. But in many areas it isn’t safe for kids to do so, because sidewalks, bike lanes, and other safe routes are either absent or unsafe. Infrastructure improvements and education to promote accessible, safe and convenient walking and biking options must reach the communities that need it most. State appropriations will go a long way in making that happen. Let’s work with community leaders to seek funding that looks both ways for the community—appropriations that improve health in a safe way.
2. **Community level action**
   We must encourage our kids to walk or bike to school, but this encouragement is only worthwhile if kids have a safe way to do it. School districts and communities need to seek out funding and promote policies to give our kids safe sidewalks and bike lanes. The wellbeing of our neighborhoods extends beyond simply providing public services to improving the health and safety of residents. Community groups can help build a healthier local community by securing resources to support Safe Routes to School programs that will help kids be active.

3. **Get schools involved**
   Many factors play into academic achievement—being active is one of them. Schools’ primary focus is to improve kids’ classroom performance, and one way to do that is to increase students’ physical activity. Encourage and incentivize schools to take part in promoting safe, active modes of transportation by providing bike racks, organizing neighborhood groups whose members pledge to walk to school together, and providing programming to teach kids about safe ways to walk or bike to school.

4. **Starting at home**
   We all know that children learn from the examples we set, both at home and in the community. Encourage parents to walk or bike to their day-to-day activities—to work, to the grocery store or to pick up kids from school where the environment allows and to teach their kids the importance of following the traffic rules when doing so. By committing to daily trips without the car, parents can lead their family to a healthier lifestyle by example. By making walking and biking the norm in communities where it is currently possible, we can highlight how important it is for this to be made available in all communities.

5. **Individual pledge**
   Walking and biking is not just an active way to get to and from school each day, but a fun, social, and healthy way, too. Instead of spending each morning waiting with a group of neighborhood kids at the bus stop, kids can walk to school together. We often decide how we are going to get places based on habit. Get kids, and their friends, into a routine of walking or biking to and from school and make a safe and healthy lifestyle a habit in your neighborhood.
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., “Georgia should adopt Florida’s Safe Routes to School 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 healthy lifestyles in the community is not lobbying. In contrast, if the proposed appropriations for the State Department of Transportation include a line item for Safe Routes to Schools improvements if you refer to Safe Routes to Schools, you are referring to a specific legislative proposal

✔ 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, you may simply want to educate the public about available resources in your community or about the benefits of living a healthy lifestyle.
Sample Emotional Op-Ed

When you think about healthy schools, what comes to mind? Good academics, maybe—challenging classes led by teachers who care. Balanced cafeteria choices with lots of fruits and vegetables. Playground equipment that gives kids ample space to play and grow. And, of course, well-planned routes for students to travel to and from school. After all, what’s the use of a healthy learning environment if kids can’t get there safely?

The schools here in [COMMUNITY or STATE] are working hard to offer the best school curriculum, facilities and food they can. But ensuring safe routes to school is the community’s job—and unfortunately, when it comes to [COMMUNITY or STATE], we’re not doing everything we can for our kids.

The lack of safe routes to school isn’t just an inconvenience; it’s a huge health and safety problem. From 2000 to 2006, 30 percent of traffic-related deaths among children between ages 5 and 15 happened while walking or bicycling.4 That’s a scary statistic.

And speaking of scary statistics, here’s another fact we need to pay attention to: childhood obesity in the United States has tripled since 1963.5,6 [COMMUNITY or STATE]’s kids would be happier and healthier with more physical activity in their lives, and one of the easiest ways to help kids get active is by encouraging them to walk or ride bikes to school. The percentage of students regularly walking or biking to school has declined from 50 percent in 1969 to just 13 percent today7—and that decrease is largely due to unsafe biking and walking conditions. It’s hard to get to school on your own steam when there aren’t enough sidewalks, crosswalks, traffic regulations or bike paths!

While doing this for [COMMUNITY or STATE]’s kids is enough a reason to take action, students aren’t the only ones who would benefit from safer routes to schools. New crosswalks, bike paths and sidewalks are things that anyone can enjoy. And with these improvements in place, we’ll all have a better reason than ever to get out of our cars and up on our feet.

Together we can help everyone in [COMMUNITY or STATE] lead better, safer, healthier lives. All it takes is a commitment to improving the streets and sidewalks that lead to our schools. It’s our job as parents, as neighbors, as people who care about our area. Please join me in telling our local leaders to support safe routes to schools by visiting [URL].

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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 to “join me in telling our local leaders to support safe routes to schools” is not a “call to action” under the definition of grassroots lobbying (see pg. 50), because you are not urging readers to contact their legislator. Readers could contact a legislator, or they might contact other local leaders. Further, by using the general phrase “safe routes to school,” rather than referring to specific legislation, we eliminate an additional prong of the definition of grassroots lobbying, unless there is pending or proposed legislation that uses “Safe Routes to School” in the name (e.g., a line item in any appropriations bill.). If a legislative vote on a Safe Routes to School bill was imminent, 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: one that advocates for policy without including a call to action.
Sample Rational Op-Ed

Healthy kids are active kids—just an hour per day of walking or bicycling is enough to make a real difference in our children’s lives. But unfortunately, kids in America are becoming sedentary, and it’s having a real impact on their health and wellness.

One of the easiest ways to help kids get active is by encouraging them to walk or ride bikes to school. It’s something millions of kids used to do—but since 1969, the percentage of students regularly walking or biking to school declined from 50 percent to just 13 percent.8 A major reason for that drop? Unsafe conditions. It’s hard for kids to get to school on their own steam when there are no sidewalks, no crosswalks, no enforcement and no traffic regulation.

The lack of safe routes to school isn’t just an inconvenience; it’s a huge health and safety problem. From 2000 to 2006, 30 percent of traffic-related deaths among children between ages 5 and 15 happened while walking or bicycling.9 That’s a scary statistic and one that parents everywhere take to heart. Addressing these safety concerns is the best way we can make more parents feel comfortable allowing their children to walk or bike to school.

Shouldn’t we make it easier for our children to travel safely to school—especially if that means also making a dent in childhood obesity rates? I think so, and that’s why I support programs that fund safer routes to schools.

Increasing state-level funding is a key part of creating safer routes to schools. When states step in, infrastructure improvements—like new sidewalks, bike paths and crosswalks—can be built. And it’s not just students who reap the benefits of safe routes—anyone who enjoys walking or biking can take advantage of clear, safe pathways.

Along with infrastructure improvements, state funding for safe routes to schools can provide the resources needed for education programs that teach important bicycling and walking safety skills. These are lessons that our kids will take with them their whole lives, creating both long-term health benefits and improving our economic competitiveness.

In a country with alarming childhood obesity rates, it’s more important than ever to raise healthy kids. Keeping our kids active can help make sure they grow into happy, healthy adults. Please join me in supporting programs that help make [COMMUNITY or STATE] safer for walking and biking to school.

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 Florida’s Safe Routes to School 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.

Issue Introduction Action Alert

Dear [NAME],

When it comes to a good education, safety and physical activity play a major part.

It’s true: studies have shown that children who stay active tend to perform better in the classroom, and walking or biking to school can be one of the easiest ways to help kids stay moving. But in [STATE], parents are hesitant to allow their children to walk or bike to school and for good reason: our communities are built for cars and buses, not walking and biking. There are simply no safe routes for children to get to school. But this can change with a Safe Routes to School program.

Safe Routes to School programs will reshape the landscape of our community for the good. They’ll make sidewalks and biking lanes that are safe for children on the way to school, and for the rest of the community throughout the week. They also incorporate safety training for our children at a young age, so they learn how to “look both ways” and stay safe on the journey to school.

We’re working to bring Safe Routes to School programs to our community—for the health, safety and education of our children and the general benefit to our entire community. Over the coming weeks, we’ll be sharing more about Safe Routes to School, including opportunities to get involved. We hope you’ll join us in helping to reshape our community for the better. Learn more at [LINK TO INFORMATIONAL RESOURCES].

Sincerely,

[ORGANIZATION LEADER OR MAIN POINT OF CONTACT]

Contact Your Legislator Action Alert

If you want Safe Routes to School programs implemented in your state, your elected officials need to know these programs are important to their constituents. The following message asks supporters to send letters to their representatives championing Safe Routes to School funding.

If a Safe Routes to School bill or an appropriations bill with a Safe Routes to School line item 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
or proposed legislation 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],

Did you know that the number of children who walk or bike to school decreased from 50% to just 13% between 1969 and 2009? Meanwhile, the number of overweight or obese children in the United States has tripled since 1963. Coincidence? We don't think so.

That’s why we’re asking [STATE]’s lawmakers to support safe routes for kids to walk and bike to school in our communities. Our children need safe, easy and fun opportunities to build physical activity into their everyday lives, and when communities build the infrastructure for children to walk or bike to school, that’s exactly what they get.

**Will you send a letter to your lawmakers, asking them to protect our children on the way to school?** [INSERT LINK TO ACTION] It’s simple, fast and could save lives. For example, a recent study of Safe Routes to School projects in New York City found that census tracts with Safe Routes to School interventions saw a 44% decline in school-aged pedestrian injury during school travel hours, while locations without Safe Routes to School interventions stayed the same. We want to see the same in [STATE]!

Don’t forget that Safe Routes to School programs are not just for children, they’re for entire communities. They take an unsafe landscape, where fewer people walk or bike, and turn it into a place that is safe and fun, allowing communities to connect over physical activity.

Safe Routes to School programs: they’re for the benefit of the entire community. **Tell your lawmaker today!** [INSERT 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:

- Protect our children
- Bring more sidewalks to [STATE]
- Look both ways!
- Coincidence?
- Safe routes for our children
- ACT NOW: Tell lawmakers to support Safe Routes to School
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

- Physical inactivity is one of the underlying causes of #obesity. Help kids in your town and give them safe walking & biking routes! #SRTS
- Kids need at least 60 min of exercise/day. Walking & biking to school can help them get there. But they need #saferoutes first.
- Do you know the obesity rates in your state? Nationwide, 31.7% of children ages 2-19 are overweight or obese. #SRTS can help!
- It’s alarming: From 2000-2006 30% of traffic-related deaths among children ages 5-15 happened while walking or bicycling. We can change this. #SRTS
- Walking a mile to and from school each day fulfills 2/3s of the recommended 60 min of daily physical activity for kids. #childhealth
- Healthy eating and exercise go hand in hand. Give your kids the nutrients they need and safe routes for an #active life. #SRTS
- Building safe routes to school can help reverse the decline in kids walking & biking to school. To learn more: [INSERT LINK]
- Walking to school can be a fun, active way for families, neighbors and friends to connect. Let’s get together and push for #SRTS!
- Unsafe conditions are cited as a primary reason for the decline in kids walking & biking to school. We need to improve the routes in [STATE].
- Did you know that kids who are #active not only have higher levels of cardio fitness, but also perform better academically?
- Parents should feel assured that their kids will make it to and from school safely. Together we can push for safer routes for our kids: [INSERT LINK]
- .@[LEGISLATOR’S NAME], give the green light on safe routes to school & help children get the physical activity they need but often don’t get. #SRTS
- .@[LEGISLATOR’S NAME], your colleagues are pushing to bring safe routes to school in [STATE]. Why not join the cause? #SRTS

Lobbying Messages

The following tweets may be considered lobbying messages if they’re sent while the legislature is considering a bill related to Safe Routes to School, or if the communication refers to a specific law that is named Safe Routes to School or a law or program from another state:

- .@[LEGISLATOR’S NAME] hasn’t voted to support Safe Routes to School in [STATE]. Tweet a reminder today for an extra push! Speak up for #SRTS
- .@[LEGISLATOR’S NAME] Bringing Safe Routes to School to [#STATE] helps encourage #exercise and can decrease healthcare costs. Support safe routes! #SRTS
- In a country with alarming #obesity rates, we’re thankful .@[LEGISLATOR’S NAME] supports Safe Routes to School in [STATE]. #childhealth
What are the barriers that prevent kids from walking and biking to school in [STATE]? Speak up and ask .@[LEGISLATOR’S NAME] to eliminate these barriers.

Facebook

Non-Lobbying Messages

- How do your kids get to school? If the answer is by car or bus, consider another option: walking or biking! Walking a mile to/from school each day almost meets the recommended 60 minutes of daily physical activity for kids. It’s that easy! But first, we need to make sure there are safe routes in communities for our children.
- Help bring safe routes to [STATE]. Make this your cover photo and ask friends to support better infrastructure that promotes kids walking and biking to school. [INCLUDE SAMPLE COVER PHOTO WITH LINK TO YOUR SITE]
- Let’s give our kids the green light on health. Don’t let unsafe conditions deter kids from being active. Promote safe routes to school in [STATE]! For more information on how you can help our kids get active and help reverse dangerous obesity rates visit: [INSERT LINK]
- Did you know? Health care costs associated with physical inactivity decrease by almost $3 for every $1 invested in safe pathways for pedestrians and cyclists. Promote safe routes in your state!
- How are you encouraging more walking and biking routes in your state? Post this flyer to raise awareness and support for safe routes to schools! And while you’re at it, snap a picture of yourself in action and come back here to share it. [LINK TO FLYER]
- Want to know more about safe routes to school? Check out this fact sheet [POST FACT SHEET]. Next time you go to a legislator meeting, consider printing this off to help make your case. Be sure to report back and tell us how it went!

Lobbying Messages

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

- States must play a bigger role in providing funding to build safe routes for our children. Tell [INSERT DECISION MAKER’S NAME] why your town needs improved biking and walking routes to school, so we can build on the success of the federal Safe Routes to School programs. Let’s make it easy for our children to stay active!
- Encourage [INSERT DECISION MAKER’S NAME] to give the green light on funding to support Safe Routes to School programs and infrastructure! By doing so, states can implement better developments and eliminate common barriers to active transportation to and from school. Find out more: [LINK TO ORGANIZATION WEBSITE]
- Did you know? Funding for safer walking and biking infrastructure has decreased nationwide. Now it’s up states and local policy initiatives to get our kids moving to and from school—without compromising their safety. Tell [INSERT DECISION MAKER’S NAME] to support building Safe Routes to School in [STATE]. [LINK TO ORGANIZATION WEBSITE]
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 Safe Routes to School initiatives.

Below are two sample newsletter blurbs to get you going. They should serve as teasers to longer, more detailed information about Safe Routes to School located on your website.

A path to a better future: Safe Routes to School (informational)
Kids are more sedentary today than they were a generation ago. This is contributing to the childhood obesity epidemic, but in many cases it is due to the environment that surrounds them. For instance, in 1969 nearly half of children walked or biked to school each day, but in 2009 only 13 percent did. A key reason for this decline? Unsafe conditions: no sidewalks, no crosswalks, no enforcement and no traffic regulation.

Building Safe Routes to School brings street-scale improvements to neighborhoods so that children have greater opportunities to be active—and parents can rest easy that their child is out of harm’s way when heading to school. These routes also provide a fun and convenient way for families, neighbors and friends to connect while being active.

Increasing state-level funding is key to supporting these kinds of improvements. It will enable communities to implement healthy changes to their environments and eliminate common barriers to physical activity for children.

Learn more about Safe Routes to School, and how it can make a difference among children in [STATE]. Click here for more information and how to get involved.

Take action! Encourage safe routes for children in your community (sample action)
Our children should be able to walk to and from school without being at risk. Such daily activity is good for their minds and bodies. Unfortunately, nowadays fewer kids engage in healthy behaviors such as regular exercise. Walking and biking to school is an easy way for young people to get the recommended 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity each day, but it’s up to us—the adults—to provide proper resources, including Safe Routes to School.

The federal Safe Routes to School program, established in 2005, provides funding for communities to implement these types of projects. However, recent changes have cut federal funding to the program, meaning states must now play a bigger role in supporting Safe Routes to School initiatives.

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We can’t lose momentum in this effort. The success and impact of these programs is evident: One California-based study reported that walking and bicycling increased by as much as 200 percent among schools that received Safe Routes to School funding for infrastructure improvements.13

In [STATE OR COMMUNITY], we can do better by our children and keep them healthy. When we put infrastructure in place that makes it safe for our children to walk or bike to school, we’re building a healthier community in more ways than one.

We’re working to bring Safe Routes to School in [STATE]. Join us and show your commitment by contacting your local leaders today.

Note: This blurb would be non-lobbying because it talks about supporting programs generally without referring to any specific programs. Further, this example refers only to “local leaders,” not to “legislators,” so there is no “call to action”—and there wouldn’t be one, even if it did refer to specific legislation. However, if there were pending or proposed legislation entitled Safe Routes to Schools, and the message referenced legislators instead of the more general “leaders,” it would be considered a communication to the public that reflects a view on specific legislation and includes a call to action—and thus would be lobbying.

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.

**Headline: Give the green light on Safe Routes to School by submitting a letter to the editor (LTE)**

A busy street. No sidewalk. Poor traffic regulation. These are just a few of the obstacles keeping our children from being healthy. Why? Because unsafe conditions like these prevent children from doing something simple: walking or biking to school each day. Childhood obesity rates have risen dramatically over the last several decades, including in [STATE], and a lack of physical activity is part of the problem. For children, the CDC recommends at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity each day.14 Walking or biking to school is one simple way to help young people reach this goal. But they can’t if community infrastructure isn’t available and the environment isn’t safe.

The federal Safe Routes to School program, established in 2005, provides funding for communities to implement these types of projects. However, since that time, federal funding has decreased, creating a need for state and local support to make up for the loss. It’s up to us. By joining together in [CITY/COMMUNITY], we can help build and protect safe walking and biking routes, and ensure the continued expansion of Safe Routes to School programs.

We need your help to make sure Safe Routes to School programs come to [STATE]. To help, you could:

- Post information about Safe Routes to School on your blog, share it via 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. It has the chance to reach hundreds, if not thousands of people—and it will help create new supporters for bringing safe sidewalks and bike lanes to communities 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 community programs and infrastructure improvements that promote physical activity or why our students need these kinds of safe routes to ensure health and well-being, consider sharing it here so you can make a personal connection from the start.

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• Make sure you include the purpose of your letter: to get public officials and other community leaders to support developments that bring safe walking and biking routes to [STATE].
• Back up your intent with facts about Safe Routes to School.
• Make sure to direct readers to [INSERT WEBSITE] so they can learn how they can get involved.
Case Studies
The following case studies spotlight successful Safe Routes to School programs around the country. They can help serve as models for your own program or provide inspiration for new ways to approach your work.

Safe Routes to School Leads to Greater Collaboration with Public Health and School Officials: California

Background
Managed by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), California administers two separate Safe Routes to School programs: the federally legislated SRTS program and the state-legislated SR2S program. The federally legislated program was awarded through two funding cycles announcing more than $90 million in grants during 2007 and 2008; 219 schools have benefitted from funding through the federal program with projects including curb and gutter installation, widening bike lanes, pedestrian paths, sidewalks, crosswalks, signage, non-infrastructure programs and more.

Program Details
California’s work on SRTS has provided many opportunities for the Department of Public Health (CA DPH) and California Department of Education (CDE) to collaborate. For example, both agencies are members of the SRTS Advisory Committee that reports to Caltrans and provides recommendations for the selection of projects and guidance on the structure and guidelines of the program. California is also one of ten states participating in the SRTS National Partnership’s State Network Project. This initiative creates state networks that bring together advocacy groups, public agencies, nonprofits and other leaders to create an institutional framework for generating long-term policy changes that benefit increased safety and physical activity for children through walking and bicycling to schools. The CA DPH and the CDE are both members of the California SRTS Network, and have opportunities to interact and collaborate together on a monthly basis during teleconferences.

In addition, classroom curricula including teacher’s manuals, teacher reference and research materials will be compiled, adapted and developed as a portion of a three year $3.8 million SRTS non-infrastructure grant awarded to the CA DPH’s Center for Physical Activity and State and Local Injury Control Section. The Center will also develop walking and bicycling to school curricula, and provide technical assistance and training for SRTS education, encouragement and enforcement programs statewide. The California Healthy Kids Resource Center, funded in part by CDE, will serve as a subcontractor, providing an opportunity for both agencies to collaborate on a healthy kids initiative that resonates with both health and education statewide priorities.

The California School Board Association (CSBA) and Cities Counties Schools Partnership are also members of the CA Network and have been crucial partners in getting the word out about SRTS to school officials, from the state to local level. The California Network provided suggested revisions to the CSBA recommending that they add SRTS into their sample wellness policy language, which is used by roughly 90 percent of schools and districts statewide. They will be reviewing the recommended updates in the spring of 2009, and the relationship that is being built will lead to future collaborations including participation in their upcoming conference in December 2008 with presentations on SRTS and school siting.
Results
Collaboration on SRTS in California with the CA DPH and CDE has brought about results ranging from policy change to relationship building to increased communication between public health and school officials. School siting policy change will be one of the key results of partnerships built around SRTS in California. In the fall of 2007, the California Network formed an Action Team of State Network partner organizations called “The Ad-Hoc Coalition for Healthy School Siting.” This school siting Action Team conducted research and in January 2008 submitted a letter to the CDE, urging them to revise current regulatory requirements with respect to school siting while the department is currently undergoing a review of its school facilities guidebook. More than 40 California-based organizations signed on in support of the letter, which urged CDE to remove minimum acreage standards and support policies that promote community-centered schools. In March 2008, members of the California Network participated in a meeting with the CDE to discuss their school siting recommendations, and were encouraged by the CDE’s invitation to continue the discussion with additional recommendations.

The California Network’s school siting Action Team, with the Local Government Commission as the lead organization, was awarded a grant in August 2008 from the National Trust for Historic Preservation with funding from the federal Environmental Protection Agency to advance school siting policies in California that will increase opportunities for community-centered schools that support walking and bicycling. Grant funds will be used to continue the Action Team’s efforts for working with CDE to update the state’s policy guidelines on school siting. Another state-level policy change is the curriculum that will be created by the CA DPH’s Center for Physical Activity and State and Local Injury Control Section to develop walking and bicycling safety curriculum.

CDE and CA DPH relationships have been strengthened as a result of the SRTS Advisory Committee, SRTS California Network and grants bringing the agencies together to work towards advancing goals of increased physical activity, safety and healthy learning environments for children across the state.

Safe Routes to School Increases Physical Activity and Improves Health: Benton County, Oregon

Background
Benton County’s Safe Routes to School program is located in the Willamette Valley in rural Oregon. The population of the county is approximately 80,000. Three school districts within the county have been actively participating in SRTS since 2003 (Corvallis, Philomath and North Albany). The Benton County SRTS program was initiated by the Benton County Healthy Weight and Lifestyle Coalition, which was supported by the Benton County Health Department’s Health Promotion Unit. The coalition began by coordinating Walk to School Days in both the Corvallis and Philomath School Districts. In the 2007-08 school year, Corvallis School District, Benton County Public Works and Philomath School District received SRTS funding totaling $183,089 through the Oregon Department of Transportation SRTS federal program for both non-infrastructure and infrastructure projects. The Corvallis School District contracted with Benton County Health Department to coordinate the SRTS education and encouragement components with Health Promotion Unit staff and interns, and the Philomath School District hired a half-time SRTS coordinator through the school district.
Program Details

*Integrating SRTS into Health:* The SRTS program and the promotion of walking and bicycling to school are written into the Corvallis School District’s wellness policy administrative rules developed in 2007. The district’s wellness council has also developed goals and objectives for their 2008-09 Action Plan, which includes SRTS in the “physical activity before and after school” section. Promotion of walking and bicycling to school is part of the Wellness Council’s new “Great Start” Initiative, to be implemented in the fall of 2008. Members of the SRTS Taskforce participate on the 20-member Wellness Council, including the Corvallis Transportation Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator, Benton County Health Promotion Unit staff, and Benton County School-Based Health program staff. The Philomath School District completed its School Wellness Policy Program and is currently working on administrative rules that will include SRTS.

*Institutionalizing SRTS:* The institutionalization of SRTS can be seen through the Benton County Health Departments convening of a SRTS Taskforce. Members of the Taskforce have grown to include city and county transportation officials, law enforcement, school district facility staff, bicycle advocates, school nurses, public health and city council members, and city managers. Another strong indication is the formation of the governmental Benton County Healthy Active Community Environment workgroup, made up of county department directors including Public Works, Public Health, Community Development, Parks and Open Spaces, and the Sheriff’s department. The workgroup received $45,000 from county general funds to support environmental and policy changes to improve the health of Benton County residents for the last three and half years. The SRTS project has been one of the group’s primary objectives.

Results

To date, Benton County’s SRTS program has been focusing on collecting baseline information, building capacity and encouraging physical activity. The Oregon Department of Transportation-funded SRTS parent surveys and student travel surveys will be available in the 2008-09 school year for comparison to the prior year. SRTS program staff have been able to collect baseline body mass index data from the Corvallis School District Tobacco Prevention Education Prevention coordinator.

Benton County Health Department has been the leading force in supporting the growth and expansion of SRTS and in building capacity among community partners through organization, coordination, and funding of the program. It has leveraged funding to support SRTS capacity building through private foundation grants, CDC Obesity Prevention funding, and local county general funds. It has used these resources to hire Oregon State University students to help coordinate the project for the last three years. In addition, Benton County staff has provided technical support to local schools to help them prepare and apply for future Oregon SRTS funding to sustain the program.

SRTS Partnership Gets Students Moving: Denver, Colorado

**Background**

The Denver Osteopathic Foundation partnered with Denver Public Schools to launch a Safe Routes to School program to increase walking and bicycling at Ellis Elementary and other schools in Denver, Colo. Ellis Elementary School is a kindergarten through fifth grade school with a diverse student population of which more than half of the students live within one mile of the school.
Program Details
The Denver Public Schools and the Denver Osteopathic Foundation share congruent goals of providing a safe and enriching environment for learning and improving the well-being of the students. Establishing a SRTS program was one way to help reach this goal. The two organizations recognized that to have a successful SRTS program they needed to bring the right people together. At Ellis Elementary, this led to the development of a School Traffic Safety Committee and the participation of the school administration and local law enforcement. The School Traffic Safety Committee was made up of school administration, parents and volunteers. This group acted as a liaison between the school and the parents and was instrumental in communicating with parents. The principal worked with school staff to oversee program activities such as parent surveys, student travel count surveys and pedestrian and bicycle events and education. The law enforcement officers played an integral role by adding a level of credibility to program events, offering information about local law enforcement concerns and providing an authoritative presence around the school.

Over a four-day period, the school surveyed students on how they arrived to school and found that more than 50 percent were driven by a parent, even though the majority of the students live within walking distance. Parents were surveyed to identify the concerns they had with allowing their children to walk or bicycle to school. Information collected from parents and students was used to inform the development of many of the SRTS program’s events and activities.

Within the school, the use of interactive presentations taught students in pre-kindergarten through second grade about pedestrian safety skills. The teachers utilized story boards, games and songs to ensure the children remembered the lessons learned. Ellis Elementary also included a bicycle skills workshop targeting third through fifth graders. The workshop consisted of a safety presentation about the rules of the road and proper helmet use, followed by students applying their knowledge and skills while practicing on a bicycle course.

The school holds weekly Walk ‘N Roll Wednesdays, when every Wednesday during April, students living within walking distance are encouraged to walk or bicycle to school and parents are welcome to accompany them. PTA representatives from the school, teachers and the principal await the children’s arrival outside school and give them small prizes for walking or bicycling. Given the diverse school population, the program incorporates several translations, of safety and education materials (including Spanish and Russian).

Results
Thanks to the concerted efforts of the School Traffic Safety Committee, the school, law enforcement officers, parent volunteers and interested students, the program has been a success. Since the program’s inception, the school has seen an increase in the number of students walking and bicycling from 27 percent of the student population to 36 percent.

Pre and post-tests administered to the students before and after attending the bicycle and pedestrian safety courses reveal that in the short term, the sessions increased the children’s knowledge of bicycle and pedestrian safety procedures.
Content Articles
The following articles are examples of media coverage around Safe Routes to School. Read on to learn more about these programs, as well as the types of articles some journalists have written about these types of initiatives.

Chattanoogan.com: Governor Haslam Announces $2.1 Million In Safe Routes to School Grants
Sept. 5, 2013
Governor Bill Haslam on Thursday announced Safe Routes to School funding totaling $2.1 for 15 municipalities in Tennessee. The funds will be used by multiple schools to improve sidewalks, crosswalks, signs and safe walking and biking educational activities. The Safe Routes to School Program is a statewide initiative designed to make bicycling and walking to school a safer, more appealing and healthier alternative for students in kindergarten through eighth grade.

"Increased physical activity is key to improving the health of Tennessee families," Governor Haslam said. "The Safe Routes to School Program helps communities across the state create safer walking and biking environments for students and funds activities that encourage healthy lifestyles."

Read more here.

Reuters: Pedestrian Safety Program Prevents Student Injuries
By Genevra Pittman
Jan. 14, 2013
Fewer kids were injured during early morning and after school hours once new traffic lights, pedestrian signals and speed bumps were put around New York City schools, according to a new study.

Those fixtures were added through the Safe Routes to School program, which received over $600 million from the U.S. Congress in 2005 to improve kids' ability to walk and bike to schools across the country.

"Pedestrian injuries for children, while the numbers have gotten better over the past decade or so, they're still pretty dismal," said Charles DiMaggio, who worked on the new study at Columbia University in New York.

Read more here.
BikePortland.org: City reports double digit bike to school rates for first time ever

By Jonathan Maus
Dec. 10, 2012

The City of Portland has just compiled the numbers from their fall 2012 Safe Routes to School parent survey. The results show an encouraging upward trend of biking and walking rates. In fact, 10.3 percent of the fall 2012 survey respondents said they biked to school. That's a 36 percent increase from fall 2011 and it's the highest bike mode share recorded they've ever recorded.

When taken together, the walking and biking mode share is 42.7 percent — an increase of 38 percent since 2006.

Read more here.
Index of Potential Allies

- Safe Routes to School National Partnership
- Active Transportation Alliance
- American Academy of Pediatrics
- American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network
- Berkeley Media Studies Group
- Bridging the Gap
- ChangeLab Solutions
- Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities
- The League of American Bicyclists
- MomsRising
- National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
- National Center for Safe Routes to School
- National Council of La Raza
- National PTA
- The Notah Begay III Foundation
- PeopleForBikes
- The Pew Charitable Trusts
- The Praxis Project
- Salud America!
- Trust for America’s Health
- YMCA of the USA
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 joint-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

Positioning

Safe Routes to School National Partnership stands to support the Voices for Healthy Kids’ stance on Safe Routes to School based on the following:

- High impact in policy related to physical activity, childhood obesity and public health
- Involved in activism aimed at promoting Safe Routes to School programs
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders and the media
- Ability to impact critical target audiences, namely the Federal Highway Administration, state departments of transportation and state and local governments
- Strength of communication channels
- Past public support of Safe Routes to School programs
- Alignment of organizational mission with American Heart Association’s policy statement on Safe Routes to School
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to Safe Routes to School programs, to improve the well-being of young people and to foster healthy communities
  - Produced a webinar series to educate advocates on the impact of MAP-21 legislation on Safe Routes to School programs
  - Compiled a library of resources for use in promoting and documenting the success and goals of the national Safe Routes to School movement
  - Ongoing participation with Voices for Healthy Kids
Media Coverage

Pedestrian safety program prevents student injuries
By Genevra Pittman
Reuters (via Chicago Tribune)
January 13, 2013

Fewer kids were injured during early morning and after school hours once new traffic lights, pedestrian
signals and speed bumps were put around New York City schools, according to a new study. Those
fixtures were added through the Safe Routes to School program, which received over $600 million from
the U.S. Congress in 2005 to improve kids' ability to walk and bike to schools across the country.

"Pedestrian injuries for children, while the numbers have gotten better over the past decade or so,
they're still pretty dismal," said Charles DiMaggio, who worked on the new study at Columbia University
in New York. As a result of Safe Routes to School, the city's Department of Transportation undertook
safety improvements at the 124 New York City schools (out of a total of 1,471) with the highest injury
rates in the city.

Active Transportation Alliance

The Active Transportation Alliance (ATA) is a non-profit advocacy organization that works to improve
conditions for bicycling, walking and transit and engage people in healthy and active ways to get around.
For nearly 25 years, ATA has led the charge for a transportation culture that values safety, health,
sustainability and choice. ATA is the regional expert that spurs Safe Routes to School programs in local
communities and advocates for policies at the state level that support walkable and bikeable schools.

9 W. Hubbard Street, Suite 402
Chicago, IL 60654-6545
(312) 427-3325
www.activetrans.org

Positioning

ATA stands to support the Voices for Healthy Kids’ stance on Safe Routes to School based on the
following:
• High impact in policy related to biking, transportation and public safety
• Involved in activism aimed at promoting Safe Routes to School programs
• High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders and the media
• Ability to impact critical target audiences, namely federal, state and local departments of
  transportation
• Strength of communication channels
- Past public support of Safe Routes to School programs
- Alignment of organizational mission with American Heart Association’s policy statement on Safe Routes to School
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to Safe Routes to School programs, to improve the well-being of young people and to foster healthy communities
  - Better Blocks program works with schools, parks and block clubs to help them use city resources to eliminate barriers to walking, biking and public transit
  - Participates in the Safe Routes to School National Partnership’s State Network Project as the convening organization for the Illinois Safe Routes to School State Network
  - Produced the Schools Changing Transportation: Local Leaders Guide that helps school boards, local school councils and parent groups identify obstacles to active transportation and determine solutions

Media Coverage

Experts expected to steer Lake Shore Drive away from being a superhighway
By Jon Hilkevitch
Chicago Tribune
July 29, 2013

Today's Lake Shore Drive doesn't meet the needs of everyone who uses the lakefront, said Lee Crandell, director of campaigns at the Active Transportation Alliance, which is part of a coalition of civic groups advocating major changes. "Coming out of the public meetings that will be held, we want IDOT and CDOT to adopt an aggressive mission that makes the road more people-friendly and doesn't just serve faster traffic," Crandell said.

Make transportation a priority
By Ron Burke
Executive Director, Active Transportation Alliance
Chicago Tribune
August 26, 2011

The job of all of our transportation agencies is to get people where they need to go, and to do so strategically, efficiently, cost-effectively and with minimal impact on our quality of life and natural resources. Experience shows that we cannot build our way out of congestion with expanded lanes and bypasses alone. New highways and traffic lanes inevitably fill with traffic. Transit needs to be part of the solution. Dedicating a small percentage of road space and resources to transit has the potential to significantly increase the overall toll corridor capacity, allowing more people -- not just cars -- to get to jobs, shopping and events. Transit creates jobs and increases access to those jobs, reduces household expenses, improves our environment and helps us make the best possible use of our existing roads and communities.
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

Positioning
AAP stands to support the Voices for Healthy Kids’ stance on Safe Routes to School based on the following:
- High impact in policy related to physical activity, childhood obesity and public health
- Involved in activism aimed at promoting Safe Routes to School programs
- 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
- Past public support of Safe Routes to School programs
- Alignment of organizational mission with American Heart Association’s policy statement on Safe Routes to School
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to Safe Routes to School programs, to improve the well-being of young people and to foster healthy communities
  - Transportation Initiative for Children’s Health provides resources to educate communities on transportation policies that promote children’s health and safety
  - Sent an endorsement letter to Congress in support of the Safe Routes to School Program Reauthorization Act
  - Ongoing participation with Voices for Healthy Kids

Published Research and Resources

Effectiveness of a Safe Routes to School Program in Preventing School-Aged Pedestrian Injury
By Charles DiMaggio and Guohua Li
Pediatrics
January 14, 2013

In 2005, the US Congress allocated $612 million for a national Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program to encourage walking and bicycling to schools. We analyzed motor vehicle crash data to assess the
effectiveness of SRTS interventions in reducing school-aged pedestrian injury in New York City. Using geocoded motor vehicle crash data for 168,806 pedestrian injuries in New York City between 2001 and 2010, annual pedestrian injury rates per 10,000 population were calculated for different age groups and for census tracts with and without SRTS interventions during school-travel hours.

During the study period, the annual rate of pedestrian injury decreased 33% among school-aged children and 14% in other age groups. The annual rate of school-aged pedestrian injury during school-travel hours decreased 44% from 8.0 injuries per 10,000 population in the preintervention period (2001–2008) to 4.4 injuries per 10,000 population in the postintervention period (2009–2010) in census tracts with SRTS interventions. The rate remained virtually unchanged in census tracts without SRTS interventions. Implementation of the SRTS program in New York City has contributed to a marked reduction in pedestrian injury in school-aged children.

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 11th Street, NW, Suite 300
Washington, D.C. 20004
(202) 661-5727
www.acscan.org

Positioning
ACS CAN stands to support the Voices for Healthy Kids’ stance on Safe Routes to School based on the following:
- High impact in policy related to physical activity, childhood obesity and public health
- Involved in activism aimed at promoting Safe Routes to School programs
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders and the media
- Ability to impact critical target audiences, namely health care professionals, community leaders and state and local governments
- Strength of communication channels
- Past public support of Safe Routes to School programs
• Alignment of organizational mission with American Heart Association’s policy statement on Safe Routes to School
• Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to Safe Routes to School programs, to improve the well-being of young people and to foster healthy communities
  o Advocated for maintained funding of Safe Routes to School in the federal transportation bill
  o Introduced legislation in Minnesota to successfully establish a Safe Routes to School program
  o Supported the Surgeon General’s call to action on walking, including Safe Routes to School as a program to promote walking
  o Ongoing participation with Voices for Healthy Kids

Media Coverage
Franzen receives Cancer Society award
By Lisa Kaczke
Sun Current
July 2, 2013

Sen. Melisa Franzen, D-Edina, has received the 2013 Rookie of the Year award from the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network. Franzen successfully advanced legislation investing in the state’s Safe Routes to School program, which builds infrastructure that allows students to make exercise a part of their daily routine, according to ACS CAN.

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
Positioning
BMSG stands to support the Voices for Healthy Kids’ stance on Safe Routes to School based on the following:

- High impact in policy related to nutrition, childhood obesity and public health
- Involved in activism aimed at promoting Safe Routes to School programs
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders and the media
- Ability to impact critical target audiences, namely public health officials, community leaders and state and local governments
- Strength of communication channels
- Past public support of Safe Routes to School programs
- Alignment of organizational mission with American Heart Association’s policy statement on Safe Routes to School
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to Safe Routes to School programs, to improve the well-being of young people and to foster healthy communities
  - Published an issue brief that promotes walking as a means to improve community health and that calls for implementation of Safe Routes to School programs
  - Ongoing participation with Voices for Healthy Kids

Published Research and Resources
Talking About: The Walkable Community
Berkeley Media Studies Talking About Series
July 29, 2010

Research shows the number of people exercising is substantially higher in neighborhoods that are easy to get around by bicycle, wheelchair, public transit or on foot. A neighborhood’s "walkability" is a measure of how well it encourages physical activity. We can ensure our communities make it easier for us to get to work or school, or even to run errands, by implementing smart land-use policies. Specific strategies include establishing Safe Routes to School.

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.
Positioning

BTG stands to support Voices for Healthy Kids’ stance on Safe Routes to School based on the following:

- High impact in policy related to diet, physical activity, obesity and tobacco use among youth
- Involved in activism aimed at promoting Safe Routes to School programs
- 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
- Strength of communication channels
- Past public support of Safe Routes to School programs
- Alignment of organizational mission with American Heart Association’s policy statement on Safe Routes to School
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to Safe Routes to School programs, to improve the well-being of young people and to foster healthy communities
  
  o Published research on state laws that support Safe Routes to School as a way to increase physical activity
  o Ongoing participation with Voices for Healthy Kids

Published Research and Resources

**The Impact of the Built Environment and Safe Routes to School-Related Policies on Youth Active Travel in a National Sample of Public Elementary Schools**

By Sandy Slater

Society for Behavioral Medicine

April 2012

We found that among schools where students walk/bike a greater presence of traffic calming infrastructure near schools increased the odds of students walking/biking to school.

These findings can help inform federal, state and local policy, such as:

- Local: community development plans (Zoning and Subdivision ordinances) and school siting plans
- State: State-level SRTS laws
- Federal: funding for SRTS – one of the largest programs that fund biking and walking infrastructure

Changes in the built environment require long-term planning, but they can also have lasting health effects and provide one possible solution to help combat the obesity epidemic.
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.

2201 Broadway, Suite 502
Oakland CA 94612
(510) 302-3380
www.changelabsolutions.org

Positioning

ChangeLab Solutions stands to support the Voices for Healthy Kids’ stance on Safe Routes to School based on the following:

- High impact in policy related to childhood obesity, community development and public health
- Involved in activism aimed at promoting Safe Routes to School programs
- 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 Safe Routes to School programs
- Alignment of organizational mission with American Heart Association’s policy statement on Safe Routes to School
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to Safe Routes to School programs, to improve the well-being of young people and to foster healthy communities
  - Created brochures, webinars and talking points in support of Safe Routes to School programs
  - Ongoing participation with Voices for Healthy Kids

Published Research and Resources

Maximizing Walkability, Diversity, and Educational Equity in U.S. Schools
ChangeLab Solutions
August 2013

Compared to the past, students walk and bicycle to school far less now and are also generally less physically active. Daily walking, once a traditional source of physical activity for many people, including
children, has been on the decline. Even students living close to their schools are walking and biking to school less. In 1969, 89 percent of K-8th grade students who lived within one mile of school usually walked or bicycled to school. By 2009, only 35 percent of K-8th grade students who lived within a mile of school did so. Today, 51 percent of students arrive at school in the family car and 36 percent arrive by school bus.

To reverse this trend, a vigorous movement to increase safe walking and bicycling has emerged. Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programs have helped numerous communities and school districts create walking and bicycling infrastructure improvements, as well as programs to advocate for and educate the public and families on the many benefits of walking and bicycling to school. As of summer 2012, at least 13,347 schools were participating in Safe Routes to School programs in the United States.

**Safe Routes to School: Minimizing Your Liability Risk**
ChangeLab Solutions
July 2010

Some schools have been reluctant to support Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programs due to concerns about being sued if an injury or problem arises. By acting responsibly and understanding the liability issues in question, schools, nonprofits, and parent groups can help students reap the health and academic benefits of SRTS programs while minimizing the risk of a lawsuit.

**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 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

**Positioning**
Healthy Kids stands to support the Voices for Healthy Kids’ stance on Safe Routes to School based on the following:
- High impact in policy related to physical activity, childhood obesity and community development
- Involved in activism aimed at promoting Safe Routes to School programs
- 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 Safe Routes to School programs
• Alignment of organizational mission with American Heart Association’s policy statement on Safe Routes to School
• Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to Safe Routes to School programs, to improve the well-being of young people and to foster healthy communities
  o Supported Safe Routes to School programs in communities such as Houghton County, MI, Jefferson County, AL and Central Valley, CA
  o Ongoing participation with Voices for Healthy Kids

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.
The League of American Bicyclists
The League of American Bicyclists (The League) represents bicyclists in the movement to create safer roads, stronger communities and a bicycle-friendly America. Through information, advocacy and promotion, The League works to celebrate and preserve the freedom cycling brings to its members everywhere. The League’s mission is to lead the movement to create a bicycle friendly America for everyone. As leaders, the League’s commitment is to listen and learn, define standards and share best practices to engage diverse communities and build a powerful, unified voice for change.

1612 K Street NW, Suite 308
Washington, DC 20006
(202) 822-1333
www.bikeleague.org

Positioning
The League stands to support the Voices for Healthy Kids’ stance on for Safe Routes to School based on the following:

- High impact in policy related to transportation, education and health
- Proponent of safe routes to school funding at the national, state and local level
- Activism aimed at maximizing funding for safe routes to school programs and educating advocates about federal/state legislation that affects these programs
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders and the media
- Ability to impact critical stakeholders, namely federal and local departments of transportation
- Strength of communication channels
- Past public support of continued funding for safe routes to school
- Alignment of organizational mission with Voices for Healthy Kids’ policy statement on safe routes to school federal dollars
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to legislation that affects safe routes to school programs at the national, state and local level
  - Advocacy Resources hub provides infographics, research, policy briefs and examples of successful funding campaigns to help advocates better engage with policymakers regarding bike/pedestrian legislative issues
  - Bicycle Friendly America program provides a roadmap, hands-on assistance and recognition for states, communities, universities and businesses tools to make bicycling a real transportation and recreation option for all people
Media Coverage

**Washington is most bike-friendly state for sixth year**
By Elizabeth Weise
USA Today
May 2, 2013

For the sixth year in a row, Washington has been named the nation's most bicycle-friendly state. Colorado and Oregon came in second and third on the yearly list that gives national bragging rights and is closely followed by the cycling community. The rankings are bestowed by the League of American Bicyclists. Begun in 2008, they are based on funding for biking legislation, bike programs and policies, infrastructure, education and planning.

**Bicycle advocates to gather in DC to 'save cycling'**
By Keith Laing
The Hill
March 19, 2012

"Two months ago, the Senate bill would have gutted critical funding for local bicycle projects, eliminated programs like Safe Routes to School and eroded the rights of all American cyclists," LAB President Andy Clarke said in a news release. "But tens of thousands of people called and wrote their members of Congress and their voices were heard. Now more than ever, cyclists have become a powerful, organized constituency that is redefining our streets as safe, public spaces for people, not just speeding automobiles."

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**MomsRising.org**

**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 the Voices for Healthy Kids’ stance on Safe Routes to School based on the following:

- High impact in policy related to physical activity, nutrition and community development
- Involved in activism aimed at promoting physical activity and reducing childhood obesity
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders and the media
- Ability to impact critical target audiences, namely local school districts, parents and state and local governments
- Strength of communication channels
- Alignment of organizational mission with American Heart Association’s policy statement on Safe Routes to School
- 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
  - Ongoing participation with Voices for Healthy Kids

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
Positioning
NAACP stands to support the Voices for Healthy Kids’ stance on Safe Routes to School based on the following:

- High impact in policy related to physical activity, childhood obesity and public health in communities of color
- Involved in activism aimed at promoting Safe Routes to School programs
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders and the media
- Ability to impact critical target audiences, namely Congress, state and local departments of transportation and communities of color
- Strength of communication channels
- Past public support of Safe Routes to School programs
- Alignment of organizational mission with American Heart Association’s policy statement on Safe Routes to School
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to Safe Routes to School programs, to improve the well-being of young people and to foster healthy communities
  - NAACP Childhood Obesity Advocacy Manual endorses policies that improve community walkability as a means to curb childhood obesity
  - Ongoing participation with Voices for Healthy Kids

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.
NAACP: A Walkable Built Environment Is a “Premier Civil Rights Issue”
By Tanya Snyder
DC.StreetsBlog.org
October 4, 2013

That’s one aspect that walkability advocates often overlook when discussing improvements to make an area “safer” for pedestrians. “For us, the conversation is along the lines of ‘reclaiming the streets,’” Niiobli Armah told me. Armah is the NAACP’s manager of childhood obesity for their health and wellness initiatives. It might surprise some that the 104-year-old civil rights organization has a focus on walkable and bikeable neighborhoods. But it shouldn’t. It stems from the organization’s work on childhood obesity. Nineteen percent of black children between two and five are obese. Black high school girls are two-and-a-half times more likely to be obese than their white counterparts. “We think of health as the premier civil rights advocacy issue,” Armah said. “We advocate for the built environment so that students can have opportunities for safe physical activity in their neighborhoods.”

National Center for Safe Routes to School

Established in May 2006, the National Center for Safe Routes to School (National Center) assists states and communities in enabling and encouraging children to safely walk and bicycle to school. The National Center serves as the information clearinghouse for the federal Safe Routes to School program. The organization also provides technical support and resources and coordinates online registration efforts for U.S. Walk to School Day and facilitates worldwide promotion and participation. The National Center is part of the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center with funding from the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration.

730 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd, Suite 300
Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3430
1-866-610-SRTS
www.saferoutesinfo.org/

Positioning
The National Center stands to support the Voices for Healthy Kids’ stance on Safe Routes to School based on the following:
• High impact policy related to Safe Routes to School programming
• Involved in activism aimed at creating safe, convenient and fun opportunities for children to bicycle and walk to and from schools
• High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders and the media
• Ability to impact critical target audiences, namely local governments and agencies
• Strength of communication channels
• Past public support of Safe Routes to School programs
Alignment of organizational mission with American Heart Association’s policy statement on Safe Routes to School

- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to Safe Routes to School programs, to improve the well-being of young people and to foster healthy communities
  - Convenes and organizes the Safe Routes to School National Conference
  - Provides community and state-level training for implementing Safe Route to School programming
  - Organizes International Walk to School Day to build stronger community support for Safe Routes to School and active lifestyles for school-age children

Media Coverage

Feet meet street on Walk to School Day in Metro Detroit
By Jennifer Chambers
The Detroit News
October 9, 2013

At one time, it was the only way to get to school, but walking has become a thing of the past for many students in Michigan schools. On Wednesday morning across Michigan, hundreds of students participated in the national Walk to School Day event, including nearly 500 students and their parents from Morgan Elementary in Shelby Township. The event is sponsored by the National Center for Safe Routes to School to promote fitness among students. Students are learning that a daily brisk walk can help maintain a healthy weight, prevent or manage various medical conditions and strengthen bones, program officials say. More than 140 schools across Michigan were registered for Walk to School Day and will participate in exploring safe routes to their school.

Owned Media

2013 Walk to School Day Celebrates Walkable, Active Local Communities
National Center for Safe Routes to School Blog
October 8, 2013

On Wednesday, Oct. 9, thousands of students, parents and community members representing more than 3,800 schools across the United States will walk and bicycle to school to celebrate International Walk to School Day. This one-day event is part of an international effort to encourage more families to enjoy the many benefits of safely walking and bicycling to school.
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

Positioning
NCLR stands to support the Voices for Healthy Kids’ stance on Safe Routes to School based on the following:

- High impact in policy related to education, health and childhood obesity in the Latino community
- Involved in activism aimed at promoting Safe Routes to School programs
- 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 Safe Routes to School programs
- Alignment of organizational mission with American Heart Association’s policy statement on Safe Routes to School
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to Safe Routes to School programs, to improve the well-being of young people and to foster healthy communities
  - Priorities for federal surface transportation reauthorization include upholding the intent of programs like Safe Routes to School and requiring states to implement grant programs for pedestrian projects
  - Ongoing participation with Voices for Healthy Kids

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.

Paving the Future of Transportation Policy: What Congress Smoothed Over This Year, and Where the Pot
By Catherine Singley
The Huffington Post
August 13, 2012

Like all Americans, Latino voters place jobs and the economy at the top of their list of concerns this year. The transportation sector alone directly employs more than one million Latinos. That's why NCLR was pleased that Congress reauthorized comprehensive surface transportation policy on June 30, just hours before the current extension of transportation policy was set to expire. The legislation, Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act, or MAP-21, was signed by President Obama on July 6 and will be active until September 2014.

NCLR identified four policy priorities for Latinos in transportation reauthorization:
- Improve job opportunities for Latinos in the transportation sector
- Ensure authentic community involvement in local transportation planning and decision-making
- Defend public transportation as a vital lifeline
- Promote safety for pedestrians and bikers

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 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
Positioning
National PTA stands to support the Voices for Healthy Kids’ stance on Safe Routes to School based on the following:
- High impact in policy related to childhood health, safety and education
- Involved in activism aimed at promoting Safe Routes to School programs
- 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 Safe Routes to School programs
- Alignment of organizational mission with American Heart Association’s policy statement on Safe Routes to School
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to Safe Routes to School programs, to improve the well-being of young people and to foster healthy communities
  - Fire Up Your Feet program encourages families to walk more to and from school while keeping track of their steps and serves as a fundraiser for PTAs or schools
  - Produced tips for implementing successful Safe Routes to School programs

Media Coverage

Video: 'Fire Up Your Feet' for a good cause
KARE NBC 11
September 20, 2011

A program called "Fire Up Your Feet" is here to help. Jill Oldenburg, the parent coordinator for "Fire Up Your Feet", stopped by KARE 11 Sunrise to talk about the program and its success so far. The fall incentive program will award $500 and $250 to two Minnesota schools with the highest levels of participation based on their student population.

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

Positioning

NB3 Foundation stands to support the Voices for Healthy Kids’ stance on Safe Routes to School based on the following:

- High impact in policy related to 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, state and local governments and Native Americans
- Strength of communication channels
- Past public support of Safe Routes to School programs
- Alignment of organizational mission with American Heart Association’s policy statement on Safe Routes to School
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives on 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
  - Ongoing participation with Voices for Healthy Kids

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.
Owned Media

Adding a Sidewalk Could Help Curb Childhood Obesity
Native American Health Blog
June 21, 2010

The $9 million in federal funding distributed to the school system through the Safe Routes to School Program will make walking and biking to school safer and more appealing for students, said district architect Robert Estrada, who put together the application for the grant money. But it can also be part of the school system’s effort to fight childhood obesity by improving school lunch diets and encouraging physical activity among its students. “Twenty years ago, everybody walked to school because parents knew it was safe,” Estrada said. “We’re hoping to improve those numbers for kids that might live in areas where they didn’t want to walk because there was traffic.”

The NB3 Foundation thinks this a great initiative to help get kids moving in a safe and active way.

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

Positioning

PeopleForBikes stands to support the Voices for Healthy Kids’ stance on Safe Routes to School based on the following:

- High impact in policy related to physical activity and biking
- Involved in activism aimed at supporting legislation to fund Safe Routes to School programs
- 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 Safe Routes to School programs
- Alignment of organizational mission with American Heart Association’s policy statement on Safe Routes to School
• Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to Safe Routes to School programs
  
  o Provides funding to third-party organizations to build Safe Routes to School programs at the state level
  o Supported APHA initiative on “Ride American for Safe Routes”
  o Petitioned for policymakers to restore dedicated funding to Safe Routes to School programs in California
  o Serves as a host for the Safe Routes to School National Partnership

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.

The Pew Charitable Trusts

The Pew Charitable Trusts is driven by the power of knowledge to solve today’s most challenging problems. Pew applies a rigorous, analytical approach to improve public policy, inform the public and stimulate civic life. With a long history of informing policy, Pew supports initiatives, grounded in research and evidence, that aim to improve the well-being of all Americans and help children and youth become active, contributing members of society both in Philadelphia and around 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
www.pewtrusts.org
Positioning
The Pew Charitable Trusts stands to support the Voices for Healthy Kids’ stance on Safe Routes to School based on the following:

- High impact in policy related to public health
- Involved in activism aimed at influencing policy and public health through research
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders, government and the media
- Ability to impact critical target audiences, namely federal, local and state governments and state and local school districts
- Strength of communication channels
- Alignment of organizational mission with American Heart Association’s policy statement on Safe Routes to School
- 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
  - Ongoing participation with Voices for Healthy Kids

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.

Owned Media
States Tackle Chronic Absence in Schools
By Adrienne Lu
Stateline
September 16, 2013

“There's no silver bullet,” said Fred Jones, legislative associate for the Alliance for Excellent Education, a nonprofit advocacy organization based in Washington that focuses on at-risk secondary school students. The key, Jones said, is to uncover the reasons behind the absences — whether the student has to care for a sick parent, feels unsafe traveling to school, or has to work to help support the family. Only then can the school intervene effectively.
Brad Strong, senior director of education policy at Children Now, a nonprofit children’s organization in California, said that while school officials often agree that chronic absence is a critical issue, doing something about it is more difficult. School officials must find out whether students need mental health services, better nutrition, Safe Routes to School or health insurance, then tap the right people to solve those problems. “If [students] are in school, if districts do this, if schools do this, you’re going to see achievement gains across the board,” Strong said.

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.

7731 Alaska Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20012
(202) 234-5921
www.thepraxisproject.org

Positioning

The Praxis Project stands to support the Voices for Healthy Kids’ stance on Safe Routes to School based on the following:

- High impact in policy related to 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
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders and the media
- Ability to impact critical target audiences, namely national peace, justice and multicultural organizations
- Strength of communication channels
- Alignment of organizational mission with American Heart Association’s policy statement on Safe Routes to School
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to programs that combat childhood obesity through local policy
  - 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
- Ongoing participation with Voices for Healthy Kids

Published Research and Resources

Communities Creating Healthy Environments to Combat Obesity: Preliminary Evaluation Findings From Two Case Studies
By Erualdo Romero González, Sandra Villanueva and Cheryl N. Grills
California Journal of Health Promotion
2012

While there is growing faith in community organizing to influence policy as a way to improve the built environment and increase food or recreational equity, relatively little research is available examining the successes and challenges of community organizing in Latino communities attempting to reduce obesity. Using process and outcome evaluation data, we present preliminary findings from a study of two community-based organizations that are making efforts to increase access to physical activity and access to healthy foods in predominantly Latino areas. The organizations are part of Communities Creating Healthy Environments (CCHE), a national initiative of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) to prevent childhood obesity. Both community-based organizations were able to achieve redistribution of public resources to advance their CCHE objectives. We discuss the study’s implications, including the need for public policy research around obesity that examines community organizing as an intervention.

Salud America!
The RWJF Research Network to Prevent Obesity Among Latino Children

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
www.salud-america.org

Positioning
Salud America! stands to support the Voices for Healthy Kids’ stance on Safe Routes to School based on the following:
- High impact in policy related to physical activity, childhood obesity and public health
Involved in activism aimed at promoting Safe Routes to School programs
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 Safe Routes to School programs
Alignment of organizational mission with American Heart Association’s policy statement on Safe Routes to School
Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to Safe Routes to School programs, to improve the well-being of young people and to foster healthy communities
  - Issue Brief on Active Spaces and Latino Children and infographic underscore the need for safe places for Latino children to be physically active
  - Member of the National Active Transportation Diversity Task Force, which assists local communities with the implementation of Safe Routes to School programs
  - Ongoing participation with Voices for Healthy Kids

Published Research and Resources
Increasing Out-of-School and Out-of-Class Physical Activity among Latino Children
Salud America! Research Review
July 2013

The Safe Routes to School National Partnership provides resources for increasing the safety of neighborhood streets to facilitate walking and biking in underserved communities. A case study describes the implementation of the Safe Routes to School program at Maybury Elementary School in southwest Detroit (approximately 600 students, nearly 90% of whom are Latino). During the program planning phase, the school sought parent feedback and conducted “walking audits” to identify factors that may be inhibiting active transport to school. Based on these assessments, the school made improvements to decaying sidewalks and installed more street lights. By using geographic information system (GIS) maps, which are generated from several forms of computerized geographical data, and crime data for the neighborhood, the safest routes to school were identified, and a walking school bus program, led by parent volunteers, was implemented on those routes, which increased rates of active transport to school.

Trust for America’s Health

Trust for America's Health (TFAH) is a non-partisan organization dedicated to saving lives by protecting the health of every community and working to make disease prevention a national priority. By focusing on prevention, protection and communities, TFAH leads the fight to make disease prevention a national
Priority. TFAH conducts science-based research, issues meaningful reports that spark change and shares best practices to improve the lives, communities and overall health of people everywhere.

1730 M Street, NW, Suite 900
Washington, D.C. 20036
(202) 223-9870
www.healthyamericans.org

Positioning
TFAH stands to support the Voices for Healthy Kids’ stance on Safe Routes to School based on the following:

- High impact in policy related to disease prevention, community development and public health
- Involved in activism aimed at promoting Safe Routes to School programs
- 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
- Past public support of Safe Routes to School programs
- Alignment of organizational mission with American Heart Association’s policy statement on Safe Routes to School
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to Safe Routes to School programs, to improve the well-being of young people and to foster healthy communities
  - Produced [A Compendium of Proven Community-Based Prevention Programs](#), which identifies Safe Routes to School among top disease prevention programs in the U.S.
  - [State Data map](#) provides state-specific public health data, including detailed information on key health indicators, public health preparedness, funding indicators and examples of programs that work

Media Coverage
**Government programs that boost health**
By Deborah Kotz
*The Boston Globe*
October 17, 2013

As the federal government fully reopens after a 16-day shutdown, some of us may be wondering why we didn’t feel a stronger impact on our daily lives. This begs the question: do we really need all those government programs from a health standpoint? As it turns out, 79 of those public health programs -- that receive federal, state, or local funding -- are well worth the tax dollars spent on them because they lead to significant health improvements or prevent life-threatening illnesses or injuries. That’s the finding of a report issued Thursday by the New York Academy of Medicine and the non-profit group Trust for America’s Health.

**The federal Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program.** This allocated funds for state departments of transportation to build sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and safe crossings, improve signage, and make other transportation improvements that allow children to travel more safely to school. In New York City, the
The annual rate of children injured while walking and biking during school-travel hours decreased 44 percent from 2001 to 2010 in areas with SRTS interventions.

YMCA

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, 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

Positioning

The Y supports the Voices for Healthy Kids’ stance on Safe Routes to School based on the following:

- High impact in policy related to physical activity, childhood obesity and community development
- Involved in activism aimed at promoting Safe Routes to School programs
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, including 21 million members, 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 Safe Routes to School programs and success on securing public funds to expand and support Safe Routes to School programs
- Alignment of organizational mission with American Heart Association’s policy statement on Safe Routes to School
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to Safe Routes to School programs to promote a healthy lifestyle and enhance quality of life in communities
  - **Pioneering Healthier Communities** program empowers communities with strategies and models for creating and sustaining positive change in support of healthy living
  - **ACHIEVE** program capitalizes on the experience and expertise of national organizations in strengthening community leadership, building capacity and activating change
- **REACH** program enables the Ys to deepen its efforts to make healthy living a reality for individuals and families in communities where it can be difficult to adopt and maintain healthy lifestyles
- Ongoing participation with Voices for Healthy Kids

### Media Coverage

**Hundreds of Treasure Valley students will walk to school today**

By Bonnie Shelton  
KTVB.com  
October 9, 2013

Students in Idaho joined with schools around the world taking part in 'International Walk to School Day.' The goal of the event is to get kids moving and teach them it's easy to incorporate exercise into daily life. Organizers in the Treasure Valley told KTVB eight schools registered to take part, but they told us many other schools most likely encouraged students to walk as well.

"Kids need about 60 minutes more of activity every day. So, if we can do that by walking or riding to school or from school, it's a great benefit," said Lisa Brady, Treasure Valley YMCA Safe Routes to School coordinator. She told us there's also an increased focus on safety this year because of an alarming number of crashes involving pedestrians and bicyclists recently.

### Published Research and Resources

**Pioneering Healthier Communities Lessons and Learning Practices**  
**YMCA Activate America**

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.