



# ANCHOR

ACCELERATING NATIONAL COMMUNITY HEALTH OUTCOMES THROUGH REINFORCING PARTNERSHIPS

## ANCHOR PARTNERSHIPS PROGRAM'S EFFECT ON THE AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION'S 2020 IMPACT GOAL



The American Heart Association's Accelerating National Community Health Outcomes through Reinforcing (ANCHOR) Partnerships Program is working in 15 locations around the nation to build healthier communities. The local ANCHOR projects are using the broad reach of the American Heart Association's nationally respected track record to draw on local expertise and home-grown collaborations to clear the air of secondhand smoke; improve access to healthy, nutritious food; and increase opportunities for people young and old to get physically active. As a result, these efforts are improving the health of people across the country and helping the American Heart Association reach its 2020 Impact Goal – improving the cardiovascular health of all Americans by 20 percent, while reducing deaths from cardiovascular diseases and stroke by 20 percent, all by the year 2020.

### The Challenge

Cardiovascular disease is the leading global cause of death, accounting for 17.5 million deaths per year, claiming more lives than all forms of cancer combined, and affecting families across the country every day. The factors leading to increased risk – tobacco use, physical inactivity and poor diet – must be addressed so more people can live longer, healthier, happier lives.



**“Our vision is a society in which all Americans enjoy a healthy weight and breathe clean air, no matter who they are or where they live.”**

- Jill Birnbaum, Vice President of State Advocacy and Public Health Initiatives for the American Heart Association

## The Solution

The American Heart Association measures cardiovascular health by tracking seven key health factors and behaviors that increase risks for heart disease and stroke. Known as Life's Simple 7, the factors include: stop smoking, get active, eat better, lose weight, control cholesterol, manage high blood pressure and reduce blood sugar. By dealing with these basic factors, the lives of people across the country can be improved.

One important component to reaching the 2020 Impact Goal is the ANCHOR Partnerships Program. By building relationships and cooperating on high impact goals in 15 communities across the nation, ANCHOR is protecting people from secondhand smoke through smoke-free environment; improving access to healthy, nutritious food where people live, learn, work and play; and encouraging increased physical activity through shared-use agreements and support of physical education in schools. Through changes in policy, systems and the environment, the American Heart Association is helping create a culture of health to benefit all people.

## Results

ANCHOR projects are seeing results around the country in promoting healthy communities, preventing chronic diseases, and reducing health disparities through policy, system, and environmental changes. Here are just a few examples.

In Texas, a solid foundation is being laid for policy change in seven communities surrounding the City of Austin, including: Round Rock, Georgetown, Pflugerville, Cedar Park, Leander, Kyle and Buda, Texas. The ANCHOR team is garnering support for smoke-free environments through grassroots messaging, participating in local events, and raising awareness locally. The project has recruited several new grassroots leaders, and the momentum is leading the way for future changes that will engage citizens to demand clean air to breathe and clear the air of dangerous secondhand smoke.

The ANCHOR Program in Fox Valley and Crawford County, Wisconsin is creating a system change in several schools by working with partners to expand Active Schools Core 4+ strategies to increase student physical activity throughout the day. The Core 4+ strategies, patterned after the Comprehensive School Physical Activity Program created by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, are relatively low-cost tactics that are easy to adopt and are sustainable. With ANCHOR support, more Wisconsin schools are receiving training and help in using the Core 4+ strategies, which means more kids have the opportunity to get moving and be physically active.

In Bismarck and Mandan, North Dakota, the ANCHOR Program prompted an environmental change in the state capitol building. Those attending meetings at the capitol now have healthier and tastier food and beverage options thanks to the collaboration between ANCHOR staff and the manager of the Capitol Café. Using the American Heart Association's Healthy Food and Beverage Toolkit for guidance, the group developed several healthy box lunch options now available at the Capitol Café. This is the first step in changing the entire food environment throughout the capitol and in state government buildings.

The policy, systems and environmental changes that the American Heart Association's ANCHOR Partnerships Program has underway are making an impact to help make healthier choices the easier choices for all Americans. The positive results are helping people live longer, healthier, more productive lives, all while helping AHA pursue its 2020 Impact Goal.

## Sustaining Success

The ANCHOR Partnerships Program is putting ideas and plans into action. Policy, systems and environmental improvements are already under development within the 15 local communities around the country. These local actions are laying a foundation for bigger changes in the future.