



ANCHOR

ACCELERATING NATIONAL COMMUNITY HEALTH OUTCOMES THROUGH REINFORCING PARTNERSHIPS

ANCHORING SUCCESS THROUGH TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE



The American Heart Association (AHA)'s Accelerating National Community Health Outcomes through Reinforcing (ANCHOR) Partnerships Program builds and strengthens local coalitions in 15 select geographic locations around the country to prevent chronic diseases such as heart disease, stroke, and diabetes and reduce health disparities. The local ANCHOR projects are mobilizing and engaging community organizations and partners to improve access to healthy food and beverages, reduce exposure to secondhand smoke, and increase opportunities for adults and children to increase physically activity. The AHA's local ANCHOR projects set the stage for policy, systems and environmental improvements by implementing activities and strategies that bring together local organizations, business leaders, health officials and decision makers by building local coalitions that aim to build policy, systems and environmental changes to improve the health of all residents.

The AHA has tapped into its national experience and expertise to create a sophisticated system of training and technical assistance that it offers to its Affiliates to ensure local project managers have the skills and tools to succeed. That resulting level of proficiency has allowed the local ANCHOR staff, referred to as regional campaign managers, to adapt and respond quickly to the unique needs of each community they work with, gain trust of local leaders, and overcome significant challenges to encourage a culture of health.



“Community transformation to support health and level the playing field for residents to improve health is intricate public health work. To increase access to healthy foods, safe places for physical activity and smoke-free environments, we work with and through community change agents. We are excited to see progress made across communities we serve so that more children and families can have healthier hearts and minds.”

— Jill Birnbaum, Vice President of Global Advocacy with the American Heart Association

The Challenge

Too many people do not have access to healthy food and beverages and safe places to get physical activity opportunities, or are exposed to secondhand smoke. All these factors increase the risk of developing heart disease, diabetes, cancer, and other chronic illnesses and conditions. Each year, chronic diseases such as heart diseases, stroke and diabetes, are responsible for seven out of ten deaths in the United States. They also account for more than 80 percent of the nation's health care costs. Taking steps to eliminate or reduce these risk factors is essential to helping more people live longer, healthier and happier lives.

The Solution

The AHA's ANCHOR Partnerships Program builds and strengthens local coalitions to implement community-based strategies for improving health and reducing the prevalence of chronic disease. The ANCHOR regional campaign managers have access to staff experts, tools, resources, and other supports. Additionally, the regional campaign managers share their experiences and seek out each other's experiences and expertise on the issue areas of focus being pursued. The training and technical assistance offerings have allowed the regional campaign managers to work nimbly under tight deadlines, making whatever adjustments necessary to meet the specific needs of their communities. The AHA has the internal capacity to provide various types of training and technical assistance to the ANCHOR regional campaign managers, including specific expertise such as developing communication materials, setting up meetings with key stakeholders or leaders, and organizing public events and awareness campaigns. Staff that support ANCHOR regional campaign managers at the national level organize trainings on wide-ranging topics including building smoke-free environments, AHA and federal nutrition guidelines, and quality physical education. Additionally, national staff experts have delivered training on topics such as healthy vending policies, approaches to address issues to increased access to affordable and nutritious food, and many other topics affecting local communities.

Sustaining Success

The ANCHOR Partnerships Program is funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to create policy, systems and environmental improvements at the local level. ANCHOR lays the foundation for the adoption of policy, systems and environmental changes as well as supports the implementation of policy and system improvements. A key approach to success is to provide tailored training and technical assistance to targeted communities that can be repeated by the leaders who will eventually take over the efforts. The goal is to build a groundswell of support, generate a positive mindset, and demonstrate practices that can be replicated.

Policy, System and Environmental Change

The training and technical assistance provided to the AHA's ANCHOR regional campaign managers helped to equip them with the knowledge and tools necessary to implement specific policy, system and environmental changes within their markets.

Results

The ANCHOR teams have collaborated with local volunteers, organizations, and community leaders to support policy, systems and environmental changes that will help create a culture of health for everyone. The ANCHOR regional campaign managers have become multifaceted, skilled leaders through technical assistance they received from the AHA, which provided them with various resources, subject matter experts, and access to AHA senior leaders, specialists and consultants. The ANCHOR regional campaign managers also lean on each other for expertise and to share best practices. The training has enabled them to adeptly fine tune their skills to the specific needs of the markets they serve in a responsive, timely and flexible manner. As a result, they not only have achieved incredible success with their local campaigns, they also have been able to anticipate what steps need to come next to move projects forward effectively. The efforts have resulted in healthier communities and a steady transformation in the way Americans eat, live and play.

Get Involved

Learn more about the ANCHOR Partnership program, its mission and the local campaigns taking place across the country. Details can be found by on the ANCHOR website, which can be found by clicking [here](#).