



NEWS The United States Conference of Mayors

1620 Eye Street, N.W. • Washington, D.C. 20006
Phone (202) 293-7330 • Fax (202) 293-2352
E-mail: info@usmayors.org URL: usmayors.org

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Contact: Elena Temple or Lina Garcia
etemple@usmayors.org or lgarcia@usmayors.org

SIX U.S. CITIES WIN GRANT AWARDS TO SUPPORT CHILDHOOD OBESITY PREVENTION INITIATIVES

USCM and ABA partnership awards a total of \$445,000 in grants for 2014

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Today, The United States Conference of Mayors (USCM) announced the winners of the 2014 Childhood Obesity Prevention Awards, during its 82nd Winter Meeting in Washington, DC. The awards went to cities with outstanding programs that encourage healthy weight through balanced diet choices and regular physical activity.

The following cities were recognized for their mayoral-based initiatives:

- Dallas, TX
- Denver, CO
- Little Rock, AR
- Monrovia, CA
- Waterbury, CT
- York, PA

The grant program is the result of a partnership between USCM and the American Beverage Association (ABA), to support and/or enhance mayors' ongoing childhood obesity prevention programs in their cities. The program also includes a national public awareness campaign, and connects mayors with innovative, cost-effective strategies to successfully reduce childhood obesity in their cities.

“Combating childhood obesity has become a top priority for mayors in their cities,” said Tom Cochran, CEO and Executive Director of The U.S. Conference of Mayors. “The best available science demonstrates that children with health problems related to overweight and obesity unfortunately not only fall far behind in school but also can't compete in the workforce. And that's why we're so proud of our partnership with the American Beverage Association, to support the pioneering strategies that Mayors and cities are coming up with to eradicate childhood obesity.”

The grant awards are divided into small, medium and large city categories, with first place and second place awards given in each category. An independent panel of judges met in Washington, DC to evaluate programs based on innovativeness, creativity, replicability and potential impact.

A brief description of each winning program appears below.

Large City

1st Place (\$150,000) – Denver (CO) Mayor Michael Hancock, “Healthy Childcare Makes a Healthy Start”

The grant will support the launch of “Healthy Childcare Makes a Healthy Start,” the goal of which is to increase the number of Denver’s more than 600 childcare centers that incorporate evidence-based healthy eating and active living (HEAL) policies and activities in everyday operations. The project will pull from existing, but currently disparate, curricula and materials to create a tool to engage providers, teachers, and families in implementing HEAL policies in their respective childcare centers. A comprehensive needs assessment with each participating childcare center and training for childcare providers are key components of the program. The program will also reward centers that achieve a high number of changes to promote healthy eating and active living, by creating a “Gold/Silver/Bronze Level HEAL Childcare Center” designation. Incentives, including a recognition ceremony with Mayor Hancock, have been built into the program to generate excitement and to maximize participation.

2nd Place (\$25,000) – Dallas (TX) Mayor Mike Rawlings, “Mayor’s Youth Fitness Initiative” (MyFi)

The Mayor’s Youth Fitness Initiative (MyFi) is a public/private partnership led by City of Dallas Mayor Mike Rawlings along with business and community leaders. Launched in 2010, MyFi targets children ages 6 – 12 by engaging them in activities aimed at helping them develop a lifetime love of exercising and eating smart. The two-hour, weekday afterschool program includes a healthy snack; a warm-up lesson or game centered on nutrition or health; 60 minutes of physical activity; and a cool-down activity that reaffirms the theme of the upcoming fitness challenge (for example, the Mayor’s Race 5K challenge or a pedometer challenge). The grant funds will support the expansion of the program to more sites, as well as the enhancement of the program’s nutrition curriculum.

Medium City

1st Place (\$120,000) – Waterbury (CT) Mayor Neil O’Leary, “Kids Marathon Program”

The grant will support the 2014 Kids Marathon program, collaboration between the YMCA, City of Waterbury, Department of Education, Boys and Girls Club, and the Police Activity League (PAL) aimed at introducing the sport of running to youth ages 7 – 12, over a 12-week period and at no charge to the participants. Based on a comprehensive analysis of the city’s environmental factors, the program is designed to target the city’s youth who are at greatest risk of obesity, and lacking physical activity and good nutritional habits. The young athletes run 1-2 miles, two or three times per week, completing a cumulative 26.2 mile marathon. 438 student athletes participated in the first Kids Marathon program in 2013; in 2014 the City of Waterbury aims to expose 1,500 student athletes to the sport of running, while encouraging physical activity as a lifestyle, along with the importance of good nutrition and healthy habits.

2nd Place (\$25,000) – Little Rock (AR) Mayor Mark Stodola, “Love Your School”

The “Love Your School” (“LYS”) Childhood Obesity Intervention and Prevention Initiative addresses the drivers of childhood obesity through evidence-based programs delivered to seven (7) high-poverty elementary schools in the Little Rock School District. In addition to education and training for students and teachers alike, key program components include the creation of more than 300 raised bed gardens; cooking courses conducted in school for SNAP-eligible parents of partner-school students; student-led weekend Farmer’s Markets located at 7 Partner School Campuses; improvement of walking trails, play spaces and recreational facilities throughout the city; and PSA campaigns that support healthy food choices and breastfeeding by new mothers, among other activities. Grant funds will support the student farmers markets and other activities.

Small City

1st Place (\$100,000) – York (PA) Mayor C. Kim Bracey, “Eat Play Breathe: York’s Childhood Wellness Initiative”

Grant funds will be used to support the program, which will focus on transforming the school environment by implementing policies that incorporate wellness into the mission and culture of each city school. Specifically, the will improve nutrition by expanding the fresh fruits and vegetable snack program from 3 to 9 elementary schools so that each student has the opportunity to snack on fresh produce, learn about each item and take recipes home for his/her family and installing greenhouses to provide opportunities for student’s yearlong growing and education, as well use of garden produce in the schools and from school to home. The program will also focus on physical activity in six preschools, as well as K-8 classrooms.

2nd Place (\$25,000) – Monrovia (CA) Mayor Mary Ann Lutz, “Fit Together”

Grant funds would support the expansion of existing and/or creation of new programs that fall under the broad banner of Fit Together. Fit Together itself is a broad-based interagency partnership between the City of Monrovia, the Santa Anita Family YMCA, the Boys and Girls Club of the Foothills and the Monrovia Unified School District, working collaboratively toward reducing the childhood obesity rate in Monrovia. Fit Together ultimately aims to increase kids’ fruit and vegetable consumption and physical activity levels, with the underlying goal of preventing obesity and other diet related chronic diseases.

The U.S. Conference of Mayors is the official nonpartisan organization of cities with populations of 30,000 or more. There are more than 1,200 such cities in the country today, and each city is represented in the Conference by its chief elected official, the mayor. Find us at usmayors.org, on facebook.com/usmayors, or follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/usmayors.

The American Beverage Association is the trade association representing the broad spectrum of companies that manufacture and distribute non-alcoholic beverages in the United States. For more information on ABA, please visit the association’s website at www.ameribev.org or call the ABA communications team at (202) 463-6770.

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