



Faith-Based Advocacy: Galvanizing Communities to End Childhood Obesity

An RWJF Solicitation

SUMMARY

With the solicitation Faith-based Advocacy: Galvanizing Communities to End Childhood Obesity, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) requested proposals from faith-based coalitions to advance community policies or environmental changes that improve access to healthy foods and/or opportunities for physical activity. It allocated up to \$5,625,000 for up to 25 grants of up to \$225,000 each. The two-year grants were funded starting in December 2008.

Context

America's vastly diverse faith communities are active at the national and local levels within Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, interfaith and other settings. Collaborations across faith communities have a rich history of working for social change. They have advanced policies that improve the health and wellness of communities, and their growing role in prompting policy and triggering action is evident across all states. Faith-based coalitions have been at the forefront of local and state efforts on social issues such as homelessness, tobacco use, hunger and poverty.

The Focus

The call for proposals (CFP) placed special emphasis on reaching children at greatest risk for obesity on the basis of income, race/ethnicity or location. These include Black, Latino, Native American, Asian-American and Pacific Islander children and children who live in low-income communities or communities with limited access to affordable healthy foods and/or safe opportunities for physical activity.

While recognizing that school-based policies are important, the CFP did not focus on them; instead, it was aimed exclusively at policies in the community setting. The CFP sought proposals that focused on:

- *Improving the availability of affordable healthy foods.* The CFP noted that local and state policies can support the production, supply and marketing of fresh, nutritious

and affordable foods. Supportive policies related to economic development, land use, water and transportation also can increase access to healthy foods.

- *Improving access to safe places for children to play.* The CFP noted that aspects of the built environment—such as the way streets are laid out, whether there are sidewalks and bike lanes, the location of parks and recreation facilities and other design elements—can either encourage or discourage routine physical activity. Expanding opportunities for physical activity, especially in neighborhoods with few existing options, can improve the health of communities.

PROJECT LIST

Program Results Reports on projects in this solicitation can be accessed from this list, which will expand as more grants close and reports are written.

- [Get a Life! Combats Childhood Obesity in the Mississippi Delta](#)

Community Foundation of Northwest Mississippi (Hernando, Miss., Grant ID# 063528, August 2011)

- [Guam Sustantia Project](#)

Guam SDA Ypao Church of the Guam Micronesia Missions (Tamuning, Guam, Grant ID# 065336, August 2010)

- [A New Light Rail Line With Stops in Low-Income Neighborhoods](#)

Gamaliel Foundation (Chicago, Ill., Grant ID# 065335, August 2010)

- [Faith & Food](#)

The Center for Closing the Health Gap in Greater Cincinnati (Cincinnati, Ohio, Grant ID# 065333, August 2011)

- [Creating a Faith-Based Campaign in Middle Tennessee to Increase Low-Income Resident's Access to Full-Service Grocery Stores](#)

Vanderbilt University (Nashville, Tenn., Grant ID# 065332, August 2011)

- [A Faith-Led Effort to Combat Childhood Obesity in Oregon](#)

Vanderbilt University (Nashville, Tenn., Grant ID# 065322, September 2011)