

STEP 2 - HOW TO GET STARTED

STEP 2: GETTING STARTED

Once a community decides they want to promote Active Community Environments (ACEs), the first question is often “What kinds of things should we do?” Before you have that discussion, you should lay the groundwork and get more information. Working on changing the built environment will likely require new partnerships that might be outside of any existing alliances. As an example, local municipal planning organizations (MPOs) in Wisconsin play a key role in setting transportation policy and, ultimately, the use of transportation funding. A brief, background document on how to work with local MPOs is one example of why these new alliances are critical: [Why Schools, Public Health, Local Officials & Other Healthy Living Advocates Should Get to Know Their MPO](http://dhs.wisconsin.gov/health/physicalactivity/pdf_files/mpo.pdf) - An issue brief on how to work with Municipal Planning organizations to incorporate opportunities for alternative means of transportation in city planning. http://dhs.wisconsin.gov/health/physicalactivity/pdf_files/mpo.pdf

A summary of three major assessment strategies would include the following items, all of which are very manageable if you take them one-step at a time and take advantage of work that has already been done.

How communities can get started

1. Convene a meeting of key stakeholders to have an initial discussion on possible individuals and community assets that could help further your mission.
 - Use the [Asset Mapping resources](#) (Appendix A) to determine the types of assets that might be available. See the Asset Mapping page for more information on this step.
 - Identify the list of groups that you want to approach to help with your initiative. Make a list of contact information for those groups and decide who will make an initial contact. Key players for environmental change would include:
 - Government leaders
 - City planners
 - Public works and transportation staff
 - Park & recreation staff
 - Business leaders
 - Public health staff
 - Neighborhood group leaders
 - School staff
 - Active Living and City Planning: [Why Schools, Public Health, Local Officials & Other Healthy Living Advocates Should Get to Know Their Municipal Planning Organization](#) (PDF, 31 KB) - An issue brief on how to work with Municipal Planning organizations to incorporate opportunities for alternative means of transportation in city planning.
 - Call contacts, make a preliminary inquiry about their interest, and ask if you can send them a quick survey to fill out or interview them in person. The purpose of the call is to provide them some background information on why you want to engage their organization and gauge their initial interest.
 - Send out a survey or interview the groups and collect all the responses from those who agreed to participate. A sample survey can be found at the end of this document in Appendix A under Asset Mapping.
 - Meet with the core group to discuss the results and determine what and who you want to involve further.

- Invite those group representatives to a meeting to discuss what you're thinking and give them the opportunity to provide input to help shape the initiative.
- 2. Create a committee that involves cross-sectional representation of your partner organizations to help with the development, implementation and assessment of your initiative. (Step Two – ACEs Committee)
- 3. Begin the Strategic Planning Process to lay out your plan.
- 4. Assess the needs of your community. Complete an environmental assessment of the community and conduct an interest survey of residents to collect information on the program, policy and environmental changes that would be of most interest to citizens in increasing physical activity levels. Gather other available data that might be helpful. (Step Three)
- 5. Look at the initiative strategies and resource needs in this kit. (Step Four)
- 6. Use the assessment, survey results and other data to prioritize your initiative components and to set goals and objectives. (Step Five)
- 7. Develop an Intervention Action Plan with appropriate strategies to address specified goals and objectives from the strategic plan. Include a timeline, a budget, and an evaluation plan. (Step Five)
- 8. Market and implement the plan. (Step Five)
- 9. Monitor progress and make necessary changes. (Step Six)
- 10. Evaluate the outcomes. (Step Six)
- 11. Continue to revise the plan to create and maintain a healthy environment for all residents and visitors.

ACEs COMMITTEE

DEVELOPING AN ACEs COMMITTEE

Gain Support from Key Leaders

Changing the local environment requires buy-in and support from the top level of leadership in order to be successful. To ensure the support of key leaders, inform them about the initiative early on and encourage them to participate. Communicate clearly and often the goals and benefits to the community and participants. You need to direct sufficient resources and staff time to developing and implementing an ACEs initiative if you want it to be successful. Once your strategic plan is completed, share it with community, school, business and organizational leaders to see if they are supportive before proceeding.

Assembling Your Team – Forming an ACEs Committee

The ACEs Committee is responsible for developing, implementing and evaluating the ACEs initiative. The size and make-up of the committee will depend on the focus of your initiative and the scope of the initiative or activities. The committee should include staff from the key partners you identified in your Asset Mapping survey. There is no minimum or maximum size, but the committee should be large enough to represent all the key partners. If you already have a group doing similar work, consider merging efforts so you can benefit from their progress to-date and additional resources.

Designate a Coordinator or Leader

Management of the ACEs Committee should identify a coordinator or leader to manage the

initiative. Although the ACEs Committee and others can share some of the responsibilities, having the right person coordinating efforts increases the likelihood that the initiative will be well managed and successful. **The level of success for the ACEs initiative is often linked to the coordinator's time and ability. It is essential that some or all of the coordinator's time be dedicated to the ACEs initiative and that those responsibilities are included in their job description. If this isn't possible, then the community or lead organization should consider contracting with an outside party to provide help with planning and implementation.**

Committee Meetings

The ACEs Committee should meet regularly, at a minimum on a quarterly basis. The committee may meet more often during peak times when planning or implementing activities or strategies. The frequency of meetings will depend on what the committee plans to accomplish.

A Final Thought on Start-up

After you've laid the groundwork to develop an ACEs initiative, take the time to plan the components that will result in a quality initiative. Many people want to jump into programming at this point, but following all the steps will ultimately make your initiative more successful. By assuring that your programming is geared to your community needs and interests and that you are using proven strategies, you will greatly increase your likelihood for success. Walking through the Strategic Plan steps and the Intervention Action Plan steps will save time in the end.

