

CHALLENGE

100State Problem-Solving Soiree:
Innovating Public Health with Ninjas for Health

ACTIVITY

How can Wisconsin cities learn from each other?

BACKGROUND

Physical inactivity is a major contributing factor to the obesity epidemic. The design of our cities, neighborhoods, and transportation systems play a role in our health. Said another way, where we live (our place) impacts our health. Active communities are places where biking and walking is easy, making regular physical activity routine for its residents. Many cities across Wisconsin are experimenting with creating opportunities to make their communities more active. For example, the city of LaCrosse adopted WI's first Complete Streets policy in 2011, requiring bicycles and pedestrians be considered in all street construction. Real stories of cities are powerful motivations for other cities to follow suit.

Traditionally, active communities like Boulder, CO, Seattle, WA or Copenhagen, Denmark stand on their own. Wisconsin cities want to learn from each other, work together, and share knowledge and resources to create a statewide alliance of WI communities that are all aligned to a few key strategies. Examples of these strategies are Safe Routes to School, Complete Streets, and Active Recreation Opportunities.

KEY FACTS

- 43% of people with safe places to walk within 10 minutes of home met recommended activity levels.
- 1/3 of the population doesn't drive
- Access to facilities increases activity levels.

CONSIDERATIONS

- We're not looking for a list of strategies to implement that will help people be more active; we already have that list.
- There are plenty of "toolkit" sorts of resources already.
- Great ideas don't have to cost a lot of money.



The Wisconsin Active Communities Alliance is a collective of 8 local city and county leaders who have had success implementing programs, structures, and policies to promote physical activity in their area. The alliance wants to grow its membership and help other localities on their journey toward becoming more active communities.

In the absence of a shared agenda statewide, the Active Communities Alliance is creating one to coordinate and communicate across the state. A major challenge is that many players don't realize they are on the same team (for example: economic development, transportation). The project will be successful if it increases sharing, reduces duplication, increases impact, and promotes learning.

QUESTIONS

- 1) How can Wisconsin cities share information with each other about their experiences with building healthy neighborhoods?
- 2) How would a network of cities operate? How would it tap into public support?
- 3) What value would a network add to its members?
- 4) How would a network inspire cities to join, and stay engaged and inspired?
- 5) How would its website be designed to facilitate sharing?

- [Wisconsin Activity Communities Team Story](#)
- <http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/P0/p00036.pdf>
- <http://centerforactivedesign.org>
- <http://www.caactivecommunities.org>