

EVALUATION OF THE NEW YORK STATE HEALTHY NEIGHBORHOOD FUND INITIATIVE

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Components of the Evaluation

Assess both the implementation of interventions at individual sites and the overall impact of the Healthy Neighborhoods initiative

- Process evaluation
- Environmental changes
- Behavioral changes

Process Evaluation Questions

- What specific **interventions** were implemented?
- What **partnerships/collaborations** were formed?
- What **barriers and facilitators** did sites experience?
- How **sustainable** are the interventions?

Environmental Change Questions

Has the Initiative:

- Increased the availability of **healthy, affordable food**?
- Resulted in improvements to the **built environment**?
- Linked community residents to **programs that support lifestyle changes**?

Behavioral Change Questions

- Has the Initiative changed resident
 - Purchasing and consumption of healthy foods
 - Knowledge and motivation toward healthy eating and physical activity
 - Awareness of community-based resources
 - Level of community involvement

2015-2017

**WHAT WE HAVE
LEARNED SO FAR**

What broad themes have we seen and heard from the field?

- HNF projects are similar in many ways, but there are important differences in neighborhood and lead organization characteristics
- Improved healthy food access, parks and public spaces were the starting points, but other areas of neighborhood concern emerged as critical
- Building and maintaining relationships within and outside the neighborhoods is ongoing work
- Making good use of available resources is essential

What have we learned about *project implementation*?

- Core grantees became network hubs for HNF work.
- The HNF activities expanded the conversation about health, engaging more organizations and residents in these conversations.
- The core grantees helped guide outside investments into neighborhood parks, public safety programs and housing developments.
- External factors affect implementation and collaboration and grantees were able to respond to opportunities as well as challenges.

What did we learn about *access to healthy and affordable food*?

- Little change in overall total number of supermarkets or farmers markets from 2015 to 2017
- It is challenging to open a new supermarket in underserved neighborhoods and challenging to keep a supermarket open in the face of external factors
- In most neighborhoods, the challenge for eating healthy is the perceived quality of supermarket foods and getting residents to shop, not the number of supermarkets

Food Access Strategies

- Establishing farmers markets, mobile markets and distributing food boxes
- Encouraging small food retailers and food pantries to stock and promote healthier food and beverage options
- Offering cooking demonstrations, nutrition education, farmers market and supermarket tours to influence residents' choices
- Assisting farm stands and farmers markets to accept food benefits and distributing food incentive coupons to improve affordability

What did we learn about *improvements to the built environment*?

- Local, county and state governments are investing in parks in most of the project neighborhoods. New York City, for example, has committed more than \$130 million to park improvements.
- Grantees had an impact on funding decisions and planned improvements.
- Public safety concerns are strongly linked to the use of parks and public open spaces.

Built Environment Strategies

- Programming that encouraged people back into parks and open spaces that were under-utilized
- Neighborhood clean-up and building days improved public spaces and serves as community building activities
- Way finding and connector projects reconnected residents to local assets such as parks, waterfronts and community spaces
- Creating safe indoor recreational spaces through programming, especially during cold weather season

What did we learn about linking residents to healthy and active living programs?

- This program area received relatively less than either food access or improvements to the built environment.
- Efforts to create web-based referral systems, resource guides and a phone app.
- Strategies focused on sharing information with residents through social media, newsletters and public presentations
- Local organizations shared information to improve coordination and reduce duplication of efforts

2018-2020

EVALUATION PLAN

Going forward

- We plan to pay additional attention to:
 - Efforts to build stronger bonds *within* the neighborhood
 - The process of building connections with organizations and resources *outside* of the neighborhood

- Look more systematically at:
 - Community and resident engagement
 - Organizational development
 - Collaboration and coalition-building

Community and Resident Engagement

Examples:

- Number and types of community and resident engagement activities
- Number of participants in each type of activity
- Leadership and other kinds of training, including number of participants and number and type of activities
- Number of volunteers

Organizational Development

Examples

- Integration of health into the mission of the organization
- Roles of key program staff
- Intra-agency collaboration on program activities
- Securing additional grants and investments to support health programming
- Involvement in broad-based planning efforts

Collaboration and Coalition-Building

Examples:

- Connections between grantees and other comprehensive health issues groups or forums
- Characteristics of partnerships working on shared projects
- Changes in the number and types of collaborating organizations over time
- Influence of community health initiatives on broader organizational awareness, programs and policies

Upcoming Evaluation Activities

- Phone check-in calls in July with grantees
- Continuation of evaluation technical assistance to grantee organizations
- Site visits to all sites September through November 2018

QUESTIONS?