

Active Living in Arizona's Rural Communities:



A Call to Action

Prepared by



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Why Physical Activity?

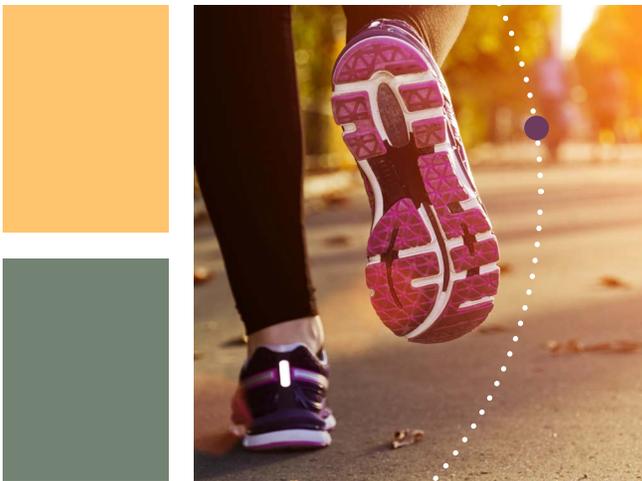


Regular physical activity is one of the best ways to maintain and improve our health. It helps reduce risk for numerous chronic diseases, including diabetes, heart disease and cancer, supports a productive workforce and healthy aging, and reduces the cost of health care.¹ Proven approaches to support active lifestyles are to create environments and adopt policies that support safe physical activity, like walking and biking. How communities design and build their neighborhoods influences how active children and adults are in their everyday life.²

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In Arizona, the public health community has embraced working on active living strategies to create more active communities across the state.

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The Arizona Health Improvement Plan has identified improving the built environment as a cross-cutting health priority. In recent years, cross sector collaboration has increased among public health agencies and municipal planning departments. However, integrating infrastructure into community planning and street design to promote walking and biking continues to be challenging, especially in rural communities. The result is very little progress in improving health outcomes related to healthy community design and the built environment in a large portion of the state.

Why Rural Arizona?

According to the Arizona Center for Rural Health, 20% of Arizona's population resides in a rural community. Rural Arizonans experience more health disparities than their urban neighbors. For instance, rural Arizonans are more likely to experience obesity than urban Arizonans (35.4% vs 28%).³ Seven out of Arizona's 15 counties do not contain an urban area and four of these seven most rural counties have the worst health outcomes in Arizona.⁴ While there are multiple reasons for poorer health outcomes in rural Arizona including lack of access to healthcare and job opportunities, barriers that make it difficult for residents to be physically active are important contributors.

Many of Arizona's small towns and rural communities are located along state and county highways and roadways that have been built in favor of high-speed auto-oriented traffic.

What is an Active Living Strategy?

For the purposes of this report, active living strategies are defined as **infrastructure and policies that facilitate physical activity in communities**. This includes sidewalks, parks, bicycle lanes, trail systems, safe streets, public transit/transportation and complete streets policies.

Barriers to physical activity in rural communities are further compounded by insufficient tax bases and limited budgets, which lead to a lack of infrastructure to accommodate the needs of pedestrians and cyclists or to support existing and new parks and recreation facilities. In addition, the best practices and highlighted examples of active communities and built environment strategies almost exclusively come from urban and suburban settings, leaving rural communities out of the discussions.

This report seeks to inform opportunities for philanthropic, nonprofit, government agencies, and coalitions to work with rural Arizonans to strengthen the design of their communities and built environments in order to support people's ability to be safe and active throughout their communities. ■

References

¹Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2019, September 11). *About Physical Activity*. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/about-physical-activity/index.html>

²Active Living Research. (2019). *Active Living Resources for Communities*. Retrieved from <https://www.activelivingresearch.org/taxonomy/communities>

³America's Health Rankings. (2018). *Annual Report Arizona*. Retrieved from <https://www.americashealthrankings.org/explore/annual/measure/Obesity/state/AZ>

⁴University of Arizona Center for Rural Arizona Health. (2019). *Rural Health Data and Resources*. Retrieved from <https://crh.arizona.edu/resources>

Background and Methodology

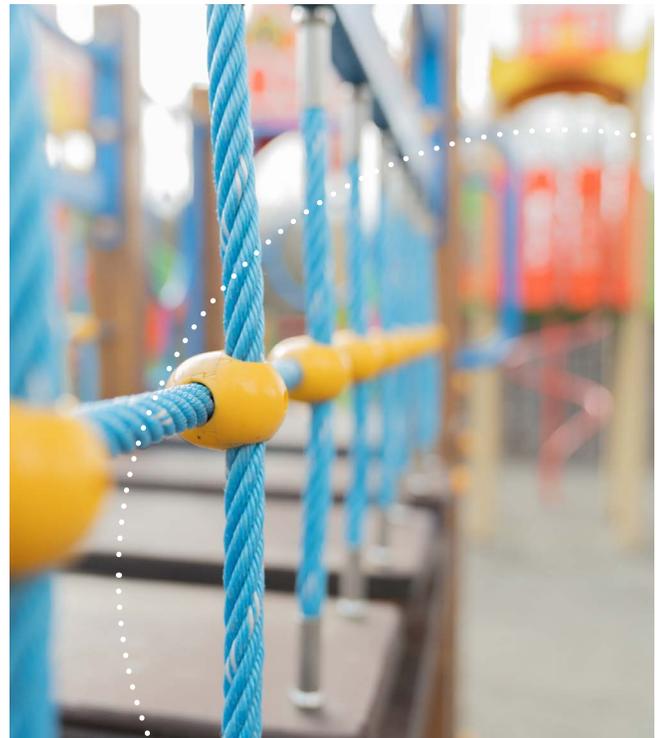
Vitalyst Health Foundation is a partner and investor to many coalitions and organizations in Arizona whose missions are to support active lifestyles through healthy community design, parks and recreation, and transportation initiatives. To date, the work of these coalitions and organizations have experienced more success in engaging urban communities, leaving a lot of room to better understand rural communities' needs.

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In mid-2019 Vitalyst Health Foundation and Pinnacle Prevention partnered on a Rural Active Living Assessment with a desire to gain a better understanding of how rural communities support active lifestyles, what challenges and needs they are facing, and how philanthropic, nonprofit and government agencies can work alongside rural communities to strengthen their active living work.

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To learn more about the state of active living strategies in rural communities, a three phased approach was used which included: key informant interviews, an online survey, and an inventory of existing community health improvement plans. For more information on the methodology, please see Appendices A through C. ■



Results

Key Informant Interviews

Active living framing

When asked what the terms active living or the built environment meant to them, key informants described a multimodal transportation system that supports walking, biking, and vehicular transportation. The built environment was also described in terms of connectivity for community members to access services that matter most to them, such as healthcare, retail, and employment. Overall, most informants felt the terms active living and built environment were not as relatable to the rural community as to urban and suburban communities. Three of those interviewed never heard of the terms, while others had heard the terms used professionally or at conferences by both public health and planning professionals. A few interviewees said they preferred to use examples when talking to community members rather than use these terms. Others suggested using other terms such as community spaces, surroundings, healthy living and recreation.

“We have wonderful weather, we have beautiful views, great air quality, no noise. People take advantage of hiking, lots of mountains, plenty of places to be active if you like to get out.”

Community assets in active living strategies

Key informants were asked to share perspectives on the biggest strengths of rural communities when it comes to active living. Informants identified the natural environment as the resounding key asset. The weather, clean air, nearby mountains, and the outdoors were often mentioned specifically.

Key informants noted a recent shift in community collaborations. Government agencies and non-profits are sharing the role of bringing together different

What is Connectivity?

Connectivity is a way to describe **the number and variety of connections serving origins such as residential neighborhoods and destinations** like schools and shopping areas. Good connectivity means providing a variety of ways to get from Point A to B, from using the car to walking.



What is Built Environment?

The built environment includes **the physical makeup of where we live, learn, work, and play**—our homes, schools, businesses, streets and sidewalks, open spaces, and transportation options. These human-made physical spaces can influence overall community health and individual behaviors such as physical activity and healthy eating.

“What makes rural communities amazing is the sense of community which is hard to measure. The places where people gather are what makes this town special.”

groups to address the built environment. A few communities are seeing school grounds open to the community outside of school hours. Limited financial resources in rural communities create the need for agencies to work together and collaborate. Living in a small town also means you likely work with friends or neighbors. Relationships form out of necessity and proximity. ■

Community challenges with active living strategies

Key informants were also asked to share their perspective of the challenges with active living in their communities. Five key themes emerged:

1 The infrastructure in rural communities is unsafe.

While the natural environment is wonderful outdoor space, areas can be difficult to access due to the terrain. This is particularly challenging for those with mobility challenges, like older adults, that make up a high percentage of people residing in rural communities.

“It is not very bike friendly due to narrow roads and steep hills. I wanted to do a free bike exchange program, but I realized it is really hard to bike in the area.”

2 Rural areas lack funding to support active communities.

Key informants described the built environment funding landscape as complex, difficult to navigate, and favoring urban and suburban communities. Rural cities and towns often lack the expertise needed for submitting competitive grant applications. Many available grants do not truly address the unique needs of rural communities.

“A challenge is sometimes the funding feels predatory. Like the partners are making money off of our community and not really addressing the true needs of the community.”

3 Transit systems tend to increase physical activity in communities, with riders often biking or walking between stops and destinations.

In rural communities, transportation options are limited. Public systems that do exist are often underutilized because of perceptions of inconvenience. Lack of funding limits bus routes and frequency, making it challenging to accommodate residents commuting to work and residents looking to access services and goods.

“Transit is an unknown entity – in terms of development we have seen a lot of work going in subdivisions and to building infrastructure – current zoning rules don’t encourage mixed use, pedestrian and bike-friendly communities and more active lifestyles.”

4 Rural communities lack resources to promote active living initiatives.

The time it takes to travel between small, isolated towns is much greater than traveling across urban and suburban areas. This distance barrier results in high staff cost to offer physical activity events or programs. Key informants also described challenges with keeping staff and high turnover rates in their organizations. Distance can also make it difficult for towns to collaborate on events or regional strategies.

5 Similar to urban and suburban areas, rural developments are often not designed for active lifestyles, health and connectivity, particularly when it comes to the housing sector.

Cheaper land outside of town is likely more desirable for developers, but the result is isolated pockets that do not connect to the main town or, if it exists, the transit system. Developers should be incentivized to create active, walkable communities connected to goods and services.

Community needs and capacity for active living strategies

Key informants were asked to think about their communities in the next three to five years, and the priorities they envisioned in terms of active living. There was a clear desire for a more active community with better supporting infrastructure. In order to achieve these visions, there were three key needs identified among key informants.

1 More funding for infrastructure.

Key informants expressed that garnering funds for physical activity programming, promotion and policy change for active living is helpful, but it will only go so far as the built environment infrastructure to support it. Strategies were suggested such as leveraging or reallocating tax revenue (e.g., gas tax) to help generate more funding for human-scale transportation improvements and creating an aquatics district to allow the community to build a local swimming pool.

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“It’s all dependent on funding and resources. Many people want a sidewalk, but how do you pay for it? It’s expensive and continues to increase as the economy comes back, with labor and materials and that continues to increase as time goes on.”

2 Stronger policy.

Key informants viewed policy as a way in which changes to infrastructure could take place. Updating zoning codes to include mixed usage and setting more regulations on new developments to include walkable neighborhoods is needed to support more active living infrastructure.

3 Expand collaboration, especially with developers.

Key informants shared that while sectors are starting to collaborate to promote active communities, expanding and strengthening collaboration is needed, particularly in the planning phases of new developments and community improvements. Success was shared in working with planning experts and parks and recreation departments, but a lack of collaboration with developers still exists. Additional collaboration will ensure that active and walkable communities remain priorities across sectors and that developers begin to see through a health equity lens.

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“I want to see a parks master plan. Parks, trails, green spaces in a master plan. Splash pads, parklets downtown to walk and rest and walk again. Sidewalks, a dog park, and public art in downtown that encourage people to be out and about.”



Partner support for implementing active living strategies

While the following themes were identified in the key informant interviews, it is important to note that these strategies support investment in rural communities across many sectors, including but not limited to active living work.

- **Be a champion:**

Key informants explained that rural communities often feel like they are undervalued and lack the voice to communicate their barriers or solutions as compared to urban and suburban areas. Partners can help rural communities speak with a louder, collective voice to advocate for resources and tools to address their unique challenges in implementing active living strategies.

- **Develop champions:**

Key informants thought that partners could help to build the capacity of local advocates and champions. External support for internal champions, who have the trust of the community, will make the work and efforts more sustainable.

- **Convene and bring partners to the table:**

Partners could also provide the time and space for collaboration to occur. Partners could host multi-sector meetings to encourage conversations or invite diverse groups of stakeholders to existing meetings and events, particularly events focused on planning. There was a specific request to help get developers and funders to the table to support active living communities.

- **Make it easy to connect to partners and funders:**

Collecting and sharing stories of success, within and outside of Arizona, that highlight best practices specific to rural communities are another way key informants thought partners could help support their active living strategies. Partners could also help communities learn about and connect to funding opportunities that support active living work. Unlike urban and suburban municipalities, rural communities often do not have specialized departments or staff (e.g., parks and recreation dept., bicycle/pedestrian planners). This makes it difficult to learn about active living strategies, identify funding opportunities, and have capacity to respond to existing grant opportunities.

“Good local leadership is required, but it isn’t necessarily the elected officials. There are positive people with great attitudes that are leading some efforts. Small towns tend to bring out wonderful attributes in people. People want to commit themselves to their communities. In larger areas, people get lost in the noise.”

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“[An organization] to act more of a go between for us little organizations and big corporations. Serve as a Match.com for funders and projects. Share projects that need funding.”



Survey Responses

Themes from the key informant interviews were used to develop the survey tool found in Appendix C. The results from survey respondents build on the findings from the key informants.

Existing Assets and Barriers

Like the key informants, survey respondents identified the natural environment as the top asset to active living in rural Arizona. In addition, collaboration between organization and local government was an asset to both informants and respondents. Similarly, key informant and survey respondents identified the widespread and remote communities across rural Arizona, lack of funding and design of developments as top barriers to active living strategies. Interestingly, while key informants discussed challenges in promoting active living challenges, survey respondents felt community events and programs that support active living is an asset, however; the lack of awareness of programs and services was identified as a barrier.

TOP ASSETS	TOP BARRIERS
My community's natural environment supports active living.	Widespread and remote community members are hard to reach and serve.
My community hosts events and programs that support active living.	Lack of adequate funding for projects/programs that support active living.
My community has enough parks and outdoor spaces.	People are not aware of the programs and services that support active living.
Local governments and organizations collaborate and work together to support active living.	Local schools do not open their outdoor spaces to the community on evenings and weekends.
People know how to be active and support each other to be active.	Developments are not designed to support and provide active living opportunities.

The most frequent places that respondents see people being active is at local parks, on local streets and on trails and paths. School grounds are the least likely to be reported as places where people are active which aligns with key informant results that reported limited number of schools' allowing public use of grounds.

Solutions and Resources

Respondents were asked to rank a series of resources and solutions in order of most important to least important to their work. Based on responses, the following resources and solutions are listed in order of most helpful to least helpful.

Respondents were asked if there are any **additional solutions or resources** not listed at that would be helpful. Nineteen respondents offered 3 additional solutions and reinforced solutions ranked in chart. (See next page)

Most helpful to least helpful.

Solutions and Resources

- Infrastructure that supports active living
- More walkable neighborhoods
- More funding for supporting active living
- Increased coordination between community organizations to make active living services more efficient
- Zoning that supports active living
- Incentivization for developers who support active living
- Advocacy that works towards multimodal transportation systems
- A peer to peer network to support active living initiatives
- Opportunities for technical assistance for transit providers
- More clear guidance on how to work with federal, state and county agencies
- New technological solutions for supporting active living
- Information on best practices

Additional Solutions and Resources

- More Places to be Active.** Seven respondents wanted to increase the number of places or improve the existing places to be active in the community. Responses included increasing shared use of school grounds, better off street and on street pedestrian and bike routes, improved traffic management, better public transit services that model more of an on-demand service, and better connections and management of urban and rural trail systems and national forests. There was also mention of putting in water refill stations where people are most active.
- Community Engagement.** Five respondents expressed desire to work better with community, increase awareness about existing programs, offer more opportunities for community to engage, such as walking clubs and free events, and better understanding of what programming to offer for the community.
- Equipment Rental.** Two respondents talked about a low-cost loan, rental, or trade opportunity of equipment that supports being active. Types of equipment mentioned includes bikes, scooters and kayaks.



Respondents were given an opportunity to further state why they selected their top written resources or solutions. The following table summarizes the most frequent reasons why respondents ranked their top solutions.

THEME	RESPONSES
<p>Use the Evidence There is national evidence and local experience from successful projects that creating environments that provide safe opportunities to be active will support more people being active.</p>	<p><i>The city and ADOT just completed a sidewalk in a neighborhood near a school as part of a safe routes to school initiative and people started using it. Build it and they will come.</i></p>
<p>Infrastructure Needed Infrastructure is critical and needed to make any active living program successful. There is demand for the infrastructure needed, but funding, collaboration, and/or political will is lacking.</p>	<p><i>Infrastructure that supports active living is important because all this work can be done and research and city events, but if there is nowhere for people to actually go, then they will not practice what they are learning.</i></p>
<p>Changing Development Patterns The community design is changing (i.e. new housing developments and sprawl outside of town centers) creating different demands on roadways, transportation systems and programming. There is need for help navigating these changes to proactively support active living.</p>	<p><i>Development teams are hesitant to build active community opportunities because they are concerned, they will not get used. If infrastructure is not built the first time around, it is much harder to add later.</i></p>
<p>Strengthen Community Engagement There is a need to create better linkages with community members, whether that is to increase awareness of existing programs and services, create an active community culture, or build a stronger grass roots community to support active living in their community.</p>	<p><i>How to help grass roots groups make changes with the government system in place.</i></p>

Role of External Partners

When thinking about how external partners could support local solutions, both key informants and survey respondents identified funding/resources, advocacy, and support local champions as top solutions to more active living opportunities.

The following actions were rated as most helpful by 75% or more by respondents were:

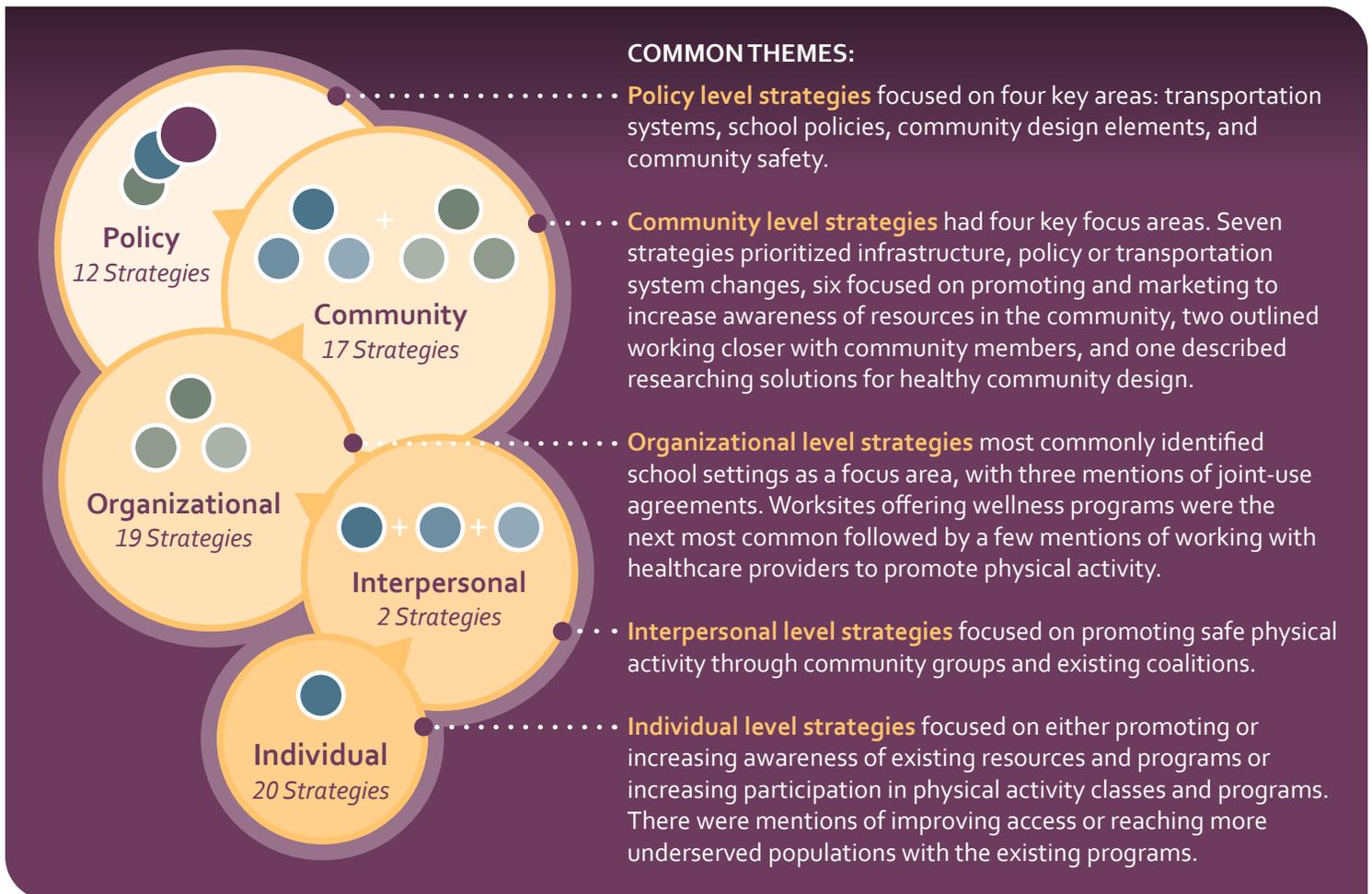
- Provide resources to rural communities
- Assist in planning processes in my community
- Host workshops and training to further my understanding of ways to improve opportunities active living in my community (i.e. shared use agreements, complete street design, trail systems)
- Act as a collective voice for advocacy at the state level

The solutions that were rated the least helpful by respondents are:

- Collect and share stories of success from across the state
- Help connect me to people concerned about active living in my community
- Help me understand the role of state agencies and how they can support active living efforts

Community Health Improvement Plans

An internal review of local health departments' community health improvement plans identified strategies that address active living. These strategies were then evaluated by the levels of the socioecological model, a useful framework to help understand the range of factors that influence health and well-being. In order to promote health and active living, it is necessary to act across multiple levels of the model at the same time. Community health improvement plans are more likely to include individual and organizational level strategies followed by community, policy and interpersonal level strategies to address active living. The following table summarizes how active living strategies compare to the socio-ecological model. A full list of strategies by county is available in Appendix E.



Rural communities have many assets, including the natural environments, that lend themselves to active lifestyles.



Strategies like improve infrastructure, increase public awareness of existing resources, and improve access of resources to people that are harder to reach outlined in the community health improvement plan echo the results from the key informant interviews and survey analysis. However, there are a few key areas that were identified in key informant and survey results that do not come up in community health improvement plans. While infrastructure changes are described, increasing funding for these projects is not prioritized. According to previous results, funding is critical to making these changes possible. In addition, working with the development community was not identified in any community health improvement plan. Opportunities to work with planning and zoning processes were not outlined. While a few mentioned better collaborations with community or creating a task force, multisector collaboration was not prioritized across plans.

Lastly, active strategies outlined in the community health improvement plans lack detail and actionable language that would allow people not involved in the process to understand what and how they can contribute. In future improvement plans, it may be more impactful to be more specific about target areas, target populations, and target policy processes as well as key collaborators needed to make change happen. ■

Recommendations for Action

Rural communities have many assets, including the natural environments, that lend themselves to active lifestyles. However, the way towns and communities were historically built, and continue to develop, has hindered people's ability to take advantage and connect to these assets. There is much opportunity to improve active living in the rural parts of Arizona.

Recommendation 1

Open the Funding Streams

Funding was routinely named as a top barrier throughout the assessment. What also became clear in discussion with state agencies is there are some existing grant opportunities available that rural communities can tap in to but have not consistently accessed. For example, Arizona State Parks Department has a grant program to support projects such as trail development, trail maintenance, pedestrian uses (hiking, running, ADA-accessibility improvements-trails, signs, education), and bicycling. The department indicated that sometimes limited capacity to administer the grant prevented some rural communities from applying.

Outlining existing funding streams, both nationally and locally, that communities can tap in to would help increase awareness and potentially utilization of grant funds. Examples of state funding streams to outline include investments from Arizona Department of Transportation, Arizona State Parks, Arizona Department of Health Services, Regional Planning and Transportation Authorities, and Arizona Department of Education. Through this analysis, identify funding and resource gaps and work with government, philanthropic and the private sector to address these gaps.



Recommendation 2

Strengthen Statewide Advocacy

It was clear in key informant interviews that there are additional ways the state can use federally awarded transportation dollars as well as change State policy to better support active living strategies. In addition, rural communities feel like they have little to no voice when it comes to statewide issues. While there are a number of active living coalitions or associations, there is not a strong advocacy network to address rural issues around active living. Most coalitions are focused on local issues and associations focused on a single topic (e.g. transportation or planning). A network of local coalitions that align their statewide advocacy needs could address this gap for rural Arizona.





Recommendation 3

Lift Local Capacity

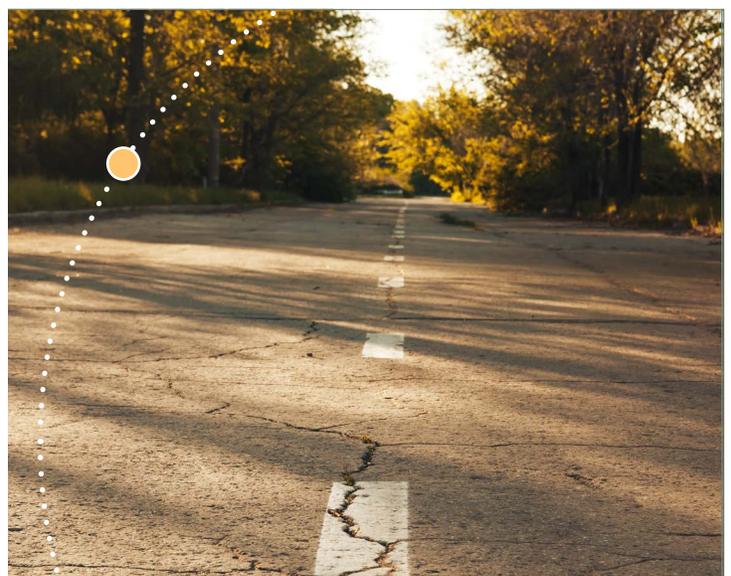
There was a desire and need for increased local capacity building throughout the assessment. While top priorities throughout the assessments was increased funding, resources and infrastructure, there is a need to build capacity to best use and implement these solutions. For example, in order to access grants and funding streams as mentioned in Recommendation #1, local capacity competing for and managing these funds is limited in rural communities. Existing staff often wear multiple hats in rural communities and vacancies are reported frequently. This makes it important to mobilize community champions and grassroots organizations to help advocate for and tap into these funds as well as develop better partnerships with state agencies to improve the ways funding streams address rural needs. In addition, there was a request to host workshops and/or multisector collaboration meetings to improve implementation of active living strategies. It was clear that these meetings would need to be hosted in the local community and that more partners are needed at the table.

Recommendation 4

Make it a Community Driven Solution

While the need for workshops appeared as a top result in the survey, it is clear in the key information interviews that a one-stop shop workshop will not work for all rural communities. Rural communities vary in size, geography and assets. Some have narrow mountainous paved roads while others have flat dirt roads. Some have town centers that are centrally located and host community gatherings, while others do not have a town center, but rather a business district along a state highway. This means there is no one size fits all approach to active living in rural communities and working closely with community members residing in each location to ensure solutions are addressing their needs is key.

To better support local capacity as outlined in #3, true community engagement, especially with those that are harder to reach, is needed. Helping communities codevelop strategies in decision making processes, like the community health improvement plans or community processes, will help improve impact and action in these efforts. This will also help to develop community champions and advocates for the work.



Appendix A:

Detailed Methodology

Phase 1:

Key Informant Interviews

Key informant interviews were conducted during July and September 2019. Interviewees were selected based on partnership members' knowledge of their work, what rural community they serve, and what sector they represent. The interviews sought to: a) understand what is working for rural Arizona when it comes to active living, b) identify challenges and barriers when working on active living strategies in rural Arizona, and c) shed light on ways philanthropy, governments and nonprofits can be better partners to those working on active living in rural Arizona. The key informants represented a variety of sectors including transportation, planning, public health, education, parks and recreation, and social services. Interviews were conducted via telephone using a semi-structured interview protocol, lasting approximately 45 to 60 minutes each. (Appendix B) Eligible organizations or individuals were compensated for their time to complete the interviews. Interview notes were analyzed through inductive content analysis using MAXQDA software. Using this standard qualitative approach, the data were organized into categories derived from the interview guide. A total of 19 individuals were interviewed representing the 15 organizations listed on this page.

Phase 2:

Online Survey

Based on the preliminary analysis of the key informant interviews, partners developed an online survey to dig deeper into the themes heard in the key informant interviews with a larger and broader audience. (Appendix C) The survey was disseminated through active living coalitions, key rural planning and transportation agencies, rural town leaders, and public health agencies. A total of 40 survey responses were analyzed.

Phase 3:

Inventory of Community Health Improvement Plans

Public health agencies are now required to conduct a community health assessment and community health improvement plan every five years for accreditation purposes. A web-based search was used to identify the most recently published community health improvement plans for the 15 counties in Arizona. Plans were reviewed for any priorities that focused on active living. This could include goals, strategies or activities written in the plan. Priorities were then recorded and reviewers identified where the priority best fit in the Socio-Ecological Model (Appendix D).

Organizations Interviewed:

Statewide

Arizona Department of Transportation
Arizona State Parks
Arizona State Parks Foundation

Regional

Central Arizona Governments
Maricopa Association of Governments
Northern Arizona Intergovernmental
Public Transportation Authority
Western Arizona Councils of
Governments

Local

City of Bullhead
City of Globe Community Leader
Cochise Healthy Communities Initiative
Lake Havasu Metropolitan Planning
Organization
Paloma Elementary School District
Payson Senior Center
Yavapai Regional Transit
Yuma County Health Department



Appendix B:

Key Informant Interview Guide

Introduction

Interviewer will introduce themselves and share the purpose of the interview.

Purpose

Children and families are more active when they live in neighborhoods that have sidewalks, parks, bicycle lanes, trails, safe streets and access to public transit. Investing in these strategies to support active living promotes health and reduces health care costs. The purpose of the agreement is to further understand the capacity of rural communities to achieve active living strategies, identify common barriers rural communities face when working on active living strategies, and identify opportunities how Vitalyst Health Foundation can support and strengthen implementation of active living strategies in rural communities.

For the purposes of this report, Active Living Strategies is defined as infrastructure and policies that facilitate physical activity in communities. This includes sidewalks, parks, bicycle lanes, trail systems, safe streets, shared use and public transit/transportation.

The key research questions this assessment will seek to inform are:

- How do rural communities support active living strategies?
- Who or what are the key facilitators for active living strategies?
- What are common challenges among rural communities to implementing active living strategies?
- What is the capacity of rural communities to address challenges to active living strategies?
- Is there a statewide role to address active living strategies in rural communities?
- What tools or resources would help rural communities prioritize and implement active living strategies?

Key Informant Interviews

Once purpose shared, interviewer will pause for questions from participants before transitioning to these questions.

(Note: Interviewer may select questions and sections to focus on based on the participants responses. Not all questions will be asked).

Proposed Questions

General Organizational Perspective

- 1) *Tell me about yourself/your organization.*
 - a. *Mission? How long in the area?*
 - b. *Services provided or issue work?*
 - c. *How do you define your organization/community/service area?*

Active Living Framing

- 1) *Tell me what active living or built environment means to you/your organization?*
 - a. *If yes, can you tell me what this means to you? Does this resonate with your community? If not, is there a better term to use?*
 - b. *If no, provide definition: Active Living/ Built Environment is defined as infrastructure and policies that facilitate physical activity in communities. This includes sidewalks, parks, bicycle lanes, trail systems, safe streets, shared use and public transit/transportation options. Is there a term you use that resonates with you to describe this?*
- 2) *How do you/your organization contribute to active living/built environment? (What is something your organization is most proud of?)*

Interviewer will develop shared definition for active living with interviewee and use this terminology through the rest of interview.

Existing Assets and Barriers

- 1) *From your perspective, what are the biggest strengths when it comes to active living in your community? How do you see people being active in your community?*
 - a. *What brings people to parks or trails?*
 - b. *What do your local streets feel like?*
 - c. *How do schools get used before or after school?*
 - d. *What kind of transportation options do you have in your community?*

- 2) From your perspective, what are the challenges when it comes to active living in your community?
 - a. What happens if someone does not have a car or can no longer drive? How do people get to bus or transportation options?
 - b. What does it feel like to walk or ride bikes in your community?
 - c. How do schools open their grounds for community?
 - d. What is it like to get to the park or trails in your community?

- 3) What services, groups or policies are you aware of in the community that currently focus on active living?
 - a. What are community advocacy groups in the area like?
 - b. What issues have mobilized people?
 - c. What groups/organizations are involved with active living? Do community/advocacy groups work together? How?

Capacity

Interviewer will share examples from other communities, i.e. Circulators in Springerville, shared use in Gila Bend and Whitman.

- 4) If your organization wanted to strengthen its work in active living, what would your organization need to make this happen?
 - a. Who or what is most important to make an active living effort succeed?

- 5) You mentioned x is a challenge. What have you or other community partners done to try to overcome this challenge?
 - a. What ideas do you have to overcome this challenge?

Statewide / Regional Perspective

- 6) How does the state level agencies and policies support your active living work?
- 7) How do state level agencies challenge your active living work? (What could be done to overcome this?)

Vision for the Future

- 8) When you think about the community 3-5 years from now, what do you see as the priorities for active living?
- 9) How can Vitalyst Health Foundation and other partners help make this vision a reality?
 - a. Who needs to be involved in making this vision a reality?
 - b. Who or what can remove the barriers to making the vision a reality?
 - c. What is the role of community members in supporting this vision?
 - d. Are there trainings, tools, or advocacy needs to make this vision a reality?
- 10) Is there anything else we have not asked you that you want Vitalyst Health Foundation to know about your strengths or needs?



Appendix C:

Rural Active Living Assessment

1. Thinking about how people are active in their daily lives in the community you serve, please read each of the following statements and indicate how much you agree or disagree: (strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My community's natural environment supports active living (ex: hiking trails, forests, climate etc)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My community has enough parks and outdoor spaces	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
People in my community can easily get to places to be physically active even if they do not have a car?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My community has infrastructure that creates safe spaces for active living (sidewalks, bike lanes, walking paths)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My community hosts events and programs that support active living	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My community has public transit that is easy to use and effective	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
People in my community support each other to be active	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Local schools in my community open their outdoor spaces to the community on evenings and weekends	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Local governments and organizations collaborate and work together to support active living in my community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Conflicting values and politics in my community impede work to support active living	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My community has adequate funding for projects/programs that support active living	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Zoning rules in my community support active living	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Widespread and remote community members are hard to reach and serve with projects and programs that support active living	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Developments in my community are designed to support community members and provide active living opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Seniors and older adults in my community have access to and use programs and projects that help them be active	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
People in my community know how to be active	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
People in my community are aware of the programs and services that support active living	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2. Where do you see people in your being active?

- Local parks
- Walking on local streets
- Biking on local streets
- Trails and walking/hiking paths
- Nearby state and national parks
- School grounds
- Community centers
- Other

3. What resources or solutions would be most helpful in community to support active living? Please rank the following from 1 - most helpful to 12 - least helpful:

- 

Increased coordination between community organizations to make active living services more efficient
- 

More clear guidance on how to work with federal, state and county agencies
- 

Opportunities for technical assistance for transit providers
- 

A peer to peer network to support active living initiatives
- 

Infrastructure that supports active living
- 

New technological solutions for supporting active living
- 

More walkable neighborhoods
- 

More funding for supporting active living
- 

Information on best practices
- 

Incentivization for developers who support active living



Zoning that supports active living



Advocacy that works towards multimodal transportation systems

4. What other resources or solutions would be helpful in community to support active living that were not listed in the question above?

5. Please tell us more about how your top choice above would help people in your community have access to opportunities to be active.

6. If statewide partners, like philanthropic or government agencies, were to take the following actions, how helpful do you feel each would be on a scale of 1 to 5 (where 1 is not helpful and 5 is very helpful)?

	1 - Not helpful	2	3	4	5 - Very helpful
Partner on active living initiatives	<input type="radio"/>				
Help identify and connect me to other people concerned about active living and safety in my community	<input type="radio"/>				
Collect and share stories of success from across the state	<input type="radio"/>				
Host workshops and training to further my understanding of ways to improve opportunities active living in my community (ie shared use agreements, complete street design, trail systems)	<input type="radio"/>				
Act as a collective voice for advocacy at the state level	<input type="radio"/>				
Help me understand the role of state agencies and how they can support active living efforts	<input type="radio"/>				
Provide resources to rural communities	<input type="radio"/>				
Help develop my community's capacity to organize and advocate for change	<input type="radio"/>				
Develop an active living guidebook for Arizona that compiles and shares best practices and ways to achieve them.	<input type="radio"/>				
Facilitate collaboration processes	<input type="radio"/>				
Assist in planning processes in my community	<input type="radio"/>				

7. Please tell us about yourself

Organization

Your role

**City and County
where you work**

Appendix D:

Survey Figures

Figure 1:

Natural environment is the top asset to active living in rural communities, while remote community members are the hard to reach is the top barrier.

Thinking about how people are active in their daily lives in the community you serve, please read each of the following statements and indicate how much you agree or disagree (n=40)

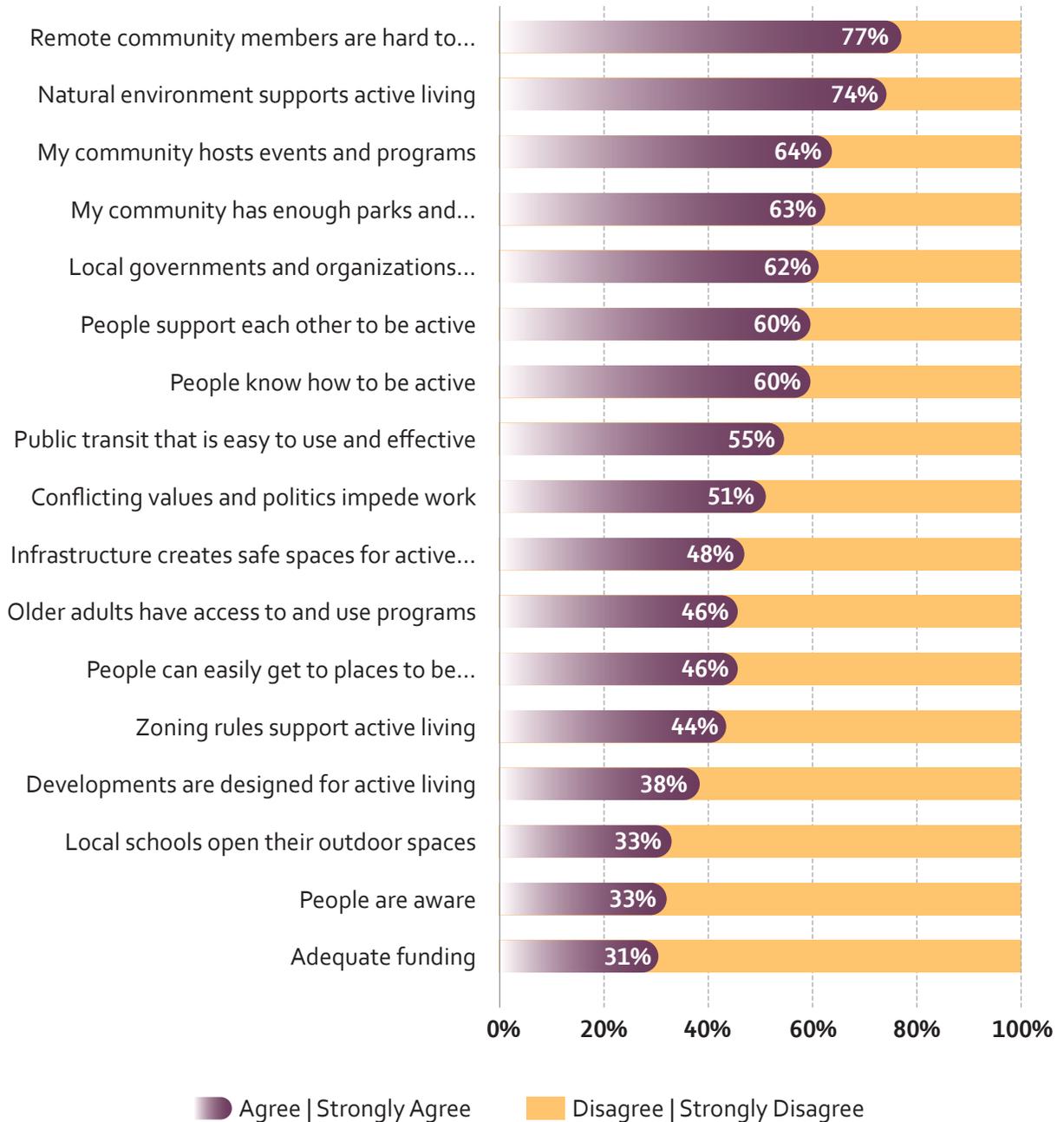


Figure 2:

Local parks are where most people are seen being active.

Where do you see people in your community being active?
Choose all that apply (n=40)

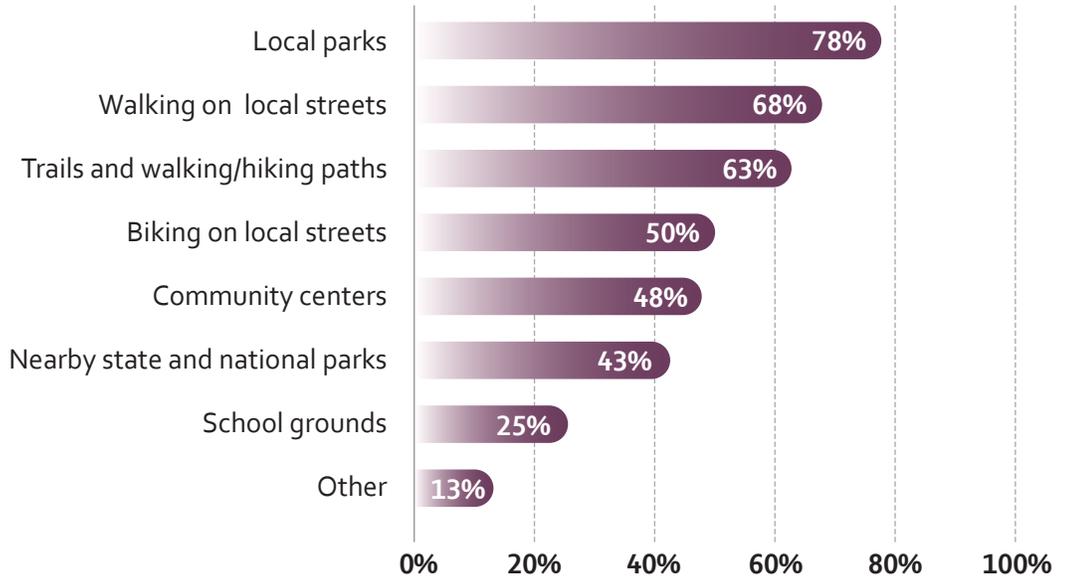
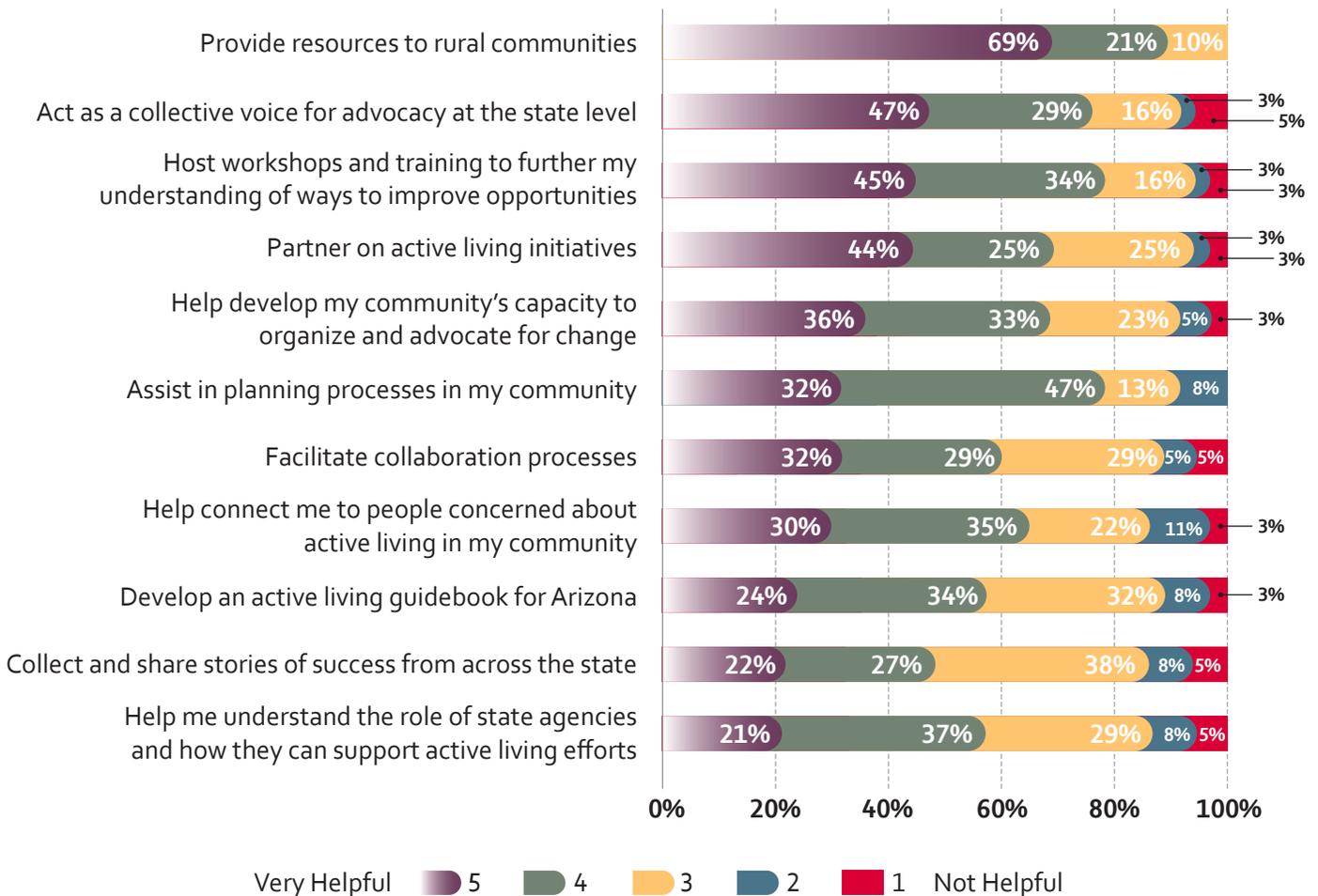


Figure 3:

Providing resources, capacity building, and advocacy support ranked most helpful by rural communities.

If statewide partners, like philanthropic or government agencies, were to take the following actions, how helpful do you feel each would be on a scale of 1 to 5 (where 1 is not helpful and 5 is very helpful)?



Appendix E:

Active Living Strategies in Community Health Improvement Plans

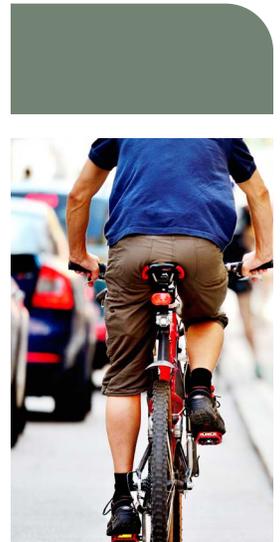
County	Goal	Strategy	Socioecological Model Level of Impact
Apache	Promoting Healthy Lifestyles	Publicize walking/biking paths and trails that are available in the community	Community
		Promote adult sports and youth sports.	Individual
		Publicize or promote use of outdoor facilities when school is not in session (after hours and on the weekends).	Community
	Reduction in Obesity	Education on the benefits of physical activity.	Individual
		Schools, cities, and towns need to publicize resources that are available to residents for use and workplace wellness programs need to be encouraged.	Community Organizational
	Heart Disease	Publicizing hiking/biking trails, walks paths after hour use of school facilities	Community
Coconino	Increase access to engagement in healthy lifestyle and behavior programming throughout Coconino County	Raise awareness and engagement of families and adults in existing nutritional and fitness programs	Individual
Cochise	Build & strengthen community-based infrastructure that provides options for healthy eating & active living	Develop county-wide, coordinated communication & marketing plan to promote healthy living activities, with a single point of contact.	Community
		Research workplace wellness policies and develop a toolkit for Cochise County business	Organizational
		Research policies for alternative use of public space (i.e. Joint use agreements for school facilities to be used for community after school hours).	Policy
		Research best practices for increased physical activity in schools	Organizational
		Research best practices for health care providers to promote healthy eating and physical activities with patients.	Organizational
	Support all efforts to expand transportation access throughout Cochise County	Support SEAGO's plans to expand intercity transportation to Benson and to set up public transportation in Wilcox.	Policy
		Support development of VICAP transportation services in all areas where there is no public transportation.	Policy
	Gila	Reduce the risk factors and disease burden associated with overweight and obesity	Improve the built environment to support active lifestyles
Increase opportunities for adults to engage in structured/group recreational activities			Individual
Increase the policies and practices that support physical education OR physical activity in schools.			Policy Organizational

Appendix E: Active Living Strategies in Community Health Improvement Plans *Continued*

County	Goal	Strategy	Socioecological Model Level of Impact
Graham	Increase physical activity in Graham County through improving access to safe places for community members to exercise.	By December 2015, the number of usable pedestrian pathways and recreation facilities/resources will increase.	Community
		Increase the number of joint-use agreements (JUAs) that increase access to physical activity opportunities by 2015.	Policy
		Provide informational outreach activities and promotional events to increase individual knowledge about physical activity and nutrition	Individual
Greenlee	Reduce adult obesity (Percentage of adults that report a BMI of 30 or more) in Greenlee County, based on data from the RWJF County Health Rankings	Increase the percentage of people who engage in regular physical activity	Individual
		Increase awareness and access to different types of physical activity, programs and facilities	Individual
	Reduce physical inactivity (Percentage of adults age 20 and over reporting no leisure-time physical activity) in Greenlee County, based on data from the RWJF County Health Rankings	Continue to provide and promote physical activity opportunities in the community	Organizational
La Paz	All persons in La Paz County will be better able to prevent and/or manage chronic diseases.	Encourage workplace and community wellness events and programs	Organizational
		Research and implement healthy community design ideas.	Community
	All persons in La Paz County will live in safer neighborhoods.	Partner with community coalitions that address neighborhood safety	Interpersonal
		Inform the public of available resources and innovative programs for public safety.	Individual
	La Paz County residents and visitors will see improvements in infrastructure, particularly in communications and transportation.	Partner with the Focused Futures coalition to focus on communications and transportation.	Community
		Assess how La Paz County can improve its transit systems	Policy
Maricopa	To strategically impact the current top five health priorities of Maricopa County: Obesity, Diabetes, Cardiovascular Disease, Lung Cancer, Access to Care, through collaboration of public and private partnerships.	Impact public policy and system approaches by engaging decision makers	Organizational
		Increase awareness and usability of community assets and resources, especially to under served populations	Individual
		Designing healthy communities: Built environment	Community
		Integrate health in all policies in community designs	Policy Community
		Create healthy school environments with School Health Advisory Councils, School Health Improvement Plans, parental involvement and training.	Policy Organizational
		Identify and promote model school-based wellness practices locally	Organizational

Appendix E: Active Living Strategies in Community Health Improvement Plans *Continued*

County	Goal	Strategy	Socioecological Model Level of Impact
Mohave	Youth Risk / Protective factors	Provide outreach in schools to educate children on healthy living skills	Organizational Individual
		Encourage physical fitness at community elementary schools	Organizational
Navajo	Increase number of community members actively engaged in healthy behaviors that prevent chronic disease	Engage employers to incentivize wellness	Organizational
		Wellness seminars	Individual
		Inspire community groups to address healthy habits	Interpersonal
Pima	Promote and support healthy lifestyle for all Pima County residents	Identify facilities and programs available for physical activity	Organizational
		Promote physical activity among school-aged youth	Organizational Individual
		Solicit input from community stakeholders on physical activity and exercise	Community
		Promote programs and resources that enhance interpersonal safety	Individual
		Promote policies and programs that reduce public and street harassment.	Policy
		Incorporate Complete Streets principles in jurisdictional planning to make streets safe for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transit users.	Policy
		Integrate green infrastructure into capital and development projects, such as providing shade, mitigating for urban heat island effects and rising regional temperatures, and managing localized storm water issues, that reduce health and safety concerns for users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transit users	Policy



Appendix E: Active Living Strategies in Community Health Improvement Plans *Continued*

County	Goal	Strategy	Socioecological Model Level of Impact
Pinal	Track physical activity and nutrition intervention strategies within Pinal County	Increase public awareness of nutrition and chronic disease self-management (CDSM) classes	Individual
		Increase attendance in nutrition and chronic disease self-management (CDSM) classes	Individual
		Partner with primary care providers in the County to provide resources for high risk clients	Organizational
Santa Cruz	Improve access to care in Santa Cruz County	Convene task force on addressing community-wide need for transportation	Community
		Enhance/expand pilot projects which have addressed transportation issue	Community
	Prevent and treat obesity and diabetes	Increased access to and utilization of active living and recreation opportunities	Individual
		Increase infrastructure for safe walking and bicycling such as sidewalks, bike lanes, and trails throughout the county	Community
		Expand public recreation facilities so that they include well-maintained equipment and fitness facilities and are accessible for all residents.	Organizational
		Encourage/support employers to adopt best practices for workplace physical activity	Organizational
		Obtain funding and expand current health promotion classes and programs and develop new programs when necessary to reach a broader scope of residents.	Individual
		Increase awareness and utilization of available healthy eating/active living programs	Individual
Promote walking and bicycling as commuting and leisure activities	Individual Community		
Yavapai (Quad Cities)	Improve and increase accessibility, affordability, and availability of nutritious foods and beverages for the quad cities' region.	Increase provider awareness of nutrition and physical activity options in the region.	Organizational
Yavapai (Verde Valley)	Increase access to, and availability of, equitable and integrated healthcare services	Improve community walkability and public transportation	Policy Community
Yuma	Obesity and Diabetes	Focus on the major risk factors of poor nutrition, sedentary lifestyles, and obesity	Individual

