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Nikole Lobb Dougherty

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2007 Model Practice Building COHORT BRIEF



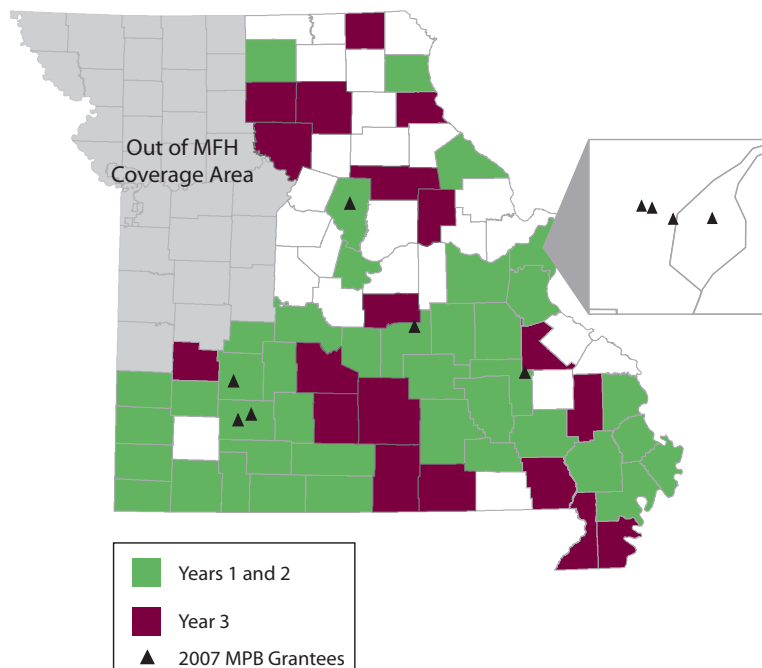
Introduction

This report is part of a series of reports and presentations to communicate on the progress of the Missouri Foundation for Health's (MFH) Healthy and Active Communities Initiative (H&AC). This report provides a descriptive snapshot of the activities that occurred over the three-year grant period of the 2007 Model Practice Building (MPB) grantees (n=10). Data for the report are taken primarily from the Healthy and Active Programs and Policies Evaluation (HAPPE) system, a web-based database in which grantees enter data required for the H&AC Initiative evaluation. To complement HAPPE data, key pieces from qualitative interviews, and a survey about capacity for sustainability, are also included. A comprehensive strategy-specific report will be developed in the future and will include all quantitative and qualitative data across both the 2007 and 2008 cohorts of MPB grantees.

2007 MPB Overview

The majority of H&AC activities were implemented in the county where the grant originated. Some grantees, however, expanded their reach within the MFH coverage area, as seen in Figure 1. In years one and two of the 2007 MPB grants, projects reached 41 counties, and by year three the reach of projects had expanded to 61 counties. Activities were generally well distributed across the state, with less concentration in Central and Northeast Missouri. In total, there were over **5.8 million exposures** to H&AC activities between 2007-2010.

Figure 1. Expansion of H&AC project activities by county



Key Findings

The following are highlights from the evaluation of the 2007 MPB grantees.

Policy and built environment changes are most likely to be sustained.

Grantees that did policy/advocacy work or built environment changes described these as the project components that would be sustainable, often with minimal efforts, beyond their funding cycle.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Continue to support implementation of built environment changes and advocating for policies for future grants. This includes continuing to provide training opportunities and additional resources to build grantees' skills in these areas.
- Encourage the use of formal agreements by grantees, such as maintenance agreements of built environment changes, to be in place prior to the end of the H&AC project.

Building capacity takes time and individual organizational needs vary.

For the majority of grantees, it took several months to get their programs up and running, including hiring of staff and developing materials and piloting project components. Capacity-building needs vary greatly from organization to organization. Small or lower-capacity organizations tend to rely more heavily on outside support of partners, consultants, or training and technical assistance to meet the diverse needs of the project.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Assess grantees on their skill sets and needs, beyond evaluation, as they begin their grants to identify common areas for training and technical assistance. This will allow for more individualized support based on individual grantee need.
- Continue to support the provision of information resources and training to grantees to support capacity building for the sustainability of their efforts. This includes topics such as gaining political support, engaging community partners, communication/marketing, and evaluation.

Relationships matter.

Grantees emphasized the importance of creating and maintaining partnerships with other organizations in their communities. Partners were important because they implemented H&AC project activities, provided access to target populations, and provided expertise to grantees.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Continue to offer support and resources to grantees in developing partnerships, particularly partnerships with policymakers. This includes training or technical support around partnership development, highlighting what strategies work best with different types of partners, and offering effective strategies for diversifying partnerships.

- Continue to provide opportunities for H&AC grantees to network with one another to share their experiences and other resources, as well as encourage more formal partnerships among grantees.
- Consider requiring that grantees engage partners from a minimum number of sectors.

Planning for sustainability is important.

Grantees ability to meet project sustainability objectives varied widely. Only half of the grantees reported leveraging additional funds to sustain project components during their three-year funding cycle. Grantees did not describe their sustainability plans in a comprehensive manner, but rather generally described sustainability as securing additional funding or maintaining built environment changes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Grantees need to develop more comprehensive plans for sustainability that look beyond receiving funding. One way to encourage this may be requiring grantees to have sustainability objectives in their project plans that span across multiple sustainability domains.
- Encourage grantees to identify and form formal agreements with partners who can continue to contribute funding, marketing skills, advocacy, and other key resources that will help ensure program efforts are sustained.

The remainder of this report provides a description of the outcomes, activities, and outputs that 2007 MPB grantees achieved during their three-year grant cycle.

Outcomes

How have policies changed over time?

Even though it was not a required project component for MPB grantees as it would later become for Promising Strategy (PS) grantees, several 2007 MPB grantees were successful in developing or implementing policy changes (Table 1). Half of grantees engaged in other related advocacy and policy change work. The most common advocacy and policy change activities grantees participated in were the development of advisory or planning committees and drafting a new or enhancing an existing policy.

Two out of three of the grantees that developed policy changes had objectives in their project plans specifically around policy work.

Staff reported implementation of policies as one of the **most sustainable elements** of their H&AC projects.

Table 1. Description of policies implemented by 2007 MPB grantees

Grantee	Setting	Policy Components	Year Implemented	Number of People Affected
Mark Twain Forest Regional Alliance	Worksite	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Permits 30 minutes of flexible work time for physical activity during work day 	Year 1	90
Polk County Health Center	School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Permits community use of school facilities and equipment (joint-use agreement) 	Year 1	1,800
University of Missouri – St. Louis (Scott County School District)	School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nutritional guidelines for food and beverages sold in school Restricts marketing of food to healthy items only Physical activity guidelines (minimum daily requirements) for physical education and recess Guidelines for integration of nutrition education and physical activity into core subjects Permits community use of school facilities and equipment (joint-use agreement) Established Staff Wellness Council 	Year 2	453
Polk County Health Center	School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creates a Wellness Committee and a Nutrition & Physical Activity Advisory Committee Established nutrition guidelines for students, parents, and staff Creates a District Nutrition Standard Cafeteria and fundraising food must follow District's Nutrition Standards Creates a District Physical Activity Goal and lays out a strategy to meet Establishes a student wellness policy 	Year 3	720

How have physical and built environment opportunities changed over time?

While only half of the 2007 MPB grantees had project objectives around built environment changes, grantees often reported the built environment changes as the primary components of their projects that would be sustained after funding ended. Half of the 2007 MPB grantees were successful at implementing healthy eating environment changes:

- Changes to cafeteria or vending machine options, development of community gardens, and displayed point of purchase prompts were the most common;
- Menu labeling or farmer's markets were less likely to be implemented.

“Once you create the environment that supports physical activity and nutrition, it’s most likely going to stay there.”

Furthermore, in the last year of their funding cycle, 60% of grantees implemented physical activity environment changes. Improved access to physical activity facilities or equipments, such as providing new fitness equipment to schools and childcares or opening school gym facilities for the local community members after hours, were the most common changes.

What was the change in capacity of organizations over time?

HUMAN RESOURCES

Overall, grantees increased capacity or skills in some areas over the course of their three-year grants. They achieved this by relying on outside support and assistance from capacity-building teams and partners to help implement H&AC project activities. H&AC projects required diverse sets of skills and many grantees met the staffing demands through use of supplemental staffing strategies (such as volunteers, consultants or interns).

Common challenges with volunteers

- Unable to increase the use of volunteers because of the lack of skills or capacity to organize, recruit, or manage volunteers.
- Difficult to retain skilled volunteers over the course of the grant cycle.

When grantees were asked about the essential skills necessary to implement project activities, responses generally fell into one of two categories: project management skills or content expertise (Table 2).

Table 2. Description of essential skills

Project management skills...	Content area expertise...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include planning, organizing, securing, and managing resources to achieve project goals, such as communication and partnership development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Included specialized skills such as physical activity or nutrition expertise, evaluation, dissemination, marketing, or technological skills.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were skills possessed by internal staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were areas where internal staff relied more heavily on external staff, including partners, and consultants.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were skills often expanded through participation in external training opportunities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 74% of the training sessions grantees participated in over their three-year project period were around project management, partnership development, or programmatic elements of projects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support was provided by MFH to grantees through access to evaluation, dissemination, and implementation teams.

FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCES

When grantees referenced sustainability, they primarily spoke about leveraging additional funds. They also cited built environment or policy change that would continue beyond the life of the grant. This cohort of grantees was required to include sustainability objectives as part of their project plans. These objectives frequently focused on working with partners to either leverage funding or to have partners continue or maintain project activities after funding ended. Overall, grantees were somewhat successful in meeting sustainability objectives:

- 40% of grantees met all of their sustainability objectives;
- 50% of grantees met over half of their sustainability objectives.

To further determine grantees’ capacity for sustainability, a survey that assessed their capacity for sustainability in nine areas was administered to key stakeholders at the end of their funding cycle. A sustainability report is currently under development and will include more detailed findings from this survey.

- The sustainability areas the 2007 MPB grantees rated themselves the highest in were those focused on organizational capacity, program improvement, and public health impact.
- Higher ratings on organizational capacity and program improvement might be expected because these grantees were provided capacity building technical assistance and training, specifically around best practices, evaluation and dissemination.

A lower relative score was achieved by grantees in the areas of funding stability and political support. This is not surprising given only half of the grantees reported securing additional funds for H&AC related activities during the three-year grant cycle (Table 3), and only 60% of grantees partnered with local or state governments.

Table 3. Supplemental funds garnered between 2007-2010¹

Grantee	Original MPB Funding	Additional Funds Reported	% of Supplemental Funds Garnered
America SCORES St. Louis	\$148,356	\$359,322	242%
Columbia/Boone County Health Dept.	\$302,668	\$161,300	53%
Forest Institute of Professional Psychology	\$348,754	\$20,750	6%
Mark Twain Forest Regional Health Alliance	\$314,026	--	--
Ozarks Regional YMCA	\$346,019	--	--
Phelps County Community Partnership	\$349,590	\$100 (\$300,000)*	-- (86%)
Polk County Health Center	\$349,166	\$151,450 (\$299,973)*	43% (86%)
Saint Louis County Department of Health	\$349,141	--	--
St. Louis Reional OASIS	\$116,960	--	--
University of Missouri - St. Louis	\$338,374	--	--
Totals	\$2,963,054	\$692,922 (\$1,292,895)*	23% (44%)

*Includes Promising Strategies funds awarded to these organizations by MFH.

Overall, grantees described MFH funding as adequate and that it allowed grantees to accomplish goals and implement specific components. Several grantees described the MPB funding as “seed” money that was used to launch or support longer term organizational goals. Many grantees were looking to their H&AC project partners to sustain elements of their project through financial contributions, including the maintenance and upkeep of built environment changes and equipment. Half of the grantees reported that they worked with partners to establish formal agreements.

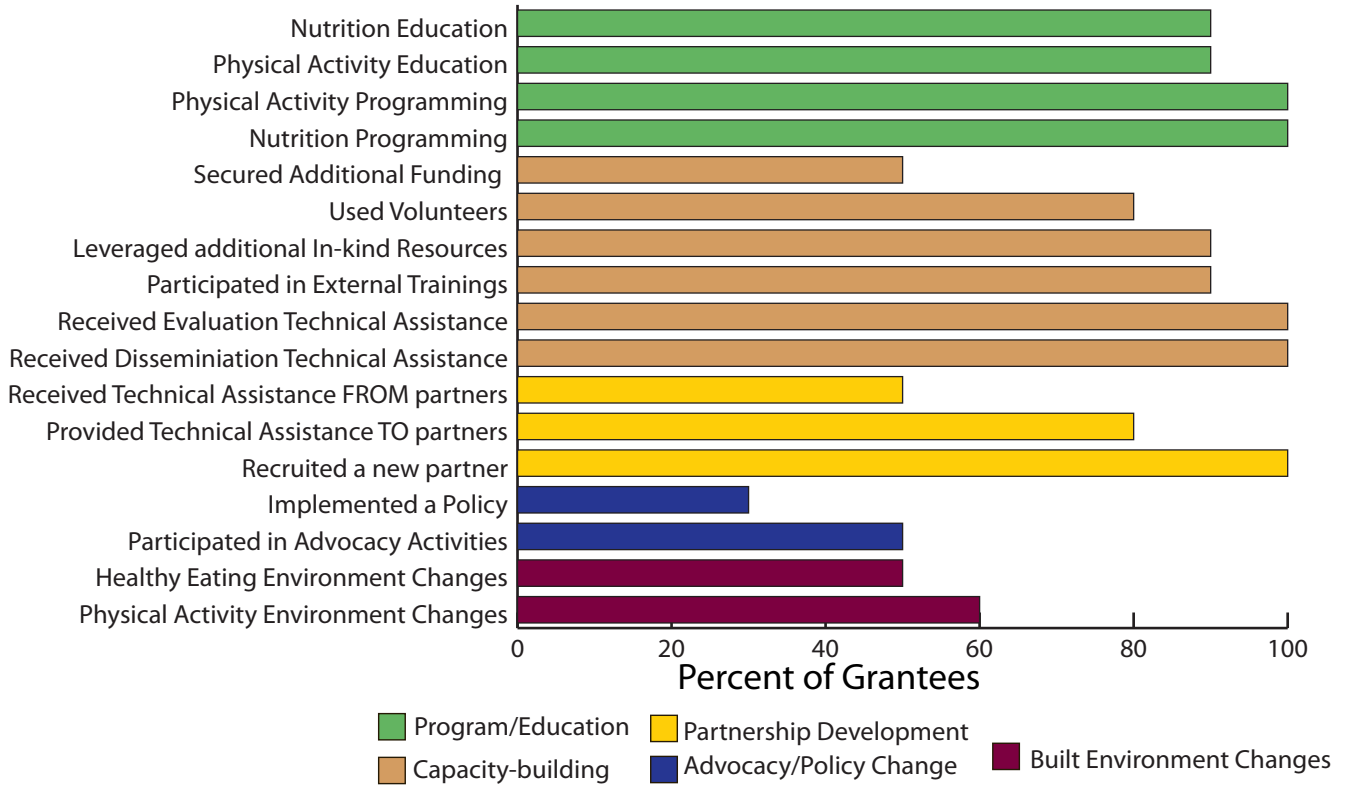
“We didn’t intend for this project to... cover every expense that might be associated with it... it was enough to start, and then we expected communities to pick that up and go, and they did.”

¹This table does not capture the additional costs associated with H&AC activities that will be absorbed by grantee or partner organizations. Post-grant financial data is not available to provide additional details as to the degree in which organizations absorb H&AC project costs.

Activities and Outputs

Grantees participated in a wide-array of project activities, including capacity-building, programmatic and education, policy and advocacy, built environment changes, and partnership development activities.

Figure 2. Percent of 2007 MPB grantees involved in project activities from 2007-2010 by type



What was the reach of activities?

For many of the activity categories, the number of people reached was collected. Individuals had the potential to be touched by multiple project activities. Therefore, reach numbers represent the number of exposures to project activities or messages.

Reach by activities

- 5,407,720** through marketing and dissemination
- 288,199** through nutrition & physical activity education
- 161,960** through nutrition & physical activity programming
- 3,063** through policy change

Where were the activities implemented?

H&AC project activities occurred in a wide-array of settings. By the end of their funding cycle, all grantees implemented at least one H&AC activity in a school and a neighborhood/community setting.



What did the partnership networks look like?

Active collaboration was a key element emphasized by MFH for the MPB strategy. Grantees were encouraged to demonstrate collaborations with diverse community and regional organizations. Partnerships were developed across many sectors.

- Overall, 250 partnerships were formed over the course of their three-year projects.
- Overall, the number of partnerships formed increased over time.
- In the last year of the funding cycle, more partnerships were reported (n= 131) across all grantees than in years 1 and 2 combined (n=119).
- Grantees most frequently partnered with community organizations, schools/daycare centers, and local businesses.

Table 4 . Percent of total partnerships by type: 2007-2010

Partner Type	Percent of total partnerships
Community Organization	28%
Schools/Daycare Centers	17%
Local Businesses	13%
Colleges/Universities	11%
Faith-based Organizations	10%
Healthcare Providers	8%
Local Government	4%
State & Fed. Government	4%
Community Residents	3%
Other Foundations	2%

Overall, grantees were successful in partnering with a diverse set of organizations.

- Over half of the grantees engaged with at least five different types of partners out of a possible eleven types of partners.

Health departments and schools were cited most often by grantees as critical partners in interviews with project staff.

- Although health departments did not make up a large proportion of partnerships overall, project staff reported they were important partners to have primarily because they were often implementation sites and hosted events.
- Schools represented a large proportion of the overall number of partnerships and were also identified as critical partners because they served as locations of built environment or policy changes and provided access to targeted populations.

The University of Missouri Extension was specifically mentioned by many 2007 MPB grantees as a very important partner.

- Grantees felt they provided significant expertise around nutrition and health education for their MPB project activities.

Few grantees indicated they had formally collaborated with other H&AC grantees.

- Grantees indicated that interactions with other H&AC grantees primarily took place at the yearly convening and peer-to-peer exchange meetings.
- These networking opportunities were successful in promoting interactions and sharing ideas between grantees; however, few formal partnerships were formed.

As seen in Table 5, there were four primary types of contributions partners offered for 2007 MPB H&AC project activities: people’s time, nutrition and physical activity programming, space, or project marketing activities.

- Across all grantees, partners made a total of **762 contributions** to H&AC project activities.

Table 5. Percent of total partner contributions by type: 2007-2010

Contribution Type	Percent of total contributions
People’s Time	24%
Nutrition & Physical Activity Programming	20%
Space	14%
Project Marketing	14%
Materials	7%
Advocacy	6%
Evaluation	5%
Dissemination	4%
Technology/Other	4%
Funding	3%

For more information, please contact:

Nikole Lobb Dougherty
 George Warren Brown School of Social Work
 Washington University in St. Louis
 700 Rosedale Ave., Campus Box 1009
 St. Louis, MO 63112
 nlobbdougherty@brownschool.wustl.edu

