Active Living for All (ALfA)

Policy, Systems, and Environmental Changes

In 2013, the Center for Prevention at Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota (the Center) awarded contracts to nine organizations throughout the state, all working to increase opportunities for active living and improve health outcomes through policy, systems, and environmental (PSE) change.

The 9 organizations initially received funding for three years, all but one contract were extended to five years, and two organizations merged into one.

About the ALfA initiative PSE changes

Funded organizations contributed directly to at least 78 PSE changes within their communities. These included changes in policy (e.g., revising city policy to include a Health in All Policy framework); systems (e.g., creating a funding mechanism for public art in public works projects); and the built environment (e.g., adding a crosswalk to a busy street). Some organizations were directly involved with implementing PSE changes, such as working with local businesses to install bike racks. In many cases, the organizations were one of many contributing factors that led to PSE changes, such as with the adoption of city-wide plans. The following is a numerical summary of the PSE changes reported by the organizations.

23 Policy changes adopted or implemented

Category	# of changes
Plans supporting active living	16
Healthy eating policies	2
Plans advancing equity	2
School policies	2
Organizational strategic plans	1
Safe Routes to School plans	1
Other	1

15 Systems changes adopted or implemented

Category	# of changes
System changes to support greater community engagement in planning processes	6
System changes to prioritize active living in planning processes	3
New coalition	2
New positions within an institution to advance changes	2
New processes taking into account health impacts of policies	2
System changes to advance equity	2
Changes impacting sustainability of projects	1

40 Environmental changes adopted or implemented

Category	# of changes
Bike lanes	13
Sidewalks/pedestrian infrastructure	7
Place-making amenities	7
Traffic-calming measures	5
Multi-use trails/greenways	4
Bike racks	3
Signage	3
Bike maintenance stations	2
Bike share programs	2
Community gardens	1
Other	1

Note: Some changes fell into multiple categories within each PSE change group.

Examples of PSE changes implemented by the ALfA organizations.

Below we highlight examples of the PSE changes from the funded organizations.

Northside Greenway

Funding from the ALfA initiative supported a multi-year community outreach process to gather resident input and determine technical feasibility of a project to convert low-traffic streets in North Minneapolis to a greenway. Led by a resident-led steering committee, and supported by the City of Minneapolis Health Department and the Alliance for Metropolitan Stability, the project was designed as a response to historic actions by municipalities in communities of color, where residents' voices have not been included in planning efforts.

👍 Organizational strategic plans

Resolution passed by the Northside Greenway Council to support the Camden Neighborhood Center as a fiscal agent for the new advocacy group, Northside Greenway Now!

🍃 Multi-use trails/greenways

5-block demonstration project (June 2016-June 2017), with some adjustments made during the year.

Get Fit Itasca

Get Fit Itasca worked with Itasca Community College and the cities of Grand Rapids and La Prairie to support improved biking and walking infrastructure that better connects the college and the surrounding community. The project included implementation of a bike share program at the college and a Photovoice project with the students to identify barriers to active living on the campus and in the community.

🍃 Environmental/other

Opened a Wellness Center at Itasca Community College: Donations and a systematic change in the form of less than $1.00 increase per credit hour pays for the use of the space, the leased equipment, and contributes to the work study hours that staff the desk.

🍃 Bike share programs

Grand Rapids Bike share continued to grow by adding bike checkouts at four additional organizations in Itasca, Grand Rapids, and Deer River.

Live Healthy Red Wing (LHRW)

LHRW worked on a number of efforts to make the city's parks, schools, businesses, and trails connected and more accessible for all residents and visitors. These efforts align with the city's Complete Streets policy and Safe Routes to School efforts to both improve infrastructure and to use programs and promotions to encourage walking and biking.

👍 **Plans supporting active living**

Outlined a city policy/guideline that deepens the Complete Streets Resolution by providing a criteria sheet and community engagement procedure.

✛ **New position within institutions to advance change**

Created a Community Engagement Specialist position in city government to continue the work started by LHRW.

Move MN

Saint Paul Smart Trips received funding for two programs: the Neighborhoods program and Women on Bikes. The Neighborhoods program and Kitty Andersen Youth Science Center developed programming with high school students from the Frogtown neighborhood. Women on Bikes mobilized a core group of women representatives (Spokeswomen) to engage other women in biking and to connect with local decision-makers to influence the development and implementation of the Saint Paul Bicycle Plan. In 2017, Smart Trips merged with Transit for Livable Communities to become Move Minnesota.

🍃 **Bike lanes**

10.6 miles of new bikeways added to Saint Paul in 2015.

👍 **Plans supporting active living**

The Saint Paul Bicycle Plan, passed in 2015, included several elements Women on Bikes advocated for, such as protected bike lanes.

Our Streets Minneapolis

Our Streets Minneapolis is dedicated to making Minneapolis a city where biking, walking, and rolling are easy and comfortable for everyone. ALfA funding supported deep community engagement and work with local policymakers to influence street design that makes bicycling more accessible and safe. Our Streets shaped the design and implementation of protected bikeways in Minneapolis by holding policymakers accountable and tracking the number of miles built and the status of protected bikeways in the city. Our Streets also adopted a more explicit focus on equity in transportation projects. Two notable efforts were a partnership with Cycles for Change to host a discussion about equity priorities for Nice Ride Minnesota in their transition to dockless bike share and their role in influencing the City of Minneapolis to incorporate equity into its Vision Zero plan.

👍 Plans supporting active living

Hennepin County's 2040 Bicycle Transportation Plan (approved February 2015) includes all of the priority routes that Our Streets suggested.

✛ Systems change to prioritize active living in planning processes

City of Minneapolis includes at least $1 million for funding protected bikeways and $1 million for Safe Routes to Schools in its 2018 budget.

Sawtooth Mountain Clinic

Sawtooth Mountain Clinic

The clinic launched Moving Matters, a countywide project to create safer and more accessible walking and biking routes. The cornerstone of this work was a community visioning process that influenced the redesign for a portion of State Highway 61, a main thoroughfare through Grand Marais. Moving Matters also developed a placemaking initiative, supported other infrastructure projects, and advocated for more robust community engagement efforts and the inclusion of health as a priority in planning processes.

👍 School policies

Safe Routes to School plan update was adopted by the ISD 166 School Board and Great Expectations School Board and is now being implemented. The Grand Marais City Council and Cook County Board of Commissioners both passed motions of support for the plan.

🍃 Multi-use trails/greenways

The Minnesota Department of Transportation funded the city's Transportation Alternatives Program application to add a multimodal trail along the south side of Hwy 61 through Grand Marais as a result of a community streetscape design process. The plan was approved through the municipal consent process in 2018, and the redesign is set to be constructed in 2019 and 2020.

///St. Louis Park

The City of St. Louis Park launched a community-involved process to improve the health of residents called Health in the Park (HIP).

🌿 Sidewalks/pedestrian infrastructure

Crosswalk installed at an intersection of concern in St. Louis Park.

👍 Plans supporting active living

Sidewalk plan in the city's Browndale neighborhood will add pedestrian infrastructure for residents. As a result of this plan, 2 bikeways and 2 sidewalks were installed.

Summit University Planning Council (SUPC)

SUPC engaged and encouraged Ramsey County Public Works and the Minnesota Department of Transportation to change their policies to be more responsive to the historic racial disparities in the Rondo Community, and be more inclusive of people with disabilities in their planning projects. SUPC worked to revise the Saint Paul Street Design manual with language to make streets and sidewalks more accessible and to promote active living. In addition, SUPC worked on two large demonstration projects: the Dale Street Bridge and Snelling Avenue. Both projects focused on improving walkability, safety, and accessibility in each Saint Paul neighborhood and included extensive community engagement activities and new structures to ensure that the community's needs and vision were included.

⊕ Systems changes to support community engagement in planning processes

Ramsey County embraced incorporating public art into infrastructure projects and is using the Dale Street Bridge as the pilot project.

🌿 Sidewalks/pedestrian infrastructure

Snelling Ave Pedestrian Project: The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) implemented several pedestrian safety and walkability recommendations in the area, including larger pedestrian islands, wider sidewalks, and installation of grass boulevards. Union Park District Council is converting vacant MnDOT land near the bridge/interchange into a park-like green space.

Other Metrics for Change

PSE changes take time and effort. Advancing PSE changes does not happen in a vacuum. The organizations put considerable effort towards engaging the community, developing adult and youth leaders, and leveraging new funds to advance their work. These efforts play a vital role in ensuring that the PSE changes are sustainable and reflect community interests.

Community outreach and engagement

All of the organizations led multiple community engagement and outreach activities. This included sharing information through social media or local publications such as newspapers and newsletters to participating in or hosting community events to building community engagement infrastructure and processes.

54,067
people engaged through outreach activities and events

281
events/ activities

76,267
people reached through social media and other communications efforts

Leadership development

Many of the ALfA organizations engaged in adult and/or youth leadership development.

198 Adults   **46** Youth

Live Healthy Red Wing:
6 Latino residents participated in the Latino Leadership Program

Northside Greenway:
6 residents were hired as Community Connectors to do outreach with specific communities

Move MN:
Move Minnesota worked with 26 youth as part of the Frogtown Crew to engage residents in the Frogtown neighborhood around active living

Sawtooth Mountain Clinic:
Sawtooth Mountain Clinic: 16 women participated in the Women's Leadership Program

Funding leveraged

In total, the ALfA organizations leveraged close to **$22 million** for their work.

This often involved leveraging ALfA funding to win larger grant awards or partner with other entities like local government to pool resources for projects.

The organizations advanced more PSE changes over time.

In the first three years of work (2013-2016), the organizations contributed a total of 49 PSE changes, or about 16 a year. In the fourth year, the organizations' work led to 9 PSE changes. In the final year of work, 20 PSE changes were adopted or implemented.

49 changes	9 changes	20 changes
2013 2014 2015 2016	2017	2018
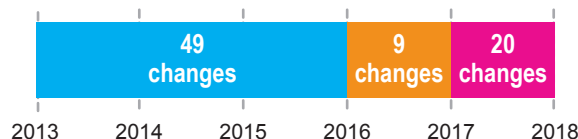
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