

YMCA of the USA Awarded CDC Grant to Support Local Y Efforts to Promote Health and Well-being in African-American and Hispanic/Latino Communities

Funds will support local Ys' efforts to ensure opportunities for healthy living are accessible to all

WASHINGTON, (October 3, 2012) –Today, YMCA of the USA (Y-USA), the national resource office for the nation's 2,700 YMCAs, was awarded a cooperative agreement of up to \$4 million per year for up to five years to improve our nation's health and well-being, with a specific focus on addressing gaps between racial and ethnic groups across the country. The agreement is part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH) initiative.

The goal of the REACH initiative is to improve health and eliminate disparities related to chronic diseases in Black/African-Americans, American Indians, Asian Americans, Hispanic/Latinos and Pacific Islanders. Through this grant, Y-USA will expand its Healthier Communities Initiatives—community-based programs and strategies that promote well-being and eliminate barriers to healthy living—to up to 15 new communities per year for five years in areas of the country with the highest burden of disease, with a particular emphasis on Black/African-American and Hispanic/Latino communities.

“Where you live should not affect your health,” said Neil Nicoll, President and CEO, YMCA of the USA. “Yet, too many communities lack the resources for individuals to access opportunities for physical activity and healthy foods and improve their health and well-being. The Y's longstanding partnership with CDC has allowed us to strengthen communities through programs and initiatives that create environments where all people have the opportunity to make a healthy choice. These funds enable us to continue this work and expand it to communities that need it most.”

Many preventable risk factors—tobacco use, poor nutrition and lack of physical activity—are more common in communities of color and in low-income neighborhoods, often resulting in higher prevalence of chronic diseases, such as heart disease and stroke, diabetes, cancer and asthma, among others. Chronic disease contributes to roughly 75 percent of the \$2.5 trillion spent annually on health care in the United States.

Y-USA will provide support to Ys and their communities to successfully implement strategies that address changes in weight, proper nutrition, physical activity, tobacco use, emotional well-being and overall mental health in order to reduce cardiovascular disease, diabetes and asthma.

The Y's Healthier Communities Initiatives empower local communities with proven strategies and models to create and sustain positive, lasting change for healthy living. In more than 200 communities across the nation, Ys have received funding from the CDC, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and others to collaborate with community leaders on efforts to ensure that healthy living is within reach of all people who live in those communities. To date, these communities have advanced more than 26,000 changes that have impacted up to 46 million lives.

Communities engaged in the Y's Healthier Communities Initiatives are helping families put healthier food on the table by bringing fresh fruits and vegetables to neighborhoods where there are not enough healthy food options; giving parents peace of mind by creating safe places to play and making safe routes possible; and helping to keep a generation of kids healthier by working with schools to increase physical education and physical activity during the school day. Each local community will determine how it is up to each local community to leverage funding and sustain their work. Sites on average have brought \$3.86 to the table for every federal dollar received.

Several other national organizations will work with Y-USA to help achieve the goals of the cooperative agreement. Partners include the American Psychological Association, NAACP, National Council of La Raza and California State University at Long Beach Center for Latino Community Health.

To learn more about the Y's Healthier Communities Initiatives, visit www.ymca.net/healthier-communities.

To learn more about the Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health, including previous funded programs, visit www.cdc.gov/reach.

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About YMCA of the USA

YMCA of the USA is the national resource office for the Y, one of the nation's leading nonprofits strengthening communities through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. Across the U.S., 2,700 Ys engage 21 million men, women and children – regardless of age, income or background – to nurture the potential of children and teens, improve the nation's health and well-being and provide opportunities to give back and support neighbors. Anchored in more than 10,000 communities, the Y has the long-standing relationships and physical presence not just to promise, but to deliver, lasting personal and social change. ymca.net