**BACKGROUND**

In 2009, the Missouri Foundation for Health (MFFH) launched the Promising Strategies (PS) funding strategy as part of the Healthy & Active Communities (H&AC) Initiative. Eligible activities for 2009 were limited to healthy eating and physical activity in small towns and rural areas at the community level. As of June 2011, 40% of the 23 PS grantees had passed a policy.

**METHODS**

Data were collected as part of an ongoing evaluation of the H&AC Initiative and were triangulated from multiple sources: 52

- The Healthy and Active Programs and Policies Evaluation (HAPEE) website, an online monitoring system to document project activities (e.g., number of built environment changes, policies passed)
- Key informant interviews with project staff
- Bi-annual grantee progress reports on project activities
- Total reach

In the community, e.g., all schools in a district

**RESULTS**

**Grantee Type**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grantee Type</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Urban 65</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rural</strong></td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Urban</strong></td>
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**Rural Grantees:**

- Passed more obesity prevention policies than urban grantees
  - 50% of rural grantees passed a policy, for a total of 29 policies
- Passed policies that typically involved a single site, and reached a smaller number of individuals
  - 75% of policies passed by rural grantees affected a single site (e.g., worksite wellness policies)
- On average, the potential reach of rural policies was 1,748 individual

**Urban Grantees:**

- Passed more comprehensive policies than urban grantees (e.g., policy addresses both physical activity AND healthy eating)
  - 40% of rural policies were comprehensive, compared to 20% of urban policies

**Table 1: Total Number of Policies Reached by Site Level**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site Level</th>
<th>Single Site</th>
<th>Multi Site</th>
<th>Community-wide</th>
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| Policies affecting a single site, e.g., one school or worksite | 300 | 85 | - School playground joint use agreement
| Policies affecting multiple sites, e.g., all schools in a district | 12,438 | 52,005 | - Small business worksite policy (e.g., healthy meeting policy)
| Policies affecting every site in the community, e.g., all community gardens | 37,941 | 352,696 | - Healthcare campus worksite policy (e.g., employee flex time)

**CONCLUSIONS**

Rural grantees were more successful in passing policies overall, and adopted policies of different scale and scope than urban grantees.

- Urban grantees’ adoption of fewer policies overall may be attributed to their focus on community-wide policies
- Larger scale policy work may require greater community buy-in; thus, consensus before a policy can be adopted (e.g., more time spent holding town hall meetings).
- To facilitate community buy-in, urban grantees did participate in advocacy activities that involved direct contact with the community, such as community education (47% of rural grantees versus 25% of urban grantees).

**NEXT STEPS**

Grantees are in the second or third year of three-year projects. To assess how policy work evolves over the course of the initiative, the evaluation will continue to:

- Track policy adoption through the end of PS projects
- Examine barriers to implementing policy change
- Assess quality of grantees’ policies

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