

National Association of Latino Elected and
Appointed Officials (NALEO)
Educational Fund

*Maximizing Local Impact of Safe Routes
to School:
Educating Local Elected Officials*



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Summary of Today's Presentation

- NALEO 101
- Healthy Communities Portfolio: Working with Latino policymakers
- Lessons Learned
- Tips for Practitioners
- NALEO SRTS Champions
- Questions/Comments



Mission

The NALEO Educational Fund is the nation's leading 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that facilitates full Latino participation in the American political process, from citizenship to public service. Established in 1981, the NALEO Educational Fund is making significant contributions to the progress of the nation's 50.5 million Latinos.



NALEO Educational Fund

The NALEO Educational Fund achieves this mission through three major departmental areas:

Policy, Research & Advocacy



Civic Engagement

Constituency Services





Why Engage Policymakers?

- Policymakers serve as key decision-makers regarding important community issues.
- Local elected officials have the ability to convene other key stakeholders to promote collaboration and partnerships.
- Leaders can promote important community issues that are vital to their constituents.
- At every level of government, elected officials have the opportunity to support policies that create a healthy environment for their constituents.





Challenge of Working With Elected Officials

Language Difference

*Practitioners, Advocates **do not** speak the same language as policymakers*

- Policy Speak
 - Formally adopted policy generally takes the form of a governing principle, plan or course of action.
 - It involves a deliberative process and is adopted by an ordinance or resolution.
 - The decisions could be the adoption of a vision for a community, a comprehensive plan, a budget, or policy relating to a specific issue.
- Governance Speak
 - How do they do it?
 - Why do they do it? Why would they not do it?
 - Who do they collaborate with to get it done?
- Political Speak

Policy-making requires political wisdom, diplomacy, and prudence to bring diverse community interests together around a shared purpose.



What Do They Do?

City Council

- Enact a city budget
- Define the powers, functions, and duties of city officers and employees
- Fix the compensation of officers and employees.
- Establish the working conditions of officers and employees.
- Maintain retirement and pension systems.
- Impose fines and penalties for violation of city ordinances,
- Enter into contracts.
- Regulate the acquisition, sales, ownership, and other disposition of real property.
- Provide governmental, recreational, educational, cultural, and social services.
- Impose taxes, if not prohibited by state law.
- Cause the city to own and operate utilities.
- Approve claims against the city.
- Grant franchise for the use of public ways,
- License, for the purpose of revenue and regulation, most any type of business

Mayor

- Enforce contracts
- Bring lawsuits, with council approval
- Preside over council meetings and, in some classes of cities, exercise tie-breaking authority with respect to council votes and veto authority over ordinances
- Call special meetings of the council
- Prepare a proposed budget
- Report to the council on the financial and other affairs and needs of the city
- Perform as ceremonial head of the city
- Approve or disapprove all official bonds and contractor's bonds.

Our Constituency Services department offers policy trainings that adhere to an extensively evaluated curriculum, and we offer intensive leadership development programs that serve to educate elected officials on the following core competencies needed to become successful advocates for their communities:



1. Recognizing Decision-Making Capacity;
2. Utilizing Data;
3. Navigating the Politics of Change;
4. Building a Base of Support/Coalition Building; and
5. Developing a Message, Effective Communication and Advocacy.



NALEO Building Healthy Communities Initiatives

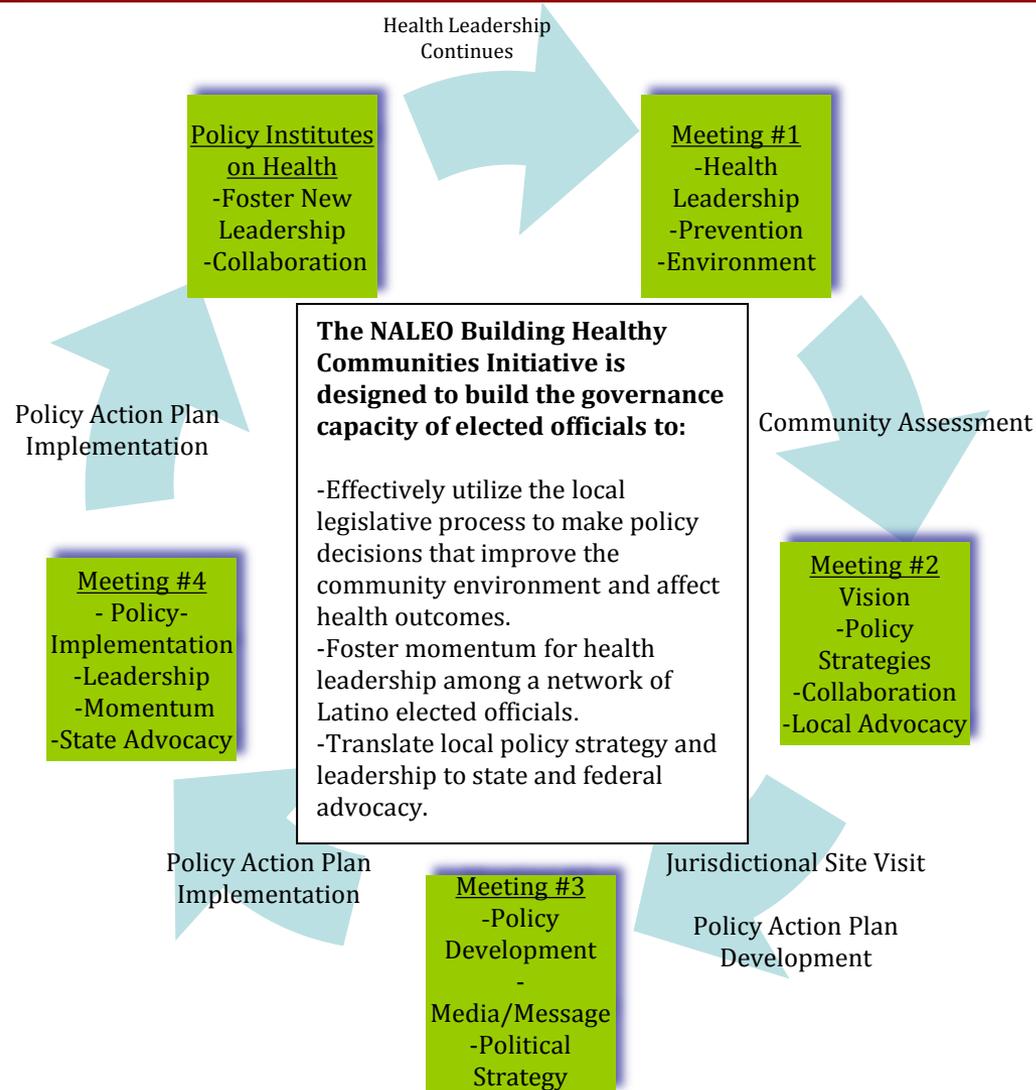
- **Goal:** *To increase the knowledge and enhance the capacity of Latino policymakers in key governance areas that are required in order to increase opportunities for healthy eating and active living.*

- **How:** *Education, Training, Skills Building and Technical Assistance focused on building key competencies in:*

- *Obesity and health within a prevention framework;*
- *Role and use of data;*
- *Governance and policymaking;*
- *Message development/media;*
- *Coalition building and advocacy.*



- **Outcomes:** *Policy Change/Action Plans that utilize this information and training, participants are responsible for developing and implementing action plans and policies to address obesity prevention in their jurisdiction.*





Lessons Learned

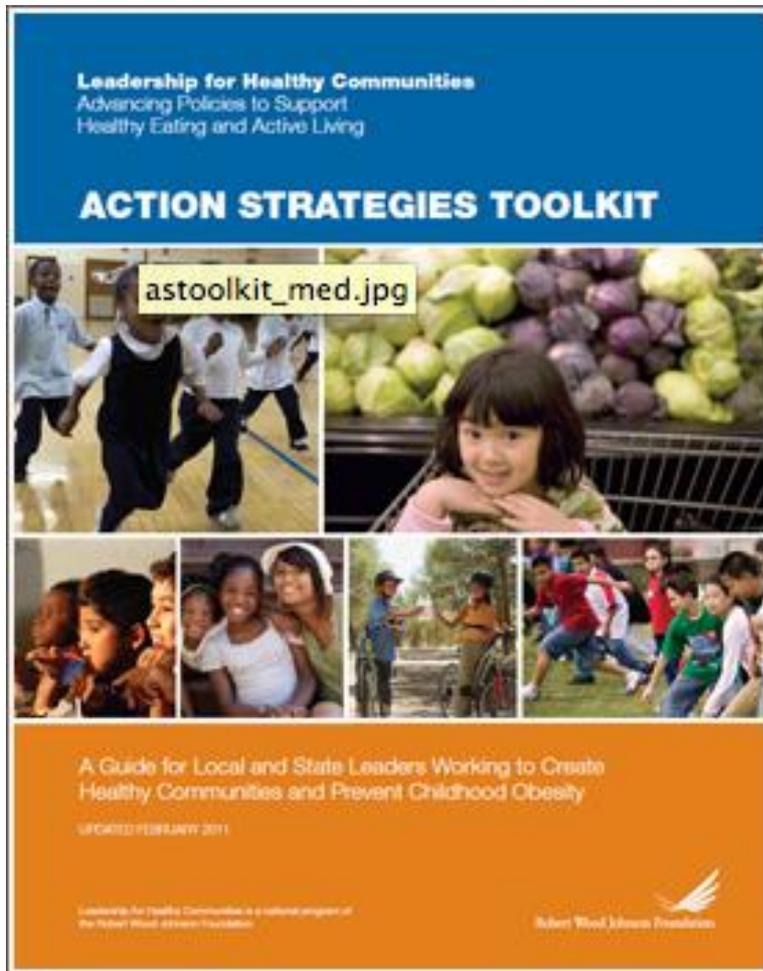
- Staff are critical and often the target as opposed to policymakers
- Role and limitations of policymakers – time, staff, resources, knowledge on an issue
- Term Limits
- Make it experiential –multiple methods and venues
- Consider your approach – it varies
 - Elected vs. Staff
 - Federal vs. State vs. Local



Tips for Practitioners

1. Understand the Roles and Responsibilities of Local Government & Elected Officials
 - Municipal vs School Board vs State Legislators vs Regional Commissions
 - Different Types of Government
 - Council – Manager, Mayor-Council, Township
 - At-Large vs District Councils
 - Jurisdictional Priorities vs Policymaker Priorities
 - Review campaign literature, city/county/school websites, attend city council and/or school board meetings
2. Surveying Political Landscape
 - Newly elected official vs Seasoned politician
 - Learn to “Count to 5”
3. Analyzing Policy Landscape/Capitalizing on Windows of Opportunity
 - Analyze whether SRTS policy objective has potential to be unifying or divisive
 - Identify points of connection between your SRTS priorities and with “hot” issues that include community priority projects.
4. Data
 - Serve as a resource for elected officials
 - Try to keep materials condensed, preferably one-page, using clear and simple language

The Action Strategies Toolkit



Presents an array of policy approaches to promoting healthy eating and active living:

- Research
- Ways to get started
- Resources
- Community examples

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

Community Vision

GOAL: To make bicycling and walking more viable transportation options in communities to help reduce childhood obesity rates. Policy-makers can increase opportunities for physical activity by creating a built environment that supports safe, active transportation.

Action Strategy



Photo: Getty Images/Image Source

Recommendation

1. Improve Safety for Bicyclists and Pedestrians

The Issues and the Research: There is a significant body of evidence linking transportation, planning and community design to increased physical activity.¹⁵ To increase physical activity opportunities in neighborhoods and combat some of the safety issues, many communities have adopted Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programs and complete streets policies, with positive results. An analysis of 33 studies demonstrated that children in neighborhoods with sidewalks and controlled intersections were more physically active than children in neighborhoods with road hazards and unsafe intersections.¹⁶ Another study found that adding and improving bicycle lanes, traffic signals, sidewalks and crosswalks increased the number of children walking or bicycling to school. Students were three times more likely to start walking or bicycling on routes that included improvements than they were before these improvements were made.¹⁷

What the Research Says!

Potential Stakeholders

Policy makers

- State and local elected and appointed officials
- School officials (e.g., state boards of education, local school boards and school administrators)

Other Government and Community Stakeholders

- Transportation officials
- Planning officials
- County and city health officials
- Law enforcement agencies
- Community-based organizations
- Community member

Policy and Program Options

State funding and support of active transportation

State policy makers can actively support legislation that promotes safety for pedestrians and bicyclists. They also can provide funding for state and local transportation initiatives that include safe, active living components.

Active transportation plans, complete streets

Local governments can develop or re-evaluate long-term transportation plans that explicitly set "active transportation" goals for walking or biking as modes of transportation. As part of these goals, they can implement complete streets in neighborhoods. The following list includes some complete streets measures that improve safe walking and biking options in communities:

- Develop a pedestrian and/or bicycle master plan that assesses the environment for pedestrians and bicyclists, and makes infrastructure improvements that enhance safety and walkability.
- Establish separate traffic lanes for bicyclists and sidewalks for pedestrians.
- Promote moderate traffic speeds, especially on local residential and commercial streets, by designing narrower streets, sidewalk curbs, raised and clearly painted crosswalks, raised medians, wide sidewalks and **streetscaping**, which can include adding trees, hedges and planter strips.
- Employ other critical safety measures including appropriately timed lights, pedestrian signals, crossing guards near schools and sufficient street lighting at night.
- Retrofit existing roads or integrate improvements as new roads are designed.

Walk to school/Safe Routes To School

State and local leaders in communities and schools can support Walk to School and Safe Routes to School programs. (See "Support Walk-to-School and Safe-Routes-to-School Programs," page 45.)

Possible
Partners

Implementation
Strategies

TERMS:

Complete streets are streets designed to function in ways that enable safe access for all users. Pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and bus riders of all ages and abilities are able to safely move along and across a complete street.

Streetscaping includes improving traffic management, adding landscaping, sidewalks, building fronts and street amenities, such as garbage cans and benches.

Traffic calming involves changing street alignment,

Tips for Starting!

Getting Started

- State legislators can introduce transportation legislation that dedicates funding streams toward projects that would increase pedestrians' and bicyclists' safety. State and local bicycling and walking projects are eligible for funding under nearly all federal transportation programs. The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), the federal surface transportation legislation, promotes the integration of bicycling and walking with transportation systems. Under this bill, states may be required to match a percentage—typically 20 percent—of federal financial assistance. States can generate funds from the motor vehicle fuel tax, motor vehicle registration fees, taxes or special license plate sales.
- Local policy-makers and school district decision-makers can collaborate with community partners, such as city planners and health officials, to identify streets or improve multi-use pathways that would result in increased bicyclist and pedestrian use.
- Local governments can conduct a **walkability audit** to identify places for improvement and assess the degree to which their community enables active living. They can also use **geographic information system mapping** to determine safe routes to school or improvements to sidewalks, bicycle lanes, trails and street connectivity.
- Local school and policy-makers can begin developing Safe Routes to School programs by working with parent organizations, students, school administrators and teachers, local law enforcement, city planners, health officials and other stakeholders to identify barriers that make it difficult for students to travel to school safely. Note: The federal Safe Routes to School program provides 100 percent funding to states without requiring states to match the funding stream.

More Resources and Examples!

Resources

Active Living Resource Center

This Web site provides policy-makers with resources and tools to help them incorporate walking and bicycling into their communities. Active Living Resource Center operates with funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.
www.activelivingresources.org

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, KIDSWALK-to-School Program

This Web site provides information about KIDSWALK-to-School, a community-based program to promote regular physical activity by encouraging students to walk to and from school in groups accompanied by adults. The program emphasizes community partnerships with schools, parent-teacher organizations, local businesses and other groups to promote areas that are conducive to walking or bicycling.
www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/Dnpa/kidswalk

Council of State Governments, *Community Design for Active Living, Talking Points*

These talking points highlight why state legislators should be concerned about the impact of community design on residents' mental and physical health. The document also encourages the use of **Health Impact Assessments**, which allow policy-makers to evaluate design projects and policies in terms of their health implications. Health Impact Assessments can provide policy-makers with findings that help strengthen local partnerships, reduce health disparities and encourage public participation in the community design process.
www.healthystates.csg.org/NR/rdonlyres/B30AFBC3-5428-4F2D-B980-C961E4EE2093/0/HealthyCommunityLiving_screen.pdf

Definitions!

TERMS:

Walkability audit is an unbiased examination/evaluation to identify concerns for pedestrians related to the safety, comfort and convenience of the walking environment. The audit also assesses potential policy, educational or enforcement alternatives or solutions.

Geographic information system (GIS) mapping is a technological tool for capturing, managing, analyzing and displaying all forms of geographically referenced information. In the form of maps, globes, reports, and charts, GIS mapping allows one to view, question and interpret data in many ways that reveal relationships, patterns and trends.

Health Impact Assessments are a combination of procedures, methods and tools by which a policy, program or project may be judged as to its potential effects on the health of a population and the distribution of those effects within the population.



Tips for Practitioners

5. Framing Your Message

- Be adequately prepared to “make the case” for your bicycle and/or pedestrian project or policy and have an “elevator speech” that can easily be tailored depending on the specific elected official and their respective priorities.
- Test your message! Learn to find the right language, expressions, attitude and/or approach to allow your message to connect with people.
- Support your elevator speech with a personal story. Most impactful when sharing real life events highlighting the barriers for children and their families to walk and bike safely in their neighborhoods.

6. Finding the Right Messenger

- Consider who is the best, most convincing and trustworthy messenger for your audience. Indeed, other individuals may be better suited or more effective in communicating your issues and solutions.



Tips for Practitioners

7. Media/Event Opportunities

- In addition to swaying policymakers and key stakeholders, these same communication skills can be translated to working with print, radio and television media outlets. Engaging the media serves not only to bolster your agenda in a particular community, it concurrently brings greater awareness and visibility to local policymakers and the local Safe Routes to School project and broader agenda.
- Invite local elected officials and/or staff to be part of larger biking or walking events and include them in the planning process, if suitable.

8. Start with Small Wins, To Build Towards a Greater SRTS Agenda

- For those who find themselves facing greater community and/or board opposition to promoting policies that support walking and biking, be strategic about advocating for less controversial changes before proposing larger scale change.
- Accomplishing meaningful change can take time and especially for those facing contentious political opposition, patience is key.



NALEO Early SRTS Wins



Motivated by her participation in the NALEO Educational Fund's programs and fueled by her own memories of walking and riding her bike to school, School Board Member Cynthia Matus Morriss worked with her board colleagues and the Patagonia Elementary School District's teachers to implement a walking school bus program.

As a very small, rural school district, many students ride the bus to school. In an innovative approach, the buses now drop the participating children off at Patagonia Town Hall, which is near the center of town. Accompanied by teachers and some community members, students have the opportunity to walk approximately a half mile to school. For students who live near the school, designated meeting points have been set up so they may join the walking school bus at various points along the route. In 2007, the program began with "Walking Wednesdays" and averaged 18 students. Because the program has been so successful during the 2008 school year, it will expand to two days a week.



NALEO Champions- Moving Forward



Photo credit: Julio Morales, Imperial Valley Press

Last year, the City of Coachella broke ground to install new sidewalks, bike lanes, and crosswalks in the community.

"We're promoting pedestrian-friendly pathways for children to get to and from school," said the mayor of Coachella Eduardo Garcia.

"With the lack of sidewalks, people are walking in the middle of the road. These are busy intersections," said Garcia.

The city teamed up with the nationwide Safe Routes to School program as part of the city's Community Development Block Grant sidewalk project, which is state and federally funded. There's more to it than safety -- it's about getting neighbors active.

"More importantly, promoting health and well-being. Making sure our children and families are more physically active. To address the health disparities that exist in communities like ours."



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