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Arkansas Department of Health

2021-2022 Arkansas State Walking College

The Arkansas Department of Health Arthritis Program partnered with America Walks to deliver its national Walking College program within the State of Arkansas.

**Goals**

* Build local capacity across the state to identify built environment improvements, recruit advocates for policy and environmental changes, and develop and implement walking action plans within each community.
* Increase the number of individuals interested in advocating for safe and accessible for environments for walking.
* Build state level capacity within the Arkansas Department of Health and state partners through training to conduct an Arkansas State Walking College to expand and sustain the program.
* Implement strategies with long-lasting changes through (PSEs).

**Overview**

Eighteen Fellows out of twenty-one applicants were selected for the program which entailed a 6-month curriculum designed to expand their capacity to enact policy, system, engagement of communities, and advocate for environment change. The fellows contributed 5-10 hours per week to study online materials, complete community-based assessments, participate in conference calls, and receive coaching from an assigned Mentor. In May, the fellows completed the final module and developed Community Walking Action Plans, laying out the goals and strategies they will pursue over the next 3-5 years.

**Course Objectives**

The course curriculum is organized into six instructional modules, each of which has a specific learning objective. After completing the Arkansas State Walking College, Fellows will be able to:

1. Discuss the history of transportation planning in the U.S. and the role of systemic discrimination in the built and social environments.
2. Recruit and inspire other advocates to build and grow a local movement to address injustice by creating safe, walkable neighborhoods.
3. Organize campaigns which use story-telling and strategic communications to develop a public narrative about healthy community development.
4. Identify design changes in the built environment which will foster active, accessible, equitable mobility and safe use of the public space for all.
5. Navigate the structure of local government and engage elected officials and professionals in conversations about public policy improvements.
6. Connect social justice, public health, and climate action in a strategic plan focused on creating safe mobility for every community member.

**Project Team**

The Arkansas Department of Health Arthritis Program co-led the fellowship program with America Walks. A core project team consisting of representatives from:

* Arkansas Coalition for Obesity Prevention (ARCOP)
* University of Arkansas Fayetteville University of Arkansas
* Partners for Inclusive Communities, and Arkansas Disability & Health Program

The project team met regularly to plan, monitor, and learn. Each organization participated in the mentor trainings, module sessions, providing funding for recruitment efforts, and collaborations. The Arkansas Department of Health Arthritis Program is the first State Arthritis Program to implement this project to address Strategy 3 (promote walking).

**Scope of Work**

Work in partnership with ADH

**52,500$30,000**

* + Recruit fellows through social media platforms (Arthritis program website page, ADH Facebook page, email blasts to existing partners and other organizations)
  + Recruit and train mentors
  + Conduct quarterly one-on-one online coaching sessions from a personal mentor
  + Coordinate monthly Fellow group discussions
  + Conduct one in-person Walking College workshop for 2021-2022 covering train-the-trainer walkability audits, traffic calming “pop-up” demonstration projects, Main Street revitalization through pedestrian streetscaping, and/or Vision Zero policy development
  + Evaluate comprehensive Walking Action Plan outcomes
  + Explore in-person workshop(s) to develop a statewide coalition

**Budget**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Item** | **Unit Rate** | **Description** | **Total** |
| Fees to cover the cost of Fellows; includes curriculum development, identifying and partnering with Mentors, recruiting Fellows, and delivery of online program culminating in the completion of Walking Action plans by the Fellows | $3,500.00  per person | 18 Fellows X $3,500.00 | $63,000.00 |
| One-day, in-person Walking College workshop; includes preparation time, speaker fee, and travel expenses | $10,000 |  | $10,000.00 |
|  |  |  |  |
| Total |  |  | **$73,000.00** |

**Outcomes**

* As a result of the State Walking College program in Arkansas, 15 local advocates have completed Walking Action Plans focused on organizing for policy change to create safe, walkable, livable communities.
* Examples of walking action plan summaries completed by Year 1 (2021-2022) fellows:
* The City of England looks to provide safe access routes to schools, implementing safe street design policies, updating infrastructure and working to create a walkable city that promotes health and equity for citizens and increased safety for pedestrians and cyclists.

Walking school bus and biking school.

**Community**: England Population: 3,000

**Organization Affiliation**: Volunteer with England Coalition and England Mayor's Office

* The gateway between the University of Arkansas and downtown Fayetteville resides in the forward-mentioned intersection. Establishing an inviting and safe crossing for university students and downtown visitors while capturing a pedestrian-first tone for Fayetteville.

**Community**: Fayetteville Population: 85,000

**Organization Affiliation**: University of Arkansas student and public transportation enthusiast

* Create a safe and walkable infrastructure for Westside’s residents to access the City of Batesville’s pedestrian trail system and existing schools and parks.

**Community**: Batesville Population: 11,000

**Organization Affiliation**: Volunteer with England Coalition and England Mayor's Office

* 100% stated that they would like to stay connected with the other Fellows and receive ongoing technical assistance from America Walks, Arkansas Dept of Health, and ArCOP.
* ArCOP provided mini grant funding or stipends for continued support and implementations of developed walking action plans.

**Plans for 2023**

In Year 2 (July 1st, 2022 – June 30th, 2023), America Walks proposes to train a second cohort of fifteen Fellows which will include at least two staff members of Arkansas Department of Health and/or partner organizations. Having completed the Walking College curriculum and created personal Walking Action Plans for their communities, these staff members will be qualified to manage many components of the program in future years, with oversight from America Walks. Along with additional training to administer an Arkansas Walking College.

The 2023 scope of work also includes ongoing technical assistance for the current cohort of Walking College Fellows as they start to implement their Walking Action Plans.

It is recommended that the Walking College curriculum starts in October, so that Modules 1-3 can be delivered before the Christmas