

Ohio Department of Health

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N E W S

Office of Public Affairs
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LOCAL COMMUNITIES RECEIVE \$1.1 MILLION TO FIGHT OBESITY

First ever comprehensive grant program offered by ODH to reduce obesity

COLUMBUS – The Office of Healthy Ohio (OHO) recently granted more than \$1.1 million to 14 local health departments to help reduce the risk of obesity in their respective communities. Poor nutrition and physical inactivity are driving an obesity epidemic that leads to preventable illness such as heart disease and diabetes as well as skyrocketing health care costs.

Awarded Oct. 17, the 2008 Healthy Ohio Obesity Prevention grants are designed to help communities protect and improve the health of their residents through environmental change, community expansion and capacity-building efforts. In order to fight obesity, communities need to increase opportunities to provide for more physical activity, access to nutritious foods and motivation to live healthier lives. Obesity-reduction and prevention efforts are especially important because nearly two-thirds of Ohio's residents are overweight (38 percent) or obese (28 percent), making Ohio the fifth-heaviest state in the nation.

“Good nutrition and ample physical activity lead to better quality of life, assure a more productive workforce and contribute to a more efficient and cost effective use of medical services,” said Ohio Department of Health (ODH) Director Alvin D. Jackson, M.D. “Partnerships such as this award program will help make Ohio the state of living well for all residents.”

The following were the three different grant types awarded:

Environmental change grants are designed to help make improvements to a community's physical environment to enhance opportunities for activity through developments such as playgrounds and walking paths. The awardees are: Allen County, \$70,000; Athens County, \$75,000; Lucas County, \$75,000; Noble County, \$75,000; Stark County, \$75,000; and Washington County, \$75,000.

Community-expansion grants are designed to help communities enhance existing obesity-reduction initiatives. The awardees are: City of Cleveland, \$107,768; Columbus City, \$96,984; Greene County, \$37,875; Miami County, \$123,982; and Muskingum County, \$92,000.

Capacity-building grants are designed to help communities establish obesity-prevention or similar coalitions where none currently exist. The awardees are: Clermont County, \$64,000; Perry County, \$77,400; and Portage County, \$85,000.

“The Ohio Department of Health and the Office of Healthy Ohio are committed to Governor Ted Strickland's efforts to turnaround Ohio,” Jackson said. “These grants will help to do that one local community at a time.”

Housed at ODH, OHO is a key component of Strickland's Turnaround Ohio initiative and features three core program areas: health promotion, disease prevention and health equity.

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