

**Physical Activity Research Center (PARC)
Voices for Healthy Kids (VFHK) – IEE Special Interest Workgroup
Activating Rural America**

The Physical Activity Research Center (PARC) is a collaboration of internationally recognized faculty from six leading universities with backgrounds in public health, city planning, behavioral science, and parks and recreation. Each team member is an expert in advancing research and policy in their diverse disciplines and is known for leadership in interdisciplinary research and research translation. PARC was first funded by a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) as part of a larger effort to build an inclusive Culture of Health across America to ensure that all children have opportunities to grow up at a healthy weight. PARC continues to receive RWJF funding to focus on dissemination efforts with the goal of building evidence, growing the network of PARC dissemination partners, and sustaining progress.

PARC received funding from Voices for Healthy Kids (VFHK) to create a Workgroup and an Advisory Group to explore current efforts addressing multiple active living-related policy levers within a rural context. These policy levers include: Bike and Pedestrian Appropriations, Complete Streets, and Safe Routes to School.

Both the Workgroup and Advisory Group are comprised of a diverse interdisciplinary team of researchers, policy makers, advocates, leaders, and residents in diverse areas of rural America engaged in promoting/encouraging active living in one or more of the following ways: policy, advocacy efforts, and health equity. The Workgroup will build off the infrastructure provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) funded Physical Activity Policy Network Plus (PAPRN+) Rural Workgroup.

Workgroup members will meet 1-2 times per month to discuss how to best accomplish the project goal and produce the deliverables listed below. Workgroup members will be engaged in scanning and synthesizing the policy and advocacy literature and web presence and surveying and/or interviewing key decision makers of rural communities engaged in this work. Several experts who engage in policy and advocacy work related to the active living policy levers, health equity, and/or rural implementation will be invited to present during Workgroup calls to share ideas, generate discussion, and provide input on the project. Advisory Group members will also join the Workgroup conference calls on a quarterly basis to provide a higher-level perspective and give feedback on the Workgroup's plans, efforts, and interpretations.

Overall Goal: To inform VFHK of rural practices and challenges regarding the active living-related policy levers, with specific attention to health equity.

Deliverables

- Identify and describe current rural efforts to adapt and advance the VFHK active living policy levers, with specific attention to approaches or challenges related to health equity in rural communities

- Provide recommendations and considerations to VFHK for next steps in continuing or modifying these policy levers for rural communities
- Create summaries of lessons learned from workgroup activities that could be distributed to a variety of stakeholders with interests in rural health and physical activity
- Develop a prioritized set of research questions that could fill gaps in understanding and developing solutions for inequities in physical activity opportunities for rural youth

| Timeframe | Objective |
|----------------------|---|
| July – Sept 2019 | workgroup planning |
| Oct 2019 | invite workgroup members, advisory board members, and speakers; schedule workgroup and advisory board launch calls |
| Nov 2019 | hold first workgroup call hold first advisory board call |
| Nov 2019 - June 2020 | hold 2-4 workgroup calls per month; hold quarterly advisory board calls; send out bi-monthly newsletters |
| Feb 2020 | in-person meeting at the Active Living Conference for those in attendance |
| Jan – Apr 2020 | conduct interviews and surveys with rural community leaders and advocacy groups |
| Apr – June 2020 | develop a prioritized set of research questions for VFHK; provide recommendations and considerations to VFHK for next steps in continuing to modify active living policy levers for rural communities |

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