

COI March 2010

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The San Diego County Childhood Obesity Initiative (Initiative) actively seeks newsletter content from its partners including resources, events, news, legislative updates, and funding opportunities related to childhood obesity prevention and reduction. Individuals and organizations may submit content for inclusion in the newsletter to the editor by [e-mail](#) or phone at 858.614.1549.

IN THE NEWS **UPCOMING MEETINGS**

- [Upcoming Meetings](#) Unless otherwise noted, all San Diego County Childhood Obesity Initiative meetings are held at County Health Services Complex (3851 Rosecrans St., San Diego, CA 92110).
- [Domain Partner Highlight](#) **Domain 1:** Government
- [Domain Update](#) TBA (See [calendar](#).)
- [Resources](#)
- [Legislative Update](#) **Domain 2:** Healthcare Systems & Providers
Tuesday, April 6, 1 - 2:30 p.m.,
Harbor Room
- [Announcements](#)
- [Events / Conferences](#) **Domain 3:** School, Before- & After-School Providers
Tuesday, April 20, 11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.,
Harbor Room
- [Grants](#)
- [Farmers' Market Corner](#)
- [Local News](#) **Domain 4:** Childcare & Preschool Providers
Tuesday, April 27, 10 - 11:30 a.m.
YMCA Childcare Resource Center (3333 Camino Del Rio South, 4th Floor, San Diego, CA 92108)
- [National News](#)

Domain 5: Community Engagement & Empowerment

TBA (See [calendar.](#))

South Bay Faith Advisory Council

TBA (See [calendar.](#))

Domain 6: Media Outlets & Marketing Industry

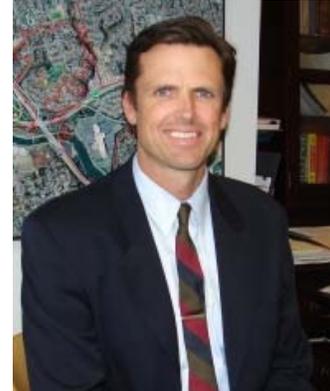
Tuesday, April 6, 10:30 - 12:30 p.m.,

Palomar Room

Domain 7: Business

TBA (See [calendar.](#))

DOMAIN



PARTNER HIGHLIGHT

Government Domain

Brad Raulston, Executive Director, Community Development Department, City of National City

A road trip can lead to big things. Just ask Brad Raulston, Executive Director, Community Development Department for the City of National City. He will be happy to explain how his trip to Monterey for a city redevelopment conference three years ago helped spark his interest and set forth an ambitious agricultural action plan in San Diego County's second oldest city.

On the way to Monterey, Brad visited with local farmers and community gardens and learned quite a bit from the experts about how to revive the rural spirit for which National City was founded upon. *Originally, the area was known as El Rancho del Rey, the Ranch of the King used by Spanish soldiers to graze horses. After independence from Spain, the Mexican government re-named it Rancho de la Nacion (Ranch of the Nation) and years later, the Kimball brothers founded what we now know as National City.* The pastoral lands have been replaced by public parks, schools, homes and sizeable urban sprawl.

Brad directs all development efforts for the City including economic development, redevelopment, development services, housing, and grants. One key project he and his team are working on is the urban agriculture program which includes the utilization of underused property (including parks and open space) to grow food that will be distributed through a Community Supported Agriculture program or CSA. "This is one of my favorite parts of the job," states Brad Raulston. "How do you get the project out of the ground?" "Plans, projects and programs, there is a big difference between a plan and a project." "Projects have budgets and timelines so we try to get things to the project level as quickly as possible, then they can grow into a program." he added.

Working in partnership with the International Community Foundation and other community partners, Brad and his team have the program moving forward in three communities where park land is easily accessible. In El Toyon Park for example, the re-design project includes both active and passive usage demonstrated by the addition of a soccer field and community garden. In partnership with Victory Gardens San Diego and others, the garden area is under construction and should be set for planting later this summer. In the Las Palmas Park area is the Olivewood Gardens, an organic teaching garden and in the Kimball Park area, the Stein Family Farm, the last cohesive remnant of an

original farmstead in the city welcomes visitors, students and provides a venue for several agricultural events throughout the year.

“Brad and his project team have done a wonderful job creating policy and systems change to increase access to healthy nutrition and physical activity in National City. Their inclusion of a health and environmental justice element within the city’s general plan update shows true leadership and a win for the community’s health,” Tracy Delaney, Government Domain Champion and Manager of Chronic Disease and Health Disparities Unit, County of San Diego HHSA.

For more information about these projects in National City, please visit www.ci.national-city.ca.us.



**SAN DIEGO COUNTY
CHILDHOOD
OBESITY
INITIATIVE
BUSINESS**

DOMAIN UPDATE

Business Domain

The Initiative’s Business Domain (Domain) is always a great source of innovation as its work spans all sectors. This year, pilots abound as partners develop replicable models that promote good business practices and health in the communities they serve.

A partner since the inception of the Initiative, the Network for a Healthy California (Network) continues to team up with the Initiative this time for the mutual goal of increasing healthy retail environments. The Healthy Checkout Stands Retail Pilot debuted this month at La Bodega Market in Chula Vista. Through this program, grocery stores are assisted in the development of healthy checkout aisles dedicated to the promotion of fresh fruits, vegetables, and other healthy options. As part of this project, the Network is working with the City of Chula Vista, Healthy Eating, Active Communities (HEAC) and the Initiative to conduct additional activities that can catalyze healthy behaviors including staff training and crime prevention through environmental design education and assessments. This pilot promises to assist grocers in making internal and external modifications that create a safe, pleasant, and healthy shopping experience in any community.

The joint venture of the California Restaurant Association and Healthy Kids Choice, Inc., a nonprofit organization that assists local restaurant owners in creating a healthy kids’ menu in a fun and cost-effective manner, is extending the domain’s work to San Diego eateries. The Restaurant Owners’ Toolkit is the result of this perceptive pairing; it is a resource which aims to educate local restaurateurs on the battle against childhood obesity and offers suggestions for creating kids’ menus that give their young customers good and good-for-you choices without breaking the business’s bank. The toolkit is slated to make its way into the hands of food establishment managers this year.

In 2009, Healthy Kids Choice, Inc. led another great Domain initiative conducting a Halloween candy buy-back with local dentists. Dentists traded trick-or-treaters a dollar for each pound of candy delivered to their office or one of the designated pick-up sites in San Diego County. The program was so successful one dentist reported paying out more than \$1,500. Healthy Kids Choice, Inc. plans to replicate this winning model once again in October 2010.

Healthy purchases at grocery stores and restaurants... “Why stop there?” is the motto of this Domain. The San Diego County Farm Bureau is installing point-of-service (POS) terminals that accept debit and credit transactions at its farmers’ markets thanks to the Business Domain. According to Casey Anderson, the Marketing Director for The San Diego County Farm Bureau, the Farm Bureau has acquired two new POS terminals this past week! In fact, credit transactions are already being processed at its Lakeside, San Marcos, and Valley Center markets. All of its markets are scheduled to come on board with the acceptance of both debit and credit later this month. This exciting business development is instrumental in determining whether allowing for additional payment options will increase farmers’ market sales and proliferate the acceptance of SNAP, the program formerly known as food stamps. SNAP benefits are delivered on an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card which operates similarly to a debit card.

The Business Domain is confident that the dollars and “sense” of fighting childhood obesity add up. The Domain is always looking for new participants interested in establishing more practices that encourage good health and business.

To learn more about the domain or investigate partnership opportunities, please contact [JuliAnna Arnett](mailto:JuliAnna.Arnott@ci.national-city.ca.us).

RESOURCES

211 San Diego: Nutrition, Healthy Weight, Physical Activity, and Diabetes Resource

The San Diego County Childhood Obesity Initiative, Rady Children’s Hospital San Diego, The American Academy of Pediatrics, San Diego Diabetes Coalition, Champions for Change/Network for a Healthy California, and Community Health Improvement Partners have joined with 211 San Diego, a 24/7 multilingual phone service and searchable online health and human service database, to create a comprehensive obesity and diabetes information and referral database. This resource provides San Diego County residents, healthcare providers and social services agencies a FREE “one stop shop” for programs and services in nutrition, healthy weight, physical activity, and diabetes. These free resources can be accessed via phone by dialing “2-1-1” or clicking on the **green apple icon** above.



**Physical Activity
& Nutrition**

Right to Recess Resources

Experts agree that playtime can be just as vital as classroom time to a child's social, emotional and educational development. You can have the Peaceful Playgrounds Right to Recess Campaign Toolbox sent directly to your email box. The campaign toolbox contains a full PowerPoint presentation and speakers notes along with all research and documents to support daily, unstructured physical activity during school hours. [More...](#)

Children & Nature Network

The Children & Nature Network (C&NN) was created to encourage and support the people and organizations working worldwide to reconnect children with nature. C&NN provides access to the latest news and research in the field and a peer-to-peer network of researchers and individuals, educators and organizations dedicated to children's health and well-being. [More...](#)

California Action for Healthy Kids® School Wellness Policy Tools

California Action for Healthy Kids® has gathered a wealth of resources related to school wellness. School wellness encompasses healthy eating, adequate physical activity, and nutrition education and physical education for all students. Improving the school wellness environment is essential to decreasing childhood obesity and preparing children to live healthy, active and productive lives. [More...](#)

National Policy & Legal Analysis Network to Prevent Childhood Obesity Webinar Archive

NPLAN hosts bi-monthly webinars to train professionals working in the childhood obesity prevention movement on legal and policy concepts relevant to their work. The concepts covered in these webinars range from healthy planning to Complete Streets to community garden land use policies. All webinars are recorded and archived to be available for review at no cost. [More...](#)

Healthy Corner Stores Network

What is a corner store? More importantly, what is a healthy corner store? The Healthy Corner Stores Network (HCSN) supports efforts to increase the availability and sales of healthy, fresh, affordable foods through small-scale stores in underserved communities. The Healthy Corner Stores Network provides information and resources for any number of questions you may have about corner stores and healthy retail. [More...](#)

Bell Institute of Health and Nutrition

The mission of the Bell Institute is to influence the development of quality products that nourish lives and contribute to healthy living. This professional nutrition education site includes professional tools, food service resources, product nutrition information, and much more. [More...](#)

Dairy Council of California Tools and Resources

The Dairy Council of California provides a wide variety of nutrition education handouts appropriate for use in both health professional and classroom settings. They are also useful for parent education and after-school youth activities. Click topics below to see a variety of downloadable nutrition education handout options. Many handouts are available in both English and Spanish. [More...](#)

America's Tomorrow: A Profile of Latino Youth

The National Council of La Raza has released a report examining the status of U.S. Latino youths across a variety of factors. Latino youth compose nearly 20 percent of all youth in the country and experience high levels of poverty, high dropout rates, low graduation rates, high unemployment rates, and low rates of health insurance. [More...](#)

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

The 2010 legislative session is bustling with activity as it considers carryover bills and newly introduced legislation. Now that all bills are on the table, it's time to start identifying bills that have the potential to impact the health outcomes of California communities.

To begin this work, we will focus our attention on the legislative actions proposed by Governor Schwarzenegger at his 2010 Summit on Health, Nutrition, and Obesity: Actions for Healthy Living. As part of this summit, Governor Schwarzenegger has co-sponsored and spearheaded a number of bills and legislative actions focused on promoting healthy beverages, increasing moderate to vigorous physical activity, and integrating health into to all policies. These actions aimed at improving the health of all Californian children include the following:

Governor Schwarzenegger co-sponsored bills

SB 1413 (Leno, D- San Francisco) Schools: food service areas: water. This bill would require school districts to provide access to free, fresh drinking water in school food service areas by January 1, 2012.

SB 1255 (Padilla, D- Pacoima) Schools: nutrition: beverages. This bill would eliminate the selling of electrolyte replacement beverages to pupils from one-half hour before the start of the school day until one-hour after the end of the school day.

AB 2705 (Hall, D- Compton) Education: physical education. This bill would take several actions to increase moderate to vigorous physical activity in schools and after-school programs, including:

~state the intent of the Legislature to increase the flexibility of joint use policies and practices that will allow schools and communities to optimize resources, share costs, and identify creative solutions to increase access safe places

to play and exercise

~require after-school programs participating in the After School Education and Safety program to incorporate at least 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity into its program components by January 1, 2013

~require After School Education and Safety program applicants to submit certification that specified content includes opportunities for physical activity as part of the program

~require that, by January 1, 2013, at least 50% of the time spent in physical education be spent in moderate to vigorous physical activity

Other actions conducted by the Governor

Increase low- socioeconomic (SES) status schools participation in Safe Routes to School (SRTS). Governor Schwarzenegger wrote a letter directing the California Department of Transportation to conduct a review of SES schools participating in SRTS, appropriate future levels of SES school participation, and best practices for securing high level of SES school participation. These findings would then be used to craft funding priorities and criteria for increasing SES school participation in SRTS.

Executive Order S-04-10 "Health in All Policies". This order mandates the Strategic Growth Council (SGC), a collaboration between state agencies to improve air and water quality, protect natural resources and agricultural lands, increase the availability of affordable housing, improve infrastructure systems, promote public health, encourage sustainable land use planning and meet the state's climate change goals; establish a Health in All Policies (HiAP) Task Force to collaborate with existing SGC working groups. The HiAP Task Force will help develop state recommendations and convene public workshops to present its work and solicit community input.

Expand the Governor's Fitness Challenge to 1 million. The Governor will partner the Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports Chairman Jake Steinfield and public and private organizations to expand school participation in the competition. The Fitness Challenge encourages students at participating schools to be active for 30 – 60 minutes a day at least three days a week for a month. Each year more than \$400,000 is given out to participating schools in physical activity equipment.

From the state to the federal level, many exciting policies are beginning to make headway. With the recent passage of President Obama's health care package, many are now expecting that Washington will turn its attention to the reauthorization of the Child Nutrition Act. This legislation provides the core funding and guidelines for the National School Lunch and Breakfast Program, Afterschool Meal Program, and Summer Nutrition Programs. Changes in the five-year piece of legislation include the expansion of the afterschool program nationwide, promotion of farm to school, provision of competitive grants for breakfast expansion, elimination of reduced price category from the school lunch program and expansion of the free meal program category, requirement that school districts utilize Medicaid and SCHIP data for direct certification of children in school meals, and many other changes and provisions regarding federal meal programs. This legislation may face a number of modifications before its final reauthorization.

For state and federal updates on food policy and obesity legislation, visit the Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity at Yale University's Legislative Database: <http://www.yaleruddcenter.org/legislation>.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Faith Engagement & Relations Intern

The San Diego County Childhood Obesity Initiative is seeking a Faith Engagement & Relations Intern to support its efforts to engage and equip faith communities in the prevention and reduction of childhood obesity. The Initiative has established two regional (i.e. North County, South Bay) Faith Advisory Councils to bring together faith leaders from all traditions to learn about childhood obesity, discuss barriers and assets in the development of healthy communities, identify and share best practices, and network. Under the supervision of the Initiative Coordinator, the student intern will participate in all aspects of faith-based program planning, implementation and support for projects. English and Spanish proficiency is required. Please contact JuliAnna Arnett at jarnett@hasdic.org or 858.614.1544 for more information. A stipend will be offered.

San Diego County Child Care Provider Needs Assessment/Survey

The San Diego County Childhood Obesity Initiative (COI): Early Childhood Community Domain, the YMCA Childcare Resource Service, and the SDSU Research Foundation project staff are collaborating to conduct an online survey with 4000 home and 1000 center child care providers throughout San Diego County. Through this collaboration, a thorough needs assessment will be conducted of all licensed early childcare places in San Diego County to ultimately prioritize strategies to ensure early childcare providers have the education and resources to provide healthy eating and physical activity opportunities and policies. This partnership is offering a thesis opportunity to one or more graduate students interested in assisting with the survey development and data entry and analysis. Gain experience, build professional contacts, and receive internship/fieldwork credit. If interested, send resume to Jamie Moody, SDSU MOVE/me Muevo Project Manager, jmoody@projects.sdsu.edu.

Group Fitness Instructors Wanted

As an instructor for Academia Fit, you will have the opportunity to train and become certified through the American Council on Exercise (ACE) as a Group Fitness instructor. For the first time ever the ACE training workshop and certification test will be offered completely in SPANISH. The training will consist of a lecture once a week for 12 weeks and will end with two weeks worth of classes taught by Master Trainers in Zumba, Kickboxing, Yoga and more. After passing the ACE certification test all instructors will receive one year of liability insurance, Academia Fit apparel, equipment to teach classes, and the chance to earn Academia Fit Pro-Points that can be cashed in for other items. [More...](#)

EVENTS/CONFERENCES

Summer Meals Webinar

April 7, 2010

San Diego, CA

Learn more about how your organization or summer program can provide free meals to eligible children during the summer. Members of the Summer Meal Program Coalition, which is hosting the webinar, will also provide dozens of resources to simplify management and programming for your summer meal program. In addition, one of the panelists is from San Diego Unified School District. [More...](#)

National Start! Walking Day

April 7, 2010

San Diego, CA

The American Heart Association is hosting a National Start! Walking Day across the nation as a part of its goal to prove the health of Americans. You can participate in this important heart-healthy cause in a number of ways. Join the AHA and its partners at San Diego Concourse Plaza for a great day of walking, free Subway sandwiches, health screenings, CPR demonstrations, live entertainment and more! However you choose to get involved, know that you are making a difference! [More...](#)

2010 San Diego Nutrition Network (SDNN) Sharing Forum

April 13, 2010

San Diego, CA

This forum will focus on the effective use of volunteers to help you meet your organization's goals and objectives. Could you use some help on a short-term project or an upcoming event? The objectives of this forum are to identify best practices in volunteer coordination and to recognize exemplary community partners who support SDNN. [More...](#)

Free Plant Giveaway for School Gardens

April 13, 2010

San Diego County, CA

The School Garden Resource Center organizes an annual give-away of herbs and veggie seedlings from Altman Plants of Vista. This year's giveaway will provide one hundred teachers with a flat of robust warm season seedlings including peppers, tomatoes, herbs, and more. Download and complete the registration form (available on the RCD website) and fax/email by April 2. First come, first served! [More...](#)

WalkSanDiego Community Walks

March 20, 2010 & April 17, 2010

San Diego, CA

WalkSanDiego, a grassroots organization dedicated to making our communities more walkable, is hosting a number of community walks in San Diego's diverse and beautiful neighborhoods. Join WalkSanDiego in exploring your community while being physically active! The walks are open to everyone; they are free to WalkSanDiego members, with a suggested \$5 donation for non-members. For further information, contact Dave Schumacher at dsc@sandag.org.

Opening Up School Recreational Facilities for Community Use through Joint Use Agreements

April 20, 2010

San Diego, CA

Join the National Policy & Legal Analysis Network to Prevent Childhood Obesity (NPLAN) for a free webinar on joint use agreements! Many communities lack safe, engaging places for children and their families to exercise and play. Fortunately, joint use agreements provide a tool that lets local governments partner with school districts to address

these concerns and open up these facilities. Presenters will discuss how joint use agreements can expand playspace in a community, various strategies and resources for developing joint use agreements, and liability risks and legal protections for school districts. The webinar will also feature a community that has successfully implemented joint use agreements. [More...](#)

11th Annual "Gardening with Class!" - San Diego Regional School Garden & Nutrition Conference

April 24, 2010

Del Mar, CA

Workshops on wellness policies, wildlife, worms, and more! Teachers may elect to tour the garden at Ocean Knoll School as one of their workshop options. Registration fee is \$50. Attendees receive a continental breakfast and lunch and generally walk away with armloads of educational resources and giveaways. Sponsored by the UC Cooperative Extension, Master Gardeners of San Diego County, and Del Mar Fairgrounds. [More...](#)

Cultivating Food Justice Conference

April 24 & 25, 2010

San Diego, CA

The Cultivating Food Justice Conference is San Diego Food Not Lawn's annual conference that gets food justice activists involved in workshops and panels to share all kinds of information about the food system with one another. It involves panels around school gardens, local food production and preparation, seed saving and much more. Watch the [SDFNL website](#) for registration information as it is posted.

Be Healthy San Diego

April 26, 2010

San Diego, CA

The County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency is excited to announce a special event called Be Healthy San Diego! This event is a health fair that will target a total of 50 high school students in order to enhance their education on various aspects of health. Project coordinators are still looking for nutrition and physical activity vendors. If interested in learning more, please contact Ashley Cassat at Acassat@gmail.com or Courtney Endicott at cendicott@vandals.uidaho.edu.

San Diego Natural History Museum Lectures on Food

September 2009 through May 2010

San Diego, CA

The San Diego Natural History Museum is offering a 7-part lecture series entitled "Sustainable Planet: Food" which kicked off in September 2009 and runs through May 2010. The lectures will address the overall health of communities and the environment through coverage of the food system. The upcoming lecture will focus on sustainable agriculture. [More...](#)

18th Annual California WIC Association Conference

May 2-5, 2010

San Diego, CA

Last year, the California WIC community made public health history with the rollout of its new food packages. This year's conference theme, WIC Goes Platinum, will explore how WIC will continue to grow. The workshops and trade show will showcase the improved WIC foods, healthy habits at birth and beyond, many possibilities for collaborating with partners, and opportunities for staff leadership in the clinic and community. [More...](#)

GRANTS

National Center for Safe Routes to School - Safe Routes to School Mini-grants

Deadline for Applications: April 7, 2010

Safe Routes to School seeks to enable and encourage children to safely walk and bicycle to school through student creativity and leadership skills. Activities funded by the mini-grants should be part of a larger walking and/or bicycling to school effort. Thirty-five grants of \$1,000 will be awarded. Eligible applicants should be engaged in improving safety for and increasing the number of children who safely walk or ride a bicycle to school. [More...](#)

NFL Network Keep Gym in School Grants

Deadline for Applications: April 12, 2010

To improve physical education programs and to raise awareness for the important role that PE plays in the lives of our nation's children, NFL Network is providing ten \$1,000 grants to middle schools across the country. Creating and improving fitness programs, purchasing equipment, funding salaries and helping with needed facility improvements, NFL Network's Keep Gym in School will provide ten in-need middle schools with the resources they need to deliver quality physical education to their students. [More...](#)

ING -Run For Something Better School Awards Program

Deadline for Applications: April 15, 2010

ING Run For Something Better, in partnership with the National Association for Sport and Physical Education, seeks to increase physical activity in students and help fight childhood obesity through the creation of school-based running programs. Fifty grants of \$2,000 will be awarded. These funds can be used to establish a school-based running program or expand an existing one. [More...](#)

"Organic. It's Worth it in Schools." Campaign

Deadline for Applications: May 1, 2010

The Organic Trade Association wants students across the nation to have access to organic foods. Organics are grown in soil free of pesticides and synthetic fertilizers. This national contest will award the winning school with an organic garden complete with seeds, soil and expert gardening support or a fully stocked vending machine featuring organic items. Vote for your favorite school by signing up now! [More...](#)

Healthy Eating Research Grants

Deadline for Applications: May 13, 2010

Healthy Eating Research is a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF). The program supports research on environmental and policy strategies with strong potential to promote healthy eating among children to prevent childhood obesity, especially among lower-income and racial and ethnic populations at highest risk for obesity. Approximately \$2.4 million will be awarded under this CFP for Round 5 grants, rapid-response grants and New Connections grants through Healthy Eating Research. Please refer to the CFP for complete details. [More...](#)

Aetna Foundation - Health and Healthcare Grants

Deadline for Applications: May 15, 2010

The Aetna Foundation is dedicated to promoting wellness, health, and access to high-quality healthcare for everyone. The Foundation has three main funding priorities: obesity, racial and ethnic healthcare equity, and integrated health care. Proposals that are national or regional in scope will be considered. Award amounts vary. Regional grant requests may not exceed two years and \$150,000 each. [More...](#)

School Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies, Obesogenic Behaviors and Weight Outcomes

Deadline for Applications: January 7, 2013

National Institutes of Health have announced several funding opportunities for research projects that are exploring school nutrition and physical activity policies as well as obesogenic behaviors and weight outcomes in school-aged students. Award amounts vary. [More...](#)

Health Impact Demonstration Projects

Deadline for Applications: Rolling

The Health Impact Project call for proposals is seeking applicants to undertake health impact assessment (HIA) demonstration projects. The goal of HIAs is to improve health, demonstrate the effectiveness of HIAs and promote their incorporation into local, state, tribal, and federal decision-making. Government agencies, educational institutions and nonprofit organizations are encouraged to apply. Successful applicants will receive grants of \$25,000 to \$150,000. [More...](#)



COMMUNITY GARDEN CORNER

The Initiative is delighted to bring you exciting news about a policy that aims to engage community residents in garden projects that will increase access to fresh produce, healthful low intensity exercise, and new opportunities for neighborhood cohesion. The City of Chula Vista has adopted San Diego County's first community gardens policy. It all started in early 2009 when community residents, public health advocates and elected officials began to meet in favor of establishing community gardens in Chula Vista. In late February of this year, the policy was passed by the City Council. This development will empower community-based groups and nonprofits to establish community gardens on unused parcels of city-owned land and underutilized public spaces. The hope is that the creation of community gardens will develop the organizational infrastructure needed for the establishment of future gardens on private property as well.

Who will build these gardens?

Although this is an exciting advance in community gardening policy, it will take quite a bit of work and dedication from the community to begin putting it into practice.

"It is essential to have community advocacy during this process," said Carla Blackmar of the City of Chula Vista's Redevelopment Department. Carla explained that the city is there to offer its support to any community group that comes forth with the desire for a garden, but that the resources, efforts, and coordination need to come from that group.

The city will work with interested parties on the challenges that lie before them, such as the identification of a useable parcel of land. It is important for the community to select parcels of land with specific characteristics. For one, why is it abandoned? There may be contamination in the soil, in which case it cannot be used for a garden. Another important factor to consider is whether or not the land is economically viable. If it is, there is a risk that the garden will not be sustainable because parties that are interested in it would be inclined to close the garden so the land could be devoted to alternative uses. This policy aims to create sustainable gardens that can exist in the community indefinitely.

Another important fact for a community group to consider is whether or not there is a community or nonprofit organization on board that has resources to operate the garden.

"Even just in terms of creating the policy, there was a lot of support from community organizations," said Linda Wagner, a representative for Chula Vista Councilmember Steve Castañeda. Nonprofit groups such as Healthy Eating, Active Communities (HEAC), a program of Community Health Improvement Partners (CHIP), were a large part of the preliminary planning process. Dana Richardson, Director of Community Advocacy at CHIP and a key stakeholder in HEAC, echoed this sentiment, "it was clear at the beginning, as it is now, that neighborhood groups and nonprofits must meet the City half-way to make the policy a true success."

Even if this may be the county's first community gardens policy, municipalities all over the region have been working on efforts that favor urban agriculture and access to fresh produce. Cities across the county have been working in partnership with community organizations and residents to plant gardens for members of the community, young and old.

Linda Wagner is among the many people that are optimistic about the opportunities this policy will make possible for Chula Vista's vast and diverse community. She reflected on the willingness of the community to participate in its implementation. "This kind of movement has to come from the public. Neighborhoods need to want it."

In the meantime, if you know of a farmers' market or community garden in San Diego County promoting health through innovative activities or would like to learn more about a highlighted project, please contact [JuliAnna Arnett](#).

LOCAL NEWS

[Food Services Wins Third USDA Summer Sunshine Award](#)

[San Diego County Gets \\$16 Million from the CDC](#)

[Let it Grow](#)

NATIONAL NEWS

[Few Companies Got High Marks on Food Marketing to Children](#)

[Obesity Risks Start Before Birth](#)

[Soft Drink Sales Drop in Schools, Group Says](#)

[Celebrating Success: Healthier Beverages in Schools](#)

[Childhood Obesity Linked to Heart Risk](#)

[FDA Issues Warnings on Food Labels](#)

[U.S. Senator Issues a Bill to Combat Childhood Obesity](#)

[Baby Fat May Not Be So Cute After All](#)

[Study Finds Watching TV Shortens Life Span](#)

[Kraft Foods Plans to Reduce Sodium in North American Products an Average of Ten Percent by 2012](#)

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The San Diego County Childhood Obesity Initiative (Initiative) is a public/private partnership whose mission is to reduce and prevent childhood obesity in San Diego County by creating healthy environments for all children and families through advocacy, education, policy development, and environmental change. The Initiative oversees implementation of the San Diego County Childhood Obesity Action Plan, a comprehensive plan to end childhood obesity in San Diego County. The purpose of the Initiative is to create, support and mobilize partnerships among multiple domains; provide leadership and vision; and coordinate countywide efforts to prevent and reduce childhood obesity. The Initiative has established active workgroups in multiple domains including Government, Healthcare Systems & Providers, Schools & Before- & After-school Providers, Childcare & Preschool Providers, Community, Media Outlets & the Marketing Industry, and Business to act as a forum for the development, replication, and leverage of best practices and resources.

San Diego County Childhood Obesity Initiative

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