



**FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
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YMCA of Greater St. Louis Awarded Grant to Expand Healthy Living Programs and Initiatives in Metro St. Louis

ST. LOUIS, MO (Jan. 23, 2014) – Reducing health disparities in the nation’s most vulnerable communities, particularly African American and Hispanic/Latino communities, remains a challenge across the country. To help address disparities in the local area, the YMCA of Greater St. Louis has been selected to receive grant funding to implement health and well-being initiatives. This grant is part of a national initiative supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Community Transformation Grant (CTG) program. The program enables Ys throughout the U.S. to design and implement transformative programs that address the prevalence of health inequity, improve health outcomes, reduce the number of new cases of chronic diseases and contribute to lowering associated health care costs. The Y is one of only six national networks of community-based organizations selected to receive a CTG grant.

The Y’s grant-funded initiatives, which will include improving healthy eating and physical activity standards in early childhood and afterschool settings and expanding the YMCA’s Diabetes Prevention Program, will be available in the following communities: St. Louis City, Ferguson, Mo., Florissant, Mo., East St. Louis, Ill., Cahokia, Ill., Belleville, Ill. and Fairmont City, Ill.

“Despite the many advances we’ve made in health and wellness as a nation, we recognize that there are still many communities facing barriers that affect access to programs and opportunities to help manage health,” said Gary Schlansker, president and CEO of the YMCA of Greater St. Louis. “We are proud to be able to help spearhead initiatives in local neighborhoods that will help improve overall well-being. The Y’s core values are healthy living, youth development and social responsibility, and the CDC’s Community Transformation Grant program will help us continue to put those values into action.”

To help with implementation, the Y has assembled a Community Leadership Team, including the following organizations: YMCA of Greater St. Louis, YMCA of Southwest Illinois, St. Louis City Health Department, YWCA Head Start, United Healthcare, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, Get Up & Go!, United Way and Grace Hill Health Centers. This coalition is currently looking for new organizations and community leaders to help support the initiative. For information on joining the coalition, please contact Joyce Hoth, community health director of the YMCA of Greater St. Louis, at jhoth@ymcastlouis.org or 314-436-1177.

The YMCA of Greater St. Louis’ Community Transformation Grant efforts will focus on two main areas:

1. Coordinating and linking systems between health care providers, clinical settings and community-based organizations to help guide individuals to prevention efforts and programs that are proven to increase health outcomes, such as the YMCA's Diabetes Prevention Program.
2. Improving local efforts to implement strategies that create environments in early childhood and afterschool settings that ease the adoption of healthy eating and physical activity standards.

The CDC estimates that the CTG program will improve the health of more than four out of ten (about 130 million) Americans. These funds will create opportunities for health and wellness with strategies that focus on creating smoke-free environments, access to physical activity and healthy food, and ensuring healthy and safe physical environments are available in many of the nation's low-income communities. To date, the Y has impacted nearly 68 million lives by influencing more than 35,970 policy, systems and environmental changes in 224 communities across the nation.

In addition to the YMCA of Greater St. Louis, funds to address health disparities were also awarded to the following Ys:

YMCA of Greater Long Beach	North Long Beach, CA
YMCA of Greater St. Petersburg	Pinellas County, FL
YMCA of Greater St. Louis	St. Louis, MO
YMCA of Greater Charlotte	Charlotte-Mecklenburg Co, NC
YMCA of Eastern Union County	Elizabeth, NJ
YMCA of Central Ohio	Columbus, OH
Family YMCA of Marion and Polk Counties	Salem-Marion/Polk County, OR

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About the YMCA of Greater St. Louis

The YMCA of Greater St. Louis is a nonprofit organization dedicated to youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. Featuring 17 traditional Y branches and two Campus Y student leadership facilities on the Missouri side of the St. Louis Metro Area, our Y also includes YMCA Camp Lakewood and Trout Lodge in Potosi, Missouri. The Carondelet Park Rec Complex and O'Fallon Park Rec Complex are owned by the City of St. Louis and operated by the Y. Our Y is a proud member of the United Way. For more information, please visit www.ymcastlouis.org or call 314-436-1177.

About the Y

The Y is one of the nation's leading nonprofits strengthening communities through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. Across the U.S., 2,700 Ys engage 21 million men, women and children – regardless of age, income or background – to nurture the potential of children and teens, improve the nation's health and well-being, and provide opportunities to give back and support neighbors. Anchored in more than 10,000 communities, the Y has the long-standing relationships and physical presence not just to promise, but to deliver, lasting personal and social change. ymca.net