

## Five Steps for Inclusive Health Promotion



### Background

The National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) works with local health departments to promote the inclusion and engagement of people with disabilities in all public health programs, products, outreach, and services.

NACCHO encourages health departments to include people with disabilities when creating and delivering health promotion activities. This fact sheet provides five action steps for local health officials to ensure that the development and delivery of health promotion programs and activities are inclusive and accessible.

### 1 STEP Understand the Needs of People with Disabilities

Over 53 million adults in the United States are living with a disability.<sup>1</sup> People with disabilities are at a higher risk for chronic disease, such as heart disease and diabetes, compared to people without disabilities.<sup>2</sup> Health departments can meaningfully contribute to reducing these health disparities by including people with disabilities in health promotion activities. To support inclusive health promotion programming, it is essential for local health officials to understand the communities they serve.

Using data can help health departments understand the health needs, demographics, and disparities that exist for people with disabilities in the jurisdiction they serve. Data about people with disabilities can strengthen community health assessments and inform targeted health promotion strategies in community health improvement plans. Including people with disabilities in focus groups, community surveys, and interviews during the community health assessment process can support a more inclusive assessment and help local health officials understand the needs of the whole community.

#### RESOURCES:

- Disability and Health Data System  
<http://bit.ly/2sMqP0N>

- Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS)  
<http://bit.ly/2sPgVfu>
- American FactFinder  
<http://bit.ly/2rR5mj8>
- Standard Disability Questions  
<http://bit.ly/2swPQe8>

### 2 STEP Develop Community Partnerships

Developing partnerships with organizations that serve people with disabilities can improve the health of the community. These community-based organizations can help improve accessibility, increase health literacy, and ensure the health needs of people with disabilities are being addressed. Consider developing an inclusive health coalition with representation from local agencies that serve people with disabilities and community members with disabilities. Below are examples of online search tools local health departments can use to locate and engage local chapters of five prominent national disability-focused organizations.

#### Disability Organizations with Local Chapters Nationwide

- **Centers on Independent Living**  
<http://bit.ly/2sU1fVw>
- **Easter Seals**  
<http://bit.ly/2tNNjfl>
- **The Arc**  
<http://bit.ly/2s9UxOc>
- **National Alliance on Mental Illness**  
<http://bit.ly/2tNJpUk>
- **Autism Society**  
<http://bit.ly/2IIUFSM>

Local health departments should be familiar with the roles and responsibilities of partner agencies to understand their perspectives and what they can contribute to an inclusive health coalition.

The National Center for Health, Physical Activity, and Disability's *Community Health Inclusion Sustainability Planning Guide* contains extensive information about how to create an inclusive, sustainable health coalition. NACCHO's *Directory of Community-Based Organizations Serving People with Disabilities* is a resource local health departments can use to identify agencies to establish community partnerships.

#### RESOURCES:

- Directory of Community-Based Organizations Serving People with Disabilities  
<http://bit.ly/2smF1Nt>
- Inclusive Health Coalition Initiative  
<http://bit.ly/2sM23xK>
- Community Health Inclusion Sustainability Planning Guide  
<http://bit.ly/2toV4si>

## 3 STEP Use Inclusive, Accessible Communication

When communicating health promotion resources, it is essential that messaging is accessible to all community members, including people with disabilities. Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires state and local government agencies to practice "effective communication," stating "whatever is written or spoken must be as clear and understandable to people with disabilities as it is for people who do not have disabilities."<sup>3</sup>

When health department staff are creating health promotion materials, such as flyers for a community event or health education brochures, it should be readily accessible to all.

NACCHO recommends the following additional tips and resources, including the *Five Steps for Inclusive Communication: Engaging People with Disabilities* fact sheet.



### Additional Tips for Accessible Communication

- Practice multimodal communication by accounting for each type of disability to ensure everyone can access information.
- Use alternative written communication formats, such as printed documents with large text, electronic documents, and audio recordings.
- Provide training and resources in sign language and video remote interpreting services, teletypewriters (TTYs) or computers enabled with TTYs, and telephone relay and video interpreting services.
- Adopt computer-aided real-time transcription (CART) services, printed transcripts, and accessible websites.<sup>3</sup>

#### RESOURCES:

- Five Steps for Inclusive Communication: Engaging People with Disabilities  
<http://bit.ly/2slq1fw>
- Disability Etiquette: Tips on Interacting with People with Disabilities  
<http://bit.ly/2sQsK3S>
- Accessible Print Materials  
<http://bit.ly/2sQsybl>



## 4

### STEP

## Provide Accessible Places and Spaces

For health promotion activities to be inclusive of people with disabilities, they must occur in places that are readily accessible and usable. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention highlights that people with disabilities face many barriers to participating and accessing health-related resources that include physical, communication, and programmatic barriers.<sup>4</sup>

When local health department staff provide health promotion activities at their agency or in the community, it should be accessible to all community members. When planning activities, such as community health fairs and events, choosing an accessible location that is near public transportation can support inclusion. The location can be assessed for additional priorities, such as the accessibility of the entrance, restrooms, and other services, through the use of checklists. Below are resources, such as the *ADA Checklist for Existing Facilities*, to help comply with the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design.<sup>5</sup> NACCHO also recommends asking people with disabilities what accommodations they need to access and participate in activities.



### RESOURCES:

- ADA Checklist for Existing Facilities  
<http://bit.ly/2tbCYwk>
- Planning Accessible Meetings and Events  
<http://bit.ly/2sj20Ci>
- Engaging People with Disabilities: Promoting Health Through Program Integration  
<http://bit.ly/2rUiLHV>

## 5

### STEP

## Adopt Practice and Evidence-Based Strategies

Implementing health promotion and chronic disease prevention programs that have evidence of positive health outcomes for people with disabilities is essential. Local health departments can benefit from agencies that have created inclusive health promotion and chronic disease prevention strategies. Start by reviewing the featured success story and additional resources below for valuable examples of such programs already being put into practice by local, state, and national organizations to advance the health of people with disabilities.



### Featured Success Story: "14 Weeks to a Healthier You"

The Montana Disability and Health Program (MTDH) successfully implemented a facilitated version of the National Center on Health, Physical Activity, and Disability's (NCHPAD's) online fitness and nutrition initiative designed specifically for individuals with disabilities, engaging participants across the entire state. Read more about the program using these links:

- **Fact Sheet: MTDH Success Story**  
<http://bit.ly/2tNn1u2>
- **NCHPAD Program Site: 14-Weeks to a Healthier You**  
<https://www.nchpad.org/14weeks>

NACCHO also recommends the *Guidelines for Disability Inclusion in Physical Activity, Nutrition, and Obesity Programs and Policies Implementation Manual* to inform disability inclusion in community health promotion strategies.

### RESOURCES:

- People with Disabilities: Health Department Strategies  
<http://bit.ly/2seoac8>
- Guidelines for Disability Inclusion in Physical Activity, Nutrition, and Obesity Programs and Policies Implementation Manual  
<http://bit.ly/2sjgUbl>
- The President's Council on Fitness, Sports & Nutrition: I Can Do It, You Can Do It!  
<http://bit.ly/2sJlSVQ>

# [FACT SHEET]

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## References

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## FOR MORE INFORMATION

To learn more about NACCHO's health and disability program, visit <http://www.naccho.org/programs/community-health/disability>. For additional resources about NACCHO's disability fellowship and initiatives, contact Sara Lyons, MPH, Program Analyst for Health and Disability, at [slyons@naccho.org](mailto:slyons@naccho.org) or Jennifer Li, MHS, Senior Director for Environmental Health and Disability, at [jli@naccho.org](mailto:jli@naccho.org).

**NACCHO**

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*The National Connection for Local Public Health*

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The mission of the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) is to be a leader, partner, catalyst, and voice with local health departments.

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