

## ActiveWV 2030: The West Virginia Physical Activity Plan Overview

West Virginia is wild and wonderful! We live in rural Appalachia with its scenic mountain landscape, welcoming people, and rich cultural heritage. While the people of West Virginia take great pride in the beauty of the natural surroundings and traditions of their Appalachian heritage, a number of disparities related to quality of life persist when compared to other geographic regions of the United States. West Virginia consistently ranks as one of the most disadvantaged in relation to a variety of health indicators including obesity, heart disease, and diabetes. These chronic health problems have multiple contributing biological, psychological, social, and environmental factors. Faced with this reality, West Virginians must continue to work together to reduce risk for chronic disease and manage the associated impact on mortality, morbidity, quality of life, and economic viability.

Physical activity is one of the most important behaviors that West Virginians of all ages can adopt to improve their health status. The relationship between regular physical activity and reduced risk for chronic disease is well established, and small to moderate increases in physical activity offer significant health-related benefits. A little physical activity goes a long way!

Our collective challenge is to find feasible solutions to this public health concern that make a physically active lifestyle the easy choice for every West Virginian. The original version of the WV Physical Activity Plan was released in 2015 and was our first attempt to identify cross-sector strategies and tactics tailored to the unique problems in the mountain state. Modeled after the National Physical Activity Plan (<https://paamovewithus.org/national-physical-activity-plan>), we adapted priorities to fit the specific demographic, cultural, and geographical challenges to physical activity in the mountain state. Since that time, many dedicated professionals have worked to implement programs, community initiatives, legislation, improved access, and policies related to physical activity.

The goal of this revised plan, ActiveWV 2030, is to increase the physical activity levels of children and adults to meet or exceed the national physical activity recommendations, and to therefore improve the health and quality of life of West Virginians. The achievement of these outcomes is dependent on the establishment of a culture that facilitates physically active lifestyles in every societal sector and geographic region, regardless of the various environmental, social, and individual barriers that people may face.

The target audience for the ActiveWV 2030: WV Physical Activity Plan includes: (a) policy leaders at the local and state levels, (b) key stakeholders representing state and local groups in each societal sector who can assist with plan implementation and evaluation, and (c) West Virginians who can promote physical activity in their communities and advocate for personal, policy, and environmental change.



Mirroring from the National Physical Activity Plan, the WV Physical Activity Plan is organized around ten societal sectors identified as key contributors to promoting physical activity as a public health priority:

- **Business and Industry**
- **Community Recreation, Fitness, and Parks**
- **Education**
- **Faith-Based**
- **Healthcare**
- **Media**
- **Military**
- **Public Health**
- **Sport**
- **Transportation, Land Use, and Community Design**

From 2022-2024, a substantial revision to the Plan was conducted by a team of professionals and community partners with the Center for ActiveWV in the College of Applied Human Sciences at West Virginia University. This multi-step process resulted in the identification of five priority areas that provide the conceptual framework for the WV Physical Activity Plan. The overarching priority areas include:

- 1. Structural Capacity**
- 2. Public Awareness and Social Marketing**
- 3. Community Engagement and Environment**
- 4. Policy**
- 5. Multi-Sector Collaboration**

These five priority areas provide the structural foundation for the specific strategies and tactics that are featured within each societal sector. Using this guide, physical activity advocates can pick up the Plan and immediately identify specific strategies and tactics they are willing to bring to life in their communities. Many dedicated West Virginians are already doing this work, and we want to showcase them as we move forward.

This ActiveWV 2030 Plan is organized in the following sections. The Priority Areas section provides a description of each area and a summary of key messages and strategies identified across sectors by priority area. The Sector Strategies and Tactics sections outline sector-specific calls to action statements, strategies, and actionable tactics by priority area. The Engaging Communities in Implementation section provides basic guidelines and initial steps for community leaders to engage their communities in physical activity promotion. The References and Resources section offers brief overviews of strategic planning initiatives within WV and identification of national resources designed to inform physical activity program development, implementation, and evaluation. Two appendices accompany this report, including: The History of the WV Physical Activity Plan and WV Physical Activity Plan Sector Expert Representatives.

