

## Faith-Based

Faith-based organizations permeate virtually every region of West Virginia and serve the state’s population by promoting spiritual growth and wellbeing. Faith-based leaders have abundant resources, including well-established networks, expertise, and relationships within their communities, that can greatly influence the health of West Virginians. Thus, faith-based leaders and organizations are poised to play an important role in promoting physical activity at the community level. This can be accomplished by advocating and supporting increased physical activity programming and messaging that aligns clearly with community and constituent needs. Faith-based leaders and organizations can mobilize local expertise and motivate citizens by communicating the importance of physical activity to those within and across constituent networks. By promoting relevant physical activity programming and collaborating across sectors, faith-based organizations can begin grassroots initiatives that raise awareness for physical activity and healthy lifestyles among the citizens of West Virginia.

### Strategies and Tactics

#### Priority Area 1: Structural Capacity

##### Priority Area 1 Strategy

Establish an emphasis on physical activity promotion efforts within the faith-based community.

##### Priority Area 1 Tactics

- 1 Create an environment supportive of physical activity, regardless of race, age, or ability, by delivering evidence-based physical activity messaging and programs that are consistent with the faith community’s religious beliefs.
- 2 Identify or develop educational resources tailored to enhance the perceptions of faith community leaders on the value of physical activity to improve the quality of life of their community members.
- 3 Engage with external grant writers to seek funding to design and implement physical activity and other health initiatives in the faith-based setting.
- 4 Recruit staff or volunteers that are dedicated to improving physical activity levels within their communities.

5

Support the promotion of physical activity programs within faith-based organizations as a worksite wellness and community health promotion activity.

## **Priority Area 2: Public Awareness and Social Marketing**

### **Priority Area 2 Strategy**

Identify and promote faith-based physical activity efforts using media, community meetings, and other outreach efforts.

### **Priority Area 2 Tactics**

1

Showcase faith-based leaders and organizations that model or support healthy lifestyles to raise awareness of the importance of physical activity and related resources available in the state, region, and local areas.

2

Identify and promote existing physical activity programs and initiatives via health ministries that are accessible to and tailored for a wide range of constituents.

3

Disseminate literature detailing how health ministries can serve as physical activity resources for individuals of all abilities.

4

Encourage faith leaders to incorporate physical activity and other messages related to holistic health in their religious and secular communication.

## **Priority Area 3: Community Engagement and Environment**

### **Priority Area 3 Strategy**

Develop and/or implement community outreach efforts that incorporate physical activity programs for individuals at multiple points across the lifespan and uphold the faith community's values, practices, and beliefs.

### **Priority Area 3 Tactics**

1

Host family-friendly community events that incorporate intergenerational physical activity opportunities that are appropriate and adaptable for all ages and abilities.

2

Develop programs that link physical activity programs to other activities, such as prayer and study groups.

3

Promote involvement in community volunteer activities that include physical activity (i.e., trash pick-up, meal delivery programs, etc.).

4

Support the planning and implementation of physical activity programs that use existing resources and infrastructures in faith-based organizations, and include various youth, women's, and men's groups.

5

Work with the surrounding community to assess the active transportation infrastructure around faith-based organizations from the perspective of all stakeholders (e.g., older adults, children) and advocate for improvements.

## **Priority Area 4: Policy**

### **Priority Area 4 Strategy**

Support policies and initiatives that effectively address the beneficial effects of physical activity programs for communities' health and spirituality.

### **Priority Area 4 Tactics**

1

Advocate for funding from local and state policy leaders to support and encourage physical activity in the faith community.

2

Foster partnerships that promote accessible physical activity opportunities between community facilities and faith-based organizations of various doctrines via shared-use policies and agreements, increasing operating hours, and affordable user fees and scholarships.

3

Communicate to local and state policy makers how ministries can support and encourage engagement in physical activity and other positive health behaviors.

4

Use existing infrastructures, such as ministerial organizations and interfaith coalitions, to support the development of messages from all religions and denominations that demonstrate how scripture and religious law can support and encourage engagement in physical activity and other positive health behaviors.

## **Priority Area 5: Multi-Sector Collaboration**

### **Priority Area 5 Strategy**

Establish partnerships with other sectors to promote physical activity in a manner that is consistent with faith-based organizations' values, beliefs, and practices.

### **Priority Area 5 Tactics**

1

Foster multi sector collaboration for funding (e.g. grants), technical assistance, and expertise to implement evidence-based physical activity programs to increase opportunities for community members of all ages and abilities to engage in physical activity.

2

Partner with media organizations to boost awareness of faith-based community outreach efforts that center on physical activity.

3

Collaborate with university researchers and local healthcare providers to identify physical activity programs, best practices, and other evidence-informed health resources that are in line with the specific faith education doctrine.

4

Work with education and business leaders to develop training programs to help faith-based organizations build their own capacities to adopt effective physical activity promotion programs.