

State Advocacy Organizer
Safe Routes to School National Partnership

Summary: The state advocacy organizer builds, strengthens and maintains a state network of diverse organizations, public agencies and partners to achieve the following three main policy objectives:

- 1) Leverage funding for bicycle and pedestrian construction projects, including the award and obligation of federal Safe Routes to School and Transportation Enhancements funds.
- 2) Facilitate additional street-scale improvements through the adoption of Complete Streets policies, design guidelines that support active transportation, and other mechanisms at state, regional and local levels.
- 3) Advance joint-use agreements through state level policies and agreements between cities and school districts.

All policies must benefit lower-income communities and are intended to improve the built environment and increase physical activity to help reverse childhood obesity.

The organizer will possess strong skills in recruiting and organizing network partners and building action teams to achieve the three main policy objectives. He or she will also be responsible for ensuring sustainability of the project and position by securing ongoing funding for 2014 and beyond.

Reports to: State network manager

Classification: Full-time, exempt

Key responsibilities:

Network Development

- Build a diverse and strong state network by developing leaders, champions and strong peer relationships throughout the state that will collaborate on the advancement of the three main policy objectives.
- Cultivate relationships with diverse entities and individuals to increase the visibility of and interest in Safe Routes to School (beyond the traditional bicycle/pedestrian supporters) including, but not limited to, public health groups, housing and smart growth non-profits and authorities, equity organizations, educational groups, youth groups and environmental advocates.
- Partner with the state Department of Transportation (DOT) and particularly with the state Safe Routes to School DOT coordinator and regional Safe Routes to School state DOT staff members or contractors to ensure the best use of federal funds, including: Safe Routes to School, Transportation Enhancements, Highway Safety Improvement Program funds and any other funds that may arise as part of the new federal transportation bill.

- Partner with the State Department of Health and the State Department of Education around achieving the three main policy objectives.
- Collaborate and coordinate with local and regional government agencies including metropolitan planning and transportation agencies, cities, counties and health organizations.
- Join, attend and take a leadership role in key state committees and/or task forces which focus on achieving the outcomes for the three main policy objectives.
- Work with state and regional partners to cultivate and nurture youth involvement, focusing on establishing active youth participation and generation of associated success stories and youth advocacy movement in support of the Safe Routes to School policies.
- Organize and facilitate monthly state-wide network meetings via conference calls to create and execute strategies and action plans for working proactively with the networks. Develop agendas and maintain meeting notes.
- Recruit and coordinate with a high-profile, well-connected individual who will become the volunteer chair of the state network.

Action Plan and Action Team Development, Implementation and Tracking

- Work with the state network manager with input from network partners to develop a state action plan to achieve three main policy objectives.
- Work with the state network manager and content experts to develop and implement strong action teams and the action plan designed to achieve the three main policy objectives (all policies will focus on benefiting lower income communities).
- Work with state, regional and local partners to ensure collaborative efforts for implementation of the action plan and action team strategies.
- Regularly review, edit and update the action plan to reflect current opportunities and changes in the process, and track and publicize policy successes.
- Track progress and participants in the state, keep the state network on task, and ensure that all efforts are reflected in the Safe Routes to School National Partnership website and through other mediums in the state.
- Document and track all program successes and communicate these successes on a real-time basis (in the established format) to the state network manager, including:
 - Number of policy changes.
 - Increases in award and obligation of federal funds.
 - Street-scale improvements (e.g. miles of sidewalks and bike facilities built during grant period, etc.).
 - Joint-use agreements.
 - Lower-income area improvements and policy changes.
 - Increase in funds raised for network sustainability.
 - Increase in funds provided by the state DOT, metropolitan planning organizations and/or cities for active transportation.
 - Research findings and opportunities to advance research.

Policy Change and Research

Policy Change

- Develop a working knowledge of the applicable laws and policies that impact walking and bicycling, built environment, joint-use agreements, funding and lower-income communities.
- Develop policies and strategies to advance transportation equity issues including an analysis of how the state Safe Routes to School program currently serves lower-income communities and the development and implementation of a strategy to increase support for and outreach to underserved communities.
- Work with government agencies to implement the three main policy objectives within the state to benefit built environment infrastructure that improves physical activity, with a focus on the following:
 - Funding: understand transportation funding mechanisms and policies and work with agencies to ensure timely award, obligation and implementation of Safe Routes to School and Transportation Enhancement funded projects throughout the state (Note: this applies to current Safe Routes to School, Transportation Enhancements, Highway Safety Improvement Program funds and any other funds that may arise as part of the new federal transportation bill).
 - Street-scale improvements: advance policy changes which support complete streets and design guidelines that encourage active transportation.
 - Joint-use agreements: advance opportunities for cities and school districts to implement joint-use agreements.
 - Lower-income communities: assure all policies focus on benefiting lower-income communities and reducing disparities.
- Document and track all policy change successes and communicate these successes on a real-time basis to the state network manager using the standardized mechanisms developed in the action plan.

Research

- Research policies and opportunities to leverage transportation funding resources at the state, regional and local levels.
- Research, collect and disseminate information regarding adopted laws, policies and existing programs to promote and advance the three main policy objectives.
- Evaluate the appropriate data sets to assess their potential for affecting bicycle and pedestrian policies and investments. Communicate data relevance with the network, advocates and policy makers via professional and public outlets (e.g., white papers, public forums, letters to the editor and blogs).
- Identify opportunities to advance research in collecting, evaluating and modeling the numbers of people walking and bicycling and the effects of bicycle/pedestrian infrastructure improvements on increase in physical activity by: (1) identifying and pursuing opportunities for state DOT, university or other research on Safe Routes to School and (2) establishing relationships with research entities and other associated groups to advance transportation modeling issues that support Safe Routes to School objectives associated with bicycle and pedestrian projects and performance-based objectives.

- Document and communicate research findings and opportunities to advance research on a real-time basis to the state network manager using the standardized mechanisms developed in the action plan.

Fundraising and Sustainability

- Work with the state network manager and network director to ensure the seven state networks will: secure a cumulative total of at least \$200,000 by the end of 2013, and become fully funded for each state by the end of 2014 and beyond. These objectives will be accomplished by:
 - Working with the state network manager to create and implement a fundraising plan for your state with targets indicated for foundation, corporate, individual and fee for service revenue.
 - Conducting research on fundraising prospects within the state, meeting prospective funders and inviting them to attend network meetings and participating in activities.
 - Attending fundraising-related trainings provided by the National Partnership.
 - Writing proposals and meeting with foundations and other potential/current funders, and inviting them to join the network.
 - Cultivating major donors/family foundations.
 - Cultivating, organizing and holding house party events with sponsors.
- Utilize SalesForce (for database queries, searches and updates) to enhance fundraising efforts and objectives.
- Document and track all fundraising and sustainability successes and communicate these successes on a real-time basis to the state network manager using the standardized mechanisms developed in the action plan.
- Implement and utilize Safe Routes to School National Partnership marketing strategies and plans.

Technical Assistance, Education and Public Outreach

- Create a learning network for the state network and other interested parties to promote information exchange on strategies, challenges, opportunities and best practices for policy change on the three main policy objectives.
- Connect with and educate policy makers including, but not limited to, staff in the governor's office, members of the state legislature, congressional members, local and regional government staff and policy makers, public health groups, DOTs and education organizations. Educational outreach must focus on the positive benefits of Safe Routes to School, including the impacts of transportation and land use on health and safety, lower-income communities and the three main policy objectives. Train network partners on the difference between lobbying and education and ensure there is no lobbying.
- Facilitate educational opportunities for the public and policymakers including but not limited to:
 - Providing best practice resources and lessons learned to partners and other select organizations on implementation of Safe Routes to School and bicycle/pedestrian policies at the state, regional and local level.
 - Advising network partners on local policies and how to best implement these policies.

- Training network partners and advocates (including health officials) on how to educate policy makers on topics related to Safe Routes to School initiatives at local, regional and state meetings.
- Informing and educating the general public about the Safe Routes to School programs via list serves, webinars, conferences etc.
- Coordinating visits to Safe Routes to School sites with local, state and federal officials to educate policy makers.
- Holding successful educational meetings with policy makers and their staff in their offices, and coordinating partners to do the same throughout the state.
- Work with the media to publicize action plans, goals and results that demonstrate how investment in bicycling/pedestrian infrastructure and programming facilitates positive changes for health, transportation and air quality.
- Work with the state network manager to develop a state-specific comprehensive communication strategy and plan.
- Work with network partners to implement media strategies in the state, including advancing publicity of Safe Routes to School successes through earned media, meeting with editorial boards and letters to the editor in major metropolitan areas.
- Maintain, write and generate content for the state's webpage on the Safe Routes to School National Partnership website, blogs, Facebook and other social media means.
- Utilize Salesforce (database queries, searches and updates) to enhance outreach efforts and objectives.

Team Work

- Respond quickly to emails, attend regular staff meetings via telephone, and take notes on staff meetings.
- Provide supervisor with regular updates and upcoming tasks on a regular basis.
- Produce and/or contribute to reports, newsletters, websites, blogs, and other communications and social media and tasks.
- Respond to requests from your supervisor for special projects, as needed.
- Attend in-person staff retreats and conferences as requested.
- Participate in phone or webinar forums and attend conferences.
- Participate in fundraising efforts for the organization and to sustain this position.
- Work as a team player to fulfill the mission and goals of the Safe Routes to School National Partnership.