

# SECURING FUNDING FOR SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL, BICYCLING AND WALKING: Coalitions, Connections, and Creativity

CHANGE CAN HAPPEN



## ACTIVE TRANS CAMPAIGNS ANALYSIS

*This case study includes highlights and lessons learned from six different funding campaigns for Safe Routes to School, bicycling, and walking in Colorado, Illinois, Minnesota, Pennsylvania, Washington, and the Portland, Oregon region.*

A simple reality is instigating campaigns around the country. Years ago, funded by a robust gasoline tax, federal transportation dollars were relatively easy to come by. But, with the federal gas tax having stagnated for more than twenty years, there is no longer enough revenue to sustain current federal spending levels on transportation—making it challenging to secure needed increases in funding for long underfunded local projects that advance Safe Routes to School, bicycling, and walking.

Faced with this challenge, advocates around the country have increasingly sought to create state or local funding streams to support infrastructure and programs that make it safer for children and adults to walk and bike to schools, work, and other key community destinations. This infobrief includes highlights and lessons learned from six different funding campaigns that took place in the past five years to help inform and advance future efforts to secure more funding for Safe Routes to School, bicycling, and walking.

## CAMPAIGN RESULTS

Each of the six campaigns took a very different strategy or approach, depending on circumstances in their state, to secure dedicated funding for Safe Routes to School, bicycling, and walking.

In Colorado, advocates worked together over a three-year period to secure state funding for Safe Routes to School. In 2014, they were successful in getting the legislature to allocate \$700,000 for Safe Routes to School programming, but not for infrastructure. Their ask for \$2.5 million from the legislature in 2015 was not successful due to state budget restrictions. However, Governor John Hickenlooper announced a new Colorado Pedals project, consisting of a \$100 million investment for bicycling over four years, of which \$2.5 million per year would be focused on Safe Routes to School infrastructure and programming. The governor's announcement was formalized through a resolution passed by the Colorado Transportation Commission.

Illinois advocates started in fall 2014, asking legislators to codify a state Safe Routes to School program along with \$5 million in annual funding. Due to the state's budget woes, the environment was not right for requests for new funding, so advocates shifted their approach to educating legislators

about the need for Safe Routes to School programs and to asking the Illinois Department of Transportation to provide additional staffing and focus on Safe Routes to School. Their campaign is ongoing.

The campaign victory in Minnesota is the culmination of several years of work for state Safe Routes to School funding. In 2012, the legislature passed a law creating a structure for a state Safe Routes to School program, but did not allocate any funding. In 2013, the legislature allocated \$500,000 for Safe Routes to School programming over two years. As part of a bonding bill, the legislature added \$1 million for Safe Routes to School infrastructure projects and an additional \$250,000 each year from the state general fund for programming. Aiming high, advocates attempted to secure \$6 million for Safe Routes to School infrastructure in 2016, but the larger bonding bill the funding was attached to failed to pass. Advocates are now working to create a state active transportation program that would utilize an increased metro sales tax and redirected federal road resources freed up by a proposed state gas tax increase to fund greater investments in bicycling and walking.

Over the course of two years (2014 to 2016), advocates in Portland, Oregon focused on carving off a portion of federal transportation funds to dedicate to Safe Routes to School. Out of the \$130 million in flexible federal transportation funds available for the region, advocates were successful in getting the Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation (JPACT), which is the decision-making body for the greater Portland region's transportation funding and planning, to set aside \$3.5 million for Safe Routes to School. Of that amount, \$1.5 million is allocated every two years on an on-going basis for region-wide programming and \$2 million is a one-time investment to support planning of Safe Routes to School infrastructure and trail projects near low-income schools.

In 2013, Pennsylvania advocates saw a once-in-a-generation opportunity to direct a portion of a twenty-year transportation funding package to bicycling and walking – the first time that funds for active transportation were included in such a package. The legislature spent a year debating the details of a \$2.3 billion per year state transportation package of increases in fuel tax, license and registration fees, and other funding sources. Pennsylvania biking and health advocates joined together with a larger transportation coalition, the Keystone Transportation Funding Coalition, to push for passage of the overall bill and were successful in securing \$2 million per year for bicycling and walking projects plus eligibility for these projects to compete for some of a \$144 million per year pot for multi-modal transportation projects.

Similarly, in 2015, the Washington legislature was considering a \$16 billion transportation revenue package over 16 years. Washington advocates were successful in securing \$504 million of that package for competitive grants for Safe Routes to School, bicycling and walking projects, and Complete Streets improvements, along with guaranteed funding for a specific list of large bicycling and walking projects. Thirty percent of the \$504 million was sustaining existing funding streams for sixteen years, and 70 percent of the total was new funding – dramatically increasing state resources for Safe Routes to School, bicycling, and walking for many years.

Clearly these victories varied widely in the amounts they achieved, ranging from a one-time investment of \$1.25 million over two years to an average of \$30 million per year for 16 years. These disparities are often due to the type of strategy being pursued – such as a standalone funding ask versus making a request as part of a large transportation package. Given the significant needs for investments in bicycling, walking and Safe Routes to School, particularly given the historic underinvestment in these modes, even the largest victory profiled here is only a step in the right direction. Active transportation needs will still remain, so campaigns will almost certainly need to look at future efforts to continue the momentum and further increase funding for these projects.

## CAMPAIGN TAKEAWAYS

Collectively, the campaigns engaged in a variety of advocacy and communications tactics and partnered with a wide range of coalition members to achieve their goals. While each campaign had unique aspects due to the circumstances in its state, there were some consistent takeaways and lessons learned across most, if not all, of the campaigns.

### ***Broad coalitions are critical, but structure and trust is even more essential***

Each of the six campaigns had, at its core, a key partnership between health and active transportation organizations. This allowed health advocates to understand the complicated transportation funding mechanisms and lingo, while allowing transportation advocates to draw upon health benefits as part of their messaging, broadening the impact and reach beyond just the transportation angle. Most of the campaigns had much larger coalitions involved, and campaign leads stressed the importance of building trust and agreement among all coalition members so that all participants were bought into the campaign's goals and potential outcomes.

In Colorado, the American Heart Association and Bicycle Colorado developed a relationship with the state's long-

standing Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) Network, chaired by LiveWell Colorado. The HEAL coalition had regular meetings and a formal steering committee consisting of many of the state's leading health nonprofits and advocacy groups. Members of the coalition could choose which of the coalition's policy priorities they actively worked on. While coalition members were in agreement about pursuing funding for Safe Routes to School to increase opportunities for physical activity, not all coalition members were satisfied with the initial outcome in 2014, in which the legislature approved funding only for Safe Routes to School programming, but not infrastructure. Rather than letting that outcome mar their trust, coalition members sat down in 2015 and agreed upon shared "bottom lines" that all members would fight equally for. Core demands were that all funding had to have an equity component to ensure those schools and communities most in need could access funding, and that funding would be for both infrastructure and programming. Their clear agreement allowed the coalition to move forward and, ultimately, achieve their goals.

The campaign in Minnesota built on several years of partnership between the American Heart Association, Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota, and the Minnesotans for Healthy Kids coalition. They had worked together previously on passing a state Complete Streets policy, and thus had built a trusting and productive working relationship. Even with that basis, Minnesotans for Healthy Kids, which includes health insurers, nonprofits, and hospital systems, among others, formalized the coalition of 16 members, putting in place a leadership team, and requiring that policy positions be determined by a consensus vote among all coalition members. Having a clear structure helped ensure issue leaders had buy-in from all coalition members for the position, avoided in-fighting about different asks, and were able to channel their energies towards the same goal. The more formal structure also enabled each coalition member to select which issues it would work on and identify its areas of expertise and what it could specifically contribute to the effort.

In Portland, Oregon, the Bicycle Transportation Alliance, Safe Routes to School National Partnership, and the American Heart Association formed a new campaign structure, called the For Every Kid Coalition. The name was chosen to allow all member organizations to feel ownership over the campaign, rather than seeing it as an initiative solely of one organization. Members included a number of transportation advocates, plus a renters advocacy organization, the local Chamber of Commerce, a local PTA, and an environmental justice organization, to name a few. The three founding organizations formed the steering committee, but decisions

around funding levels or sign-on letters were made by consensus by all coalition members. While the Bicycle Transportation Alliance served as lead negotiator in the final stretch of the campaign, any offer had to be run by the full coalition for a consensus decision. The campaign leads often heard that their broad coalition was the key to their victory.

The situation in Pennsylvania was somewhat unique. Rather than health and active transportation advocates uniting to form their own coalition, the Philadelphia Bicycle Coalition (operating under the umbrella of Pennsylvania Walks and Bikes to include bike groups and clubs from around the state), the American Heart Association, and Mission: Readiness were able to join the long-established Keystone Transportation Funding Coalition. That coalition was made up of transportation insiders — engineering firms, Chambers of Commerce, and other transportation industry groups. While the coalition had significant clout with the legislature, they had thus far been unable to get the state to pass a long-term increase in state transportation funding. To increase their reach and appeal, the coalition sought out the involvement of health, bicycling, and transit advocates. Health and bicycling advocates attended coalition meetings regularly for two years before the 2013 legislative campaign, proving their dedication to the cause and building trust that was essential in the final negotiations of the transportation package.

### ***Local knowledge and local leaders are influential to policymakers***

While the politics in each of the states differed, all campaigns made sure that they had coalitions, leaders, and examples from around the state (or region, in Portland's case). Geographic diversity was important to ensure that key decision-makers could see the impact of the funding request on their constituents specifically, rather than just the generic benefits. The Colorado campaign got the Colorado Counties, Inc. and the Colorado Municipal League to join their coalition, facilitating the involvement of local leaders as advocates for the funding. In Minnesota, the Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota, in partnership with Minnesotans for Healthy Kids, created the Minnesota Mayoral Active Transportation Caucus and recruited mayors from small towns and suburbs outside of Minneapolis to counter legislators' views that biking and walking only mattered in big cities. These mayors identified safety and quality of life as primary motivators that helped them keep and attract residents to their towns. These mayors are very effective nonpartisan spokespersons with legislators and in the media. Portland advocates got support letters from school districts and asked cities in the Portland region to pass resolutions in support of dedicated funding for Safe Routes to School.

Another important tool for several campaigns was knowledge of who had applied for Safe Routes to School funding in the past. In Minnesota, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota Center for Prevention convened a Safe Routes to School network for many years and developed long-standing relationships with contacts around the state who valued Safe Routes to School. They were able to produce fact sheets and maps for each legislative district showing all funded and unfunded Safe Routes to School projects. Legislators understood that communities large and small needed the funds, and most legislators were very familiar with the schools or intersections that were seeking funds, allowing for deeper engagement on the importance of Safe Routes to School. Often, leads for these unfunded projects were willing to talk with legislators to tell them about the safety and health needs in their community. The Washington campaign also used the long list of unfunded Safe Routes to School projects — in the most recent grant cycle the state had only been able to fund one out of every four applications — to make the funding request tangible for legislators.

### ***Get expert help for lobbying***

Each of the campaigns had to get support from policymakers — for the five state campaigns, that was state legislators, and in Portland it was the 17 members of the region's JPACT. Four of the campaigns — Colorado, Illinois, Minnesota, and Washington — had one or more professional lobbyists on contract for the campaigns in addition to the organization and coalition staff, who also usually had some experience with the legislature.

Each of these campaigns stressed the importance of having professional lobbying help for two primary reasons. First, lobbyists have long-standing relationships with legislators that cannot be replicated by a nonprofit agency even if that organization has a staff person dedicated to lobbying. These lobbyists also have experience in knowing how to arrange one-on-one meetings with legislators, appeal to bipartisan interests, secure a slot to testify at a hearing, and organize lobby days, as well as when to engage grassroots voices. Second, capacity: the timetables are such that legislative decisions are often happening in a short period of time and there are dozens and dozens of legislators that all need to be contacted. The campaigns that had professional lobbyists were able to divide up the outreach among the various lobbyists and coalition members, ensuring that each were matched with legislators they either knew or who represented a geographic area in which the organization was strong.

While the Pennsylvania campaign leads did not have a paid lobbyist, they worked closely with Keystone Transportation Funding Coalition's lead staff person, who was an experienced lobbyist, and who made sure to invite the bicycle and health interests to participate in key meetings with legislators, fundraisers, and strategy sessions. In Portland, most of the coalition members had experience working at the state level, but were unfamiliar with how JPACT worked. Fortunately, the coalition leaders did understand how JPACT worked, and were able to educate coalition members about the process. The coalition did power-mapping of the 17 JPACT members to understand who and how to influence them, and engaged diverse voices to testify at JPACT meetings in favor of funding for Safe Routes to School.

### ***Be creative in how you get the attention of policymakers***

While all the campaigns used traditional means of building support with lawmakers, such as one-on-one meetings and testifying at hearings, several of the campaigns came up with creative ways to engage lawmakers in new ways.

In Illinois, advocates planned a walk audit in Springfield between the State Capitol and a nearby school. Several legislators participated, along with coalition members and the media. The local planning commission led the walk, stopping along the route to discuss hazards for children and families walking, along with needed improvements. The event helped legislators better understand the need for Safe Routes to School funding and also got a lot of media attention. Moving forward, the campaign hopes to replicate the walk audit in the home districts of key legislators.

The Portland campaign prioritized the engagement of storytellers in low-income communities. The For Every Kid campaign set aside a portion of their grant funding to support involvement by community organizations that otherwise lacked the capacity to participate. This investment helped bring key equity voices to the campaign, while also resulting in creative engagement opportunities for JPACT decision-makers. In one case, the Community Cycling Center (CCC) worked with a group of Spanish-speaking parents to create a vision board of the unsafe areas in their community for bicycling. The parents shared their findings at a community event that a JPACT member participated in, and followed up by sharing their presentation with the Portland Office of Transportation and the city council. Because of the availability of funding for transportation costs, child care and translators, the CCC was able to engage parents to come to meetings, get petitions signed, and share their experiences

with JPACT. The Community Alliance of Tenants also received capacity-building funding, allowing them to hold a listening session with tenants in east Portland who were concerned about traffic safety around their buildings and schools. The campaign filmed the listening session, which included a panel of local leaders with their translators, and shared it with JPACT members.

Pennsylvania advocates took a more traditional lobbying approach. Because the Keystone Transportation Funding Coalition was a larger coalition that included many entities with deeper pockets, there were a number of invitations to political fundraisers. The Bicycle Coalition of Philadelphia often recruited bike shop owners from the legislators' districts who could give a small political donation, attend the fundraiser, and talk with the legislator about the role of bicycling and walking to the economy.

Two campaigns also specifically targeted the involvement of youth advocates. In Portland, the Girl Scouts got involved — a local troop was working on their environment patch, and the girls chose active transportation as their focus. After they reached out to the Bicycle Transportation Alliance, the campaign provided training to the troop members about how to testify. Girl Scouts then testified at a JPACT meeting, gaining support from the members while also earning a second patch in government. In Washington, the American Heart Association created a partnership with an AP Government class at a Seattle-area high school and brought the students to a lobby day to talk about the importance of bicycling, walking, and Safe Routes to School to legislative leaders.

### ***Engage the voices of people who will be affected by the policy***

Nearly all the campaigns made significant use of tools or events to get the general public to weigh in with their legislators (often called “grassroots advocacy”). Washington was the exception; since the overall transportation package negotiations were changing frequently and mostly happening behind closed doors, there was not really an opportunity to engage grassroots advocates.

Most campaigns used online grassroots advocacy tools in which supporters were able to customize pre-written messages and email them directly to their legislators. In Pennsylvania, the ability to garner significant grassroots action was the key value-add that bicycling and health groups brought to the larger Keystone Transportation Funding Coalition. At key points during consideration of the transportation package, bicycling and health groups

generated thousands of emails to legislators; so many that several legislators set up auto-replies on their email accounts indicating they had gotten the message that active transportation was part of transportation.

Several campaigns also did lobby days, bringing in advocates aligned with coalition members to blanket the state legislature with dozens of meetings between legislators and constituents. In Minnesota, approximately 300 health and bicycling advocates attended a single lobby day on behalf of funding for Safe Routes to School. In Colorado, LiveWell coached local advocates about how to talk to their legislator, and connected them together for phone conversations.

The Portland campaign created a petition for the public that eventually garnered more than 1,000 signatures. They did a petition drive every quarter, attending farmers markets and local events to get people to sign on to the petition, building their advocacy list at the same time. They also did a postcard campaign, collecting hundreds of them to hand out to JPACT members, and even held a rally and march to the JPACT offices in which advocates held signs supporting Safe Routes to School. The campaign also took photos of key supporters with their children, holding up a sign about why they supported Safe Routes to School. Each day during the last 18 days of the campaign, the campaign sent a different “face of Safe Routes to School” to the JPACT members along with a short story about the family and their trip to school.

### ***Adapt your strategy to the political realities of your state***

Given the vagaries of the legislative process, all of the campaigns had to strategically shift their campaign goal or strategy at some point in the process. All of the campaigns emphasized the importance of knowing your state well—including the political and financial realities, the legislative or budget process, and the nuances of politics (whether it be geography-based politics or party politics.)

Illinois and Colorado ended up targeting a different decision-maker when their initial legislative strategy failed. Colorado had initially asked the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) to dedicate funding for Safe Routes to School; when that was a non-starter, they moved to the state legislature. Even though the coalition had all the right partners, messaging, testimony, and bill sponsors, they were unable to overcome the barrier of a legislative session in which anything costing new dollars was shot down. Fortunately, as part of a larger investment in bicycling, the Governor was able to align Safe Routes to School with CDOT goals; as a result, the Colorado Transportation Commission decided to vote to fund the program. In Illinois, the state's

finances are so dire that legislators were unable to pass a state budget for more than a year, leaving even basic services unfunded. The campaign quickly realized their legislative strategy was not going to bear fruit and so the coalition shifted its attention to get the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) to adopt many of the coalition's preferred policy changes.

Minnesota's strategy was simply to keep at it, taking several bites at the apple. Each year, they made a little progress — first getting a state Safe Routes to School program created via legislation, then securing a small investment in programming through the state budget, and then winning greater funding for infrastructure and programming through a bonding bill. One of the lead campaign members indicated it was hard to see it at the time, but there was forward motion and each victory built on the one before.

In Portland, the For Every Kid Coalition had to adjust their funding goal downward so that it was a realistic ask, given the size of the transportation funding being allocated. They also wanted to avoid taking funding away from freight projects, which would have created powerful opposition. In Pennsylvania, while the overall transportation package was billions of dollars, bicycling and health advocates knew they would be unsuccessful “going it alone” given the lack of support in rural areas for active transportation funding. As newcomers to the larger transportation coalition with limited political power, they had to be moderate in their funding ask so as not to alienate coalition members and to be taken seriously.

### ***Prioritizing equity can help strengthen your case***

Equity was an important component of the funding ask for most of the campaigns. By prioritizing funding for underserved schools and communities, campaigns were able to ensure funds would go where they were needed most and make a more effective case to policymakers. It also helped several campaigns expand their membership and grassroots advocates.

For both Colorado and Minnesota, it was important to counter legislators' perceptions that Safe Routes to School funding was only important in Denver and Minneapolis. The campaigns had to demonstrate that funds would be needed and, in fact, were already being used outside of their major cities. Both campaigns emphasized the needs in rural areas and enlisted advocates from those areas to help push for funding. While neither campaign was able to secure specific language mandating the equitable distribution of funding, both feel that their state departments of transportation will

use equity and geographic considerations as a factor when awarding funds. The Illinois campaign assured legislators that funding would go beyond Chicago by including language in their proposed legislation requiring funding to be appropriated across the state for priority populations.

In Portland, the For Every Kid Coalition decided from the beginning that funding would be prioritized for Title I schools. This equity focus amplified their messaging around the need for the investment by highlighting low-income schools that were lacking safe infrastructure for walking and bicycling. The campaign partnered with the Coalition for a Livable Future to produce maps that pinpointed Title I schools and overlaid rates of Type 2 diabetes and poor bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure—a nearly perfect alignment that clearly showed JPACT decision-makers the impact of the lack of investment in these schools. The equity priority also attracted equity and social justice groups to their coalition, along with their constituencies. Due to the coalition's persistence at all phases of negotiations, the final package includes language directing the infrastructure planning to happen in proximity to Title I schools.

### ***Messaging must be tailored to your state***

While all of the campaigns had similar goals to secure dedicated funding for Safe Routes to School or active transportation, a variety of messages were used with legislators.

In Washington, the campaign made a conscious decision to pivot away from messaging used in prior years about the environmental benefits of active transportation, which were not resonating with Republican lawmakers. Instead, campaign members focused on the health and safety benefits of Safe Routes to School projects and did a better job of pointing out specific infrastructure projects in legislators' districts that could improve or were improving safety for children and families. The campaign did polling in the fall of 2014 that found that 84 percent of voters believed funding to keep kids safe and active should be a part of the transportation package. That number remained strong at 79 percent even when respondents were reminded of the state's budget deficits and funding shortfalls. Together, the polling results and messaging helped make the case to legislators that Safe Routes to School projects should be a legitimate component of transportation funding, rather than a “nice to do” if funding allowed.

The Pennsylvania campaign was able to contract with a communications and lobbying firm that was experienced in developing messaging for issue campaigns. Based on the

firm's expertise, the campaign focused on several messages: roadway safety and mobility for all, in both urban and rural locations; providing healthier transportation options; and the tourism and jobs benefits of investing in trails. The firm developed a website and printed materials for legislators to emphasize these key points.

Minnesota also used polling that helped the campaign determine that there was significant public support for Safe Routes to School and active transportation within a larger transportation package, and that safety and health were their best messages. The polling was an important gut-check since the state had experienced significant political swings in the preceding years. While focusing on the safety and health benefits of Safe Routes to School, campaign members also highlighted the significant unmet need in the state: the Minnesota Department of Transportation had only been able to fund \$15 million of Safe Routes to School projects out of \$100 million in requests over the past five years. Campaign members also partnered with Mission: Readiness to help make the case that childhood obesity affects national security and military readiness, which was particularly helpful with Republican legislators.

The Colorado campaign chose a multi-pronged approach, with different messages for each party. Republican members heard about the congestion relief benefits of getting parents to shift from driving their children to walking with them and the academic benefits of getting kids more active. The message for Democrats was about the health and safety benefits for children. While Colorado has the lowest obesity rates for adults (though still far too high), at the time its obesity rate for children was the second-fastest growing out of all states. This increased the urgency of the health message, as well as the eventual burden on the state for health care costs if the childhood obesity trend was not reversed.

### ***Media and social media are important parts of your campaign***

All of the campaigns used some form of media and/or social media to get their message out to policymakers and the general public. Common strategies were having a campaign website and social media accounts with a hashtag to organize social media around. Several campaigns also held press conferences or press events throughout the legislative cycles.

Pennsylvania and Minnesota invested a particular effort in producing op-eds and letters to the editor in key papers throughout the state. These editorials had a potential dual effect of influencing the reader of the newspaper to join the campaign as a grassroots supporter, while also influencing

lawmakers who read their local papers to get a sense of their constituents' priorities.

Not all communications strategies were effective though. The Illinois campaign ran short radio ads in targeted geographic areas and demographics to try and drive the general public to the campaign website, but did not get great results. The Portland campaign tried a creative approach on social media, asking people to post pictures of their best and worst infrastructure on the trip to school. While the campaign invested a lot of effort in promoting it over social media, it just didn't get much traction.

### ***It's not over when it's over: don't forget about implementation and next steps***

Several of the campaigns indicated that their work was not over once they had achieved their funding goal. It may be necessary to focus on implementation to safeguard a victory and ensure that future funding asks are well received.

In Colorado, it was clearly a victory to have the Governor declare that \$10 million would be spent on Safe Routes to School over four years. However, the fact that this was a decision by a Democratic Governor could result in Safe Routes to School funding being seen as a partisan issue, rather than a bipartisan priority. The multi-year commitment has also made it challenging for the campaign to go back to the legislature for additional funding until after the four-year initial commitment is passed, even though the \$2.5 million a year is only a portion of the need. One of the Colorado campaign leads recommended thinking carefully about how you message a victory, so that you leave room for future funding asks for unmet needs.

While the Portland campaign sought a significant investment in Safe Routes to School infrastructure, they were successful only in securing a one-time \$2 million investment in planning for Safe Routes to School and trail improvements. JPACT decision-makers were concerned that the region's low-income schools weren't ready for the investment, and hadn't yet identified the necessary projects to improve safety for children. Leaders of the campaign have now shifted to ensuring that Title I schools are prepared to apply, showing the demand for funding. Only if the funding is well-used will the campaign be able to secure sustained funding for Safe Routes to School over the long-term.

The Washington campaign had barely declared victory when they had to mobilize a second time to safeguard the victory. The final transportation package included a "poison pill" provision that would have shifted all active transportation funds in the package to roads if the Governor issued an

executive order mandating the usage of clean fuels. Within two days of the bill's passage, it became clear that the Governor was seriously considering moving forward with the clean fuels mandate, despite the consequences of doing so. Campaign members quickly rallied advocates and grassroots supporters throughout the state, which coupled with media attention, convinced the Governor not to activate the poison pill provision.

In Minnesota, campaign members are working to identify ways to address challenges that lower-income communities face in applying for Safe Routes to School funds. Those communities may lack staff capacity to apply, lack experience with prior implementation of federal funds, or be short the funding needed for the required match. All three of the coalition leaders sit on the Minnesota Department of Transportation's Safe Routes to School steering committee and are currently reviewing different funding options for Safe Routes to School that could address community access and capacity.

## CLOSING THOUGHTS

Clearly, there is potentially much to gain in campaigns to secure funding for Safe Routes to School and active transportation — millions of dollars for projects to increase safety for children and families and to create healthier transportation options.

However, any campaign of this magnitude is a big undertaking, and likely a multi-year commitment. These campaigns take tenacity and flexibility, and above all, preparation:

- Take the time before launching a campaign to build trusting relationships with key state and local partner organizations, including equity organizations, and identify what each partner could contribute to a campaign.
- Talk with allies in your state that have run successful campaigns — such as transit funding initiatives or healthy foods campaigns — to understand their keys to success.
- Learn more about your state's political environment to determine whether the time is right to launch a campaign before you invest resources.
- Assemble data about needed Safe Routes to School and active transportation projects in your state and build relationships with mayors, school leaders, and other decision-makers in those communities.
- These initial steps will help make sure that your campaign is able to start out on the right foot, with the right allies, smart campaign goals, and strategies tailored to your state.

*Author: Margo Pedroso, Safe Routes to School National Partnership*

## END NOTE

The information in this infobrief was drawn from a series of phone interviews conducted in August 2016 with lead advocates for the six campaigns. Individuals interviewed include:

- Colorado
  - Dan Grunig, Executive Director, Bicycle Colorado
  - Erin Hackett, Government Relations Director for CO, NM, American Heart Association
  - Sarah Kurz, Vice President of Policy and Communications, LiveWell Colorado
- Illinois:
  - Erin McMillan, formerly Campaign Manager, Active Transportation Alliance
  - Julie Miostaw, Government Relations Director for IL, American Heart Association
- Minnesota:
  - Rachel Callanan, Regional Vice President of Advocacy for MN and WI, American Heart Association
  - Dorian Grilley, Executive Director, Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota
  - Jill Chamberlain, Senior Health Improvement Project Manager – Physical Activity, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota
- Pennsylvania:
  - Alex Doty, Executive Director, League of American Bicyclists (formerly Executive Director, Philadelphia Bicycle Coalition)
  - Steve Doster, Pennsylvania State Director, Mission: Readiness
- Portland, Oregon:
  - Kari Schlosshauer, Pacific Northwest Regional Policy Manager, Safe Routes to School National Partnership
  - LeeAnne Fergason, Safe Routes to School Director, Bicycle Transportation Alliance
- Washington:
  - Blake Trask, Senior Director of Policy, Washington Bikes
  - Lindsay Hovind, Senior Director of Government Relations for WA, American Heart Association
  - Vic Colman, Director, Childhood Obesity Prevention Coalition