

LT. GOVERNOR BARBARA O'BRIEN'S
COLORADO KIDS' OUTDOORS INITIATIVE

A TOOLKIT *for*
COMMUNITIES
FAMILIES
& YOUTH

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January, 2010



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Lt. Governor Barbara O'Brien's *Colorado Kids Outdoors Initiative* is a collaborative effort between numerous partners throughout the state. Thank you to the hundreds of people who offered their ideas, time, and expertise to this endeavor.

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The *Colorado Kids Outdoors Initiative* were funded by the generosity of:



BACKGROUND: ABOUT THE COLORADO KIDS OUTDOORS INITIATIVE

Lt. Governor Barbara O'Brien, in partnership with leaders from the education sector, conservation community, public health agencies, parent groups, youth organizations, and many more stakeholders, is committed to a future where *"all Colorado kids spend time outdoors regularly and connect to the natural world."*

More details about the Colorado Kids Outdoors initiative, including findings from the eleven forums across the state, and a shared call to action, are available in *A Report on Lt. Governor Barbara O'Brien's Colorado Kids Outdoors Initiative*.

Other valuable resources including the *Colorado Kids' Outdoor Bill of Rights*, and a presentation highlighting research which describes the implications of a generation disconnected from the natural world are available at: www.colorado.gov/ltgovernor.

INTRODUCTION TO THE TOOLKIT

Ensuring *"all Colorado kids spend time outdoors regularly and connect to the natural world"* will require shared responsibility and action on all levels including individual, community, and institutional.

Many communities across Colorado are already successfully combating the sedentary lifestyle youth have embraced and are taking action to get kids reacquainted with nature. Despite these efforts, participants at the eleven public forums convened during the *Lt. Governor Barbara O'Brien's Colorado Kids Outdoors Initiative* conveyed a need for more tools to identify and enact evidence-based strategies. Forum participants also voiced the importance of involving families, schools, and youth in implementing change within their own communities.

This publication was developed in response to these needs and was designed to stimulate more opportunities for outdoor experiences where kids and families live, play, and learn. It can serve as a resource for anyone committed to this effort including decision makers, families, schools, early childhood centers, and of course, kids.

What is a community?

"Community" can be defined in many ways.

A community can be a group of people residing in the same area or those who share common interests or beliefs.

Think about your neighborhood, school district, social network, tribe, or colleagues as different types of communities.

Components of the toolkit include:

- A guide to assess the needs in your community
- Ideas to get more kids into the outdoors
- Technical assistance and planning resources to help accomplish your goals
- Relevant data and information sources
- A selection of potential grant and funding mechanisms
- An overview of opportunities to collaborate on a statewide level.

Every region, county, school district, and neighborhood in our state is uniquely Colorado. Approaches that work in rural areas may not be translatable to urban areas. Concepts that are effective for one community may not be practical in another because of cultural differences, resource limitations, or varying demographics. As a civic leader, decision maker, resident, or student, you know your community best. Therefore, a variety of ideas are outlined, some of which may spark ideas for what might work in your region.

Whether you're a parent, mentor, elected official, Boy Scout leader, grandparent, Homeowners Association (HOA) member, youngster, or educator, hopefully the *Colorado Kids Outdoors Toolkit for Communities, Neighborhoods, and Youth* will be useful in your endeavors to get more kids outdoors regularly in your “neck of the woods.”¹

ASSESSING COMMUNITY NEEDS

The infrastructure that comprises communities is fundamental in encouraging or dissuading youth to get off the couch and out the door. Existing programs offered by non-profit organizations, schools, places of worship, or recreation districts can also be influential tools for introducing kids to nature in simple ways.

If you were, or are, a kid, would you want to hang out, play, or roam in your area? Does it seem fun and inviting? Not sure? Ask a few kids or look around.

Here are a few quick questions to help assess whether your community is “kid-friendly” by evaluating strengths and weaknesses regarding planning, land-use, and programmatic opportunities which encourage youth to be outdoors. After you take the test, read on for ideas and resources to assist your community increase its “fun-factor.”

¹ All websites, grant programs, and resources are provided for informational purposes only. Inclusion does not imply endorsement and does not guarantee funding.

Get your #2 pencils ready, and answer the following questions by circling “yes” or “no.”

In your community....		
Are there ample parks, play areas, open spaces, and trails? Are there minimum requirements for this type of infrastructure for new developments?	Yes	No
Are Health Impact Assessments (HIAs) used to assess the health benefits of new developments, capital projects, and policy decisions?	Yes	No
Is there a greenway network or trail system connecting neighborhoods, libraries, recreation centers, urban centers, parks and open spaces, etc.? Is connectivity to adjacent communities considered?	Yes	No
Does the community have a pedestrian and bicycle master plan to guide the creation of a safe network of sidewalks, greenways, trails, and street crossings?	Yes	No
Are there gardens where families can get their hands dirty and grow fruits, vegetables, and other plants?	Yes	No
Are sidewalks and shoulders of roads wide enough for multiple uses (e.g., bikes and walkers)? Are they well-maintained and cleared quickly after snowfall?	Yes	No
Are youth considered in planning and land-use decisions and do they have an opportunity to provide input?	Yes	No
Do natural areas, parks, community gardens, and play equipment accommodate youth and families with disabilities?	Yes	No
Are there wildzones? (Not sure what a "wildzone" is? Check out the <i>Technical Assistance</i> section or www.wild-zone.net)	Yes	No
At Schools and Early Childhood Centers...		
Is there a Safe Routes to School Program?	Yes	No
Do children have the opportunity to spend time outside daily during recess or during childcare hours? Are warm clothes available for kids who may not have adequate clothing?	Yes	No
Does the school district have daily physical education programs that incorporate outdoor activities and skills?	Yes	No
Is there adequate lighting along trails and sidewalks to increase the comfort level of those using them?	Yes	No
You're Almost Done...		
Are school and park facilities (playgrounds, ballfields, etc.) open (and unlocked) to the public after school hours? Are they well-maintained?	Yes	No
Are experiential programs, outdoor programs, and camps available for youth after school, during school holidays and breaks, including summer vacation?	Yes	No
Is information about these opportunities and youth groups like Campfire Girls, Boy Scouts, 4-H, etc. widely distributed in English and Spanish? Is information centralized?	Yes	No
Are scholarships offered for families who may not be able to afford costs associated with these activities? Is transportation also available?	Yes	No

Based on the quiz on the previous page, use the space below to write down a few ideas to encourage more outdoor experiences in your community.

SMALL INVESTMENTS = BIG STRIDES

Many initiatives to get kids outdoors require very little human resources and financial investments but can provide long-term impact. Small investments can result in big strides toward reconnecting kids with the outdoors in a healthy, meaningful, and safe manner. Some of the strategies in this section may help you develop, or more effectively achieve your goals.

Never underestimate your ability to influence measurable change in your area, whether you're an individual or member of a group or coalition.

Educators, local government officials, healthcare providers, parents, mentors, residents, and kids should all be invested in the future health and well-being of youth. And, you can make a difference, whether you're a kid or an adult.



Many of these strategies can be adapted for places of worship, events, or youth groups.

The strategies below are based on recommendations from partners who participated in the eleven forums convened for *Lt. Governor Barbara O'Brien's Colorado Kids Outdoors Initiative*. Other sources were also considered including: Colorado's Early Childhood Councils, LiveWell Colorado, Colorado Physical Activity and Nutrition Program (COPAN), the Institutes of Medicine, The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and the Centers for Disease Control.

Include Time Outdoors and the Built Environment in your Local Comprehensive Public Health Plan and Health Assessment

In accordance with Colorado SB 08-194, each local public health agency must develop a comprehensive plan and community health assessment to help direct public policy issues. Incorporate how the built environment impacts time spent outdoors as part of your assessment. If using a survey system, include questions about which activities residents partake in and how often to help inform future planning and policy decisions.

“Local Government Actions to Prevent Obesity” contains more practices to promote physical activity and outdoor time. Download the best practices guide at: www.nap.edu

Develop (or Expand) a Safe Routes to School Program

Did you know National Walk (or Bike) to School Day occurs every November? Follow this step-by-step guide to plan an event at your school. All the details to successfully develop this program are included like how to create “walking school buses” and “bike trains” as safety precautions, as well as publicity materials. After introducing the community to the benefits of walking or biking to school, implement a permanent walking or biking to school program like Westwood’s “Walk to School Wednesday.”

Visit COPAN’s website to download the guide:

www.cdphe.state.co.us/pp/COPAN/resourcekits/resourcekits.html or visit www.walktoschool.org for more ideas.

Not sure where to start, or expand, a Safe Routes to School program? Begin here: www.coloradodot.info/programs/bikeped/safe-routes

Take Volunteerism and Community Service Outside

Take volunteerism outdoors during Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service in January and Colorado Cares Day in July. The Governor’s Commission on Community Service website has project ideas and a toolkit to make it easy to plan and implement.

www.colorado.gov/gccs

Get Involved in Take a Child Outside Week

Initiated in North Colorado by the Museum of Natural Sciences, this idea is gaining national momentum since it was launched in 2006. Scheduled in late September, Take a Child Outside Week, helps parents find participating organizations, lists free and easy activities to get started, and has an online pledge for you to encourage more people in your community to take a child outdoors. The website and weeklong celebration are methods to eliminate some of the barriers parents, mentors, and teachers may confront when encouraging more explorations in the out of doors.

www.takeachildoutside.org

Share Information!

Promote ways to get involved in conservation groups like Pheasants Forever, 4-H, Campfire Girls, Boy Scouts, etc. Place parks and recreation department activity guides and calendars in schools, at physician offices, and medical facilities.

Publicize activities and events through existing websites that are searchable by location so internet-savvy kids can easily find information about what to do and where to go outdoors. Here’s a few:

www.naturerocks.org

www.naturefind.com

www.planetexplore.com

Looking for outdoor education programs or partners near you?

Visit www.cae.org/ee-directory/ee-directory to see what’s happening in your “neck of the woods” or share details on your own upcoming events.

Revive Community Watch Programs to Alleviate Fears

Parents' fears about kidnapping and other crimes can severely limit the time kids spend outdoors. Forum participants repeatedly conveyed that many parents can be uncomfortable letting kids play unattended, even in their own yards.

If this fear is common in your neighborhood, work with your neighbors to make your area a safe place to play and organize a community watch program. Model it after the drug-free, crime-free zone/neighborhood watch programs developed in the 1980's. You can even proclaim your street a "Safe Place to Play Zone" with signage.

Collaborate with School Districts and Parks and Recreation Departments to Establish Joint Use Facility Agreements

When schools are closed, these agreements can help ensure residents have an opportunity to use ballfields, playgrounds, and recreation equipment. Enacting regulatory policies might help address liability issues.

Invite Organizations that Provide Outdoor Education and Informal Science Programs to Parent-Teacher Nights, Open Houses, and Places of Worship

No matter where you live in Colorado, there's most likely a recreation provider, non-profit organization, public land manager, or other partner who is experienced with taking youth and families outside. Help your community connect with some of these entities by inviting them to school events.

Here are some partners to consider contacting to find programmatic providers near you:

- Colorado Alliance for Environmental Education
(303) 273-9527
www.caee.org
- Colorado Division of Wildlife
(303) 297-1192
www.wildlife.state.co.us
- Colorado Parks and Recreation Association
(303) 231-0943
www.cpra-web.org
- Colorado State Parks
(303) 866-3437
www.parks.state.co.us
- U.S. Forest Service
(303) 275-5350
www.fs.fed.us/r2/

Raise Awareness about the Issue

Whether you're a Girl or Boy Scout leader, concerned parent or caregiver, resident, or civic leader, educate others in your community about this epidemic. Hold a discussion to determine what can be accomplished in your area to get more kids and families to spend more time outside. Download the *The Lt. Governor's Colorado Kids Outdoors Tour* presentation at www.colorado.gov/ltgovernor and adapt it to your needs. Or distribute the presentation and report to your networks via email.

Host a Parent-Child Outdoor Skills Workshop

Partner with a local recreation department, state park, Colorado Division of Wildlife office, U.S. Forest Service Ranger District, environmental education or outdoor education provider to arrange a "Get to Know the Outdoors" workshop. Provide information on programs, parks, open spaces, trails, and other nearby natural areas and recreation sites. Discuss the realities about known fear factors like getting lost, insects and poisonous plants, wildlife encounters, and stranger danger to empower more families to spend time outside safely.

Take Story Time, or Class, Outside

Whether at school, library, or an early childhood center, have kids select a nature book and take story time beyond the classroom. Or, plan to let take a class outside one day a week. Why not hold study hall outside regularly? Art classes, physical education, and music classes may be even more fun in the schoolyard. Added benefit: time outdoors increases concentration, attention spans, and academic performance.

Stock Your Library, Classroom, or Child Center with Fun-filled Resources

Does your home, classroom, or local or school have resources to excite, educate, and encourage parents and kids to immerse themselves in the outdoors? Consider these acclaimed resources:

- *"Last Child in the Woods"* by Richard Louv
- *"Free-Range Kids: Giving Our Kids the Freedom We Had without Going Nuts with Worry"* by Lenore Skinowzy
- *"I Love Dirt!: 52 Activities to Help You and Your Kids Discover the Wonders of Nature"* by Jennifer Ward
- *"Outdoor Parents, Outdoor Kids - A Guide to Getting Your Kids Active in the Great Outdoors"* by Eugene Buchanan. (Mr. Buchanan resides in Steamboat Springs and a portion of book proceeds will benefit the Outdoors Industry Foundation's efforts to increase youth engagement in outdoor recreation).
- "Wetlands & Wonder: Reconnecting Children with Nearby Nature" a video produced by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), which can be downloaded at: <http://epa.gov/wetlands/education/wetlandsvideo/>
- Print copies of the worksheet, "40 Neighborhood Outdoor Adventures – Ways to Get Youth and Adults into Nature and Nature into Lives" and distribute it widely. Available at: www.landhelp.info/Framify.php?Page=Home.php

Participate in TV-Turnoff Week

TV-Turnoff Week is a national initiative from TV-Turnoff Network that encourages kids, adults, families, and schools to turn off the tube and enjoy life away from the screen! Because you can't go outside if you're in front of the TV.

When? Annually in April. www.tvturnoff.org

Organize a National Get Outdoors Day or Outdoor Heritage Day

June is National Get Outdoors Month! Download information on how to organize a cost-effective National Get Outdoors Day event in your town. Details including promotional materials, and existing annual celebrations are posted at:

www.getoutdoorsusa.org

And, check-out Outdoor Heritage Day in the Grand Valley and Delta. See what a few dedicated volunteers are doing to promote activities like fishing, archery, rock climbing, shooting, nature hikes, a hunting simulator, and much more:

www.outdoorheritageday.org

Create an Outdoor Activity Guide for Your Community

Model it after The Mesa County Teen Leadership Commissions Activity Guide, which helps connect teens to outdoor activities like fishing, rock climbing, biking, and visiting natural areas. *See what a creative group of teenagers created for youth in Mesa County:* www.mesacounty.us/teen/youthactivityguide.aspx

Turn a Portion of an Existing Schoolyard, Park, or Empty lot into a Wild Zone!

Wild zones are places where adults, children and adolescents can co-create a new form of public space that is dedicated to unstructured free play in nature. Any site can be turned into a Wild Zone, even an empty lot or portion of a schoolyard or community park. Wild Zones offer opportunities to be creative and have fun by:

- Building dens, forts and treehouses
- Making new paths
- Playing in water and mud
- Creating works of art from natural materials

Visit www.wild-zones.net to learn more. Use the process as an opportunity to inform your community about the importance of playing outside.

Hold a Contest About Outdoor Adventures

Challenge youth to document their nature experiences in the area through poster, essay, photo, or video contests. Use the campaign to raise awareness about the issue and gather ideas from youth in your community about innovative solutions for spending more time outside.

Start a Local or Regional Network to Strategically and Collaboratively Build a Kids Outdoors Movement

Visit the Children & Nature Network website to view a step-by-step action plan entitled, “*C&NN Community Action Guide: Building the Children & Nature Movement from the Ground Up.*” Everything you need is free and downloadable at: www.childrenandnature.org

Another free and helpful resource on developing a coalition has been published by LiveWell Colorado: “*Understanding Your Community: The Key to Building an Impactful, Sustainable Coalition.*”

www.livewellcolorado.org/resources/white-papers

Host a Walkability Assessment and Workshop

Many of the LiveWell Colorado communities including Healthy Lifestyles La Plata County and LiveWell Summit have conducted walking audits by contracting with: Dan Burden, (Director, Walkable Communities, Inc., Principal, Glatting, Jackson, Kercher and Anglin).

www.walkable.org

Helpful tip: Consider partnering with adjacent communities to assist with the cost of an assessment.

Consider Health Impact Assessments (HIAs) for New Projects and Policies

HIAs are a flexible, data-driven approach that identify the health consequences of new policies and programs, and develop practical strategies to maximize their health benefits and minimize adverse effects for new development projects and policy decisions.

Download the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) HIA Fact Sheet:

www.cdc.gov/healthyplaces/hia.htm

Start a Nature Club with Your Family or Class

“*What if more and more parents, grandparents and kids around the country band together to create outdoor adventure clubs, family nature networks, family outdoor clubs, or green gyms? What if this approach becomes the norm in every community?*”— Richard Louv, author and Chairman, Children & Nature Network.

Learn how at:

www.childrenandnature.org/movement/natureclubs

The National Wildlife Federation (NWF) also offers a great resource for families and teachers including a guide to reconnect kids to nature:

www.nwf.org/Get-Outside/Be-Out-There.aspx

Record some of your thoughts about these initiatives. Which of these cost-effective methods be effective in your community?

List a few partners to collaborate with to be begin your endeavors.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE & PLANNING RESOURCES

Now that you're energized with some ideas to implement in your community, check out the numerous technical assistance and planning resources available in Colorado and across the U.S. available to help you get more kids interested in outdoor pursuits.

Table 1: Colorado-based Technical Assistance & Planning Resources

Source	Summary	Website
Bicycle Colorado Complete Streets Program	Bicycle Colorado and the Colorado Dept. of Transportation have partnered to ensure statewide policies include the needs of bicyclists in every planning, design, and operation of state transportation facilities.	www.bicyclecolo.org
Colorado Alliance for Environmental Education (CAEE)	CAEE serves all sectors of the Colorado community by increasing the effectiveness of environmental education (EE) through professional development, a certification program for environmental educators, and other tools to improve the quality of EE experiences in Colorado.	www.caee.org
Colorado Office of Smart Growth, Dept. of Local Affairs (DOLA)	Workshops, resources, and technical assistance for Colorado's communities dedicated to proven smart growth principles.	www.dola.state.co.us/dlg/osg/index.htm
Colorado State Trails Program	Need assistance with trail planning efforts or seeking grants to expand your trail network. Colorado State Trails Program can assist you.	www.parks.state.co.us/Trails/
The Design Collaborative	Unless design collaborative (UDC) is a charitable organization focused intently on engaging, educating and sustaining communities through design. This mission is achieved through providing professional architecture and landscape design services to educational, environmental and community organizations. UDC projects focus on integrated, experiential education UDC services are offered on a sliding scale and pro-bono basis.	www.unlessdesign.org
LiveWell Colorado	LiveWell Colorado's mission is to inspire and advance policy, environmental and lifestyle changes that promote health through the prevention and reduction of obesity. From free webinars, data, and toolkits to advocacy information related to obesity issues, LiveWell Colorado is the most comprehensive resource for healthy eating, active living, and obesity efforts in the state. Check out how to build a sustainable coalition in your community in the white papers section.	www.livewellcolorado.org

Table 2: National Technical Assistance & Planning Resources

Source	Summary	Website
Complete Streets	Find out about policies and fundamentals of “complete streets” which ensures people of all ages can use streets for transportation, whether in a car, on foot, on a bike, or in a wheelchair.	www.completestreets.org
Creating a Walkable Community	Walkable communities are an important part of infrastructure offering an alternative mode of transportation, more social interaction, safer environments, and opportunities for physical activity. To learn more about walking assessments and how to improve the walkability of your neighborhood, town, or city, consider organizing a walking assessment.	Download this podcast for more information: http://www2a.cdc.gov/podcasts/player.asp?f=8880
Healthy Community Design	Healthy places are designed and built to improve the quality of life for all people who live, work, worship, learn, and play within their borders -- where every person is free to make choices amid a variety of healthy, available, accessible, and affordable options.	www.cdc.gov/healthyplaces/healthy_comm_design.htm
Kaboom! Webinars	Details on recruiting and utilizing volunteers to reduce the cost of developing or updating a playspace, while engaging youth and instilling a sense of ownership.	www.kaboom.org/webinars
The Leadership for Healthy Communities	A national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The site provides webinars, toolkits, and details on improving the health of communities including how to use American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds to make your community healthier.	www.leadershipforhealthycommunities.org
Rivers, Trails, & Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA), National Park Service (NPS)	A national program based in Colorado’s NPS office in Golden, the RTCA program supports community-led natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation projects with free technical assistance to conserve rivers, preserve open space, and develop trails and greenways.	www.nps.gov/ncrc/programs/rtca/
Smart Growth Principles	Find reports, funding opportunities, and planning resources for smart growth.	www.epa.gov/smartgrowth
Trail-building Toolbox	From planning, design, and innovative funding mechanisms, learn everything you need to know about trail-building from the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy.	www.railstotrails.org/whatwedo/trailbuilding/technicalassistance/toolbox/toolbox_index.html

INFORMATIONAL RESOURCES

The following Colorado-specific and national websites provide research and information to better understand the issue and tools to help address the many factors influencing the trend. Many of these organizations also publish newsletters, best practices, and toolkits which can benefit your community’s planning efforts to get more youth engaged in outdoor activities.

Table 3: Informational Resources Specific to Colorado

Source	Summary	Website
Colorado Alliance for Environmental Education (CAEE)	Post (and find) local informal science programs, outdoor activities, and environmental education events on CAEE’s statewide calendar of events. Also lists professional development opportunities for environmental educators.	www.caee.org
Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment	Data, research, planning documents, and publications on specific populations, including youth. Also provides results of the on-going behavioral risk factor surveillance system (BRFSS), which includes a youth survey. The Childhood, Adolescent, & School Health (CASH) Unit is also a great resource.	www.cdphe.co.state.us
Colorado Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)	Details on trends in outdoor recreation, visitation, and public lands. Also highlights the most significant issues and influences affecting outdoor recreation in Colorado and a strategic plan to address these factors, including engaging youth in outdoor activities. An invaluable resource for grant applications.	www.coloradoscorp.org
Colorado Tourism Office Kids Page	Plan your trip to explore Colorado’s fourteeners and other natural wonders.	www.colorado.com/ColoradoForKids.aspx
LiveWell Colorado	From webinars to best practices, LiveWell’s website is the most comprehensive resource for active living and healthy eating information.	www.livewellcolorado.org

Table 4: National Informational Resources

Source	Summary	Website
American Academy of Pediatrics	Research, policy guidelines, advice for pediatricians, and great information on how the built environment can reduce crime, increase time outside, and increase incidental and recreation-based activity outdoors. Download the policy guide, <i>The Built Environment: Designing Communities to Promote Physical Activity in Children</i> for policies that might work in your community.	www.aap.org
Centers for Disease Control (CDC)	The Healthy Youth section of the website provides evidence-based strategies for combating childhood obesity through increased physical activity and the built environment. Excellent resource for data on youth health.	www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/index.htm
Children & Nature Network (C&NN)	C&NN provides access to news and research for advocates trying to connect youth to nature. Downloading the <i>Children and Nature 2008: A Report on the Movement to Reconnect Children to the Natural World</i> .	www.childrenandnature.org
LandHelp	Searching for ideas on how to engage your child or student in outdoor activities? An excellent resource full of fun activities, teaching and education resources, and contact information to join a youth conservation club. Compiled by Dr. Delwin Benson, a professor at Colorado State University.	www.landhelp.info and click on "Next Child in the Woods."
National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO)	Best practices, policy recommendations, toolkits, and more on creating active living environments, healthy communities, and successful coalitions.	www.naccho.org
National Survey on Recreation and the Environment (NSRE)	On ongoing survey of outdoor recreation and tourism trends in the U.S. Excellent resource for planners.	http://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/trends/
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation	Clearinghouse of best practices and research on the correlation between policy, environment, physical activity, and obesity.	www.activelivingresearch.org/resourcesearch/ literaturedatabase

FUNDRAISING METHODS & GRANT RESOURCES

Now you've got some great ideas; you've researched resources for technical assistance and learned how to accomplish your vision. Now, if only budgets were limitless. Consistent and adequate funding was identified by forum participants as one of the most significant barriers preventing kids from experiencing the entire spectrum of outdoor experiences. Local governments and non-profit organizations continuously confront budget challenges, particularly in the current economic situation. Fundraising methods and grant resources can help supplement your community or organization's budget shortfall.

This section provides a considerable number of resources, although it is not an exhaustive list of all grants or fundraising methods. Please note, inclusion of a grant in this toolkit does not guarantee funding.

Fundraising Methods

If you need financial assistance to accomplish your goals, think creatively! Whether your target budget is small or large, consider launching a community fundraiser and get youth involved. In addition to raising money, you'll also help create awareness about the need to connect kids to nature.

Whether you're looking to accomplish an existing initiative or interested in implementing one of the recommendations included in the section *Small Investments = Big Strides*, here's some ideas to consider:

- ***Use Technology.*** Participants at all 11 forums recommended connecting to youth through technology. Why not use social networks to help your community accomplish its fundraising goals to get kids outdoors? The website www.giveo.com utilizes social networks on Facebook™ to seek donations for a specific need. Simply post details about your project, your fundraising goal, and spread the word through Facebook™ networks.
- ***Organize a fundraiser that takes place outside.*** Consider a walk-a-thon, fishing derby, nature photography contest, geo-caching contest using global positioning system (GPS) units borrowed from residents, kickball tournament, or nature scavenger hunt. Step-by-step instructions on developing your own innovative, healthy, and effective fundraiser are detailed on the following websites:
 - www.common-threads.com
 - www.123fundraising.com
 - www.cspinet.org/new/pdf/schoolfundraising.pdf
 - www.stepbystepfundraising.com
 - www.reacheverychild.com/feature/fundraisers.html

Grant Resources

Colorado State Parks and Colorado Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA) have compiled details on over 200 local, state, and national grant programs, to fund programs, education, and places for youth to enjoy the outdoors.

Grants are organized into four different categories:

- Environmental and outdoor education
- Parks, open space, and trails
- Natural resource, sustainability, and conservation
- Outdoor recreation, and community improvement

For comprehensive details on grant-making entities, award areas, funding amounts, and contact information, please visit:

→ <http://parks.state.co.us/Trails/Grants/Other+Outdoor+Recreation+Grants/>

Conducting your own fundraising effort is one way to offset budget challenges. Depending on your needs, grants could also help subsidize your efforts. Tables 5 and 6 highlight Colorado-specific grant programs as well as potential opportunities across the U.S.

The following websites also list more grant programs:

- www.livewellcolorado.org/resources/funding-opportunities
- www.cof.org
- www.ega.org
- www.crcamerica.org/online_grantsguide/default.asp
- www.grants.gov
- www.raonline.org/info_guides/funding/
- www.eelink.net/pages/Grants+-+EE+Specific+Resources

Classes, podcasts, and newsletters on grantwriting are at www.coloradogrants.org. If you need help developing an effective grant proposal, Colorado Grants can assist non-profits and tax-exempt groups at a cost-effective rate.

Table 5: Grants and Funding Resources in Colorado

Source	Summary	Website
Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW)	Fishing is Fun Grants, Schoolyard Habitat Program, Teaching Environmental Science Naturally (TENS) program	http://wildlife.state.co.us/
Colorado State Trails Program	For planning, development, special projects, or maintenance, see if your project is eligible for a Colorado State Trails Program grant.	www.parks.state.co.us/Trails/
Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO)	Grants for a myriad of outdoor experiences are available through multiple funding programs including: local parks and outdoor recreation, open space, and periodic legacy grants and special opportunities.	www.goco.org
Gates Family Foundation	Grants are available to support capital projects, which are typically building purchase, construction, expansion, renovation, and/or land acquisition.	www.gatesfamilyfoundation.org
LiveWell Colorado	While their mission is to promote active living and healthy eating throughout Colorado, multi-year grants have been used for many projects that get kids out the door including community gardens, bike events, walkability assessments, etc. Grant applications are typically posted every October.	www.livewellcolorado.org/community-initiatives/community-grant-application-process
Safe Routes to School Program	Infrastructure and non-infrastructure grants are available for kindergarten through eighth grade programs.	www.coloradodot.info/programs/bikeped/safe-routes

Table 6: National Grants and Funding Resources

Source	Summary	Website
Lowe's Outdoor Classroom Grants	Lowe's Charitable and Educational Foundation, International Paper and National Geographic Explorer! classroom magazine offers grants to K-12 public schools to build or improve outdoor classrooms to provide hands-on experiences outside the traditional classroom. Grants of \$2,000 are awarded to at least 100 schools annually, and up to \$20,000 for major outdoor classroom projects may be available.	www.lowes.com/lowes/lkn?action=pg&p=AboutLowe/outdoor/index.html
U.S. Forest Service (USFS)	The USFS "More Kids in the Woods Campaign" provides grants for communities and organizations partnering with national forests.	www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/woods/
National Parks and Recreation Association (NRPA) & the Centers for Disease Control (CDC)	Ten park and recreation agencies will receive \$35,000 in 2010 to develop local coalitions to address chronic disease risk factors, including physical inactivity through the Action Communities for Health, Innovation and EnVironmental ChangE (ACHIEVE) grant program.	www.nrpa.org
Responsible Sports Community Grants	Twenty youth sport organizations are awarded \$2,500 each year.	www.responsiblesports.com/community_grants/community_grant_details.aspx
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation	Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities is a large-scale national program that will aid 60 communities across the U.S. with up to \$360,000 to support community initiatives to expand physical activity opportunities and promote the consumption of healthy foods.	www.healthykidshealthycommunities.org
Youth Garden Grants	The National Gardening Association (NGA) annually awards Youth Garden Grants to schools and community organizations with child-centered garden programs across the U.S. For the 2010 grant cycle, 100 grants are available for up to \$1,000.	www.kidsgardening.com/YGG.asp
Youth Outdoors Legacy Fund	The Youth Outdoors Legacy Fund was founded with two fundamental beliefs: children need to be in the outdoors more and non-profit organizations and volunteers who work with kids in the outdoors need our help. Since its inception in 2005, YOLF has made grants exceeding \$585,000 to support that mission.	www.youthoutdoorslegacyfund.com

Opportunities for Statewide Collaboration

Working within your community is essential in reversing a sedentary lifestyle among Colorado youth. However, partnering with existing statewide efforts will ensure a more effective and united movement. While not all of these entities explicitly work to connect youth to the outdoors, their work does indirectly benefit the cause.

Table 7: Statewide Collaborations in Colorado Related to Kids & the Outdoors

Source	Summary	Website/Contact
Active Community Environments (ACE) Task Force	A program of the Colorado Physical Activity and Nutrition Program (COPAN), the ACE Task Force is a coalition working toward.... COPAN's Active Community Environments (ACE) Task Force is comprised of government, public health, transportation, planning, and design partners committed to existing environments to assessing, modifying, and improving community planning and design to support and advocate for increased physical activity.	www.cdphe.state.co.us/pp/COPAN/activecommunity/activecommunityhome.html
Colorado Kids Outdoors (CKO)	Colorado Kids Outdoors (CKO) is a collaboration of public, private and nonprofit partners devoted to connecting Colorado youth to experiences in nature.	www.coloradokidsoutdoors.org
Colorado Outdoor Recreation Resource Project (CORRP)	A statewide information sharing and networking group focused on outdoor recreation. Meets the second Friday of every month at the R.E.I., Inc. Flagship Store in Denver. Also has a Yahoo! Group for networking.	www.corrp.org To be added to the CORRP membership list go to www.yahoo.com , click on "Groups" (on left sidebar). Search for "CORRP" then click on "CORRP" and hit "subscribe." Or email ifreeman@cyca.org .
The Coalition to Support Environmental Literacy in Colorado	Formerly the No Child Left Inside Colorado Coalition, this group is working on state legislation to provide access to environmental ed. opportunities for all learners. Also aims to develop a Colorado Environmental Literacy Plan to ensure every child has opportunities for environmental ed.	www.caeel.org
LiveWell Colorado Community Planning, Recreation & Transportation Community	Helps evaluate the impact your programs or policies may have on the community, implement smart growth strategies, and include green, healthy places in land use planning.	www.livewellcolorado.org