

Health Grants Address Body and Soul in Iowa's African-American Community

Jane Schadle

Summary

African Americans in Iowa die from cancer at higher rates than other races, both in the state and in the nation as a whole.¹ The Iowa Department of Public Health put into action the Body & Soul initiative—a data-driven, community-based grant that aims to increase healthy behaviors associated with a lower risk for cancer in African-American communities. Since 2012, the Body & Soul program has awarded grants in varying amounts to predominantly African-American community organizations to support education outreach on healthy behaviors.

Challenge

African-American Iowa residents are diagnosed with colorectal and lung cancers at a higher rate than Iowans of other races.¹ According to CDC, 37% of black men and 57% of black women in the United States were obese in 2011–2012.² Obesity is a condition associated with a higher cancer risk, including adenocarcinoma of the esophagus, colorectal, kidney, pancreas, postmenopausal female breast, and endometrial cancer.³ Community institutions—including schools, neighborhoods, and faith-based organizations—can play a significant role in creating an education connection with residents about ways to live healthier.



Your Involvement Is Key

Learn how to carry out these cancer control and prevention ideas in your community organization by connecting with the ICCCP (<http://canceriowa.org/AboutTheICC.aspx>).

Solution

The Iowa Comprehensive Cancer Control Program (ICCCP) designed a local grant initiative called Body & Soul. Body & Soul provides funds to predominantly African-American organizations. It was adapted from the National Cancer Institute's nationwide Body & Soul program. The Iowa model uses Body & Soul to help make members of predominantly African-American community organizations aware of healthier choices in nutrition and exercise. In 2012—the first year of the program—the ICCCP worked with 2 churches, giving grants of \$250 each to support health awareness among members. In 2014 alone, more than 1,300 African-American residents across Iowa participated in the program.

Results

During the orientation process, newly funded organizations learn about the connection between wellness and physical activity to prevent cancer. The ICCCP also provides cancer prevention and screening information each month to health activity coordinators who share it with their members. Organizations participate in many ways by hosting fitness classes and camps; sponsoring health seminars on cancer for men and women; encouraging members to keep a log of how often they drink water, eat vegetables, and exercise. Since its inception, the number of funded organizations has grown. Body & Soul now reaches almost 10% of the approximately 97,080 African-American Iowans. By 2015, the program had more applicants than grants available. For organizations that are initially declined, the ICCCP offers technical assistance to set up health care committees as well as consultation on grant and proposal writing.

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"We learned that people really do want to do better. They just need someone to give them the tools, resources, and encouragement."

- Tammy Trice

Sustainable Success

To reach more people and provide assistance in continuing and sustaining programs, the ICCCP partnered with the state's Office of Minority and Multicultural Health and the Iowa Cancer Consortium. Together they spread information and encourage program applications. Body & Soul provides organizations support in the grant-writing process as well, so community organizations can continue to develop their health efforts with grant opportunities from other entities such as county community foundations and private charitable trusts.

References

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