

2018 Evaluation Summary

Allina Health Neighborhood Health Connection™

The Allina Health Neighborhood Health Connection (NHC) grants were created to help individuals build social connections and participate in activities that encourage physical activity and healthy eating. Results from the evaluation suggest positive changes in social connections, physical activity, and healthy eating occurred for a majority of participants. In addition, participants who took part in a higher number of activities were more likely to report positive changes.

Evaluation methods

At the end of the grant-funded activities, written or online surveys were administered to adults (age 18 or older) who participated in two or more program activities. Of the 71 grantees that were funded, three did not administer the survey because their participants were all transient (i.e., participants were mobile and did not have a permanent address or did not have a valid email address) or participants were ineligible for the survey. The participant survey was completed by 882 of the approximately 1,855 eligible participants, a response rate of 48 percent. Frequency of participation in the NHC activities was categorized as high (participants attended 6 or more activity sessions), moderate (4-5 sessions), or low (2-3 sessions).

Limitations

Caution should be used when interpreting the results as they may not represent the thoughts of all participants who were eligible for the survey. The results of the significance testing should be interpreted with caution as slightly less than half of the participants completed the survey. In addition, additional factors, such as program effectiveness, may contribute to observed differences between groups.

Reach of the NHC Healthy Activity Grants

In 2018, 71 NHC-funded grantees reached an estimated 3,367 participants. The majority of survey respondents were female (77%), white (83%), and age 50 and older (53%). In addition, the majority speak English (95%), were born in the U.S. (89%), and did not receive public support (71%). Twenty-one percent of survey respondents were participants of color. Just over half of participants rated their health as either excellent (13%) or very good (41%).

Seventy-two percent of grantees identified their activity as an **open cohort** in which the group of participants remained mostly the same, but new people could join at any point. Fourteen percent identified their activity as a **closed cohort** in which an identified group of participants took part in a series of activities and new people typically did not join. Seven percent identified their activity as an **open group** in which some participants attended multiple activities, but the overall group of participants differed at each event.

Success building social connections

The survey findings suggest positive changes in social connections occurred for a majority of participants. A majority of participants reported that as a result of participating in the NHC activity, they strengthened current connections (85%) and they connected with new people they did not know before (86%). Half (53%) were very confident they will stay in touch with at least one person they met.

- Participants who took part at a high frequency were significantly more likely to indicate they were very confident (62%) they will stay in touch with at least one person they met, compared to those who participated at a moderate (46%) or low frequency (42%).*
- Participants of color (65%) were more likely to report they were very confident they will stay in touch with at least one person they met compared to white participants (50%).*
- Regardless of receipt of public support, participants were very confident they will stay in touch with at least one person they met at similar rates (54% of those who receive public support 55% of those who do not receive public support).
- The percentage who said they were very confident they will stay in touch with at least one person they met did not vary significantly by participants in an open cohort (60%), closed cohort (46%), or an open group (61%).

Success improving healthy eating

Results also suggest participants made positive changes to their healthy eating behavior as a result of the NHC activities. Sixty-one percent of participants said they were eating healthier meals and snacks more often than six months ago.

- Participants who took part at a high (67%) or moderate (62%) frequency were more likely to say they eat healthy meals and snacks more often than six months ago compared to those who took part at a low frequency (51%).*
- Participants of color were significantly more likely to say that because of the NHC activity they eat healthy meals and snacks more often than six months ago (75%, compared to 58 percent of white participants).*
- A similar percentage of participants who receive public support (66%) and those who do not receive public support (60%) said that because of the NHC activity they eat healthy meals and snacks more often than six months ago.
- The percentage of participants who eat healthy meals and snacks more often than six months ago was similar for participants in an open group (70%), an open cohort (62%), and a closed cohort (63%).

Success improving physical activity

Results suggest participants made positive changes in their physical activity. Fifty-three percent of participants reported they were more physically active than six months ago.

- Participants who took part at a high frequency were more likely to say they were more physically active than six months ago (62%), compared to those who took part at a moderate frequency (49%) and low frequency (40%).*
- Participants of color were significantly more likely to indicate that, as a result of the NHC activity, they were more physically active than six months ago (82%), compared to 47 percent of white participants.*
- Participants who receive public support were more likely to say they were more physically active than six months ago (64%) compared to those who do not receive public support (51%).*
- A similar percentage of participants in a closed cohort (63%), an open cohort (55%), and an open group (50%) said that because of this activity they were more physically active than six months ago.

* Significance tests were conducted using a chi-squared test. Differences are statistically significant at $p < .05$.