



Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Local Partners Provide Funding to Fight Obesity Problem

East Chicago, IN – The Lake Area United Way, United Way of Porter County, United Way of LaPorte County, and HealthVisions Midwest, Inc. have joined together to wage a battle against the growing problem of obesity in the three counties. Assisted by a matching grant from Lilly Endowment, Inc., the three United Ways and HealthVisions Midwest will provide grants to organizations that:

- Improve the health status of residents of the three counties, by increasing their life spans, and elevating their overall quality of life, by lowering the rate of obesity.
- Reduce health disparities among residents
- Increase access to obesity preventive services
- Increase nutritional knowledge.

Organizations interested in submitting a proposal must first submit a Letter of Intent. The Letter of Intent should be a maximum of one page, and provide an overview of the proposed project. Only those projects that are considered eligible and suitable for funding will be asked to submit a full proposal. The deadline for Letters of Intent is 4:00 p.m., Friday April 15, 2005.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, a sedentary lifestyle is fast becoming a leading cause of disease and premature death among adults and children alike. Overweight and obesity is one of the most serious health concerns facing our nation. Almost two-thirds of U.S. adults are overweight or obese, and an alarming 15% of children aged 6-19 years are overweight. As we eat more and move less, the epidemic spreads across all races, genders, and socioeconomic classes at a dangerously fast pace. According to the Surgeon General, “we are already seeing tragic results from these trends” – approximately 300,000 U.S. residents die every year because of preventable weight-related problems. Obesity rates continue to rise in direct opposition to the Surgeon General's *Call to Action* and *Healthy People 2010* objectives to reduce overweight and obesity. Left alone, obesity may soon cause more death and disease than cigarette smoking.

A three county Epidemiological Report on the Health Concerns of Northwest Indiana, conducted in January 2005 by Professional Research Consultants (PRC) of Omaha, Nebraska, found the following statistics:

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- More residents are overweight than seen nationwide;
- Similarly, more area residents are at an unhealthy weight than average Americans;
- Northwest Indiana residents are less likely to consume fruits and vegetables, as compared to their national counterparts;
- More than two-thirds of residents have an unhealthy BMI (Body Mass Index), **and** are overweight;
- Almost one-third are considered obese;
- More than one-fourth of those considered overweight have been advised to lose weight;
- One-third have received advice on nutrition in the past year;
- Only one-third of those overweight are trying to loss weight;
- Approximately one-fourth of children, ages 6-17, are overweight.

Not-for-profit organizations interested in working to reduce obesity and overweight among residents of NWI (residents of Lake, Porter and La Porte counties) are encouraged to apply. The following types of organizations are eligible to receive support:

- Public and private not-for-profit agencies, including governmental entities
- Not-for-profit organizations for businesses or professionals
- Institutions of Higher Education
- Faith-based organizations
- Collaborations among several organizations are encouraged, and will receive preference points
- Funding is restricted to agencies with offices in at least one of the three target counties.

In all cases, organizations must have the capacity to address the indicators outlined in the PRC study.

Collaborative projects with two or more partners are encouraged to apply. Only proposals that target residents of Lake, Porter, and/or LaPorte counties are eligible to apply.

Letters of Intent may be submitted to Sr. Annemarie Kampwerth, HealthVisions Midwest, Inc., 4522 Indianapolis Blvd. East Chicago, IN 46312, or via email at akampwerth@hvusa.org.

For more information, or to obtain a copy of the RFP, contact Sr. Annemarie Kampwerth, Director of Partnerships & Education for HealthVisions Midwest, Inc., at 219-397-4335 x. 15