



# California Convergence

Working Together to Improve  
Food and Physical Activity  
Environments

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## Overview

- I. Translating the Vision for California
- II. Key Elements of the CA Convergence
- III. Actions and results
- IV. Policy Directions
- V. Looking Ahead

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## Translating the Vision to California

1. CA Convergence was shaped by the priorities, needs and interests of local community leaders working at the cutting edge of the movement
2. Designed to connect and strengthen, not duplicate, existing efforts



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## What Community Leaders wanted from a convergence effort:

- Build a common identity and help with communicating an environmental approach
- Learn from each other in real time
- Accomplish something together - policy change
- Feel connected to a larger movement – broaden base of support



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**Community leaders did NOT want to:**

- Create another structure or bureaucracy
- Attend multiple committee meetings
- Take on additional work that did not have immediate benefit to their current projects (must create 'value added')
- Do logistical planning --  
"If you build it, we will come."

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**The Goal of CA Convergence:**

To build synergy to improve food and physical activity environments in communities across California, through building the knowledge, networks, and capacity to advance and sustain this work.

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**Elements of CA Convergence:**

- Peer Network - that could connect and support local leaders
- Common Frame and Purpose
- Structure to advance Policy
- Grow the Movement

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## Elements of CA Convergence

- Advisory Committee
  - Community leaders from all initiatives
  - State advocates and t.a. providers
  - Funders
- Process Evaluation



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## Peer Network of Community Leaders

1. In-person gatherings (2 x year)
2. Ning - social networking site (350 members)
3. Newsletter (monthly)
4. Webinars (Safety, WIC)
5. Conference Calls (supporting regional work)



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## Common Frame and Purpose

- Communications Workgroup
  - 9 of the leading media and communications firms that support the foundations, and also provide technical support to communities
  - Convened by PPH, ongoing leadership from Berkeley Media Studies Group (BMSG)



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# Communications Workgroup

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# Policy and Advocacy

- Convergence communities wanted to advance policies at both state and local levels.
- Engaged in process to identify what policies to address

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## Policy Priorities

- Joint Use of school grounds for physical activity
- Incentivize Healthy Food Retail (corner store conversion + other strategies)

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## Local Actions and Results

- Communities from far north to south have worked with school principals and school boards to open up school yards, many successfully
- One community built a playground through contacts made through the Convergence
- Another community developed walking trails
- Still others were able to have farmers markets on school grounds

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## Local actions

- Leveraging the new WIC food package
  - Cal WIC Association helping make connections between Convergence advocates and WIC liaisons
- Farmers markets in Central Valley
  - Convergence supporting linkages to t.a. and other sites to support efforts
- EBT access in farmers markets and flea markets
  - Convergence linkages to other sites and t.a.

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## Local Actions

- Corner Store Conversion
  - Support for local communities to increase availability of fresh fruits and vegetables in local food retailers
  - Assessing needs of sites, tailoring t.a. strategies

### Strategies being replicated:

- San Diego model (county-wide approach) replicated in Central Valley county
- Far North is looking at regional structure used in Central Valley



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## Actions (cont.)

- 2 Counties have had their own convergence efforts to bring the movement into alignment and strengthen the base of support
- Climate change movement has linked with Convergence leaders – impact on the rulemaking process for state climate change legislation
- State policy in support of Joint Use being advanced by CPEHN



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## Actions (cont.)

- Leaders from several sites have been invited to speak at national forums
- Stronger base of leaders in this state that are ready to support and mentor other sites, also ready to mobilize constituents for action
- This is a movement that communities and leaders throughout the state want to be part of



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## Next Steps

- Joint Use
  - Joint Use Task Force will be resourced to help fill some of the gaps both in tracking progress and in providing t.a. and support to communities working to open up school yards
- Healthy Food Retail
  - Convene a task force to strategically align the variety of strategies needed to increase access to healthy food across the broad diversity of California's communities.



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## Emerging Issues and Opportunities for California Convergence

- Safety
- Stimulus Funds
- Strategies to reduce soda consumption



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## Conclusion

- California Convergence began as a deliberate process to link and leverage existing efforts and to share learning in order to accelerate the movement to change food and physical activity environments.
- By lifting up the priorities of community leaders on the front lines of this work, this effort has evolved to more deliberately take on and become a driver for key policy issues.

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In future years, continue to align our strategies, lift up successes and work together to advance the movement to change food and physical activity environments

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## Partnership for the Public's Health

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