

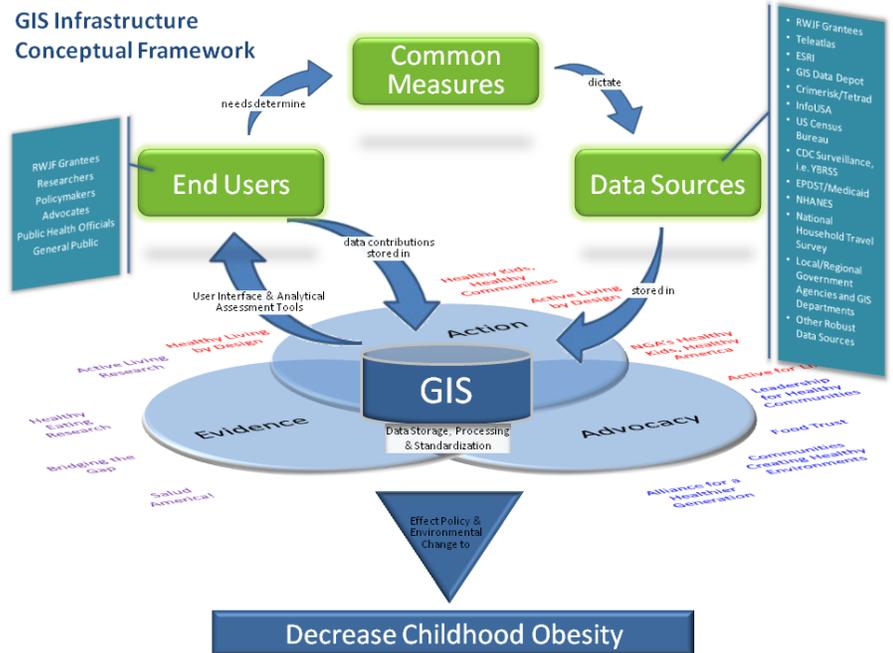
Building a National Childhood Obesity Geographic Information System

The problem:

The alarming growth in the rate of childhood obesity over the last two decades and its deleterious effects on the physical well-being of children is now widely acknowledged. Childhood obesity likely arises from a complex combination of factors that include fetal programming and genetics, physical activity levels, diet, socioeconomic status, and environmental and community aspects. Central to identifying relationships between these factors and childhood obesity is the concept of place.

A solution:

The **Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF)**, in partnership with the **University of Florida**, is committed to developing an innovative National Childhood Obesity Geographic Information System (GIS) infrastructure. The goal is to develop place-based analytic tools that can link environmental, and policy determinants of physical activity and healthy eating with measures of children's activity, dietary patterns and other related obesity measures. This approach holds enormous potential to inform and redirect efforts and target resources to more effectively impact childhood obesity health outcomes.



Accessing the System

Free Access via the Internet

- Using Firefox, Internet Explorer etc

No need to purchase GIS software

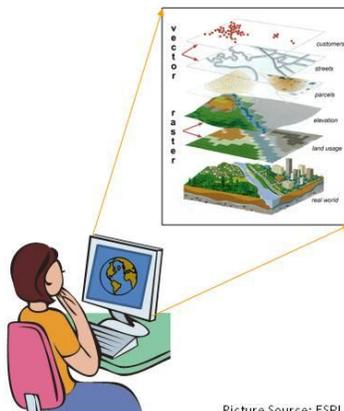
- Users can run applications within the system

Doesn't require GIS expertise

- Intuitive & user-friendly
- Training will be available

No need to maintain your own GIS databases

- Users can upload/download data from the system



Picture Source: ESRI

How does it work?

Accessed through any standard internet browser, the system will provide analytical tools that will assist users generate summary reports, graphics, and maps, as well as download data, that will inform and support decisions affecting programs, policies and actions. The evolution of the GIS will be user-driven, resulting in enhancements and refinements in data content and analytical capabilities. Through its conjunction of place to policies, the GIS will demonstrate to stakeholders a community's return on investment in supporting a healthier lifestyle for its children.

System Sustainability:

The future of the childhood obesity GIS is tied to the sustainability of the system. A key component of a successful and sustainable national database is community support, established through the growth of data-sharing partner network and a substantial and expanding user base. A desired outgrowth of this data-sharing network is standardized collection methods for obesity data, making the data more reliable and efficient for subsequent analysis and comparison across locations.

How do you fit in?

All participants in the effort to prevent childhood obesity, whether focusing on Evidence, Advocacy or Action are potential users. We envision users undertaking roles such as:

- accessing data and utilizing interactive mapping and analytical tools
- contributing to the system, through addition of local data or sharing results and experiences with others
- partnering in the development of GIS by clarifying needed functions and capabilities and providing ongoing feedback

How can you get involved?

Opportunities for involvement throughout the development and enhancement of the GIS include:

- responding to a user needs survey
- participating as a pilot community
- becoming a beta test site
- providing suggestions on functions and analytical tools

Who should you contact?

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