
Evaluation of Active Living Research

Progress and Lessons in Building a New Field

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Background: An evaluation was undertaken of the initial 6 years of the Active Living Research (ALR) program. Conducted in 2006 and analyzed in 2007, the evaluation was designed to assess productivity and progress on all three program goals and to inform consideration of program re-authorization.

Methods: The evaluation was a retrospective, in-depth, descriptive study utilizing multiple methods, both qualitative and quantitative. Qualitative data were derived mainly from 88 interviews with key informants. Quantitative data were derived primarily from a web-based survey of grantee investigators.

Results: Examples of key indicators of ALR's progress in addressing its goals were (1) in building a knowledge base: 40% of grantee investigators reported producing at least one scientific publication based on their ALR study, averaging two papers per principal investigator who had published; (2) in growing a transdisciplinary field: investigators funded in the first five rounds of grants reported representing more than 20 disciplines; and (3) in contributing to policy change: ten examples were reported of contribution to specific policy changes. In addition, more than one-third (37%) of principal investigators had leveraged additional funds, averaging \$275,000 per ALR grant, suggesting that ALR also had made progress in growing financial resources for the field.

Conclusions: Overall, ALR made strides during 6 years in addressing its mission to develop a transdisciplinary field of research on environmental and policy factors that promote physical activity. The evaluation provided insight into useful approaches and strategies for building a nascent research field and suggested how to enhance the contribution of research to policy.

(Am J Prev Med 2009;36(2S):S22–S33) © 2009 Published by Elsevier Inc. on behalf of American Journal of Preventive Medicine.

Introduction

In 2000, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) expanded its efforts to improve healthy lifestyles by targeting increased physical activity in daily life. RWJF staff selected environmental and policy change as the primary approach to this health behavior issue, building on their decade-long work on tobacco control. RWJF staff posited that progress on policy and practice in this nascent field would require both the development of an evidence base and capacity among researchers to produce needed knowledge and the development and testing of policies and interventions, with support for successful policies and interventions coming from professionals and policymakers. Conse-

quently, the RWJF took a multi-pronged grantmaking approach, developing a suite of programs to address the various necessary pieces of the paradigm: research (Active Living Research [ALR]); community demonstrations (Active Living by Design); support from elected officials (Active Living Leadership); and support and coordination from the media and other "influentials" (Active Living Network). This suite of programs was designed to increase physical activity across the entire population; see Orleans et al.¹ in this supplement to the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*.

Authorized in 2001 for \$12.5 million, ALR was designed "to stimulate and support research that will identify environmental factors and public and private policies that influence physical activity among Americans" (www.activelivingresearch.org). Program activities were designed to achieve three goals: (1) establishing a strong research base regarding the environment as well as the policy correlates and determinants of physical activity, (2) helping to build a transdisciplinary field of physical activity policy and environmental researchers, and (3) facilitating the use of research to

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support policy change (www.activelivingresearch.org). During the subsequent 6 years, the program, led by a national program office (NPO) and a national advisory committee, issued seven calls for proposals (CFPs) starting in 2002 and awarded 121 grants. Sallis et al.² in this supplement provides more specifics about the program.

In June 2006, the RWJF supported evaluation both to assess the initial 6-year stage of ALR's efforts to stimulate and develop research on physical activity in daily life and to inform consideration of the program's re-authorization, including potential ways to enhance the program's function and its contribution to the more recently adopted goal of preventing childhood obesity. Two complementary assessments were instituted: (1) the Gutman Research Associates' (GRA) study to examine mainly the program's productivity and its progress in achieving its original goals and objectives during the past 6 years; and (2) the Group Health Community Foundation's study to focus more on the future of ALR within the context of childhood obesity prevention. Orleans et al.¹ in this supplement provides more information on the decision to support two complementary evaluations. Although 6 years have passed since the program was authorized and 5 years since its first CFP, it is important to note that only 16% of the competitively awarded grants had been completed prior to 2006.

To achieve these purposes, the GRA study addressed four research questions that derived from the initiative's goals and the RWJF's information needs:

1. To what extent is ALR working to build the knowledge base on policy and environmental factors conducive to physical activity?
2. To what extent is ALR working to build human resources—in this case, a dynamic, transdisciplinary research community?
3. To what extent is ALR working to build additional financial resources for active living research?
4. To what extent are the research findings from ALR studies contributing to policy discussions on how to promote physical activity through policy and environmental change?

This paper presents the findings from the GRA study that address the four evaluation questions above, describing the evaluation's focus and methods and presenting the results generated as well as conclusions and recommendations.

Logic Model

The conceptual, or logic, model for the ALR program, developed by the NPO, was used to guide the evaluation as it addressed the four research questions (see [Figure 1](#) in Sallis et al.⁴ in this supplement). While the model was

generally useful for this purpose, three aspects of it needed refinement to provide optimal guidance for the evaluation. First, the model did not give explicit recognition to the program's context, notably the RWJF organization and the set of related Active Living programs as well as the broader context of policy environment and funding organizations related to active living beyond the RWJF and ALR.

Second, the ALR conceptual model omitted an additional important basic strategy for building the transdisciplinary research community. The model presented field building—consisting mainly of convening, training, and technical assistance—as one strategy, and CFPs, or research grantmaking, as a second strategy. However, the model did not include attracting additional financial resources beyond those contributed by the RWJF and ALR as a third major strategy for building a viable research field. This additional funding would most likely be in the form of research grants provided by public agencies at the federal, state, or local levels and by other private philanthropies. It has been suggested that such additional funding might be leveraged based on the combined inputs of the RWJF, the NPO, the developing transdisciplinary field, and the knowledge base. Although not an explicit objective of the program, growing financial resources other than those offered by the RWJF could be beneficial even in the shorter term and might become essential to the sustainability of this new research field when RWJF funding wanes or ceases, as such funding typically does.

Third and last, the ALR conceptual model was fairly limited, or truncated, regarding the process of translating research into policy change, the final goal to which ALR was intended to contribute. The ALR model did include both the dissemination of evidence from the knowledge base and the end-users of research products. However, it explicitly presented neither the final outcome of the policy process—namely, policies or policy change—nor the complex array of components besides research that are also part of the policy-development process. The presented configuration was reasonable because it was understood by all stakeholders that ALR did not have control over actual policy change. The furthest reach of the program's direct efforts was expected to be to inform the policy process through dissemination to and communication with policymakers and advocates. However, it was hoped by the RWJF that ALR research would at least contribute to changes in policy and practice conducive to active living. Thus, the RWJF leadership requested the documentation of specific policy changes that could reasonably be attributed at least in part to ALR-supported research findings. Additionally, a more-sophisticated conceptualization of both the policy process and the process of translating research to policy could assist the program to meet this goal in the future.

Table 1. Key-informant interviews

Informant category	Sample/organizations ^a	Number of informants
ALR grantee investigators	Stratified random sample of grantee investigators who received competitive grants from Rounds 1–5, excluding those who received diversity supplement grants or OBE supplement grants	30
Funding organizations	Foundations: Association of Black Executives, The California Endowment, CDC Foundation, Healthcare Georgia Foundation, W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Mary Black Foundation Federal agencies: CDC, NCI, NHLBI, NIEHS, NIDDK, OBSSR	17
Policy and advocacy organizations	Action for Healthy Kids, Bikes Belong Coalition, Congress for New Urbanism, International City/County Management Association, Local Government Commission (Department of Land Use and Transportation programs), National Association of School Administrators, National Association of Sports and Physical Education, National Conference of State Legislators, National Council of Latino Elected Officials, National Governors' Association, National League of Cities, National Recreation and Parks Association, Rails to Trails Conservancy, Smart Growth America, Surface Transportation Research Project, U.S. Conference of Mayors, Walk America	18
Program leadership	ALR NPO (program director, deputy director), ALR National Advisory Committee	9
RWJF staff and advisors	Members of childhood obesity prevention team; president, managing director for health behavior; program officer for ALR evaluation; program officer for ALR program	14

^aUsually one informant was interviewed per organization. In a few instances, however, two representatives were interviewed from one organization, and at the CDC six informants were interviewed from relevant divisions and centers.

ALR, Active Living Research; NCI, National Cancer Institute; NHLBI, National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute; NIEHS, National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences; NIDDK, National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases; NPO, national program office; OBE, obesity and the built environment; OBSSR, Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research; RWJF, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Methods

The evaluation was a retrospective, in-depth, descriptive study utilizing multiple methods and both qualitative and quantitative data. Most of the data collection took place from July 2006 through December 2006, with a few interviews and some of the quantitative analyses implemented thereafter, ending in February 2007; a final report was submitted in June 2007.

Qualitative Methods

Key-informant interviews were used as the main qualitative method.^a A total of 88 interviews were included in the study, consisting of interviews with five categories of informants: ALR grantees; funding organizations other than the RWJF; policy and advocacy organizations; ALR leadership (director and deputy director of the NPO and National Advisory Committee members); and RWJF staff and advisors (see Table 1).

A random sample of 30 ALR grantee investigators was selected from those who received grants via CFPs 1–5, excluding Diversity/Partnership grants and Obesity and the Built Environment (OBE) supplement grants. Interview groups from policy and advocacy organizations consisted of representatives from eight of the ten Active Living Leadership policymaker member organizations as well as the leaders of ten na-

tional advocacy organizations working on active living issues; either the executive director or a senior staff person as interviewed.

Semi-structured interview protocols were developed for each category of informants and then piloted in simulated interviews. All interview protocols included open-ended questions on the respondent's background, position, and the organization's interest in the promotion of active living; the level of familiarity and involvement with ALR; reflections on ALR's overall contribution and specific products (e.g., research briefs, websites); and recommendations for enhancing the program. Interview protocols for ALR program leadership and RWJF staff and advisors were more extensive, with additional questions asking for detailed information on the program's goals, strategies, development, and implementation. Depending on the interviewee's availability as well as resource considerations, 1-hour interviews were conducted either in person or via telephone.

Data from interviews were analyzed per informant category using specialized qualitative data-analysis software (i.e., N6 [NUD*IST6]). A broad coding scheme was developed jointly by the investigators and then applied to all interviews. All coding was then checked by the principal investigator. Next, coded interviews in each grouping were reviewed and summarized, and then reviewed to extract major themes and exemplary quotations. Finally, major themes, information, and exemplary quotations from all informant categories were integrated per evaluation question and reviewed.

^aInterviews with seven foundation leaders were orchestrated by the Group Health Community Foundation team to supplement the three interviews with foundations conducted by the GRA team.

Quantitative Methods

The main quantitative method utilized in the evaluation was the ALR NPO grantee survey of ALR-supported investigators, although other secondary quantitative methods were used, including the analysis of grant abstracts and evaluations of ALR conferences and seminars. (See Appendix A, available online at www.ajpm-online.net, for the survey text.) The consent statement accompanying the survey assured respondents that their responses were confidential and would not jeopardize their current or future funding status. The survey was developed and conducted by the NPO—in collaboration with the evaluation team and their advisors and the RWJF leadership—because it was initially seen as a program management tool by the RWJF and the NPO and had been included 6 years previously in the program authorization. Because the survey was scheduled to be conducted during the same time period as evaluation data collection, the RWJF decided that the evaluation should not conduct a separate survey.

The NPO grantee survey consisted of 36 items and took 30–40 minutes to complete. It was sent via the Internet to all principal investigators (74) and co-principal investigators (13) for ALR-supported studies funded in Rounds 1–5 ($n=87$) in early August 2006, with several subsequent reminders. The survey closed on September 16, 2006. As an incentive, the NPO entered all respondents in a drawing for three iPod® music players.

Altogether 73 of 87 grantee investigators (84%) responded. The response rate among principal investigators was 88% (65/74) and among co-principal investigators was 62% (8/13). Due to the sampling, some grants were represented by one individual (typically a principal investigator) and some by multiple individuals (principal investigator and co-principal investigator). For the purposes of this study, GRA analyzed a subsample of the original sample, eliminating respondents where necessary, so that each grant was represented by only one individual ($n=68$): 65 principal investigators, two co-principal investigators who responded when no principal investigator responded, and one senior co-principal investigator of five co-principal investigators on a grant that did not designate a sole principal investigator. When grants were represented by more than one respondent, results from the co-principal investigator were eliminated.

Approximately half of the questions in the survey covered similar information to that sought (in open-ended form) in the GRA grantee–investigator interviews, although the interview protocols generally requested more in-depth information than the survey. Results from the survey and interviews were compared for these 15 overlapping questions; they differed for only two questions: one requesting information on

studies and funding leveraged by ALR grants and one requesting the grantee–investigator’s opinion of the contribution or impact of his or her ALR research findings to policy.^{b,c}

Results

Building the Knowledge Base

An important goal of ALR was to build a knowledge base regarding environmental and policy correlates of physical activity that could inform policy change. The program implemented several major activities to build the knowledge base, notably developing a research agenda; developing and issuing a series of CFPs; peer review and the awarding of grants on a competitive basis; and the awarding of grants on a noncompetitive basis for commissioned studies (e.g., systematic literature reviews, White Papers), as described by Sallis et al.³ in this supplement. This effort resulted in the awarding of 83 grants on a competitive basis and of 20 more grants on a noncompetitive basis as of February 2007, when data collection for the evaluation ended.

Creation of a new research field. Informants were generally in agreement that ALR was central to creating a new field of research or at least taking an incipient field and accelerating its growth and visibility. Experts knowledgeable about the field prior to 2001 spoke about how research on the built environment, including transportation, recreation, and urban design, was essentially separate from that on physical activity in a

^bThe grantee interviews yielded different results primarily due to differences in question wording. The NPO grantee survey asked *Have you applied to agencies other than RWJF’s ALR program for grant funding to conduct research on environmental or policy aspects of physical activity? If yes, where did you apply? Did you receive funding? If you received funding, how much did you receive? If you received funding, what was the period of funding? Did your RWJF/ALR grant help you secure funding from this agency?* In the GRA grantee–investigator interviews, the question was posed as *What other grant funding, if any, have you leveraged as a result of your ALR study? Please include any planned proposals relative to ALR. (Please describe each funding source and grant topic).*

^cThe NPO grantee survey asked *Are you aware of any policy impacts resulting from your research on active living? For purposes of this survey, a policy impact is a specific interaction with policymakers (e.g. testifying, meeting with policymakers, policymaker briefings) or direct evidence of the research findings in a written policy (language included in a bill or regulations, work cited in a bill). Do not count journal articles, press releases, and similar items. If yes, what were the primary types of impact? For example, if you were invited to testify before a committee reviewing a policy relevant to your active living work and responded based on your research findings, you could check several items below, depending on the specific outcome (options: changed law, changed regulation, changed policy, changed program practice, led to or contributed to evidence-based guidelines, influenced policy process, influenced enforcement, influenced policy implementation, or other). What was the level (or levels) of this policy impact? (options: federal, state, local, company, nonprofit organization, university/college, schools or school systems, judicial/legal, or other). Was the policy impact you indicated above attributable to research funded by RWJF’s ALR program? (options: no, yes, in part, yes, entirely).*

In the GRA grantee–investigator interviews, the question was posed as *Have there been contributions from your ALR study that informed, defined, or influenced policy? Please describe in detail any challenges you have experienced in making contributions to policy.*

public health context, and how the program had stimulated at least some degree of integration. One informant said:

I think that this is the program that put the whole field on the map. I think the program was absolutely seminal in establishing that there is a serious research and policy area around physical activity and health in the built environment.

Other informants also spoke about CDC efforts to pave the way in the late 1990s, including modest funding for this kind of research and initial conceptual pieces⁴ suggesting and laying the groundwork for the integration of these two research areas.

Strategies for building the knowledge base. Informants emphasized four specific aspects of the program as instrumental in putting the field on the map and growing the knowledge base: (1) the development of a strategic research agenda, (2) an increase in the recognition of physical activity as part of the energy-balance equation, (3) improved measurement tools and methodology, and (4) serving a knowledge-synthesis function. Key informants offered several statements supporting ALR's role in these aspects, including this one:

There was a very thoughtful strategic approach beginning with research, general research needs; moving to specific niche research needs such as children's issues, environmental justice, and so on; then moving from the research to implementation at the local level, to policy, to leadership. That is, you couldn't think of a more strategic approach to this issue than this one . . .

Publications as indicators of progress. Results from the NPO grantee survey and GRA grantee-investigator interviews reinforced themes that arose in the key-informant interviews. Although only 16% of grants had been completed, almost 40% of the surveyed principal investigators reported producing at least one scientific publication (i.e., journal article, book, book chapter) based on their ALR study(ies), averaging two publications per principal investigator who had published. Principal investigators reported a total of 55 publications, with an additional 153 publications in preparation. The subset of interviewed grantees yielded similar results. Further, almost 40% of investigators surveyed said that they had developed at least one new measurement tool.

The NPO played a major role in synthesizing the knowledge generated by ALR grantees, ALR program leadership, and others pursuing research on active living environmental and policy issues. As detailed in the paper in this supplement by Sallis and colleagues,² the program was responsible for five supplements to or special issues of scientific journals⁵⁻⁹; a series of brief policy case-studies based on one CFP and written for

policymakers¹⁰; and three research briefs that were also aimed at policymakers and advocacy groups.¹¹⁻¹³ Further, the NPO helped other agencies/organizations to develop major policy documents, including the Task Force on Community Preventive Services' community guide on physical activity (www.thecommunityguide.org)¹⁴⁻¹⁶ and the IOM's report on childhood obesity.^{17,18}

Building Human Resources—Growing a Transdisciplinary Field

Building human resources is a necessary component of growing and sustaining any new research field and is one of the three main goals of the ALR program. All interviewees agreed strongly that ALR had promoted and achieved progress on transdisciplinary research, helping (as one said) "biomedical and social science researchers to cross the gulf with nonhealth disciplines like urban planners, geographers, housing developers," and that ALR was the catalyst to build a new field of transdisciplinary research focused on policy and environmental factors conducive to physical activity.

Four indicators of ALR's progress in building a transdisciplinary field are described below: (1) the diversity of research disciplines among principal investigators awarded grants, (2) the engagement of grantees in cross-disciplinary collaboration, (3) the attracting of young/new investigators, and (4) the nurturing of grantees' career trajectories and commitment to the field.

Diversity of grantees' research disciplines. Progress can be seen in the range of research disciplines practiced by the investigators funded in Rounds 1-5 who responded to the NPO grantee survey. Investigators who were awarded grants represented more than 20 disciplines; the largest percentage of investigators from any one discipline was from urban planning (22% of all survey respondents), as seen in [Figure 1](#). However, a notable caveat to hopes of policy progress is the finding that only a relatively small percentage (6%) of investigators identified themselves as policy scientists—for a program that purports to feature policy research. This small percentage seemed to be genuine and not an artifact of misidentification. A cross-check of the distribution of reported disciplines with grant abstracts, proposals, and face sheets yielded a similar percentage of investigators from policy-science disciplines.

Cross-disciplinary collaboration. In addition to the diversity of disciplines represented by ALR grantees, ALR's success in promoting transdisciplinary research is indicated by the percentage of ALR grantees engaged in cross-disciplinary collaborations. Most (85%) of the NPO grantee survey respondents indicated that the ALR grant had resulted in new collaborations within their own institutions but outside of their primary

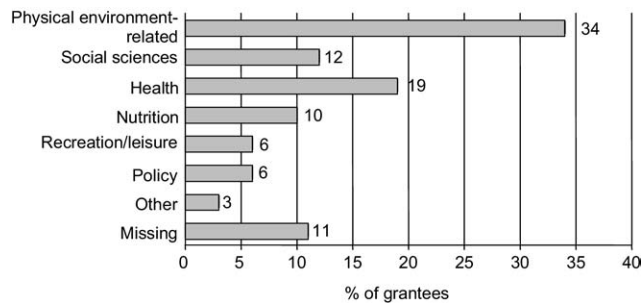


Figure 1. Research disciplines of grantee investigators. The categories represented the following disciplines: **physical environment-related** (architecture, environmental science, geography, landscape architecture, transportation, and urban planning); **health-related** (epidemiology, medicine, nursing, public health, and statistics); **social science-related** (anthropology, behavioral science, education, and psychology); **recreation- and leisure-related science** (physical activity/exercise science and recreation/leisure science); and **policy science-related** (business, economics, and policy studies).

discipline. Further, more than three quarters (77%) of respondents indicated that the ALR grant had resulted in new collaborations outside of both the respondent's own institution and his or her primary discipline. As one interview respondent stated:

Although there has been increasing interest in policy and environmental approaches to health promotion among national and state public health agencies, RWJF/ALR provided incentives for researchers from different fields to work together and forge long-term commitments to joint projects.

Young/new investigators. An important aspect of building a new research field is attracting younger and/or new investigators. For this reason, ALR deliberately structured its research program to support dissertation grants and Diversity/Partnership grants. Of the 83 competitive grants funded via Rounds 1–5, 19 (23%) were doctoral candidates. In addition, six Diversity/Partnership grants were made through a separate funding mechanism. Many of these dissertation and Diversity/Partnership grants were small studies, pilot studies, or both, and received additional technical assistance from the NPO. The ability to attract less-experienced investigators is reflected also in data from the NPO grantee survey. Almost one third of the principal investigators surveyed (31%) had ≤ 5 years' experience in conducting research.

By supporting less-experienced investigators, ALR not only helped to seed the active living research field with investigators with potentially long careers, but also helped to enhance these individuals' competitiveness in applying for federal and other funding. As one young grantee stated in an interview:

Oh, I think they [ALR] certainly helped build the field. And they certainly built up a lot of capacity

so that someone . . . I couldn't have gotten an NIH grant before, and now I have a track record and it's easy for me to be on multiple teams.

Career trajectory and commitment to the field. ALR appears to have improved the career trajectories of a majority of grantees. Data from both the NPO grantee survey and the GRA grantee–investigator interviews indicated that almost two thirds of investigators benefited in this respect from ALR funding and technical assistance. For example, 19 (63%) of the 30 interviewed grantees indicated that their work on the ALR grant resulted in new positions, promotions, training, or affiliations. Promotion was the most common outcome (30%), followed by training and affiliations (23%) and new positions (17%).

Ongoing commitment to the active living research field also appears strong among ALR-supported investigators. Almost all interviewed investigators (93%) stated future plans for research in this area. An almost-equal percentage of survey respondents (86%) agreed that ALR had stimulated a great deal of interest in conducting more research on policy or environmental aspects of physical activity. Ongoing commitment to the active living research field also was indicated by changes in how respondents teach. Three quarters (75%) of survey respondents teach. Of those, at least two thirds have embedded active living into their teaching, either through placing these concepts into an existing course (66%) or creating a new course or seminar series (13%). By exposing students to active living concepts, ALR investigators may influence the career paths of the next generation of researchers.

Growing Financial Resources

Building a new field requires an ongoing flow of resources to maintain new ideas and investigators. The RWJF, in developing its grant programming, uses its limited resources primarily to seed or launch a new field or to invigorate an existing field with new ideas and collaborators, with the expectation that a successful program concept or research agenda will catch on and be supported by others with little or no long-term support from the RWJF. The extent to which ALR had already begun directly or indirectly to stimulate new resources for active living research was examined, as evidenced by the following indicators: (1) research grants leveraged by individual investigators due at least in part to their ALR grant, and (2) support for active living research from sources other than the RWJF.

Leveraged research grants. Investigators from ALR already have leveraged a considerable number of additional research dollars in a relatively brief time period, although the NPO grantee survey yielded somewhat different results than the GRA interviews with grantee investigators due to differences in question wording

(see Footnote B). Based on the NPO grantee survey, more than two-thirds (67%) of principal investigators had applied for additional funding to conduct research on environmental and policy factors in active living. Of those, more than half (54.3%) had been successful at the time of the survey. Thus, more than one third (36.8%) of all principal investigators responding to the survey had leveraged additional funds. Altogether, \$8.8 million had been leveraged across 32 grants (an average of \$275,000 per grant). This leveraged amount is more than two-thirds the total ALR authorization (not all of which had been awarded at the time), an impressive return on investment.

In the GRA's grantee–investigator interviews, in which the question was less restrictive, slightly more than a majority (53%) of the 30 interviewees reported leveraging additional funds as a result of the ALR grant. Of 21 who had applied, 16 (76.2%) had been successful. Sixty-nine percent of successful grantees leveraged funds from government sources, while 44% acquired funding from private sources such as Fannie Mae, Blue Cross/Blue Shield, the Lincoln Institute, and other private foundations.

Support from other funding organizations. Another way of providing additional funds for the research field is to stimulate another funding organization to promulgate an initiative or requests for proposals focused on environmental and policy factors in physical activity. To date ALR appears to have played an explicit role in the development of one new NIH request for applications: Obesity and the Built Environment—a National Institute of Environmental Health Science (NIEHS) initiative. Staff at NIEHS sought assistance from the ALR NPO over a period of 2 years while developing the OBE initiative. In 2005, NIEHS—in partnership with CDC; the National Cancer Institute (NCI); the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD); and the Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research (OBSSR)—made available up to \$25 million over the following 5 years and awarded 14 grants. Studies funded under this request for applications were aimed at either increasing knowledge regarding the role played by the built environment in exacerbating obesity and related comorbidities, or developing, implementing, and evaluating intervention or prevention initiatives that promoted change in the built environment to reduce obesity and its comorbidities. Further, in a highly collaborative move, in 2006 ALR provided supplemental grants ranging from \$10,202 to \$51,361 to four OBE initiative grantees, “to enhance the quality of previously funded OBE–NIEHS initiative research, improve compatibility of research results, and to enhance diversity in this research field” (www.activelivingresearch.org).

An implicit role also may have been played by ALR in encouraging other funding organizations to add environmental and policy language to obesity-prevention

and physical activity–promotion CFPs or announcements. As one informant expressed it:

Actually, now as I think about it, there are some things related to physical activity mechanisms. A colleague of mine here has a mechanisms grant from, I think it was NCI. That was very heavily laden with language that relates to environment and what not. And there is no question that that was influenced by this initiative [ALR].

One other noteworthy example surfaced of ALR's role in catalyzing other support for active living, although not necessarily for research. Around 2002, the Mary Black Foundation, situated in South Carolina and endowed at \$75 million, chose active living as one of its two main funding goal areas. The ALR NPO and the Active Living by Design NPO were instrumental in helping the Mary Black Foundation during its strategic planning process. Said one interviewee: “A lot of what we were doing was modeled after a lot of the things that we saw in the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation materials.”

Contribution to Policy Debate and Change

A stepwise approach was undertaken to examine the fourth evaluation question. The steps in this approach are:

1. to summarize the interface between ALR and the policy environment by exploring the dissemination of ALR-supported knowledge through its products and interactions with end-users;
2. to describe how policymakers and advocates perceive the usefulness and relevance of ALR and its products; and
3. to examine ALR's contribution to policy by identifying examples of contribution to specific policies (i.e., a policy change linked specifically to ALR input) and the type of influence.^{19,20}

Interface between ALR and the policy environment. The RWJF context is particularly integral to the program goal of contributing to policy change and to the interface between ALR and the policy environment. As noted earlier, in establishing the Active Living suite of programs the RWJF foresaw the need for initiatives to mobilize and inform “influentials”—specifically, elected and appointed officials (i.e., Active Living Leadership)—to improve policies to support active living.¹ From the perspective of ALR, Active Living Leadership could be seen as an intermediary to facilitate dissemination, or more broadly, to manage the flow of information between ALR and these end-users (although the program was also expected to disseminate research information directly). The Active Living Network also provided communities with support for ALR findings and field building.

The RWJF also provided direct communications resources to ALR grantees and the NPO, as it typically does for its national programs. The level of direct communications support provided to ALR appears to have been somewhat lessened by reliance on the Active Living Leadership and the Active Living Network to communicate research findings and by the following transitions: During the 6 years of ALR's initial authorization, the RWJF was in the process of undergoing a major change in its communications structure with national programs and was also developing a plan for broad communications support to the newly adopted childhood-obesity goal area. Interviews with program leadership and RWJF staff reinforced the conclusion that communications resources provided to ALR were more limited than either envisioned or typical for RWJF national research programs.

Products from the NPO targeted at the policy audience. The NPO was active in synthesizing and translating knowledge generated by ALR grantees, ALR program leadership, and others conducting research on active living issues. In addition to publications and syntheses for scientific audiences, the NPO oversaw the production of three research briefs intended to summarize and distill the state of the field specifically for policy advocates and policymakers.

Grantee products targeted at the policy audience. Investigators supported by ALR have been productive in the development of documents for a policy audience. More than half (55%) of the principal investigators responding to the NPO grantee survey reported that they had produced policy-related products (fact sheets, contacts with policymakers, testimonies). In addition, slightly less than half (49%) said that they had produced media-related products (e.g., a newsletter, print story, broadcast story, press release, news conference, website), all potential mechanisms for disseminating policy information as outlined in the ALR conceptual model. Although direct inquiries were not made, a few investigators also mentioned articles that they had prepared for professional journals as well as reports prepared for professional organizations.

Relationship of ALR to policy and advocacy organizations. Relationships between ALR and representatives of the 18 interviewed policymaker and advocacy organizations varied in frequency and type of interaction, with most groups reporting a moderate amount of interaction focused mainly around receiving ALR information and written products, sometimes brokered by Active Living Leadership. The few organizations with more active—and usually longstanding—relationships with ALR typically had multiple two-way types of interactions, including receiving research information and written products from and providing input into ALR via reviewing proposals, contributing to the overall research

agenda, and helping plan and present at ALR annual conferences. Importantly, these few organizations also had utilized ALR research information and products extensively with their members, inviting ALR program leaders and investigators to present and distribute research briefs at their meetings. The organizations that had no involvement with ALR were ones that had either recently joined Active Living Leadership, were in major flux, or were focused more broadly on childhood-obesity prevention than solely on active living.

Interviews with Active Living Leadership member organizations ($n=8$) and RWJF staff and advisors ($n=14$) indicated that the Active Living Leadership program was not functioning as expected during its first few years, which led to a number of gradual programmatic changes and improvements after the first 3 years. Active Living Leadership member organizations reported an increase in interactions with ALR in Years 5 and 6, following an Active Living Leadership meeting where members indicated their concern that they were not being kept informed enough of ALR research directions, projects, and findings. Said one member:

But we found out that there were projects going on in our cities that we didn't know about. I'm going to be honest with you—so once we started talking a little bit about it, we started realizing that there was a, somewhat of a detachment, for lack of a better way of saying it, between the different pieces of Active Living (suite of programs) as a whole. We started saying well, we'd like to know what they're doing, we'd like to know what's coming out.

Members reported that following this meeting, there were more updates on ALR research at Active Living Leadership semi-annual meetings and on the regular conference calls, and there was more distribution of ALR products. A major indicator of increasing coordination between Active Living Leadership and ALR may be the overlapping grantee meetings held in February 2007. Further, the ALR 2007 annual conference included two workshops on working with policymakers and a plenary panel of researchers and policymakers. Also, a newly organized Active Living Leadership program office (reorganized as Leadership for Healthy Communities) was in place by February 2007 to further facilitate and coordinate relationships and the flow of information and ideas.

Usefulness and relevance of ALR to the policy community: policy informants' perceptions. Policy informants typically spoke quite favorably about ALR, citing its importance in filling key knowledge gaps and in giving visibility and credibility to the issue of physical activity in daily life. Although few could provide specific exam-

ples of its direct policy contribution or impact (see “Policy contribution by ALR” below), policy informants from both Active Living Leadership and other policy-focused organizations generally cited ALR’s relevance to their work in helping to set the stage for policy change, what Kingdon²¹ might call problem recognition:

Well, I think they’ve made tremendous contributions. They’ve definitely helped us underpin a lot of the work that we’re doing with the kind of data that are needed to support some of the policies that [policymakers] want to put in place.

More specifically, most interviewees reported that the relationship with ALR had:

- bolstered the case for action which, in turn, helped to energize their constituents to advocate for active living policies
- provided a centralized knowledge base, offering research to enhance testimonies, presentations to members, and workshops
- raised awareness regarding knowledgeable academic partners available to local and state policy organizations
- increased skills to dialogue on the link between the built environment and health
- provided materials (e.g., research briefs) to distribute to legislative staff and legislators

Opportunities to enhance ALR’s usefulness and relevance. While acknowledging ALR’s considerable contribution to date, many representatives of policy and advocacy organizations had suggestions to help improve the usefulness and relevance of ALR’s contribution to their work (each of the following suggestions was made by more than one informant and typically by more than two):

- more policy studies, especially economic analyses and analyses examining the effectiveness of specific policy actions
- more action-oriented materials, that is, specificity regarding how to translate research into action
- more-consistent outreach by ALR to its organizations, providing more opportunities for input into ongoing policy and advocacy organization events such as annual meetings, leadership workshops, audio conferences, newsletters, fact briefs, and toolkits
- a better system to access state-of-the-art knowledge (“... Active Living [website] needs to be about active living and not about active living research”)
- improved feedback loop from policy and advocacy organizations to the ALR NPO to help guide the research agenda
- stronger communication outreach, based on a focused, well-targeted communications strategy
- a coordination system between policy/advocacy organizations and ALR to match researchers with key policy actors in specific states or regions

- better linkage to specific policy action at the federal level—potential opportunities included a focus on important federal legislation such as the Transportation Bill and Education Bill, a series of Congressional seminars, and a review of proposed Congressional initiatives

Policy contribution by ALR. The last step was to analyze both whether ALR research had already played a role in specific policy discussions or changes and the nature of that role. While funding organization and National Advisory Committee key informants often thought that it was too early to say whether ALR had had an impact on specific policies, some evidence was found of specific policy contribution.

Grantees’ perceptions of policy contribution. Questions regarding policy contributions were asked slightly differently in the NPO grantee survey than in the GRA grantee–investigator interviews, leading to fairly large differences in the percentage of respondents affirmatively reporting policy effects (see Footnote C). In the NPO grantee survey, 25% of grantee investigators stated that their ALR research had had policy impact. Principal investigators with >5 years’ experience were more likely (27.3%) to state that their ALR research had a policy impact than principal investigators with ≤5 years’ experience (19%). Most of the ALR research-policy impact reported was at the nonfederal level (categories not mutually exclusive): federal, 12%; state, 59%; local, 88%; and 71% at other levels such as organizations, universities, schools, and the justice/legal system.

In the grantee–investigator interviews, slightly fewer than half ($n=14$) of the 30 grantees interviewed indicated they had informed, defined, or influenced policy through their ALR-supported studies (but not necessarily had a policy impact). Of these, almost two thirds (64%) reported policy contributions at the local level, with one grantee informing both local- and state-level policymakers. A few grantee investigators did cite examples of specific policy change, suggesting that their ALR research had had a policy impact. An example:

There’s a kind of ongoing influence, I think, on policy... a lot of the focus has been trying to engage residents in doing walkability assessments and engaging our working group, and the results of those walkability assessments go to the Transportation Department for the city... Through this continued advocacy, the Transportation Department has changed some of their policies around new development. So, they’ve extended, say, for example, the walk lights; the timing for the walk portion of the walk light.

Examples and types of policy contributions. Table 2 categorizes the ten examples of ALR research contribution to specific policy situations reported by grantee inves-

Table 2. Application of Weiss's framework^{19,20} to examples of specific policy contribution by ALR research

Policymaking organization	Project	Instrumental	Political	Conceptual	Imposed use
City transportation department	Walk lights at traffic signals	X			
Metropolitan transportation improvement program	Bicycle projects	X			
USDA forest service/city park district	Open-space use among Hispanics (parks)			X	
Department of transportation/state planning professionals	Land use/nonmotorized transportation influences			X	
Mayor's Wellness Council	Physical activity		X		
State department of transportation	Bridge walkway and bicycle paths	X			
County government association	New monies for nonmotorized and smart-growth improvements	X			
Philanthropy	Pedestrian safety audits			X	
City planning board	Open-space use among Hispanics			X	
National meeting of state legislators	Research briefs distribution			X	

USDA, U.S. Department of Agriculture

tigators and policy informants, using Weiss's framework.^{19,20} As predicted by Weiss, the role played by ALR research has varied. Sometimes ALR research provided direction for specific policies (i.e., instrumental). At other times, its use was conceptual, providing new generalizations or concepts—or, even once, political, justifying pre-existing actions. There were no examples of the imposed-use type of influence, where typically the federal or state government requires state and local entities to adopt evidence-based interventions or policies. Table 2 also indicates that ALR research to date has influenced various types of policymakers, including federal, state, county, and local government officials as well as boards, legislators, and philanthropic management, along with various areas of active living policy (transportation, bike or walking paths, open-space use, urban smart-growth).

Conclusion

Summary and Conclusion

Gutman Research Associates conducted a retrospective, in-depth, descriptive evaluation of ALR 6 years after the program's authorization and 5 years after the program issued its first of seven CFPs. The evaluation was intended to assess progress on program goals in order to inform re-authorization discussions at the RWJF and to guide future grantmaking efforts within the program itself. At the time of the evaluation, only 16% of 83 ALR studies awarded on a competitive basis had been completed, which is indicative of the long pipeline for research and an important consideration in interpreting the evaluation results.

By the end of these 6 years, ALR had made considerable progress toward its three goals. Regarding the first goal—building the knowledge base on policy and

environmental factors conducive to physical activity in daily life—informants generally thought that ALR was central to developing a new research field as it had stimulated and supported the integration of research on the built environment with public health outcomes and methods; supported new methods, especially measurement tools; developed several products that brought together existing evidence and identified remaining gaps; and supported studies that produced a number of publications in scientific journals.

Concerning the second goal—growing a transdisciplinary research community—informants reported that ALR had been instrumental, if not singular, in stimulating and supporting partnerships and collaboration among researchers from a wide variety of disciplines, notably public health, and those who study the built environment. Other key indicators supported this conclusion.

At this stage in the program, ALR has made some progress in having research findings contribute to policy discussions and change, the third goal, but it can be concluded that the program is positioned to make substantially more progress during a next phase. ALR progress in this area seems to have been hampered by a somewhat optimistic and simplistic conceptualization of the relationship between research and the policy-making process; design and implementation challenges within its partner program, Active Living Leadership; and the receipt of a lesser amount of communications assistance than envisioned by the RWJF due to transitions within it to a new system of providing communications assistance to national programs coupled with the adoption of childhood obesity as a goal area.

While not an explicit goal of ALR, stimulating the growth of funding for further research in an area is generally necessary to long-term field building and an

implicit goal of RWJF research programs. ALR made some progress in growing financial resources, despite the availability of only level or slightly decreased funding through federal research agencies in recent years. ALR-supported investigators leveraged a considerable amount of additional research money in a relatively brief time period. In addition, ALR played an explicit role in the development of one new NIH request for applications and in the adoption of active living as a grantmaking priority by a local foundation.

Limitations

Two methodologic issues limit the conclusions and interpretations of this study. First, the study design is descriptive rather than quasi-experimental, and therefore does not include a comparison group composed of other RWJF national programs. In evaluation, the most important issue is whether a program meets its own objectives. These objectives are informed by historical information on what funding realistically can be expected to accomplish. The limitation in the case of ALR, and many other programs, is the lack of historical data that allow the funding organization and program to set the objectives perfectly. If the objectives are unrealistically too low or too high, it can be said—incorrectly—that a program was successful or unsuccessful.

Another limitation to the evaluation is that the grantee survey was developed and conducted by the NPO and analyzed in collaboration with the evaluation rather than having been handled entirely by the evaluation team. This decision was made by the RWJF and the NPO because the survey was envisioned initially as a program-management tool when it was included in the initial program authorization. Further, because the survey was going to be conducted during the same time period as evaluation-data collection, the RWJF determined that the evaluation should not field a separate survey, given the resulting burden on and perhaps confusion for grantee investigators. To counteract potential side effects from the survey's being developed and fielded by the NPO, it was accompanied by a written statement affirming the confidentiality of responses and stating that responses would have no bearing on investigators' current or future funding from ALR.

Implications

Findings from the ALR evaluation can be applied more generally to building a new research field, particularly an applied and transdisciplinary one, and to utilizing research to inform and influence policy. Concerning the former task, several strategies and activities of ALR seemed to work well and might be utilized by other investigators and research organizations when building a new field. Evidence-building strategies included de-

veloping and implementing a strategic research agenda to guide grantmaking and the field, creating and disseminating written products that synthesized findings across many studies, and emphasizing the development of new methods and measurement tools early in the evolution of the field.

Several strategies employed by ALR to build a vibrant, transdisciplinary community of investigators are also noteworthy and worthy of adaptation: creating a senior advisory group composed of leaders from the relevant disciplines; implementing special seminars within the conferences of the relevant research-specialty associations, conducted by program and other leaders from that specialty; developing an annual conference for the new field; including a grant-selection criterion in the CFP that requires a transdisciplinary team; and offering special, more-modest grants aimed at young/new investigators. Those involved in building a new research field could benefit from resolving two major challenges noted by grantee investigators: the time-consuming and complex nature of transdisciplinary collaboration, and the disjuncture with current norms of academia that traditionally reward expertise in a specific discipline.

Findings from the ALR evaluation also offer insights into generally how to use research to inform and influence policy. While ALR might have made more progress on contributing to policy—and hopefully will during a next authorization—some approaches utilized by the program worked well, including developing a multifaceted, ongoing, interactive relationship with advocacy and policymaker organizations. One prominent feature of a few of these exemplary relationships was that they were bi-directional or more interactive, with advocates and policymakers providing input into the research agenda and conference planning, in contrast to the more typical one-way relationships that consist solely of researchers providing findings/evidence for the policymakers and advocates. Another ALR strategy that seemed promising for enhancing the contribution of research to policy was the provision of written products designed to meet the needs of policymakers and advocates, that is, products that were synthetic; brief (two to four pages); easy to read and comprehend; and contained action implications of the research findings.²²

Findings from the evaluation also suggested that some ALR approaches may not work optimally to enhance the contribution of research to policy. First, the current ALR conceptual model does not represent a sophisticated, complex conceptualization of the policy-making process and the relationship of research to policy. Concepts like *dissemination* and *communications* generally denote a vague, one-way process of using research to inform policy. The frameworks developed by Kingdon²¹ and Weiss^{19,20} can be integrated into ALR and other programs intended to translate research into policy to

provide a more complex and useful picture of the forces involved in the policy process and the role of research.

Kingdon²¹ postulates that three interacting but relatively separate process streams—problem recognition, the formation and refining of policy proposals, and politics—run through a government's policy-development process. Kingdon argues that the key to understanding policy outcomes is the coupling of these streams at unique times, called policy windows, that open briefly before closing, underscoring the potential value of rapid-response-research funding and timely and targeted communications. Within each stream are actors, including groups who bring to bear in reality (or may be perceived by other actors to possess) varying resources such as political know-how, expertise, or constituency mobilization and vote-getting. Kingdon found that research on the nature of problems and their solutions can be a major factor in the policy stream and, to some extent, in the problem stream, but may have little independent effect on the political stream. This framework implies that the policy-change process is a complex one and that research is only one of the many factors that influence it. Sometimes research ultimately has no influence on the policy outcome. Further, even if research evidence contributes to policy change, it is likely to be only one of several factors, and its influence may be difficult to distinguish.

The various roles that research can play in influencing policy—when it does—are clarified by Weiss's conceptual model,^{19,20} as can be seen in the results on the contribution of ALR-supported research to policy (Table 2). Evaluations could be used (1) instrumentally, to give direction to policy; (2) politically or symbolically to justify pre-existing preferences and actions, and (3) conceptually, to provide new generalizations, ideas, or concepts that are useful for making sense of the policy scene and problem. A fourth category—imposed use—was added to the framework to label situations in which evaluation/research is used to indicate which programs or interventions are worthy of funding in a situation where government seeks to exercise accountability.¹⁹ The main implication of the Weiss framework is that the role of research can vary, and a researcher or research program might develop research and position evidence to play a particular role in a given policy area.

Other lessons from the ALR evaluation regarding the translation of research into policy are (1) the development or utilization of a program that targets representatives of policymaker organizations and advocacy orga-

nizations as an intermediary may be a useful strategy but requires excellent implementation (see also the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids at tobaccofreekids.org); and (2) research programs and investigators need to be given adequate time and resources, including communications assistance, to bring research maximally to bear on informing policy.

No financial disclosures were reported by the authors of this paper.

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Appendix A

Active Living Research Impact Survey

Background/Instructions

The chief aim of Active Living Research (ALR), a national program funded by The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF), is to increase knowledge about active living by supporting research to identify environmental factors and policies with potential to substantially increase levels of physical activity among Americans of all ages, incomes, and ethnic backgrounds. ALR will be reviewed soon for potential renewal by RWJF with authorization of additional funds for research. The impact that ALR has had on science and on policy to date is a critical factor in the Foundation's deliberation about renewal. As someone involved in the field of active living, your responses to this survey are critical for evaluating the evolution of the active living research field and the contributions of ALR.

We are asking all ALR grantees and applicants to complete this survey, which will document the impact that researchers like you have had on the field of active living. This survey will take about 20–25 minutes to complete. You will be able to save your results so you will not need to complete the entire survey at one time.

There are two parts to the survey. The first part asks you to report the impact your work has had on research and policy in active living, and this part is not anonymous. The second part asks for your evaluation of various components of ALR and solicits your input about future research priorities. The second part is anonymous. For both parts, all responses will be presented in aggregate format. Please complete this survey by **MONDAY, AUGUST 14TH, to be eligible for a prize.**

When you complete this survey, you will be given an opportunity to enter your name and e-mail address in a drawing to win one of three free iPods® (Nano model) available to the pool of responders to this survey. Your entry in the drawing will be collected in a separate form to respect anonymity. Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey as your feedback is very important to us!

Please be aware that skip patterns are used within this survey so depending on your responses, question numbering may not be chronological.

1. Please enter your name and e-mail. This will be attached only to Part I.

Full name: _____

E-mail: _____

PART I: This part is not anonymous.

- 2*. Are you a principal investigator or co-principal investigator on an ALR grant? (*check one response*)
 - Yes, I received grant funding from RWJF's Active Living Research program (I am a principal investigator or co-principal investigator on a current or former ALR grant).
 - No, I applied, but never received funding from RWJF's Active Living Research program. (Check this box if you have a pending ALR application and have never held an ALR grant.) (*skip to Q7*)
 - No, I never applied for funding from RWJF's Active Living Research program. (*skip to end of survey*)
3. I have received grant funding from RWJF's Active Living Research program through the following Calls for Proposals: (*check all that apply*)

Round of Funding	Research topic grant	Dissertation grant
Round 1 (May 2002)—measurement studies of the built environment and physical activity	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Round 2 (November 2002)—correlational studies of the environment and/or policies related to physical activity, as well as studies assessing the impact of environmental and policy changes related to physical activity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Round 3 (November 2003)—correlational studies of the environment and/or policies related to physical activity in under-studied populations, and the impact of changes in community environments or policies on physical activity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Round 4 (September 2004)—case studies that examine the process of significant policy change attempts and case studies that describe significant policy changes	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Round 5 (March 2005)—studies that will increase understanding of policies that are likely to be related to active living so that information can be used to motivate and guide policy change	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Diversity Partnership Grant	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Obesity and the Built Environment Supplement Grant	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Special Project Grant or Contract—noncompetitive study commissioned by ALR	<input type="checkbox"/>	

4*. My first funded grant came from ALR.

- Yes
- No

5*. We are interested in learning more about whether your Active Living Research (ALR) grant has led to any of the following types of products or activities. If you have produced any of the following products or activities based on your ALR grant, please specify the number. The number refers to different products or activities, not copies of a product. Also, please provide us with the number of such activities that are in preparation.

If you have not produced an item below, enter a "0".

	If "yes," check below	How many?	Number in preparation
Article in professional journal	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
Book	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
Book chapter	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
Technical Report (not peer reviewed)	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
Fact sheet or issue brief			
Newsletter	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
Conference presentation	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
New measurement instrument (do not include adapted surveys)	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
Contact with policymaker	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
Testimony before government body	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
Print story (e.g. newspaper, magazine, web)	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
Broadcast story (e.g., television coverage, radio coverage, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
Press release	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
News conference or briefing	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
Invited talk	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	_____
Consulting	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Employment/promotion/advancement	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Advancement in professional organization	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Invited to collaborate with others	<input type="checkbox"/>		
World wide web site (specific to ALR grant)	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>		

6*. It is very important to collect publications that are related to ALR grants. Please provide full citations (any format) for any publications (article, book chapter, book, technical report) resulting from your ALR grant. Please include "in press" publications, but not those in preparation or submitted. NOTE: This question is required. If you do not currently have any publications to list, type N/A in the space provided.

7*. Were you conducting research on policy or environmental aspects of physical activity before preparing your first ALR application? (check one response)

- No, I was not involved in this field before preparing the ALR grant application.
- Yes, I had been conducting research in this field for less than 2 years prior to the application.
- Yes, I had been conducting research in this field for 2–5 years prior to the application.
- Yes, I had been conducting research in this field for 5 or more years prior to this application.

8*. Has participation in the Active Living Research application process resulted in new collaborations with other researchers WITHIN your institution but OUTSIDE of your primary discipline? (check one)

- No, it has not.
- Yes, it has resulted in 1–2 new collaborations.
- Yes, it has resulted in 3+ new collaborations.

9*. Has participation in the Active Living Research application process resulted in new collaborations in this field with other researchers OUTSIDE of your institution AND OUTSIDE of your primary discipline? (check one)

- No, it has not.
- Yes, it has resulted in 1–2 new collaborations.
- Yes, it has resulted in 3+ new collaborations.

10*. To what extent has participation in the Active Living Research application process stimulated your interest in conducting more research on policy or environmental aspects of physical activity? (check one response)

- Not at all
- A little
- Somewhat
- A great deal
- A great deal AND it's likely that I'll be applying for funding in this area in the next year

11*. Has involvement in the Active Living Research application process stimulated changes in your teaching in any of the following ways? (check all that apply)

- I do not teach
- I have incorporated new active living content in my course(s)

- I have created a new course related to active living
 - I have supervised/mentored more active living–related student projects or research (PhD or other)
 - I have created a seminar series on active living-related topics
 - I have given guest lectures/presentations on active living-related topics within my institution
 - I have given guest lectures/presentations on active living-related topics outside of my institution
 - Other: _____ (please specify)
 - None
- 12*. Are you aware of any new educational programs (e.g., degree, subspecialty track, department) related to research on active living that have been formed at your institution in the past 5 years? (check one response)
- No, no new educational programs related to research on active living have been formed at my institution.
 - Yes, a new educational program related to research on active living has been formed at my institution.
- 13*. If you are currently conducting research on policy or environmental aspects of the two topics listed below, please specify the percentage of research time that is spent on each one.
Please enter your answer using numbers only; do not include the percent sign. If you are not conducting research on these two topics, please enter a “0” for zero percent.
Physical activity _____
Healthy eating _____
- 14*. Are you aware of any policy impacts resulting from your research on active living? For purposes of this survey, a POLICY IMPACT is a specific interaction with policymakers (e.g. testifying, meeting with policymakers, policymaker briefings, etc.) or direct evidence of the research findings in a written policy (e.g., language included in a bill or regulations, work cited in a bill). Do not count journal articles, press releases, etc.
- Yes No (*skip to Q16*)
- 15*. (a) If “yes,” what were the primary types of impact? For example, if you testified before a committee reviewing a policy relevant to your active living work and responded based on your research findings, you could check several items below, depending on the specific outcome: (check all that apply)
- Changed law
 - Changed regulation
 - Changed policy
 - Changed program practice
 - Led to or contributed to evidence-based guidelines
 - Influenced policy process
 - Influenced enforcement
 - Influenced policy implementation
 - Other: _____ (please specify)
- (b) What was the level or levels of this policy impact? (check all that apply)
- Federal
 - State
 - Local
 - Company
 - Nonprofit organization
 - University/college
 - Schools or school systems
 - Judicial/legal
 - Other: _____ (please specify)
- (c) If you interacted directly with a policymaker, please indicate the kind of policymaker: (check all that apply)
- Elected government—federal
 - Elected government—state
 - Elected government—local
 - Appointed/executive government official—federal
 - Appointed/executive government official—state
 - Appointed/executive government official—local
 - Judiciary—federal
 - Judiciary—state
 - Judiciary—local
 - Private policymaker—company/corporation
 - Private policymaker—association
 - Private policymaker—union
 - Other: _____ (please specify)
 - None
- (d) Was the policy impact you indicated above attributable to research funded by RWJF’s Active Living Research program? (check one response)
- No, the policy impact was attributable to research on active living that was NOT funded by the RWJF Active Living Research program.
 - Yes, the policy impact was IN PART attributable to research funded by the RWJF Active Living Research program.
 - Yes, the policy impact was ENTIRELY attributable to research funded by the RWJF Active Living Research program.

16*. Have you applied to agencies other than RWJF's Active Living Research (ALR) program for grant funding to conduct research on environmental or policy aspects of physical activity?
 Yes No

If you answered "yes", where did you apply?	Did you receive funding from this organization?		If you received funding, how much funding did you receive? (total costs)	If you received funding, what was the period of funding? (e.g., 2001-2003)	Did your RWJF/ALR grant help you secure funding from this funding agency?		
	Yes	No			Yes	No	Never had ALR grant
1)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ _____	_____ - _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ _____	_____ - _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ _____	_____ - _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ _____	_____ - _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ _____	_____ - _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you received funding, how much funding did you receive in total costs? (e.g., \$200,000)

17. Do you have any stories you would like to share with us about the impact that Active Living Research has had on your work or the impact your work has had on the field of physical activity research? If so, please describe briefly below.

18*. Please indicate your primary discipline: (select one response—drop-down list)

- Architecture
- Behavioral science
- Business
- Criminology/criminal justice
- Economics
- Education
- Environmental science
- Epidemiology
- Food science
- Geography
- Health services research
- Landscape architecture
- Law
- Medicine
- Nursing
- Nutrition
- Physical activity/exercise science
- Political science
- Policy studies
- Psychology
- Public administration
- Public health
- Public policy
- Recreation/leisure science
- Sociology
- Statistics
- Transportation
- Urban planning
- Other: _____ (please specify)

19*. How many years have you been conducting research? (check one response)

- Less than 2 years
- 2-3 years
- 4-5 years
- 6-7 years
- 8-9 years
- 10-12 years
- 13-15 years
- 16-20 years
- More than 20 years

20*. What degree(s) do you hold? (check all that apply)

- Bachelor's level degree
- Master's level degree (e.g., M.S., M.A., M.P.H., M.C.R.P., LL.M., etc.)

- Doctoral level degree (e.g., Ph.D., Sc.D., PsyD, Dr.P.H., etc.)
- M.D.
- J.D.
- Other: _____ (please specify)

21*. What best describes your race/ethnicity? (check all that apply)

- African American or black
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Latino or Hispanic
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- White
- Other
- Prefer not to answer

22*. What is your gender?

- Male Female

PART II—This part is anonymous and will be saved to a different file.

23*. Are you a principal investigator or co-principal investigator on an ALR grant? (check one response)

- Yes, I received grant funding from RWJF's Active Living Research program (I am a principal investigator or co-principal investigator on a current or former ALR grant).
- No, I applied, but never received funding from RWJF's Active Living Research program. (Check this box if you have a pending ALR application and have never held an ALR grant.)

24*. Have you ever contacted the Active Living Research National Program Office for any type of information or technical assistance? (This does not count visits to the ALR website)

- Yes No (skip to Q29)

25*. How many times have you contacted the Active Living Research National Program Office staff for information or technical assistance?

- 1–3 times
- 4–6 times
- 7–9 times
- 10 or more times

26. Why did you contact the Active Living Research National Program Office? (check all that apply)

Pre-proposal assistance

- Inquire about funding opportunities at ALR or other sources
- Technical assistance with application questions/proposal development
- Background information on Active Living Research
- Applicant teleconference call(s)
- Assistance with RWJF online application system
- Other pre-proposal assistance _____ (please specify)

Assistance with research studies

- Participation in group conference calls with other ALR grantees, experts, or ALR staff
- Assistance with RWJF/ALR funded project changes (e.g., direction, budget, etc.) and/or reporting requirements
- Assistance with finding sources of information, consultation, or collaboration
- Borrow accelerometers from ALR
- Measurement tools for research on active living
- Other research study assistance _____ (please specify)





Communications

- Information on upcoming conferences (other than the ALR conference)
- Information on ALR's annual conference/grantee meeting
- Request that ALR staff give presentations (e.g., seminars, professional conferences)
- Request to coordinate presentations at professional meetings by ALR grantees
- Request recommendation/contact information for topic expert
- Information on publications in the field
- Assistance with scientific/journal publication
- Assistance with communicating study results to media or policymakers
- Sending scientific references to include on ALR website
- Sending personal publications produced as a result of ALR grant
- Other communications assistance _____ (please specify)

Policy change

- Interact with ALR to coordinate work with policymakers or organizations that influence policymakers
- General assistance in using research to inform and change policy
- Other policy change assistance _____ (please specify)

27*. How would you rate your overall experience with your request(s) for information or technical assistance from the Active Living Research National Program Office? (check one response for each category below)

	Not at all satisfied 	Somewhat satisfied 	Very satisfied 	Extremely satisfied 
Response time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Timeliness of information provided	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Level of expertise of staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Addressed my question	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adequacy of follow-up, if needed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overall satisfaction with assistance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

28. Please provide additional feedback about ALR responses to requests for technical assistance or offer ways ALR can improve technical assistance.

29*. Have you recommended that any of your colleagues contact the Active Living Research National Program Office for information or technical assistance?

Yes No

30*. Have you ever accessed the Active Living Research website (www.activelivingresearch.org) for information or technical assistance?

Yes No (skip to Q32)

31*. Please indicate, on the list below, how useful those resources were to you. If you did not access a particular resource, check N/A. (check all that apply)

	Level of usefulness				N/A
	Not at all useful	Somewhat useful	Very useful	Extremely useful	
Research summaries/fact sheets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Literature citations/reference list	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tools and measures	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Related links	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Open access to special journal supplements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Information on grant opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Annual conference information/presentations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recent news and events	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

32. What advancements in physical activity policy and environmental research or practice do you believe Active Living Research has contributed to since the program began in 2001?

33. What is the unique role of ALR/RWJF compared to other funders?

34. The Active Living Research program is planning to submit a proposal to renew the program to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The renewed program will contribute substantially to the Foundation's mission of halting the increasing prevalence of childhood obesity by 2015. The emphasis will be on high-risk populations, including low-income and specific racial/ethnic groups.

We are soliciting input about research priorities and other activities that Active Living Research should include in our proposal, and we welcome your thoughts. You can suggest specific research topics, broad research areas, activities to build the field, or activities to speed the translation of research to policy change. All your suggestions will be carefully considered.

35. What would be the advantages and disadvantages of continuing the Active Living Research program for another 5 years?

36. Are there any other comments about the Active Living Research program that you would like to share?

Thank you for taking the time to complete our survey! If you would like to enter our contest for a chance to win one of three iPods® (Nano model), please click on the link below. You will be re-directed to another page where you can enter your name and e-mail address. We will notify you by e-mail if you have won a prize.