

G u t m a n
Research Associates

Evaluation of Active Living Research

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ALR Annual Conference

Evaluation Team

Gutman Research Associates (GRA)

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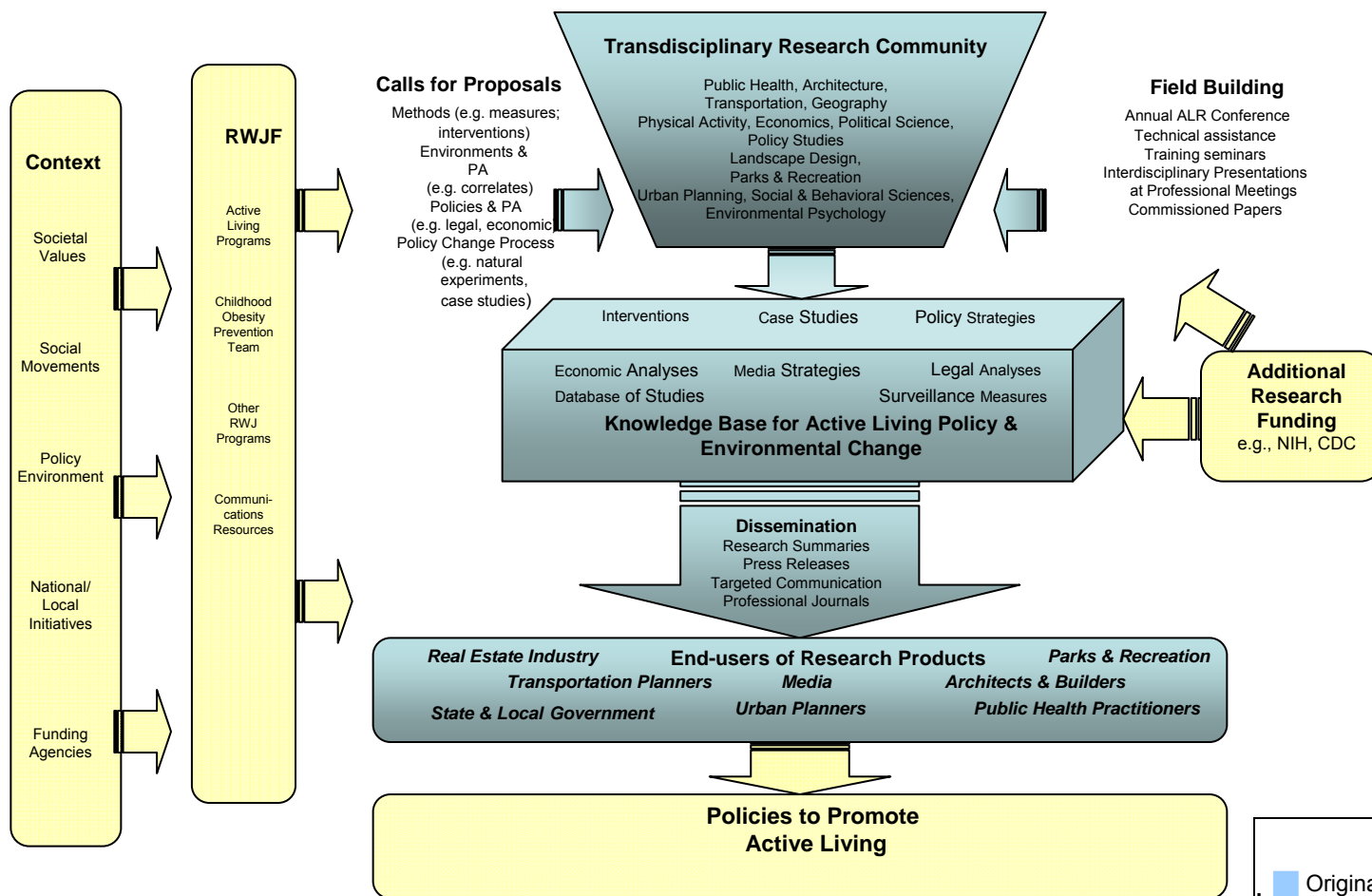
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Evaluation Questions

To what extent is ALR –

1. Building the knowledge base on environmental and policy factors conducive to physical activity?
2. Growing human capital (i.e., transdisciplinary field)?
3. Growing financial capital (i.e., funding)?
4. Contributing to policy and practice?
5. Filling a unique niche?

ALR Conceptual Model



Key

- Original Conceptual Model
- Extensions added by Gutman Research Associates

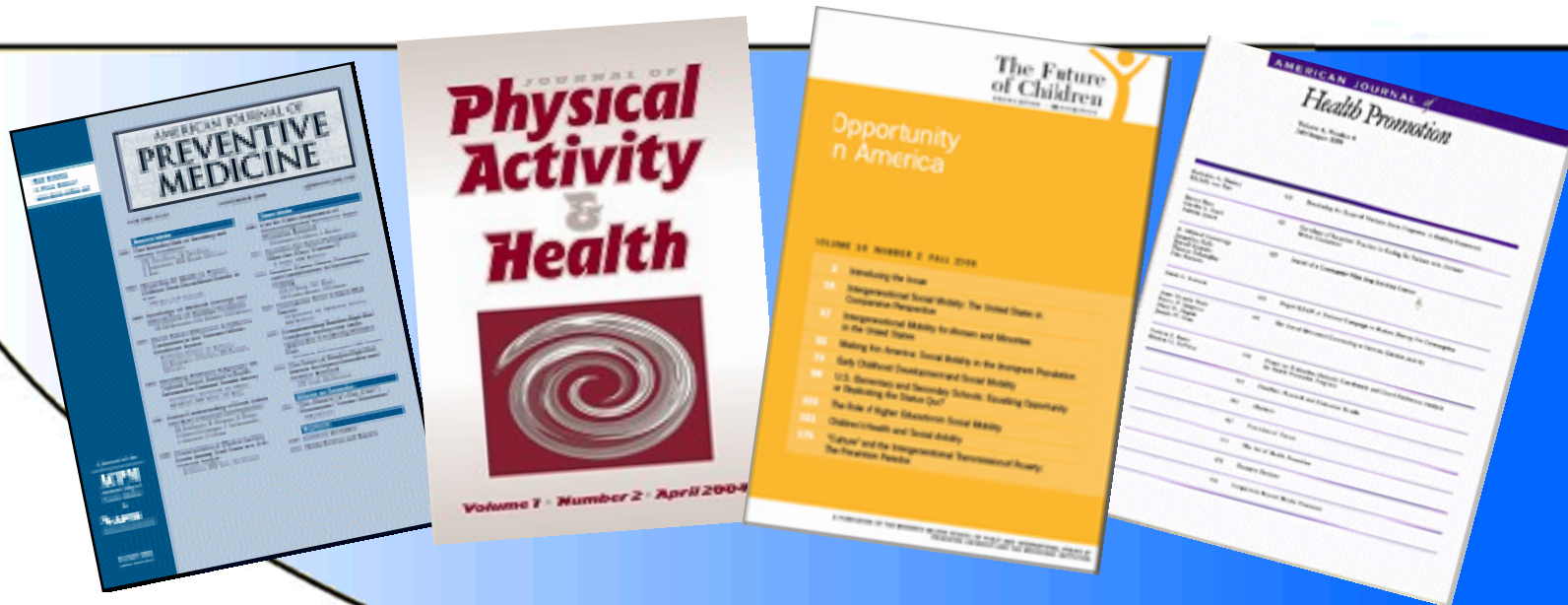
Methods - Qualitative

Interview Group	Description of Sample or Group	Number of Informants
ALR Grantees	CFPs 1-5; no Diversity or OBE; stratified random sample	30
Funding Organizations	CDC, NIH, Foundations	17
Policy/Advocacy Organizations	Active Living Leadership and Other national organizations	18
ALR NAC and Senior Advisors		7
ALR NPO (background)		2
RWJF (background)	Staff and advisors	14
TOTAL		88

Methods - Quantitative

Method	Description
NPO Grantee Survey	-- Developed and fielded by NPO in 8-9/2006 -- Sample: 65 PIs (CFPs 1-5) + 3 co-PIs where no PI (total n =68)
Grant Abstract Analysis	-- CFPs 1-5 (including dissertations) (n=83) -- Abstracts analyzed by setting, research type & target population
ALR Conferences and Seminars Analysis	-- Participant evaluation data collected by NPO -- Analyzed by # attendees & attendee disciplines
ALR No Cost Extensions Analysis	-- CFPs 1-5, receiving no cost extensions by 9/1/06
NIH Computer Retrieval of Information on Scientific Projects (CRISP) Database Analysis	-- PAs for obesity prevention grants 2000-2006 -- 5 most relevant institutes (NCI, NHLBI, NICHD, NIDDK, NIEHS)

Findings: Building the Knowledge Base



ALR Applications and Grants

CFP	Focus	Number of Applicants	Number Grants	Children/Adolescents	Low Income/Minority
I	Measurement	44	9	0	1
II	Correlates	221	22	6	4
III	Special Populations	256	19	7	6
IV	Case Studies	44	11	2	0
V	Policy	116	11	5	3
VI	Expansion and Gap Filling	78	11	5	4
All	-----	759	83	25(30%)	18(22%)

Analysis of Grant Abstracts by Setting and Type

	Community	Schools	Buildings	Recreation	Transportation	Total
Methodology	7	0	1	4	0	12 (14%)
Correlates	30	2	1	7	0	40 (47%)
Case Studies	10	2	0	1	1	14 (16%)
Policy Analysis	5	2	0	1	0	8 (9%)
Intervention /Evaluation	4	3	1	3	0	11 (13%)
Total	56 (66%)	9 (11%)	3 (4%)	16 (19%)	1 (1%)	85

Note: Categories were not mutually exclusive; grants were allowed to occupy more than one category.

Analysis of Grant Abstracts by Setting and Population

	Community	Schools	Buildings	Recreation	Transportation	Total
Children & Adolescents	13	7	0	4	0	24 (24%)
Adults	12	0	1	4	0	17 (17%)
Elderly & Disabled	5	0	1	1	0	7 (7%)
Low Income/ Minority	10	2	0	3	0	15 (15%)
General	26	2	1	8	1	38 (38%)
Total	66 (65%)	11 (11%)	3 (3%)	16 (19%)	1 (1%)	101

Note: Categories were not mutually exclusive; grants were allowed to occupy more than one category.

Building Knowledge

Interviews

- **ALR has been central to the development of a new research field**
- **Support for development of new measurement tools**
 - 38% of PIs developed one or more new instruments
 - Expert assessment: favorably impressed with variety, potential usefulness, and psychometric properties
- **Summarized existing evidence, and increasing recognition of energy balance**
 - Journal supplements (5)
 - Research briefs (3)

Building Knowledge

“I think they created a new area of research. There are people who think of themselves as wearing this area.” (Funder)

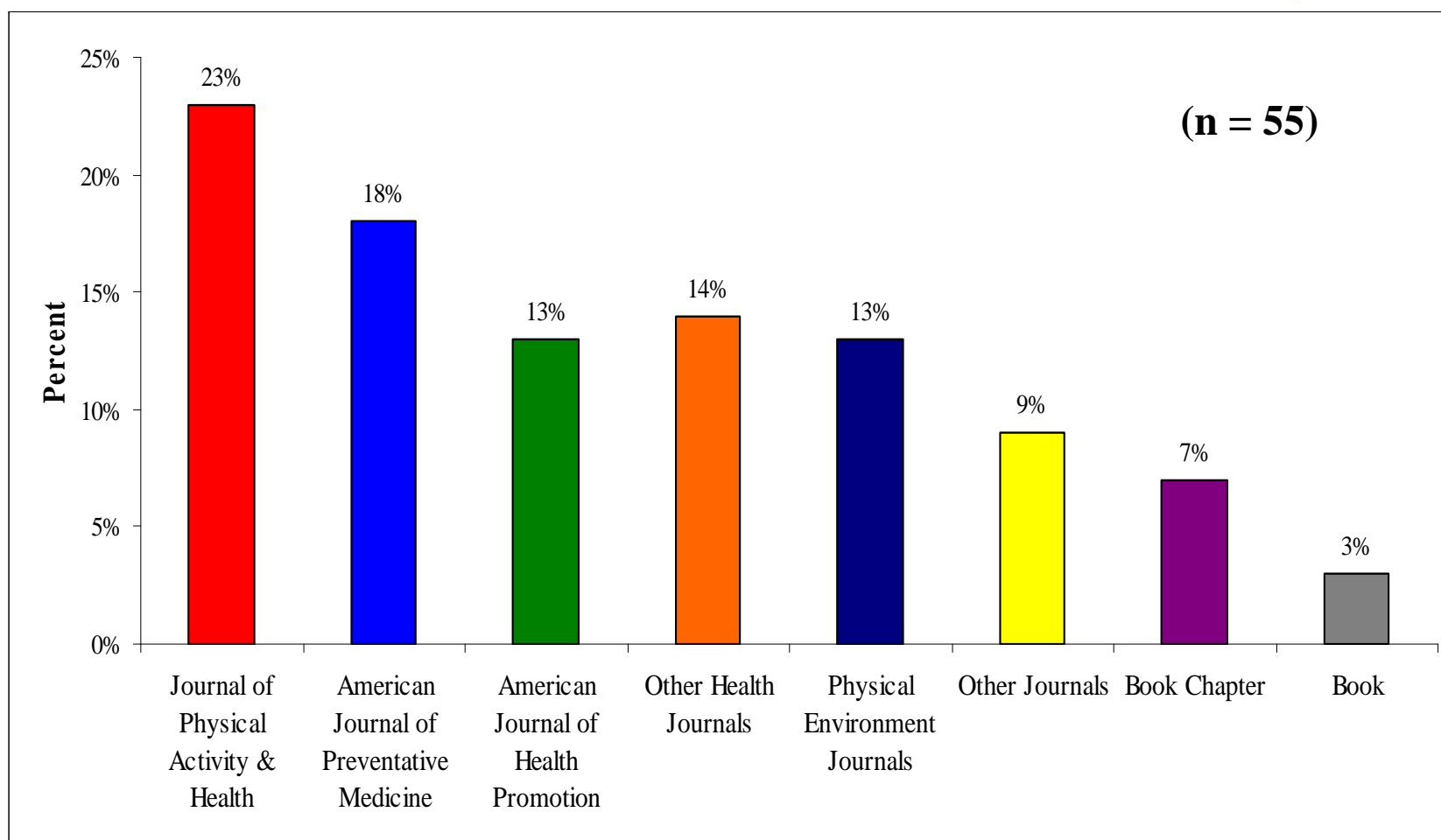
“Fair assessment would be that ALR has put out second generation of this research. CDC funded first generation. ALR pulled the field together – projects coming out, addressing selection bias, improved methodology.” (Funder)

Building Knowledge

Scientific publications (*Survey*) --

- 55 total publications to date
- 38% of PIs had published at least one paper
- Average 2 publications per PI who had published
- +153 manuscripts in preparation

Grantee Publications



Findings: Growing Human Capital



ALR Conferences

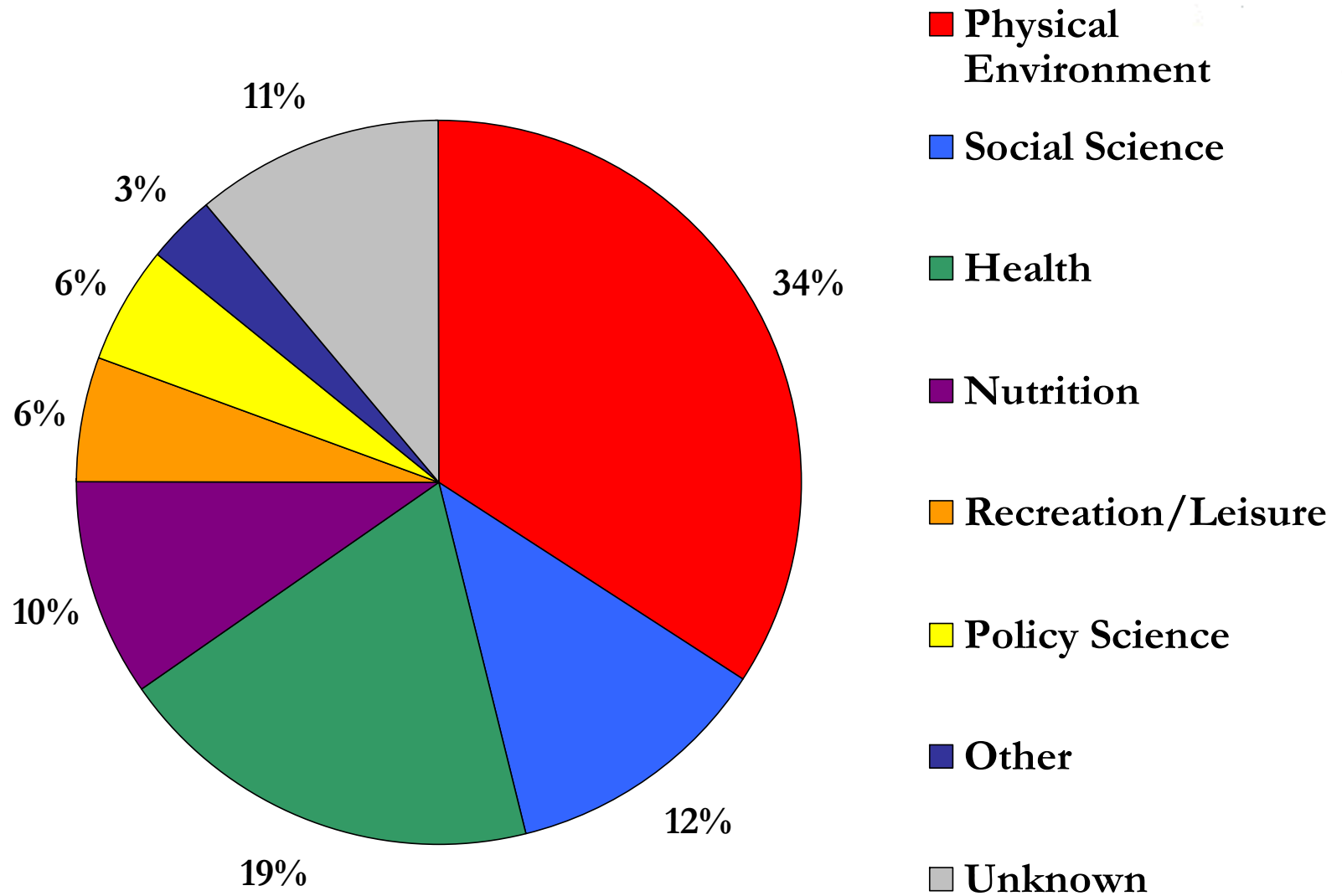
Year	Number Attendees	Policy Session	Journal Session	Funders Session
2004	138	Paper	----	Panel
2005	187	Panel	----	Panel
2006	223	Workshop	Panel	Panel
2007	285	Panel & Workshops (3)	----	Panel

“Meeting sells out. If you’re doing work in this area, that’s the place you want to go.” (Funder)

ALR Seminars

Year	#	Attended	Disciplines
2003	1	17	Leisure Studies Landscape Architecture
2004	2	42	Policy, Public Health
2005	5	266	Policy, Public Health Environmental Design Recreation, Behavioral Medicine
2006	5	270	Public Health Environmental Design Recreation, Urban Planning

Investigator Disciplines



Growing Human Capital

Grow transdisciplinary field – *(Survey)*

- Investigators reported stimulated new collaborations outside of primary discipline
 - 77% outside of their institution
 - 85% investigators within own institution
- 66% of those who taught reported integrating AL research into teaching

Growing Human Capital

Attracted, nurtured new/young researchers –

- 31% of PIs had 5 years or less research experience
- 77% of all investigators reported professional advancement
- Dissertation and other small grants led to pilot data, preparation for larger grants

Diversity - 26% of PIs are persons of color

Challenges

- Transdisciplinary work is more time consuming and complex

“So in a sense you had to do two jobs. You had to sort of satisfy your own department and you have to learn a new one. And I wanted that, that’s why I did this. But it really, you know, it is something that takes a lot of additional time.” (Grantee)

- NCI, RWJF and others are also supporting and stimulating transdisciplinary research but long-term normative change is needed within the academic field (journals, universities, etc).

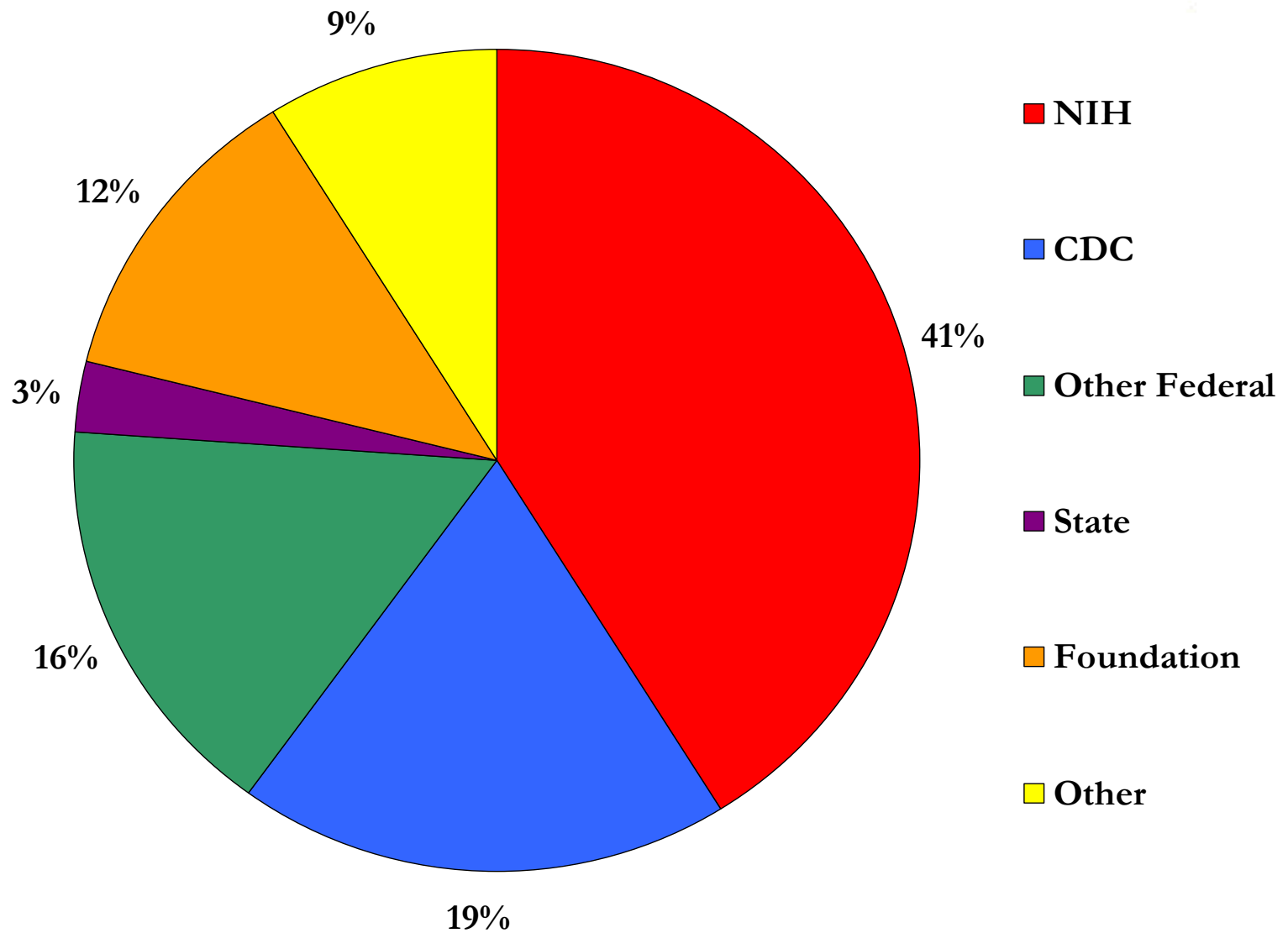
Findings: Growing Financial Capital



Growing Funding

- **68% of PIs had applied for additional grants**
- **Of those who applied, 54% received at least one grant (37% of all PIs)**
- **Total of \$17 million leveraged from 32 grants**

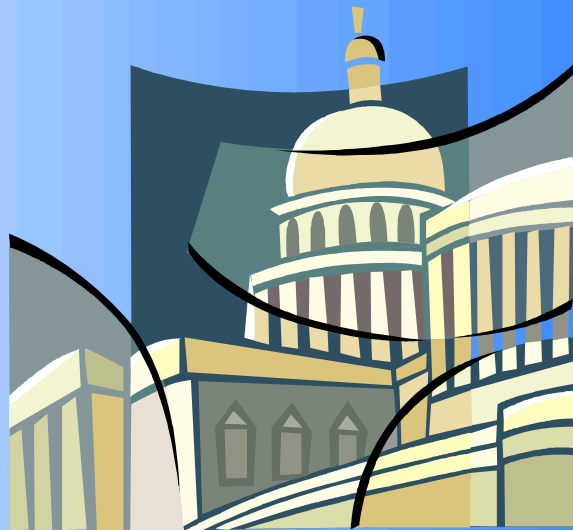
Sources of Leveraged Grants



Challenges

- Flat or slightly decreased funding at NIH and other federal sources
- Positive signs
 - Slight increase in environmental/policy language in NIH RFAs, proposals & grants
 - NIEHS initiative - \$5 million – 12 grants
 - Small, local foundation adopted AL as a goal

Findings: Contribution to Policy



Stepwise Approach

- 1. Interface between ALR and Policy environment**
 - ALR and grantee products
 - Interviews with policy and advocacy
- 2. Policy makers' and advocates' perceptions of ALR usefulness and relevance**
- 3. ALR contribution to policy**
 - Grantees' perceptions
 - Policy informants' perceptions
 - Specific examples

NPO Products

Three Research Briefs

- **Designing for Active Recreation (2005)**
- **Designing for Active Transportation (2005)**
- **Designing to reduce childhood obesity (2005)**

PLUS

- **5 special supplements to journals**
- **Systematic literature reviews**
- **Major reports**

Grantee Products *(survey)*

- 49% of PIs produced media-related products (newsletter, print story, broadcast story, press release, news conference, website)
- 54% of PIs produced policy-related products (fact sheet, testimony, contacts with policy makers)

Relationship with Policy & Advocacy Organizations

- **Relationship with NPO varies from intense to none**
 - Mainly receiving ALR products (website, research briefs)
 - Intense relationships were more ongoing and two-way
 - AL-L members reported increased interaction during last 2 years via
 - NPO present/share at AL-L meetings
 - Review proposals, give advice on research agenda
 - Assist with design of annual conference
 - NPO present at their association meetings
 - ALR research briefs
- **NPO receptive and good to work with**

Usefulness to Policy/Advocacy Community

- **Bolstered the case for action**
- **Provided materials, i.e., research briefs, to distribute to constituents**
- **Provided a centralized knowledge base to enhance testimonies, workshops for members**
- **Raised awareness of knowledgeable academic partners available to local and state policy organizations**
- **Increased skills to dialogue on link between built environment and health**

Policy/Advocacy Interviews

And...

- **Want more information and relationship with NPO**
- **Strong need for research evidence**
 - **Want more policy studies, especially economic analysis, and effectiveness of specific policy options**
 - **Need more translation of research to policy**

Ways to Improve Usefulness

- **More policy studies, especially economic**
- **More action-oriented materials**
- **More consistent outreach by ALR**
- **Better system to access knowledge**
- **Improved feedback loop from policy/advocacy organizations to ALR**
- **Communications outreach and strategy**
- **Better linkage to specific policies at the federal level**

Grantees: ALR Contribution to Policy

NPO Grantee Survey

- 25% of PIs reported policy impact (survey)

GRA Grantee Interviews

- 50% indicated informed or influenced policy
 - 80% contributed to policy at local level
 - Policy areas: walking trails, physical activity in schools, built environment, active living in urban centers
- Typical impact at state, local, or organizational level
- Typical impact at state or local level

Challenges

- **Limited resources to do dissemination**
- **Lacked skills to translate findings into policy or practice**

Examples of Policy Contribution

Policy Making Organization	Project
City Transportation Dept	Walk lights at traffic signals
Metro Trans Improvement Program	Bicycle projects
USDA Forest Service/City Parks Dist	Open Space use among Hispanics (parks)
Dept of Trans State Planning Professionals	Land use/non-motorized trans influences
Mayor's Wellness Council	Physical Activity
State Dept of Transportation	Bridge walkway and bicycle paths
County Government Assoc	New monies for non-motorized and smart growth improvements
Philanthropy	Pedestrian safety audits
City Planning Board	Open space use among Hispanics

Role of Policy Contribution

Weiss' conceptual framework of role of research in policy (1998; 2005)

- Conceptual 5
- Instrumental 4
- Political 1
- Imposed Use 0

Findings: Unique Niche in Research on Physical Activity



Niche

ALR seems to fill a unique or at least highly distinctive niche

- **Methods/instruments**
- **Growing a transdisciplinary field**
- **Small studies, young investigators**
- **Policy research**

Conclusions and Recommendations



Preliminary Conclusions

EQ	Nature	Progress	Potential
1	Knowledge Base	Major	High
2	Transdisciplinary Field	Major	High
3	Financial Capital	Minor	Some
4	Contribution to policy & practice	Minor	High*
5	Niche	Unique	Unique

* Under optimal conditions

Recommendations

Focus	Recommendations
Knowledge Base	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More emphasis on policy research (especially economic)• Improve national surveillance questions
Transdisciplinary Field	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue ALR approach• Actively recruit policy researchers• Introduce additional ways to assist investigators• Place more emphasis within other RWJF programs
Financial Capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work more with NIH, etc, to leverage funding• Explore non-health funding (e.g., DOT, DOE)• Expand grantsmanship TA for young investigators• Expand ALR web site re: other funding

Recommendations

Focus	Recommendations
Contribution to Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Closer relationship with Active Living Leadership• More emphasis on translation from research to policy<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Institute coordinated, ongoing communications strategy– Develop a separate policy advocacy panel– Continue CFP preference re: policy person• Increase emphasis on policy research• Potentially focus on local and state policy levels (e.g., case studies, legal research)• Potentially link to major federal research opportunities
Niche	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Focus more on policy studies• Collaborate with other funders• Link to Prevention Center Policy Network; internal NIH cross-institute groups