

COMMUNITY CHAMPION PROGRAM



About the Program

The Community Champion Program is designed to build a network of confident, engaged, and effective advocates to address community walking and biking safety concerns and priorities.

The Program can be tailored for a specific community, such as youth, a school community, city, or county and is offered as interactive virtual or hybrid sessions designed to expand champion's understanding of active transportation, equity, and health.

During the first half of the program, champions learn about active transportation, engaging with decision-makers, advocacy skills, and how to conduct community assessments. In the second half, champions develop and implement activation projects that address their community safety concerns, reflect their skills and passions, and build their community's capacity to advocate for active transportation. Some examples of past activation projects are: community surveys, safety messaging campaigns, quick-build demonstrations, and safe route to school programming.

The curriculum has been developed and tested by Cal Walks with 7 cohorts across California but can be updated to meet community needs and timelines. The program typically runs 9 to 12 months, including outreach, training sessions, activation projects, and reporting.

What to Expect

The Program prepares champions to identify, develop, and implement activation projects. With strengthened skillsets, champions can continue their advocacy work within their local community beyond the program. Training sessions include:



Program Listening Session

Learn about program purpose, structure, and champion expectations.



Community Visioning & Safe Systems

Review Safe System Framework and connect Safe System strategies through community visioning.



Community Context

Learn about the community through a series of activities.



Engaging Power

Learn about active transportation from the perspective of local agency officials and decision-makers.



Advocacy Skillshare

Learn the basics of advocacy and how to apply program concepts to advocacy planning, strategies, and projects.



Community Showcase

Present champion-led activation projects and celebrate Champion accomplishments!

Activation Projects

Activation projects are participant-led activities meant to engage community residents around a key community concern. The purpose of the activation project is to mobilize participants and their local community to take action. Activation projects are developed with the support of the Project Team and can be completed independently or in collaboration with other participants. Below are two examples of activation projects developed by Community Ambassadors during our Community Safety Ambassador Training Program in Ventura, San Bernardino, and Imperial County and our Community Safety Champion Program in Stanislaus County.

Farmer's Market Table and Surveys - Modesto, Stanislaus County



Champions developed a safety survey focused on walking and biking conditions. Champions administered the paper surveys in English and Spanish at their local Farmer's Market and handed out incentives, like reflective arm bands, to encourage greater participation in the survey. In total, the Champions administered a total of 39 surveys to patrons of the Farmer's Market.

Safety Messaging Campaign at Vermont Elementary - Muscocy, San Bernardino County



Ambassadors conducted a walking assessment to gather information about the walking and biking conditions around Vermont Elementary. Ambassadors then developed original safety messaging materials and led a 2-day campaign focused on raising awareness of high vehicle speeds in the school zone.

Next Steps

If you are interested in pursuing a grant application with California Walks or using existing funding to bring the Champion Program to your community, please contact us at info@calwalks.org or visit calwalks.org for more information.