

Shared-use agreements as a strategy for promoting physical activity opportunities in local communities

The obesity epidemic remains among the most important health problems that face our nation today. The percentage who are obese now approaches 17% for children and 35% for adults in the United States. In recent years, increasing access to school-based recreational facilities has emerged as a promising strategy for creating safe affordable neighborhood play space. In the current era of budget shortfalls, community leaders view maximizing access to existing facilities as a highly efficient use of public resources. A shared-use agreement (SUA), an agreement between a school district and one or more public or private entities allowing community access to school facilities, is seen as a way to gain public access to these neighborhood resources.

Emerging evidence suggests that programming and group activities can increase usage of recreational facilities.

- ▮ SUAs offer the opportunity for both parties to clarify their intent and roles in the partnership.

- ▮ Comprehensive agreements can address concerns about costs, liability, and authorized activities.

SUAs that address a range of issues help create confidence for the parties to the agreement, fostering the conditions necessary for successful sharing of resources while reducing the likelihood of termination.

Table 1 • Legal Elements of Shared Use Agreements

Examples:	SUA #1	SUA #2	SUA #3	SUA #4	SUA #5	SUA #6
Agreement Type	Application/ Agreement	Memorandum of Understanding	Appliation/ Permit	Contract	Agreement	Community Recreation Access Agreement
Term	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	—
Termination Clause	—	✓	—	—	✓	—
Dispute Resolution	—	+	—	—	✓	—
Indemnity	+++	—	—	✓	+++	—
Insurance	✓	✓	✓	✓	+++	—
Renewal	—	✓	—	—	✓	—
Cost Allocation	—	✓	—	—	✓	—
Equipment	✓	✓	✓	—	—	✓
Access/ Security	—	✓	—	—	✓	—
Custodial Services	—	—	—	—	✓	—
Maintnance/ Repair	—	✓	—	—	✓	—
Parking	—	—	—	—	—	—
Programs/ Services	—	✓	—	—	✓	—
Staffing	—	+++	—	—	✓	—
Use Period	✓	✓	✓	—	✓	—
Symbol Key:	✓ Issue addressed;		— Issue not addressed;			
	+++ Strong legal language;		+ Weak Legal Language			

In 2009, the Joint Use Statewide Task Force reached out to public health practitioners and representatives from the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) to develop district- and county-level shared use initiatives. Together, they founded the Joint Use Moving People to Play (JUMPP) Task Force. The goals of the JUMPP Task Force were to bring about two levels of school policy- and system-level changes: (1) a districtwide, joint use board policy that enables and encourages SUAs to be developed and implemented in each participating district, and (2) at least one site-specific (school-level) SUA adopted and implemented in the district as a way to showcase the application of the new SUA board policy.

A well-drafted agreement could help address barriers or challenges that may arise.

RESOURCES

- ▶ ChangeLab Solutions. Model Joint Use Agreement Resources: Increasing Physical Activity By Opening Up School Grounds. Available at: <http://changelabsolutions.org/publications/model-JUAs-national>
- ▶ UC Berkeley Center for Cities and Schools. A Policy Framework for Joint Use: Enabling and Supporting Community Use of K-12 Public School Facilities. Available at: http://citiesandschools.berkeley.edu/reports/policy-framework-for-joint-use%202014_proofed2.pdf
- ▶ Center for Training and Research Translation. Joint Use Moving People to Play (JUMPP) Los Angeles County Health Department. 2014. Available at: <http://www.centertrt.org/>

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE

- ▶ With declining budgets and resources, SUAs and the partnerships they support may offer important opportunities for cities and/or communities to promote physical activity at relatively lower cost as compared to other strategies.
- ▶ Collectively, the benefits of working with the JUMPP Task Force were evident by the higher number of school districts that instituted a programmatic element in their contractual arrangements (Table 1, ChangeLab Solutions; Lafleur et al, 2013).
- ▶ The achievements of the JUMPP Task Force represent emerging models of SUA design and practice that can be replicated and used to guide future shared-use efforts.

PERCEIVED BARRIERS

- ▶ Liability
- ▶ Budget Constraints
- ▶ Vandalism
- ▶ Operations/Maintenance
- ▶ Staffing, including Janitorial Staff
- ▶ Safety



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