20 years strong

AMERICA WALKS

Technical Assistance Services
From Leaders of the National Walking Movement

customs of NCHPAD

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Our Capabilities

Founded in 1997, America Walks is a national education and advocacy organization whose mission is to empower communities to create safe, accessible, and enjoyable places to walk and be physically active.

Unique among planning, design, and engineering firms, America Walks delivers affordable, high quality, and site-specific solutions to government, non-profit, and business clients. With more than 20 years of experience in advocacy campaigns and policy development, our TA services are based on proven strategies for engaging community stakeholders, building local walking movements, and developing the political will that leads to positive change. Because America Walks believes that walking is a basic right, we implement inclusive programs, develop equitable plans and public policies, and design fully accessible projects.

With professional skill sets in planning, public health, community organizing, local government, transportation systems, education, and research, America Walks’ staff and key partners offer the following range of services:

**Public Engagement**
- Strategic communications
- Walkable community workshops (WALKshops)

**Community Evaluation**
- Walkability audits
- Pedestrian safety audits
- Training in leading audits
- Crash data analyses
- Road safety assessments

**Planning Facilitation**
- Neighborhood planning
- Safe Routes to School plans
- Community pedestrian master plans
- Integrated multi-modal/trail planning
- State collaborative walkability plans

**Built Environment Interventions**
- Traffic calming
- Neighborhood Pop-Up Projects
- Tactical Urbanism Lending Library
- Streetscape design

**Public Policy Development**
- Vision Zero policies
- Complete Streets policies
- Walkability and Main Street Revitalization workshops
- Community advocacy training
- Toolkits and case studies

**Capacity-Building**
- Grants research and writing
- Walking movement leader training
- Walking College curriculum

“For more than two decades, America Walks has been the leader of the national walking movement. No other group knows more about strategies for building the capacity of local advocates, and best practices for creating safe, walkable communities.”

Dan Burden, Director of Inspiration and Innovation, Blue Zones
Examples of Our Services

Our workshops are designed to cultivate broad public support for walkable design, and provide leaders with the information they need to make the case for policy. We are the “go-to” source for building the local capacity to create change.

Community WALKshop
All-day workshop for community members and professionals, which combines best practices in starting a walking program with guidance on public policy and street design.

Walk Audit Training
Step-by-step instructions for planning, promoting, and leading a community walk audit - the most powerful strategy for getting your local walking movement started.

Vision Zero Policy Development
Community planning process, which starts with a statement that traffic deaths and serious injuries are preventable and ethically unacceptable, and ends with a Vision Zero safety goal.

Tactical Urbanism
Learn how to design and implement an inexpensive ‘pop-up’ demonstration project that engages residents in neighborhood safety and leads to permanent change.

“America Walks staff have expertise in a wide array of issues related to walkability, from public health to affordable housing to diversity of the movement. And they evaluate their work, so they know what is working well and what could work even better.”

Kate Robb, Senior Program Manager, American Public Health Association
Our Team

Kate Kraft, PhD, Executive Director
Kate has led America Walks since 2015. Previously, as a Senior Program Officer with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, she was the primary architect of RWJF’s Active Living portfolio. Kate is a recognized expert in the ways structural environments impact health, and her past work has resulted in collaboration between design, planning, transportation, and public health professionals to identify new methods for creating healthy communities for all.

Ian Thomas, PhD, State and Local Program Director
A specialist on the benefits of walkable communities and strategies for creating them, Ian headed up America Walks’ initiative to design and develop the Walking College. From 2000 until 2013, he was founding Executive Director of the PedNet Coalition of Columbia, MO, coordinating a campaign that led to Columbia adopting the first Complete Streets policy in Missouri, and launching one of the largest Walking School Bus programs in the U.S. In 2013, Ian was elected to City Council, where he spearheaded adoption of Columbia’s Vision Zero policy.

Heidi Simon, Deputy Director
Since joining America Walks in 2014, Heidi has transformed the organization’s communication strategy, growing the organization’s reach to more than 35,000, and leading the Every Body Walk! Collaborative. Previously, she managed external relations for federal government, corporate, and nonprofit clients in Washington, DC. Originally from Milwaukee, WI, Heidi holds degrees from Loyola University Chicago and George Washington University.

Emilie Bahr, AICP, Walking College Program Manager
Emilie is a writer and AICP-certified urban planner. She is passionate about walkable and bikeable communities, and has led active transportation coalitions in in her home state of Louisiana. Her writing has been published in the Huffington Post, Next City and Momentum magazines and her first book, Urban Revolutions: A Woman’s Guide to Two-Wheeled Transportation, was released in 2016. Emilie lives in the Bayou St. John neighborhood of New Orleans.

“America Walks brought a wealth of technical and organizational expertise to the table as we worked to integrate transportation and health needs in Georgia. I also benefitted personally from the Walking College – becoming a better communicator regarding the opportunities and issues surrounding walkability.”

Katelyn DiGioia, Civil Engineer, Georgia Dept. of Transportation

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