

## SUMMARY

Building upon successful efforts of the coalition requires increased and sustained community engagement and visibility. The dissemination of digital stories and participation in Bike Ajo bicycling events by community leaders and residents and the long-term commitment of partner agencies are key to the future success of Bike Ajo.

To learn more about Bike Ajo and all coalitions participating in Plan4Health, check out the project website ([www.plan4health.us](http://www.plan4health.us)). Join the national conversation at the intersection of planning and public health on social media by

## CHALLENGE

There is a great need for increased access to safe opportunities for physical activity, chronic disease prevention interventions, as well as innovative economic drivers. There are high rates of diabetes and chronic disease in Ajo. Desert Senita reports that more than 15% of their patients have been diagnosed with diabetes. That number is much higher than the 9 percent prevalence rate for the state of Arizona (Desert Senita Community Health Center, 2016). Recent studies

found that 71.4 percent of families in Ajo were living below the federal poverty line and there was a 15.1 percent unemployment rate, significantly higher than other areas within Pima County. Nearly half of the population identifies as Hispanic or Latino, a group that continues to experience significant chronic disease disparities. Data from the Ajo Unified School District shows that each grade had an obesity rate of at least 32 percent, with sixth grade reaching an alarming 57 percent

## YOUR INVOLVEMENT IS KEY

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*"When I first saw the bikes come into town my first thought was "How fortunate Ajo is for such an influx of resources for the school and community. I look forward to seeing how this will contribute to Ajo's energetic revival." Adrian Vega, community health worker and LAB Certified Bicycling Instructor."*

*- Aliza S Norcross*

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## SOLUTION

Bike Ajo Coalition is striving to promote biking, increase opportunities for physical activity, and develop corresponding diabetes prevention education and resources. The coalition has established a community cycling center by building upon existing projects in Tucson. Bike Ajo addresses barriers to biking including economic and safety concerns. The bicycling center provides extensive resources to the community including 50 bicycles, increased access to free helmets, and tools for bicycle maintenance and repair. A community bicycling and public health assessment serves as a blueprint for the project. Two other community assessments are in process focusing on Safe Routes to School and diabetes prevention. There are more than 130 small towns in Arizona with

## RESULTS

The Bike Ajo Coalition has developed the capacity in Ajo to promote physical activity opportunities and chronic disease prevention. New resources include a middle school bicycle program; 50 new bicycles, 600 helmets and tools; a high school health careers club; two League Certified bicycling instructors and newly trained community health workers (CHW). Training workshops and new partners in the Bike Ajo Coalition have increased the capacity of Bike Ajo to promote physical activity and prevent chronic disease in the community. New partners include the Ajo Unified School District, Perimeter Bicycling Association of America, the Southeast Arizona Area Health Education Center and Girls Scouts of Southern Arizona, Cabeza Prieta Wildlife Refuge, Organ Pipe National Monument and the Arizona Alliance of Community Health Centers. Training workshops on digital storytelling, CHW core competencies, bike safety and diabetes prevention will help sustain efforts and engage community members. Monthly cycling events, community rides and diabetes prevention resources are part of the ongoing work of the coalition.

## SUSTAINING SUCCESS