

The Role of Local Health Departments in Promoting Healthy Beverages: Changing Procurement Standards to Increase Access to Healthier Beverages



Background

Despite recent declines in sugar-sweetened beverage (SSB) consumption, Americans still consume far more SSBs than are good for their health. Recent studies show that SSBs are the single greatest source of added calories in the American diet.¹ In addition, in recent years Americans have consumed an additional 250–300 daily calories compared to several decades ago; nearly half of this increase can be attributed to greater consumption of SSBs.² The consequences of SSB consumption have been demonstrated by research that shows a clear link between the consumption of sugary drinks and higher rates of obesity and other chronic health problems such as diabetes, heart disease, and metabolic syndrome.^{3,4,5}

To reduce the complications associated with consumption of SSBs, local health departments (LHDs) and their community partners are working together to create conditions that help people make healthier choices. One key way that LHDs are working to reduce consumption of SSBs is through the development of food and beverage standards that provide guidelines for the types of food and beverages purchased and served on city or county properties.

Why Focus on Procurement?

State and local agencies can play a critical role in decreasing consumption of SSBs through changes to procurement strategies and promoting consumption of healthier foods and beverages. LHDs and governmental entities can largely accomplish these changes by leveraging their buying power to require healthier options through procurement standards. By setting institutional standards and supporting policies that increase access to healthier foods and beverages, governmental agencies can be a leader for other institutions and worksites by modeling healthier food and beverage policies that are in line with the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. In turn, procurement policies for purchasing and providing healthy foods and beverages can improve the health of the local community and the employees who work within these organizations.

Recommended Websites

Center for Science in the Public Interest: Healthier Food Choices for Public Places Webpage

This website includes resources, tools, and materials focused on food and nutrition guidelines for governments, worksites, hospitals, and organizations. Learn more at <http://bit.ly/Q3bRYm>.

Center for Science in the Public Interest: Community Commons Healthier Food Choices for Public Places (Procurement) Group

The Center for Science in the Public Interest is moderating a Procurement group on the Community Commons website. Users may post resources, pose questions to other group members, share insight about challenges, and generally work toward advancing healthy food procurement policies (vending, cafeterias, concessions, and meetings). Learn more at <http://bit.ly/1f3ka5k>.

National League of Cities (NLC): Institute for Youth, Education, and Families' "Let's Move! Cities, Towns and Counties" Website

This website includes information about the goals of the "Let's Move!" program, including strategies for the implementation of model food service guidelines that are aligned with the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* in municipal or county venues that serve food. Learn more at <http://bit.ly/1buk7Pf>.

Stories from the Field*

Los Angeles Department of Public Health

In 2006, the County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors passed a motion to increase access to healthier foods and beverages. Since the food policy's adoption, it has been reviewed and revised periodically and now requires that 100 percent of all snacks and beverages sold in vending machines on government property must meet nutrition standards for products lower in calories, sugar, sodium, and fat. Learn more at <http://bit.ly/GzOUfD> and scroll down to policy number 3.115.

In March 2011, the County Board of Supervisors passed an additional motion that requires all county departments to consult with the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (DPH) prior to the release of any requests for proposals for county food

services contracts that involve the purchase, distribution, or sale of food and beverages in county facilities. The motion was passed to ensure that contract language promotes healthy food and beverages and complies with DPH-recommended food and beverage standards. To learn more, visit <http://1.usa.gov/1fjMw5L> and scroll down to page 17.



New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

The New York City Food Standards were created with the goal of improving the health of all New Yorkers served by city agencies by decreasing their risk of chronic disease related to poor nutritional intake. The Standards for Meals/Snacks Purchased and Served, which were enacted September 2008, apply to over 260 million meals and snacks served annually at schools, senior centers, homeless shelters, child care centers, after-school programs, correctional facilities, public hospitals, and other New York City agency facilities and programs. New York City also has established standards for all food and beverage vending machines contracted by city agencies and for food served at meetings and events sponsored by city agencies. Learn more at <http://on.nyc.gov/1c9zmN4>.

Boston Public Health Commission

In 2011, Boston Public Health Commission assisted the City of Boston in developing an executive order that prohibits the sale of SSBs on city properties, such as schools, fire departments, and community centers. The policy covers beverages served in

cafeterias, vending machines, and concession stands, and at meetings, programs, and events where beverages are purchased with city funds. Learn more at <http://bit.ly/18TsqQR>.

San Francisco Department of Public Health

In 2010, the mayor of San Francisco issued an executive directive establishing nutrition standards for food and beverages sold through vending machines on city and county property. The standards for beverages prohibit calorically sweetened drinks, and 50 percent of foods sold must meet the nutrition standards. The standards were developed by the San Francisco Department of Public Health in collaboration with other city agencies and groups. Learn more at <http://bit.ly/1f385x1>.

Public Health – Seattle and King County

In April 2011, the King County Board of Health passed the King County Healthy Vending Guidelines. These voluntary guidelines support businesses, community-based organizations, and local governments that want to offer healthier food and beverages. The guidelines include three categories of food and beverages to assist people with making choices: healthiest, healthier, and food and beverages that should be limited. The standards are based upon calories, fat, sugar, and sodium content. In March 2013, the City of Seattle used the guidelines to implement a policy that requires at least half of items in vending machines on city-owned property to meet the healthier and healthiest food and beverage standards. To implement the policy, the City of Seattle set a goal to have at least 50 percent of items offered in the healthiest or healthier categories by June 2014. Public Health – Seattle and King County has also developed a Healthy Vending Implementation Guide to assist organizations with implementing the healthy vending guidelines. Learn more at <http://1.usa.gov/Z3Z7X5>.

Resources

Center for Science in the Public Interest

MODEL BILL: HEALTHY VENDING ON GOVERNMENT PROPERTY

This model state bill to expand healthy food choices in vending machines for state employees can be adapted for use at the local level. Learn more at <http://bit.ly/GBq7Ih>.

Center for Science in the Public Interest: National Alliance for Nutrition and Activity

MODEL BEVERAGE AND FOOD VENDING MACHINE STANDARDS

These vending standards provide a model for vending machines that are on public property or that are owned or leased by the municipal, state, and federal government. The

*This is not an exhaustive list of all LHDs that have been involved with the implementation of a procurement policy within their jurisdiction.

standards can also be used by hospitals, private workplaces, and other organizations to support the health of employees or visitors. Learn more at <http://bit.ly/YOH0W2>.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

IMPROVING THE FOOD ENVIRONMENT THROUGH NUTRITION STANDARDS: A GUIDE FOR GOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT

This guide provides practical guidance to states and local jurisdictions developing, adopting, implementing, and evaluating a food procurement policy. Learn more at <http://1.usa.gov/gkoPHK>.

Department of Health and Human Services

HEALTH AND SUSTAINABILITY GUIDELINES FOR FEDERAL CONCESSIONS AND VENDING OPERATIONS: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR EMPLOYEES

This document provides potential answers to questions employees and constituents may ask as healthy and sustainable food procurement policies are implemented. Learn more at <http://1.usa.gov/1c9MTnQ>.

ChangeLab Solutions

MAKING CHANGE: A GUIDE TO HEALTHIER VENDING FOR MUNICIPALITIES AND MODEL HEALTHY MUNICIPAL SNACK AND BEVERAGE VENDING AGREEMENT

This guide explores different options for municipalities looking to develop a healthy vending policy to improve the food environment for people working for, visiting, and being served by local government agencies. Model policy language for municipal snack and beverage vending agreements is also available, which assists in drafting and negotiating municipal vending contracts. Learn more at <http://bit.ly/T4IN8W>.

ChangeLab Solutions

UNDERSTANDING HEALTHY PROCUREMENT: USING GOVERNMENT'S PURCHASING POWER TO INCREASE ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOOD

This guide shows how state and local governments can adopt healthier procurement policies to help improve public health, lower overall costs, and provide leadership for the private sector to do the same. Learn more at <http://bit.ly/19P6Obo>.

Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)

HEALTH AND SUSTAINABILITY GUIDELINES FOR FEDERAL CONCESSIONS AND VENDING OPERATIONS

These guidelines represent the best practices in nutrition science for improving health and reducing impact to the environment. These guidelines translate the 2010 *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* into clear and definitive standards

that food service operators can follow to make their operations healthier and more sustainable. The guidelines apply to all food service concession operations and vending machines managed by HHS and the General Services Administration. Learn more at <http://1.usa.gov/hYlqiA>.

Fairmount Park Conservancy

CREATING HEALTHY CONCESSIONS: A RESOURCE GUIDE

This guidebook is a resource for community groups, local and state officials, non-profit organizations, and other partner agencies interested in bringing healthy food resources to their communities, improving their local parks, and building community capacity. Learn more at <http://bit.ly/17xLEv3>.

National Park Service

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE HEALTHY FOOD CHOICE STANDARDS AND SUSTAINABLE FOOD CHOICE GUIDELINES FOR FRONT COUNTRY OPERATIONS

In 2012, the National Park Service introduced food standards that require concessions at all national parks across the United States to offer healthy food options, including fruits and vegetables, low-sodium and low-fat meals, reduced portion sizes, and non-sugary drinks. Learn more at <http://bit.ly/1OZFEoT>.

Nemours Health and Prevention Services

HEALTHY VENDING GUIDE

These healthy vending guidelines provide sample policies to support and sustain healthy vending and marketing strategies to promote healthy options for people working for, visiting, and being served by local government agencies. Learn more at <http://bit.ly/19XGV3g>.

Public Health – Seattle and King County

HEALTHY VENDING TOOLKIT

This toolkit assists institutions interested in offering healthier food and beverages in vending machines. Learn more at <http://1.usa.gov/Z3Z7X5>.

Public Health Law Center, Health Care Without Harm, and the Minnesota Cancer Alliance

MINNESOTA HEALTHY BEVERAGES IN HEALTHCARE TOOLKIT

This toolkit includes a series of resources designed to inform and support efforts to promote healthy beverage choices and reduce consumption of unhealthy products within workplace settings in Minnesota, with a special focus on healthcare settings. Although the series focuses on beverages, many of the principles and approaches can also be applied to the food environment. Learn more at <http://bit.ly/GBrl6p>.

[ISSUE BRIEF]

October 2013



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Acknowledgments

This document was made possible through support from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Cooperative Agreement #5U38HM000449-05. NACCHO is grateful for this support. The views expressed within do not necessarily represent those of the sponsor. NACCHO thanks the following individuals who contributed to this document: Jennifer Kahn-Marshall, MPH, CHES, and Truemenda Green, MA.

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NACCHO

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The National Connection for Local Public Health



The mission of the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) is to be a leader, partner, catalyst, and voice for local health departments.

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