



MAYORS' GUIDE TO FIGHTING CHILDHOOD OBESITY



THE UNITED STATES
CONFERENCE OF MAYORS



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INTRODUCTION

The problem of obesity in the United States, including the alarming and growing rates of obesity among American children, is receiving increasing attention. At the same time, there is a growing realization that mounting an effective response to the problem will require a comprehensive approach involving a wide range of partners in the public and private sectors. Local government leaders are key actors in this effort since they can provide the vision, advocacy and policies to bring about extensive changes in the community environments in which children and their families live.

In 2006, the U.S. Conference of Mayors (USCM) surveyed mayors on their perceptions about childhood obesity in their communities, and their efforts to address the problem. A majority of respondents indicated that childhood obesity is a problem in their local communities and believe that they—in their capacity as mayors—could have an impact on the problem. In order to implement programs in their communities, mayors indicated that sample policies and information on funding opportunities would be the most useful resources. Responding to these needs, this guide provides information on sample policies (presented in the examples that follow suggested action steps) and selected funding opportunities (in the Resources section). USCM will continue to provide information that mayors can use to implement policies and programs in their communities in upcoming newsletters, conference workshops and on the USCM Web site.

How to Use This Guide

The *Mayors' Guide to Fighting Childhood Obesity* provides suggested action steps that mayors and other local government leaders can take to address the childhood obesity epidemic in their communities in three areas: the community food environment; the physical environment; and the school and out-of-school environment. Each suggested action step is backed by one or more examples of local policies and initiatives or programs that relate to that step. The examples here are not exhaustive but do provide a representative sample of the available options. There are many cities with exemplary policies, initiatives and programs that have not been referenced in this guide, but we will continue to seek out and highlight cities that are doing an outstanding job in our ongoing newsletters and reports.

To assist mayors who are ready to implement policies, programs and strategies that promote active living and healthy eating, especially among children, the USCM guide provides the following resources:

- **Health Observances Calendar:** Lists national health observance days, weeks or months related to active living and healthy eating that mayors and their staff can use to highlight new initiatives and programs.
- **Funding Sources:** Provides a selective list of national sources of funding for a wide range of efforts to support active living and healthy eating at the local level.

- **Informational Sources:** Provides a selective list of Web sites and online publications that provide important background information on the topics covered in this guide.

About The U.S. Conference of Mayors

USCM is the official non-partisan organization of cities with populations of 30,000 or more. There are 1,139 such cities in the country today. Each city is represented in the Conference by its chief elected official, the mayor.

The primary roles of The U.S. Conference of Mayors are to:

- promote the development of effective national urban/suburban policy;
- strengthen federal-city relationships;
- ensure that federal policy meets urban needs;
- provide mayors with leadership and management tools; and
- create a forum in which mayors can share ideas and information.

The Conference President—currently Seattle, Washington Mayor Greg Nickels—serves as the national spokesman for the mayors. The Vice President—currently Burnsville, Minnesota Mayor Elizabeth Kautz—and an Second Vice President—currently Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa—complete the bipartisan leadership team.

About the Mayors' Healthy Cities Campaign

The *Mayors' Healthy Cities Campaign* was launched in the spring of 2004 in response to the nation's growing obesity epidemic and its relationship to chronic diseases and certain types of cancers. Because chronic diseases—such as diabetes, high blood pressure, and heart disease—and obesity often can be prevented or alleviated through regular exercise and healthy eating, the *Mayors' Healthy Cities Campaign* focuses on ways that mayors can have an impact on the health of their constituents by:

- 1) establishing policies and programs that facilitate physical exercise and healthy eating, particularly among low-income individuals and racial and ethnic minorities; and
- 2) promoting the benefits of physical activity and healthy eating.

Currently, the campaign is addressing the nation's obesity epidemic by focusing on children, since the nation is raising the first generation who may live sicker and die younger than their parents. You can find out more about the Healthy Cities Campaign, and join the campaign by visiting: <http://usmayors.org/chhs/healthycities.asp>.

Leadership for Healthy Communities Initiative

The U.S. Conference of Mayors participates in *Leadership for Healthy Communities*, a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation designed to support local and state government leaders nationwide in their efforts to reduce childhood obesity through public policies that promote active living, healthy eating and access to healthy foods. The program advances policies to support healthy eating and active living and undertakes the following activities:

- educate state and local government leaders about the impact of public policies on the health of children and communities;
- create tools and materials that help governments implement active living and healthy-eating strategies;
- facilitate cooperation between state and local leaders;
- build peer support networks for leaders engaged in preventing childhood obesity;
- help leaders gain public support for preventing and addressing childhood obesity through high-impact activities, like town-hall meetings, public hearings, workshops and trainings; and
- engage diverse policy-makers and community members in strategies to promote healthy eating and active living.

In addition to USCM, other Leadership for Healthy Communities member organizations include:

[American Association of School Administrators](#) (AASA)
[International City/County Management Association](#) (ICMA)
[Local Government Commission](#) (LGC)
[National Association of Counties](#) (NACo)
[National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials](#) (NALEO)
[National Conference of State Legislatures](#) (NCSL)
[National Governors Association Center for Best Practices](#) (NGA)
[National League of Cities](#) (NLC)

For more information about Leadership for Healthy Communities, please visit www.leadershipforhealthycommunities.org.

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Through the Leadership for Healthy Communities program, USCM's work in the area of childhood obesity is supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the nation's largest philanthropy devoted exclusively to improving the health and health care of all Americans. The Foundation has committed at least \$500 million to reversing the childhood obesity epidemic by 2015. For more information about the Foundation, visit www.rwjf.org.

COMMUNITY FOOD ENVIRONMENT

The food environment's affect on poor nutrition has gained a lot of attention recently, reflecting the public's growing interest in the important role healthy food access plays in communities. Studies show that when people live in neighborhoods with supermarkets and other sources of fresh and nutritious food, their diets are healthier and they are less likely to suffer from obesity and diet-related diseases such as diabetes and heart disease.^{1,2,3,4,5} Mayors and other municipal leaders can play an important role in ensuring that all residents in their communities have access to healthy and affordable foods.

Food Policy

Although the production, distribution, and sale of food play a large role in local and regional economies, local and state governments do not have a department of food. As a result, various agencies address food-related issues within and across jurisdictions on an uncoordinated, ad hoc basis. As local and state governments increasingly respond to broader, emerging issues such as climate protection, environmental sustainability and improving access to healthy foods, there is a corresponding need to coordinate efforts and adopt a comprehensive approach to food policy.

► **ACTION STEP:** Conduct an assessment of your community's food system.

A good starting point for formulating local food policies is to make an inventory of the local food system in order to identify strengths and gaps in the system. To conduct the assessments, city governments may want to work with local nonprofit organizations that focus on food security issues. These types of organizations may be able to apply for private funding that could cover the cost of or help mitigate the cost of conducting the assessments.

City Examples:

- In 2005, collaboration between several **San Francisco** city government agencies and community organizations produced the [*San Francisco Collaborative Food System Assessment*](#), the goal of which is to compile and consolidate data from various sources in order to develop a comprehensive resource to help drive food-related policy and decision-making in the city and county of San Francisco. The assessment was funded by the Health Department's Environmental Health Section, a private foundation, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food Stamp Program.

► **ACTION STEP:** Form a local food policy council or assign staff to participate in an existing one.

Forming or participating in a food policy council (FPC) is one way that local governments can tackle increasingly complex issues related to food and food access. FPCs bring together stakeholders from diverse food-related sectors to examine how the food system is operating and to develop recommendations on how to improve it. Although councils may take a variety of forms, they are typically commissioned by state or local government, or are a grassroots effort. The first FPC was formed 20 years ago in the city of Knoxville, Tenn., and today there are almost 50 councils nationwide.⁶ FPCs are engaged in a number of areas that intersect with the current interests of local governments, including sustainable development, hunger and food security, health disparities, and the nation's obesity epidemic. Since FPCs are composed primarily of volunteers and are usually administered by nonprofit organizations working within public/private partnerships, their administration costs are generally low and may be paid in part by private sources.

City Examples:

- Some of the cities that have local government-affiliated councils that address food policy include: the **District of Columbia; Hartford, CT; Knoxville/Knox County, TN; New Haven, CT; Oakland, CA; Portland/Multnomah County, OR** and **San Francisco, CA.**⁷

► **ACTION STEP:** Ensure that your local food policy council addresses the issue of access to healthy and affordable food in underserved communities.

City Examples:

- The City of **Hartford** Advisory Commission on Food Policy has been instrumental in the creation and continued survival of a bus route that provides riders with direct and reliable access to several supermarkets. The commission also monitors and publishes supermarket prices to assist shoppers in making informed choices and monitors participation rates and the quality of food at Hartford's federally-funded Summer Food Service Program sites, which provide free summer meals to children in lower-income areas.⁸
- The joint [Portland/Multnomah Food Policy Council](#) (OR) has conducted a community food assessment and market basket survey in Lents, a lower-income neighborhood in southeast Portland. The council also has participated in an inventory of city-owned land suitable for agricultural uses, including community and school gardens, and has made recommendations to the Portland City Council on removing impediments to urban agriculture on city-owned land.⁹
- In June 2005, then Mayor Jerry Brown's Office of Sustainability initiated the [Oakland Food System Assessment](#) to begin a process of evaluating each element of the food system in Oakland, and to provide key baseline information on the various activities that represent it. This [baseline analysis](#) initiated discussion among city policymakers, staff, and community members to consider the impact that the city's food system might have on different areas of public concern.
- In **New York City**, Mayor Michael Bloomberg and the city council collaborated to create a Food Policy Task Force and the position of [Food Policy Coordinator](#) to combat both food insecurity and unhealthy eating. The Food Policy Coordinator and the Task Force are charged with overseeing and coordinating efforts to improve access to healthy foods in underserved communities, coordinating city agency food purchasing to ensure that the meals provided by city agencies are healthy and nutritious, and increasing enrollment in food stamp and other food support programs. The Food Policy Coordinator staffs the Task Force and is located in the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services.¹⁰ Among the Task Force's initial activities was a recommendation that the City adopt [Green Carts](#) to bring food carts with fresh fruits and vegetables to neighborhoods with limited access to fresh produce. The Task Force also facilitated a partnership between the Gerald J. and Dorothy R. Friedman Foundation, the Food Trust, the Food Bank for New York City, and the grocery industry to develop policies encouraging supermarket operators to locate in neighborhoods in need of improved access to healthy foods.

Field Code Changed

► **ACTION STEP:** Pass local food policies requiring foods and beverages purchased with government funds or offered at public facilities to meet good nutrition standards.

Another area in which mayors and other local officials can make important changes to the community food environment is to adopt food policies governing the types of foods that can be purchased with government funds or made available at public facilities.

City Examples:

- The [City of Berkeley Food and Nutrition Policy](#) requires that the food served in city programs (e.g., youth centers, senior centers, summer camp programs, etc.), and city-sponsored events and meetings be nutritious, fresh, culturally diverse, regionally grown and organic. It also contains language that supports local and regional food systems, equitable access to nutritious food for all residents and formal links to the Berkeley Food Policy Council.
- The **Baldwin Park** (CA) [Healthy Policy Yields Healthy Minds initiative](#) addresses the nutrition needs of young people by requiring healthy vending machine offerings at city youth-oriented facilities such as the teen center, community center, family service center, public pool and city parks.
- [The Chicago Food Policy Advisory Council](#) facilitates and informs the development of responsible policies that improve access for Chicago residents to culturally appropriate nutritionally sound and affordable food that is grown using environmentally sustainable practices. The council was formed in 2002 as a result of the Chicago Community Trust-sponsored Illinois Food Summit and with funding from Chicago Community Trust. [Building Chicago's Community Food Systems](#) is the Council's latest report.
- San Francisco's [Healthy and Sustainable Food Policy](#) requires the city's department of public health to purchase foods for department events, programs and institutions that is healthy, environmentally sound and acquired from sustainable sources. The policy, which currently only applies to the health department, could eventually serve as the basis for a citywide food purchasing policy.
- **San Jose** (CA) has two policies governing the nutritional content of foods and drinks stocked in their public libraries and city-owned or operated locations. The [library vending machine policy](#) requires that 100 percent healthy food and drink choices be offered in library vending machines and sets specific nutritional standards such as requiring that food offerings be low in fat and that beverages be limited to such choices as water and 100 percent fruit or vegetable juice.¹¹ The city has another [policy governing vending machine offerings at city owned or operated locations](#) other than public libraries. In those settings, the policy specifies that 50 percent of offerings should be healthy and establishes nutritional standards for those offerings.¹²
- The [Seattle-King County Acting Food Policy Council](#) (WA) aims to ensure that all residents have access to nutritious, fresh food that is produced and distributed in a just

manner; and that farming, food processing and distribution flourish as part of the local economy and contribute to a healthy environment.

**Acknowledgement: This section was prepared with assistance from food policy expert, Mark Winne.*

Grocery Retail

Lower-income communities often have a dearth of full-service grocery stores and an abundance of convenience stores and fast-food outlets that sell high-calorie, nutrition-poor food. A recent national study examined neighborhoods across 28,050 U.S. ZIP codes for disparities in access to food stores and found that low-income neighborhoods had 25 percent fewer chain supermarkets than did middle-income neighborhoods.¹³ The "grocery gap" in inner-city neighborhoods has been well documented for a growing number of U.S. cities and counties, such as Los Angeles County,¹⁴ Philadelphia,¹⁵ Washington, DC¹⁶ and Chicago. Increasing the number of supermarkets in underserved neighborhoods has the potential to facilitate economic development and help ensure that all residents of a community have convenient, affordable access to healthy food.

► **ACTION STEP:** Prioritize supermarket development in underserved neighborhoods.

The leadership of mayors and other municipal leaders is essential in attracting new supermarket development to inner-city neighborhoods. City governments can actively recruit developers, identify and assemble parcels of land to be developed for grocery retail, offer financial incentives and streamline the approval process.

City Examples:

- In **Washington, D.C.**, a new full-service supermarket in the city's poorest ward, where the last full-service store closed almost a decade ago, opened in late 2007. In 2001, under then-Mayor Anthony A. Williams, the District—which owned the land on which the new supermarket was built on—sold the property to a development team for \$500,000, with the requirement that the developer lease space to a supermarket.¹⁷
- **San Francisco** Mayor Gavin Newsom was instrumental in attracting a new full-service grocery store to the Bayview Hunter's Point neighborhood—a predominately lower-income neighborhood that lacks a full-service supermarket—after promising to do so at a town-hall meeting. Groundbreaking for the new Fresh & Easy supermarket—a division of the British-based TESCO—began in December 2007.¹⁸ The supermarket will be part of a mixed-use development combining retail space with 360 condominiums. According to a [press release](#) from the mayor's office, "the Mayor's Office of Economic and Workforce Development (MOEWD) played an instrumental role in the project by connecting Fresh & Easy with Noteware Development, the developer of the housing units. MOEWD asked a national community development organization, Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC),

to provide New Markets Tax Credits financing to help close the financial gap in the project. The New Market Tax Credit program, run by the U.S. Department of Treasury, is designed to stimulate investment and economic growth in lower-income urban neighborhoods.”

- In **Gary** (IN), the city combined market analysis with a package of tax abatements, empowerment zone benefits and assistance with land assembly to attract supermarkets. The city council used data from a marketing assessment to successfully attract a nationally recognized grocery franchise—County Market, owned by SuperValu—to develop a site that had been vacant for seven years.¹⁹
- A program in **Chicago**—[Retail Chicago](#)—based in the Department of Planning and Development—is a retail development program with an emphasis on grocery retail. The program offers retailers and developers centralized project management and city support for retail projects; a single point of access for inquiries about development opportunities; customized market information; a strategic plan to coordinate new developments with developer and neighborhood needs; and a package of financial incentives. These services coupled with an aggressive outreach program that includes an annual [Grocery Expo](#) and bus tours of targeted sites for potential developers has resulted in the opening of a number of new supermarkets in lower-income neighborhoods.
- Since 2002, almost 20 new grocery stores have been developed in **Baltimore** (MD) through public-private partnerships under the leadership of former Mayor Martin O’Malley, who promised to bring quality goods and services to the city. Among the new stores is a full-service Giant supermarket that was developed with public-private funds, including \$550,000 from the mayor and city council.²⁰

► **ACTION STEP:** Prevent the loss of supermarkets particularly in undeserved neighborhoods.

City Examples:

- A **San Francisco** [ordinance](#) amends the city’s planning code to remove barriers to opening a grocery store when it replaces another grocery store, thereby ensuring that a grocery store that closes can be replaced by another one as quickly as possible.²¹
- A **Chicago** substitute [ordinance](#)—thought to be the first of its kind—limits the ability of grocers and drugstore owners who have closed a store from using restrictive land use covenants to prevent competitors from opening a store on the vacated parcel of land. The ordinance notes that restrictive covenants “serve no public purpose but instead have significant deleterious and blighting effects on the affected community’s health, safety and general welfare.”

► **ACTION STEP:** Ensure that residents in lower-income neighborhoods can access supermarkets quickly and cheaply through public transportation.

The scarcity of supermarkets in many lower-income neighborhoods often lead transit-dependent shoppers to take several buses or pay for costly cab rides to reach supermarkets, where they can purchase a greater variety of food items at lower prices than in small neighborhood stores. The forced dependency of many lower-income families on public transit to take them to supermarkets limits the frequency of shopping trips, as well as the purchase of groceries in general and perishable foods in particular. Lack of transportation further limits the ability to shop in bulk, translating into higher prices paid per item. Mayors and municipal leaders can work with local transportation agencies and retailers to ensure that shoppers in underserved neighborhoods can get to supermarkets directly, quickly, reliably and affordably.

City Examples:

- In **Hartford**, the [Advisory Commission on Food Policy](#) advocated for the establishment and continued survival of the L-Tower Avenue bus route, which allows riders to travel directly across town without transferring, providing them quicker and more reliable access to supermarkets and other important destinations.²²
- In **Knoxville**, the local mass transit system—Knoxville Area Transit (KAT)—runs a program called [Shop and Ride](#) in which participating retailers (currently two large supermarket chains and a food co-op) give passengers free tickets when they spend a minimum amount at their stores (usually \$10). The tickets, once validated by the store, can be used for a one-way ride on any KAT route.

► **ACTION STEP:** Encourage small store owners in underserved areas to carry healthier food items.

In many inner-city neighborhoods, small corner and convenience stores are the closest or only source of groceries. Too often, however, such stores carry snack foods of limited nutritional value and rarely stock healthier foods and fresh produce. A number of innovative local projects involve working with small store owners to improve the quality of their food offerings. These projects recognize that it is not always feasible to build new grocery stores and concentrate, instead, on improving the nutritional quality of foods and beverages sold at existing stores. City governments have supported these efforts in a variety of ways, including participating in initiatives that encourage store owners to carry healthier food items.

City Examples:

- In **New York City**, the health department is working with neighborhood bodega owners through its [Healthy Bodegas Initiative](#) to promote the offering of lower-fat milk and fresh produce in communities that have the highest rates of poverty and diet-related health diseases in the city. The program stems from studies conducted by the [Brooklyn District](#) and [Harlem District](#) public health offices, which found that small

grocery stores (bodegas) in those communities are the most common food retailers, yet most do not offer a variety of affordable nutritious foods such as low-fat milk, whole grains, or produce.

- **San Francisco's [Good Neighbor Program](#)** is a public-private partnership (public partners include the city's departments of public health and the environment, the Mayor's Office of Economic and Workforce Development, the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, and Supervisor Sophie Maxwell's Office) that provides local merchants in the Bayview Hunters Point neighborhood—a predominantly lower-income neighborhood with one grocery store and over 40 liquor stores—with economic incentives to engage in health promoting practices, including offering healthier foods. Participating retailers that commit to stocking fresh produce and healthy foods, accept food stamps and limit tobacco and alcohol advertising and sales, are offered a stepped-up incentive program that includes benefits such as refrigerated storage for produce.
- In **Hartford (CT)**, the [Healthy Food Retailer Initiative](#)—run by a local nonprofit organization of which the City of Hartford Mayor's Office is a partner—is working with neighborhood retailers to reduce their junk food inventories and increase shelf space devoted to healthier offerings. Hartford has only one major supermarket but numerous corner markets and bodegas. Participating retailers receive door stickers identifying them as a Healthy Food Retailer, free publicity and linkages to wholesalers who can provide better food.
- In **Philadelphia**, an innovative state-sponsored initiative—the [Green Supermarket Initiative](#)—is encouraging small independent grocers in underserved neighborhoods to increase their offering of healthy foods by renovating their stores using green building practices and energy-saving equipment. “Green” features such as energy-efficient lighting and refrigerators, and a ductless HVAC system minimize the additional energy costs associated with the refrigeration needed to stock fruits and vegetables, and can serve as an economic incentive for participating grocers to carry more fresh produce.

Farmers' Markets

Farmers' markets can serve as an important supplemental source of fresh and nutritious food, particularly for people who live in neighborhoods that lack grocery stores or reliable transportation to grocery stores. In fact, research shows that access to farmers' markets increases fruit and vegetable consumption among lower-income participants.²³ In states like California, where fresh produce is available year-round, farmers' markets can play an even larger role in meeting nutritional needs. In 2006, there were 4,385 farmers markets in the U.S., up from 1,755 in 1994.²⁴

► **ACTION STEP:** Enact policies and programs that support farmers' markets.

Many city governments support local farmers' markets by designating public land for markets and providing logistical support such as traffic control and cleanup. Some cities provide additional support in the form of dedicated staff positions, a centralized source of support within the city administration, or policies that encourage the growth of new markets.

City Examples:

- In **New York City**, the [Greenmarkets Program](#) of the Council on the Environment of New York City (CENYC), a nonprofit entity that is affiliated with the Office of Mayor, establishes new markets in the city based on neighborhood need, manages the markets, and secures private funding for their continued operation. There are more than 40 greenmarkets throughout the city, serving approximately 250,000 New Yorkers weekly.
- The City of **Ann Arbor** (MI) which has been running its farmers' market since 1919, formalized its role in 1998 through an ordinance that outlines the rules and regulations that govern the market. Another ordinance established a Farmers' Market Commission, which serves as an advisory board to guide daily market operations. Prospective members are nominated by the mayor and confirmed by the city council. In addition, the city employs a full-time market manager who is based in the Department of Parks and Recreation.²⁵
- **San Francisco** recently passed an [ordinance](#) that will lead to the development of new farmers' markets throughout the city by authorizing markets to be located on public park land. The ordinance also contains several provisions intended to support the establishment of markets in underserved areas.

► **ACTION STEP:** Ensure that farmers' markets are accessible to individuals in lower-income or underserved neighborhoods.

There is a wide range of strategies that mayors and other local government leaders can employ to ensure that individuals in lower-income neighborhoods know about farmers' markets in their community, can access them easily and can afford to shop there. One strategy is to locate markets in areas where lower-income individuals live or work. Another is to promote the markets through the media, through outreach programs tailored specifically to lower-income communities, and through incentive programs. Finally, enabling lower-income shoppers to buy produce using their food stamp coupons or Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards, and making the markets easily accessible by public transportation, is essential in promoting markets in underserved communities. While the introduction of EBT cards has posed special challenges for farmers' markets because of their outdoor location and lack of telephone service and electrical power needed to operate EBT devices, several cities and states are implementing programs that provide support for the purchase of wireless EBT devices at farmers' markets to increase sales among EBT card users.

City Examples:

- As part of an ongoing initiative of the city of **New York** to bring affordable and healthy food to underserved communities, 10 new farmers' markets were established

through the city-affiliated Greenmarkets program in predominantly lower-income or underserved communities. Several of the sites are located on the grounds of public housing complexes. Shoppers are able to use senior coupons, Women, Infants and Children (WIC) coupons, and EBT cards at many of the markets for produce purchases.²⁶ In a related effort, the city's health department runs the [Health Bucks Program](#), which distributes vouchers redeemable at farmers' markets for the purchase of produce. The vouchers are distributed at community events in neighborhoods with high rates of obesity and diabetes. In addition, the city council launched a pilot project to increase the use of food stamps at farmers' markets throughout the city by equipping several markets with EBT terminals.²⁷

- A collaboration between the city of **Somerville (MA)** and several community organizations ensures that the Union Square farmers' market, located in an ethnically and economically diverse section of the city, is accessible to all residents. The market is held in a municipally-owned parking lot within walking distance of several bus lines. The health department conducted a variety of outreach activities including meeting with lower-income and non-English speakers at local gatherings (e.g. faith-based meetings) and distributing information about the market and nutrition education and cooking tips in four languages. In addition, the health department purchased and has agreed to absorb the maintenance costs of an EBT machine, which accepts food stamp benefit cards at both of the city's farmers' markets. To encourage recipients of food stamp benefits to shop at the market, the city offers an incentive of \$1 for every \$5 spent using an EBT card to the first 500 food stamp customers.²⁸
- In **Minneapolis (MN)**, a project made possible through the city's federally-funded [STEPS to a Healthier Minneapolis](#) initiative has led to the formation of five mini-farmers' markets (featuring one to four participating farmers) located directly in lower-income neighborhoods, often just steps away from where families live, work or regularly visit. The locations include two senior high-rise apartment buildings, an African-American church, an immigrant community center, and the county hospital. In the future, project organizers hope to expand the markets to several public housing complexes. Preliminary research indicates that the proportion of fresh produce consumed by market shoppers at lower-income sites increased up to 44 percent since the markets were opened.²⁹

Community Gardens

Community gardens provide underserved communities with the opportunity to grow their own affordable fruits and vegetables and can help address issues of poor nutrition by increasing residents' consumption of fresh produce. In addition to providing the health benefits of fresh produce, community gardens can also beautify open space, raise nearby property values³⁰, foster a sense of community and provide educational opportunities for children and adolescents.

► **ACTION STEPS:** Convert brownfields or other blighted areas into green spaces that can be used for community gardens.

Many cities have a large number of vacant parcels of land that have resulted from a decades-old pattern of migration to suburbs and abandonment of inner-city neighborhoods. Mayors and other municipal leaders can facilitate the transformation of some of these lots into community gardens in order to promote healthy eating in their communities. When properly redeveloped, even contaminated vacant sites, or brownfields, can be safely converted for agricultural purposes.

City Examples:

- [GreenThumb](#), a program of **New York’s** Parks and Recreation Department, supports more than 600 gardens serving nearly 20,000 residents. Funded by federal Community Development Block Grants, the majority of *GreenThumb* gardens were originally derelict vacant lots located in economically disadvantaged community planning districts.
- In **Hartford** (CT), a hazardous brownfield adjacent to a local school in one of the city’s poorest neighborhoods was transformed into a 1.74-acre green space that includes open playing space, a nature path and a community garden cultivated and maintained by students from the nearby school. As an added benefit, fresh produce from the community garden is donated to the local soup kitchen.³¹
- The city of **Irvine** (CA) turned vacant, unproductive land unsuitable for conventional landscaping into the [Incredible Edible Park](#) through community action and a strong public-private partnership. The park, which spans 7.5 acres, contains garden plots that are nurtured by community volunteers and produce harvests that are distributed to local food pantries. A bike trail that runs alongside the park provides residents with an opportunity for physical activity. The city of Irvine contributed the use of the leased property and provides project coordination and oversight.³²

► **ACTION STEP:** Support policies that promote and protect community gardens.

While barriers such as liability expenses, code restrictions on landscaping and a lack of resources may make it difficult for communities to establish or maintain gardens in their neighborhoods, mayors and other municipal leaders can promote and protect community gardens through resolutions, land use plans or zoning ordinances. They can further promote gardens by providing city resources to nonprofit groups who run community gardens.

City Examples:

- The **Portland** (OR) zoning code contains specific provisions for community gardens, defining them as part of the Parks and Open Areas category of its City Code³³. In addition, the city’s Parks and Recreation Department has a [Community Gardens Office](#) that devotes staff to assisting volunteers with developing and maintaining community gardens.

- **Chicago’s** award-winning [NeighborSpace](#) program is an intergovernmental partnership that is authorized to purchase properties and protect them as open space for a variety of purposes including the establishment of community gardens.
- **San Francisco’s** Recreation and Parks Department supports and manages a program of [40 community gardens \(and growing\)](#) on city-owned property. Each garden is operated by a group of committed volunteers for growing ornamentals and produce for personal use through individual or shared plots.
- **Seattle’s** 20-year comprehensive plan establishes a goal of “one community garden for every 2,500 households in an urban village and urban center.” Further support for community gardens can be found in a 2000 City Council [resolution](#) setting forth a five-year plan to expand the city’s community gardens. In addition, the city’s Department of Neighborhoods runs the [P-Patch Program](#) (a local term for community gardens) in conjunction with a local nonprofit organization. Program staff provides extensive assistance to community groups in evaluating, acquiring, developing and managing gardens.
- **San Diego’s** [Community Farms and Gardens Resolution](#) formally recognizes the value of community farms and gardens and pledges to encourage their creation and continued existence.

► **ACTION STEP:** Make community gardens accessible to lower-income individuals.

To ensure that lower-income residents can participate in community gardening, it is important to remove barriers that may prevent them from participating. For example, reducing or waiving plot fees or locating the gardens within walking distance of lower-income neighborhoods may increase participation.

City Example:

- In **Seattle**, the [Cultivating Communities Program](#)—a partnership between the City’s P-Patch Program, the Seattle Housing Authority, and Friends of P-Patch, a local nonprofit—operates ten community gardens within four lower-income housing communities. The program makes the gardens accessible to lower-income residents by reducing or waiving plot fees for them.

► **ACTION STEP:** Support youth gardens and related nutrition education programs.

Exposure to community gardens can teach children about the importance of fresh produce and nutrition and provide opportunities for physical activity and interactive learning. For example, students may be able to apply their math skills to take measurements to design garden plots, use ratios to mix plant food or calculate the harvest date for fruits and vegetables.

City Examples:

- **New York’s** Council on the Environment (CENYC) runs a pilot project in the South Bronx called “[Learn It, Grow It, Eat It](#)” which offers nutrition education to local public school students. The project involves teaching students about healthy eating through classroom nutrition education, hands-on gardening experience in a local community garden and field trips to local farmers’ markets.
- Another **Seattle** P-Patch program—the [Cultivating Youth Program](#)—offers nutrition and gardening classes at a local elementary school and runs year-round, after-school programs at three youth gardens located in Seattle Housing Authority communities.

Fast Food, Chain and other Restaurants

Americans are eating out more often. In 1970, Americans spent 26 percent of their food dollars on meals prepared outside their homes; today that figure is 46 percent.³⁴ Because restaurant foods are generally higher in calories and saturated fat and lower in nutrients than meals prepared at home, eating out may lead to over-consumption of calories and contribute to obesity. Children’s nutrition is particularly affected by the eating-out trend. Thirty percent of U.S. children and adolescents eat fast food on a typical day.³⁵ Moreover, many consumers are not aware of the caloric and nutritional content of the food they eat outside the home.³⁶ Responding to the nation’s obesity epidemic, a number of cities, states and counties are taking steps to enact or consider strategies that can help consumers make more informed nutritional choices when eating out.

► **ACTION STEP:** Require nutrition labeling at fast food and other chain restaurants.

City Examples:

- In December 2006, **New York City** [amended its health code](#) to require restaurants that already offer nutritional information to display the calorie count of their fare on menus or menu boards. It was the first city in the nation to do so.³⁷
- In November 2008, **Philadelphia** passed a [strong menu labeling requirement](#) for chain restaurants. In September 2008, **California** became the first state to pass a menu-labeling law. **Chicago** and the **District of Columbia** have considered legislation requiring chain restaurants to display nutritional information on menus and menu boards. Similar bills are pending before state legislatures in at least 17 states and the list is expected to grow.³⁸
- **New York City**, **Boston**, and **Baltimore** are among the cities that have banned the use of trans fats by the food service industry.

► **ACTION STEP:** Work with restaurants to identify healthy choices on menus.

Several cities have launched programs that promote healthier food selections in local restaurants. These programs allow diners to identify restaurants that serve healthy dishes and to select healthy menu options at those restaurants. They also help promote local restaurants.

City Examples:

- In **Somerville** (MA), the [Shape Up Somerville](#) program—a community healthy eating and active living initiative that works closely with city government—helps local restaurants to identify healthy menu options. Participating restaurants receive a “Shape Up Approved” sticker for display in their window if they offer: low fat dairy products, some dishes in a smaller portion size, fruits and vegetables as side dishes, and if they display visible signs that highlight their healthier menu options.
- In **Berkeley** (CA) the [Eat Well Berkeley](#) program identifies restaurants that meet its overall criteria for healthy eating, as well as individual healthy menu items at each restaurant. Some of the criteria include: no trans fats, a fruit or vegetable side dish and a lean meat option, healthy options on the kid’s menu and at least two dietician-approved dishes. Participating restaurants receive special window decals, sticker or logos to use on menus to highlight approved dishes, table tents, a certificate or recognition, and listing on the *Eat Well Berkeley* website and in the program brochure.

► **ACTION STEP:** Adopt zoning laws that limit the presence of fast food establishments.

Not only are fast-food restaurants common in lower-income neighborhoods, in some cities, like Chicago, they are concentrated within a short walking distance from schools.³⁹ One community level strategy is to pass zoning restrictions on fast food outlets. Although many cities and towns have already passed zoning restrictions, many were not passed with specific public health intentions. Several cities and towns have banned fast-food restaurants altogether throughout the entire municipality, others have banned them in certain neighborhoods, others have limited their number or regulated their density, and several have put restrictions on their distance from schools and other sites. In most cases, these measures have been undertaken to restrict over-development and preserve the character of a community. Legal experts have suggested that zoning to restrict fast-food establishments because of public health concerns—specifically for the prevention of obesity—is a feasible option for municipalities to consider.⁴⁰

City Examples:

- **Concord**⁴¹(MA), **Carlsbad**⁴² (CA), and **Newport**⁴³ (RI) have banned fast-food or drive-in restaurants throughout the entire municipality.
- **San Francisco**⁴⁴ has banned formula restaurants in two specific commercial districts.
- **Arcata** (CA) has a zoning ordinance that caps the number of formula restaurants at nine (the existing number), which bars a new formula restaurant from locating within the city unless it replaces an existing one.⁴⁵

- In June 2007, **Los Angeles** City Councilwoman Jan Perry proposed an ordinance to require an up to [one-year moratorium on new fast food restaurants](#) in South LA, which has the city’s highest concentration of fast food eateries. The ordinance was *specifically* intended to address the area’s high rates of obesity and lack of places to buy healthy food.⁴⁶ The proposal was approved subsequently by the council’s Planning and Land Use Committee in December 2007 and by the full council in August 2008.

► **ACTION STEP:** Adopt zoning regulations that limit the location of vending trucks near public properties such as schools parks and recreational facilities.

Foods sold by mobile truck vendors are often highly processed and of minimal nutritional value. The easy availability of such foods near places where children congregate can promote unhealthy eating. Regulations that limit the availability of such foods near schools, parks, playgrounds and recreational facilities can limit children’s exposure to minimally nutritious foods associated with unhealthy diets, as well as to vehicle exhaust and the potential for auto-related injuries.

City Examples:

► **San Francisco** has a [2007 ordinance](#) prohibiting mobile catering vehicles from selling within 1,500 feet of San Francisco public schools.

► **Santa Ana** (CA) has a [regulation](#) that establishes a minimum distance of 500 feet between vending trucks and school, parks and recreational facilities.

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PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The built environment impacts children’s opportunities to be physically active on a daily basis. Factors such as the availability and condition of sidewalks and bike paths, safety features such as crosswalks, proximity of homes to schools and local destinations and proximity to playgrounds, parks and recreational facilities can affect whether and how often children engage in physical activity. The advocacy of mayors and other local government leaders is vital to implementing long-lasting policy changes that can create environments that support physical activity for all residents.

Land Use Planning and Active Living

In the past few years, there has been increased dialogue between the fields of urban planning and public health. Mayors and other local government leaders can encourage this interdisciplinary dialogue by convening meetings to discuss public health considerations in local land use planning and encouraging city planners to incorporate public health goals—such as promoting active living—into the planning process.

► **ACTION STEP:** Encourage city planners to incorporate active living considerations into the planning process.

City Examples:

- The **San Francisco** health department’s Environmental Health Section conducted a “Health Impact Assessment” of the health benefits and burdens of development in several city neighborhoods. The assessment resulted in the creation of a [Healthy Development Measurement Tool](#), which city agencies can use to incorporate public health considerations into their planning activities. The tool defines active living indicators related to walking and biking, pedestrian and bicyclist safety, and parks and open spaces. It also includes language about access to healthy foods.
- The California cities of [Chino](#) and [Richmond](#), which are currently in the process of developing general plans as required by state law, are going one step further by incorporating public health elements into their plans—even though they are not required to do so. The public health elements include opportunities for physical activity and healthy eating. These cities are among the first in the state to include a public health component in their general plans.
- Cities are also incorporating public health language related to active living and healthy eating in their sustainability plans, even though the primary purpose of these plans is related to broader environmental concerns. For example, [Sacramento’s Sustainability Master Plan](#) has a chapter entitled “Public Health and Nutrition,” which

contains measurable goals such as: maximizing the quantity of roads in the city that are Complete Streets, maximizing the number of amenities such as parks and grocery shops that are located within a half mile of all residents so that all citizens can walk to six or more amenities, and promoting and supporting community gardening.

► **ACTION STEP:** Encourage Smart Growth and other policies that promote active living.

Smart Growth principles, such as creating walkable neighborhoods, promoting mixed-use development, providing a variety of transportation choices and preserving open spaces, support active living by providing opportunities for people to incorporate activity into their daily lives. A new tool to help communities implement Smart Growth objectives is the use of [form-based codes](#), which emphasize the form—or design—of the built environment over its use, as is the case with conventional zoning.

City Examples:

- Form-based codes have been used in developing new planned communities, in guiding redevelopment efforts in existing neighborhoods, and in wholesale code revisions for entire communities. Some of the cities that have adopted form-based codes include: [Arlington \(VA\)](#), [Petaluma \(CA\)](#), and [Hercules \(CA\)](#).

Pedestrian and Bicycle-Oriented Transportation

The condition and safety of community streets and sidewalks are significant factors in residents' ability to incorporate regular exercise into their lives. In order to improve air quality and encourage residents to be more active, states and local jurisdictions are increasingly adopting policies that promote walking and biking as alternative means of transportation.

► **ACTION STEP:** Develop Pedestrian and/or Biking Master Plans or incorporate pedestrian and biking elements into your Comprehensive Plan.

City Examples:

- **Portland** (OR) adopted a [Pedestrian Master Plan](#) in 1998, one of the first cities nationwide to do so. The plan includes pedestrian policies, design guidelines, priorities for capital improvement projects and funding recommendations.
- **Chicago's** [Bike 2015 Plan](#) is an attempt to make bicycling “an integral part of daily life in Chicago.” Among its goals are the creation of a 500-mile bikeway network and the establishment of a bikeway within a half-mile of every resident. The leadership of Mayor Richard Daley, who has a stated goal of making “the City of Chicago the most bicycle-friendly city in the United States,” has been a key factor in the adoption and implementation of the plan.

► **ACTION STEP:** Support policies and initiatives that require streets to be designed for all users including pedestrians and cyclists.

A leading trend in efforts to ensure that streets are bikeable and walkable is the adoption of Complete Streets policies, which call for streets to be designed and operated to enable safe access for all users of all ages and abilities. These policies require transportation agencies to shift their orientation from building streets primarily for cars to building them for a broader range of users—a significant departure from the way that transportation systems have been designed in recent decades.

City Examples:

- Nationwide, Complete Streets policies have been adopted in 18 states and, within those states, in approximately 23 cities. (For a list of cities that have adopted Complete Streets policies, visit the [Thunderhead Alliance's](#) website). Chicago's [Complete Streets Policy](#), adopted in October 2006, is considered a model policy.
- The [Safe Streets for Chicago](#) program is a comprehensive pedestrian safety initiative of the **Chicago** Department of Transportation that includes such measures as stepped-

up traffic enforcement, crosswalk awareness campaigns for motorists and pedestrian countdown signals.

Recreation Facilities, Parks, Trails and Greenways

Proximity and easy access to places where people can be active—such as parks and trails—are key factors in increasing the likelihood that people will be physically fit. Mayors and other local government leaders can play a pivotal role in ensuring that cities develop a network of parks, trails, greenways and recreation centers that serves all neighborhoods, including underserved ones where residents have few safe, reliable facilities to be physically active. They can:

- convene stakeholders and mobilize community support for the development of parks and other public recreation facilities;
- encourage the development of joint-use agreements between the school district and the parks department;
- prioritize the development of new parks and recreation facilities in their city planning documents; and
- secure city and other public and private funding to support such projects.

► **ACTION STEP:** Prioritize the development of an interconnected system of trails, parks and greenways in your community to increase opportunities for physical activity.

City Examples:

- The **Atlanta** [BeltLine Initiative](#) addresses urban sprawl, traffic and a dearth of park land and green space by proposing the creation of a 22-mile corridor of interconnected parks, trails and light-rail routes encircling downtown and midtown Atlanta. When completed, the BeltLine will connect nearly 45 in-town neighborhoods and add almost 1,300 acres of new green space to the city, including improvements to almost 700 acres of existing parks. The leadership of Mayor Shirley Franklin, who has identified the BeltLine as a priority of her administration, has been essential to its creation and continued development.
- The **Detroit** City Council recently approved a Non-Motorized Transportation Master Plan. The City developed the [Detroit Non-motorized Transportation Master Plan](#), which calls for various improvements for walking and biking in Detroit, including greenways and nearly 400 miles of bike lanes.

► **ACTION STEP:** Prioritize the development of parks and playgrounds in close proximity to all residents particularly those in underserved communities.

Mayors and other local government leaders can improve children's access to places where they can play and stay fit through a number of strategies, including:

- ensuring that there are playgrounds or open spaces within walking distance of all neighborhoods;
- developing relatively inexpensive small pocket parks (also known as mini-parks or vest-pocket parks) on vacant lots or other neglected areas in urban neighborhoods;
- entering into joint-use agreements with local school districts to make school playgrounds accessible to the whole community when school is not in session; and
- using innovative strategies such as “mobile playgrounds” to bring recreational opportunities directly into underserved neighborhoods.

City Examples:

- In **New York City**, [a partnership between the city's Department of Education \(DOE\) and the Trust for Public Land \(TPL\)](#), a national non-profit, involves the construction of 25 new playgrounds at public schools in underserved communities across the city. The TPL will raise one third of the funds needed for the project through private fundraising efforts, and the DOE will cover the remaining amount. The TPL, through its Parks for People Program, has similar partnerships to create playgrounds, parks, and green areas in underserved urban neighborhoods in a number of cities, including [Newark](#) (NJ), [San Francisco](#), and [Hartford](#) (CT).
- The **Nashville** (TN) and Davidson County Metropolitan Parks and [Greenways Master Plan](#), commissioned by Mayor Bill Purcell, specifies that the majority of the population should live within half a mile of a park and that all residents should reside within two miles of a greenway.

► **ACTION STEP:** Encourage the Parks and Recreation Department to offer affordable physical activity and recreation options in underserved communities.

City Examples:

- In **New York City**, [Shape Up New York](#), a free fitness program for adults and children run jointly by the city parks and health departments, is offered at recreation centers, public housing units, and local community centers in underserved areas of the city with high rates of obesity and diabetes. In addition, all of the parks department's recreation programs are free to children under 18.

- In Los Angeles County, a partnership between The Trust for Public Land (TPL), Los Angeles County Supervisor Gloria Molina, and Kaiser Permanente has developed [Fitness Zones](#) in five Los Angeles County parks. Fitness Zones contain outdoor gym equipment similar to that found in health clubs. Fitness Zones also feature bilingual health and fitness information panels with general nutrition information, usage instructions, and healthy eating guidelines.

SCHOOL AND OUT-OF-SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

Schools and after-school programs have a considerable influence on children's food choices and activity levels. Children consume an estimated 35 to 50 percent of their daily calories in school during an average school day.¹ This makes it essential for schools to provide a wide variety of nutritious and affordable meals, snacks and beverages. Schools are also an obvious venue for regular physical activity, yet less than 10 percent of younger children have daily physical education in school.² Although school districts are responsible for deciding how school time is spent, mayors can take action to ensure that schools in their jurisdiction provide a healthy environment for children. Since enhancing students' health by promoting healthy eating and regular physical activity in schools and out-of-school settings can have long-term benefits for local communities, many mayors are partnering with school authorities to improve their schools.

School Food Environment

Because children eat several meals and snacks per day while at school, school settings play a significant role in meeting their nutritional needs. There are a number of opportunities for mayors to get involved in shaping school food environments in their communities by partnering with local school authorities.

► **ACTION STEP:** Partner with schools to support policies that improve the school food environment.

A federal mandate requires all school districts that participate in the federal school breakfast or lunch program to develop, implement and evaluate school wellness policies that address nutrition and physical activity. The federal government does not currently assess the quality of local wellness policies, nor does it provide funding to support policy implementation. This gap presents an opportunity for local and county government officials to provide technical assistance, resources and structure to improve the quality of policies and implementation. Some city governments have assigned staff to policy-development teams and other cities have provided resources to implement the policies.

City Example:

- The City of **Indianapolis** and the Marion County Health Department awarded \$440,000 in 2006 to local school systems to help them implement their wellness policies. The funds will be used to hire a school wellness coordinator, purchase wellness curriculums and support physical fitness activities. The wellness grants are part of [Fit City](#), a public-private initiative to address obesity in Indianapolis.³

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► **ACTION STEP:** Promote participation in federal child nutrition programs as a way to address the nutrition needs of lower-income students.

For many low-income students, free or reduced-cost breakfast and lunches offered through the federal School Breakfast and National School Lunch Programs may be the only nutritious meals they eat all day. However, participation nationwide in such programs is not as high as it could be, and many schools are not taking advantage of their eligibility for millions of federal dollars. Mayors and other local government leaders can play an important role in increasing the number of students who participate in federal nutrition programs by:

- expressing their strong support for these programs to school authorities;
- using their leadership positions to bring together community partners from the public and private sectors to work on a strategy to increase participation;
- sharing the message about the importance of federally-funded school meals in addressing children’s nutritional needs with the media; and
- requiring city health and human services staff to conduct community outreach to raise awareness about availability of and eligibility for these programs.

City Examples:

- Nationwide, cities like [New York](#), [Boston](#), [Newark](#) (NJ) and [Washington, D.C.](#), offer universal breakfast programs in their public schools. These programs provide free meals to all students, regardless of income, and have the potential to be especially beneficial for children from lower-income families, who often experience malnutrition. Children who suffer from poor nutrition during the brain’s most formative years score much lower on tests of vocabulary, reading comprehension, arithmetic, and general knowledge.⁴ Universal breakfast could have multiple benefits for students because studies show that students who eat breakfast improve their academic performance, behavior and diet.⁵

► **ACTION STEP:** Support programs that promote increased consumption of and appreciation for fresh produce among children, particularly those from underserved communities.

Research suggests eating habits are shaped early in life. Healthy habits formed during childhood and carried into adulthood decrease the future risk for chronic diseases.^{6,7} Unfortunately, most U.S. children do not consume the government-recommended total of five servings of fruits and vegetables daily.⁸ In fact, only one-quarter of children ages 2–11 years consume three daily servings of vegetables, and less than one-half of those children consume two daily servings of fruit.⁹

The current national interest in locally grown foods and environmental sustainability is being reflected in a number of innovative programs that encourage children to increase their consumption of fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables. Mayors can support such programs in a number of ways, including:

- allocating public land to be used as school or community gardens;
- providing grants or direct funding to support school gardens, farm-to-school ¹⁰, and nutrition education programs; and
- providing city resources to assist community partners in implementing these programs.

City Examples:

- In **Santa Monica** (CA), the [Farmers' Market Salad Bar Program](#) is a multi-agency collaboration that provides fresh salad bar lunch options from local farms to public schools. The program, which was initially funded by a grant written by a member of the city's Task Force on the Environment, has become a fixed budget and policy initiative in both the city and school district's plans. A mandate from a Sustainable City resolution allowed Mayor Richard Bloom, with the help of his staff, to implement this policy goal in his school district.¹¹
- In **Portland** (OR), the [Learning Garden Laboratory](#) initiative provides urban students with hands-on lessons about healthy eating habits and agriculture through gardening. The initiative is managed collaboratively by Portland State University (PSU), Portland Public Schools, Portland Parks and Recreation and local non-profits¹². The city awarded PSU funds to initiate this program, and the university matched those dollars.¹³
- The "[Edible Schoolyard](#)" concept, first piloted at the Martin Luther King Jr. Middle School in **Berkeley** (CA), an urban elementary school with a predominantly minority student body, has spawned a national movement of school gardens. Students gain valuable science and nutrition lessons as they cultivate gardens and have the opportunity to cook and prepare produce harvested from their school garden.
- In **San Francisco**, working in close partnership with the local school district, the city helped 25 public schools install new salad bars featuring locally sourced vegetables, fresh fruits, and whole-grain breads and muffins. A 2008 evaluation of the salad bars found that 80 percent of the students going through the mealline take an item from the salad bar with very little waste. The program recently was expanded to include 42 schools. The salad bars, which will be offered with regular hot lunches at no additional charge, will offer fresh greens, seasonal raw vegetables, fresh fruit, and whole-grain breads and muffins.¹⁴

► **ACTION STEP:** Support local government policies that restrict the sale of fast food near public schools.

City Examples:

- Detroit has had a [zoning ordinance](#) on its books for more than two decades, which establishes a minimum distance of 500 feet between carry-out, fast-food, and drive-in restaurants near schools.¹⁵
- San Francisco passed an [ordinance](#) in 2007 prohibiting operators of mobile catering vehicles from selling within 1,500 feet of San Francisco public schools.¹⁶

School Fitness Environment

According to federal guidelines, children should engage in at least 60 minutes of physical activity on most, preferably all, days of the week.¹⁷ However, many schools offer limited or no physical education, recess or extracurricular programs, making it difficult for the students to incorporate regular physical activity into their school day. In addition, schoolyards and playgrounds in many underserved urban neighborhoods are in poor shape and do not offer children a safe or inviting environment. Revitalizing aging urban school playgrounds and schoolyards or building new facilities provides children with more opportunities for physical activity during school and out-of-school hours, and can serve as a visible symbol of neighborhood revitalization.

► **ACTION STEP:** Encourage school officials to support policies and programs that promote the offering of physical education during the school day.

City Example:

- In **New York City**, the education department has implemented a comprehensive physical education program citywide, with the help of partners such as the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Nike GO PE, and Kid Fitness. Schools offer students at all grade levels physical education classes based on proven curricula, track students' physical levels, help them set personal fitness goals through the [FITNESSGRAM](#) software program and share the results with students and their parents. In addition, a collaboration between the city health department and [SPARK](#), a nationally recognized physical education program, is providing training, equipment and curricula to daycare providers and early childhood teachers in public elementary schools.¹⁸ The education department's efforts complement Mayor Michael Bloomberg's efforts to address the city's obesity and diabetes epidemics.

► **ACTION STEP:** Work within public-private partnerships to ensure that schools in underserved neighborhoods have safe and attractive schoolyards and playgrounds.

Mayors have used their leadership to jumpstart playground construction and improvement initiatives; they have provided city funds to leverage additional funds from a range of public and private sources; and they have contributed city resources for the maintenance of these facilities.

City Examples:

- The [Boston Schoolyard Initiative](#) (BSI), a public-private partnership that began in the mid-1990s, has succeeded in renovating many Boston schoolyards. Derelict areas have been transformed into active play spaces and open-air educational environments featuring safe play equipment, teaching gardens, outdoor amphitheaters and

classroom space. Mayor Thomas Menino's leadership was a key component of the initiative's success. Mayor Menino endorsed the early planning process and has consistently allocated significant capital funds and staff resources to the ongoing revitalization of the city's schoolyards.

- In **Cleveland**, a public-private partnership between the nonprofit [ParkWorks](#), the city of Cleveland and the Cleveland Municipal School District, is raising funds and designing and installing playgrounds at the city's 82 elementary schools through the School Grounds as Community Parks initiative. The initiative was launched in 1998 when then-Mayor Michael R. White asked ParkWorks to address the widespread lack of suitable play equipment at the city's schools. Funding is provided through community block grants, community funding efforts, and the Cleveland Municipal School District. Each playground park includes playground equipment, an outdoor educational garden, and site improvements such as landscaping and parking areas.¹⁹
- In **Denver**, [Learning Landscape Alliance](#), a partnership between the city and county of Denver, the University of Colorado at Denver, the Denver Public Schools, and private foundations, has been working since 1999 to build new playgrounds on school grounds in the city's 16 poorest neighborhoods. In addition to providing recreational opportunities, the initiative also aims to reconnect communities with their public schools and provide much-needed green space in heavily urbanized neighborhoods. Each playground project involves the creation of a "learning landscape," which includes a playfield, three levels of age-appropriate equipment, non-traditional play elements, trees, a shade structure, a gate to the community, gardens, art work, and traditional facilities such as basketball courts.²⁰
- In **New York City**, Mayor Michael Bloomberg's "The Schoolyards to Playgrounds Initiative" will eventually open 290 school playgrounds citywide in underserved neighborhoods for use outside of school hours. The Bloomberg Administration has made a \$111 million investment in the improvement of schoolyards, as part of the Mayor's [PlaNYC](#) goal of having every New Yorker live within a 10 minute walk of a park or playground. The City is receiving assistance in this effort from The Trust for Public Land through its Parks for People Initiative.²¹

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► **ACTION STEP:** Expand the supply of playgrounds and recreational facilities in your community by promoting joint-use agreements with schools and other community partners.

Joint-use agreements between city governments, school districts and other community partners to develop and share the use of playgrounds are a practical solution to limited land and resources.

City Examples:

- **St. Petersburg** (FL) Mayor Rick Baker has pledged to establish a public playground within one-half mile of every city resident as part of his [“Play ‘n’ Close to Home”](#) initiative. Mayor Baker and his staff worked closely with the Pinellas County School Board to remove longstanding barriers—such as legal liability, insurance, maintenance, security and vandalism—that made joint-use agreements challenging. Under the agreement with the school district, the city maintains the playground in exchange for public use of the land outside school hours, from sunrise to sunset. Schools receive state-of-the-art playgrounds at no cost to them, and neighborhood children have access to the facilities after school and on weekends.
- **Camden** (NJ) is building [a new school and a Boys and Girls Club](#) at a local park. The school and Boys and Girls Club will share an Olympic-size indoor pool, auditorium, gymnasium and cafeteria. This innovative combination of school and after-hours recreational space addresses the dearth of recreational areas and parks in the community and relieves overcrowding in a nearby school.
- **San Francisco** Mayor Gavin Newsom unveiled a [pilot program](#) that will open 14 school playgrounds for use on weekends and select holidays. Under a facilities-sharing agreement, the Recreation and Parks Department will lock and unlock gates, the Department of Public Works will take care of graffiti or other damage, and the San Francisco Police Department will provide assistance if there is illegal activity.²²

Safe Routes to School

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) is a national and international movement to create safe, convenient and fun opportunities for children to bicycle and walk to school. SRTS provides a means of incorporating daily activity into children’s lives while at the same time reducing traffic congestion, improving air quality and enhancing neighborhood safety. A federal transportation bill, SAFETEA-LU, offers funding which is available through each State Department of Transportation (DOT) for local cities to improve walking and bicycling infrastructure routes to schools, and to initiate education, encouragement, enforcement and evaluation programs. Municipal officials can play a variety of important roles in local efforts to establish SRTS programs.

► **ACTION STEPS:** Partner with schools and the community to create local Safe Routes to School team or task force.

The foundation for organizing a Safe Routes to School program is cooperation between the city, the school district, parents and other community leaders. A SRTS team should be formed at each school participating in the program, and a SRTS task force should be formed to coordinate city-wide efforts related to law enforcement, engineering, incorporating project elements into planning documents, securing and coordinating funding and large-scale promotional efforts. To create a city action plan on the 5Es for SRTS (evaluation, education, encouragement, engineering and enforcement), participating organizations may want to hold a public meeting to gather ideas.

City Example:

- The [City of Bowling Green](#) (KY) and the Bowling Green Independent School District initiated a Safe Routes to School team to plan for outreach activities and improvements at five pilot schools. The SRTS team includes the health department, parent volunteers, and other city and school officials. The team has led evaluation efforts, initiated a complete streets corridor study, and conducted bicycle safety education and Walk to School Days.

► **ACTION STEPS:** Prioritize funding for short- and long-term improvements to the built environment to allow children to walk and bike to school safely.

While still working within their current budget, many cities are able to undertake improvements identified by SRTS school teams such as painting crosswalks and installing street safety signs around schools. Costlier, longer-term efforts such as installing sidewalks and new pathways, however, must be prioritized in the city's capital improvement plan. City improvements to the walking and biking environment will boost momentum for a city's SRTS program and demonstrate immediate progress to parent volunteers and other participating organizations.

City Example:

- The city of **Mill Valley** in Marin County (CA) installed “yield to pedestrian” signs at crosswalks, repainted crosswalks, improved traffic signal timing at a dangerous intersection and upgraded signing and striping around the Park Elementary School using general funds.

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► **ACTION STEPS:** Apply for funding through the state Department of Transportation’s Safe Routes to School program for both infrastructure and non-infrastructure projects.

Your city SRTS task force and/or school team(s) can prioritize long and short-term infrastructure improvements by conducting community walkabouts and inviting public input. They can also identify education and encouragement programs that will teach and inspire children and adults to use the new facilities. Your city and school district(s) can then apply for federal funds from the state DOT.

City Example:

- The city of [New Brighton](#) (MN) received a \$175,000 grant from the Minnesota Department of Transportation to improve trail connections and safety for children to walk and bicycle to schools. The project was submitted to the DOT after an analysis conducted by residents, city staff and consultants.

► **ACTION STEP:** Support bicycle and pedestrian safety training for children in the schools or community.

It is important for students to learn the rules of the road so that they can stay safe when walking and bicycling. Cities can help initiate school-based education programs, and can provide law enforcement personnel to help teach safety lessons and patrol areas around schools.

City Example:

- In **Chicago**, Mayor Daley’s [Safe Routes Ambassadors](#) program provides free outreach and training on safe traffic behavior and the benefits of active transportation to elementary school children.

► **ACTION STEP:** Participate in a Walk and Bike to School Day in your community or in other efforts to publicize the benefits of a local Safe Routes to School program.

[International Walk and Bike to School Day](#) takes place each October. This event provides a wonderful opportunity for mayors to get involved by walking or biking with children to schools. Walk and Bike to School Days can be used to kick-off an SRTS program, or to keep an existing program energized.

City Example:

- Officials in **Decatur** (GA) are regular participants in Walk and Bike to School Days; one school likes the concept so much that they plan regular “Walk and Wheel Tuesdays.”

► **Action Step: Encourage school officials to locate schools within walking distance of neighborhoods.**

According to the Healthy People 2010 survey, in 1973, 52 percent of U.S. students lived within two miles of their school; by 2001 only 35 percent of students were found to live within two miles of their school. Building schools in centralized locations close to where people live rather than locating them on the fringes of a community has many benefits. It makes it easier for children to incorporate physical activity into their day by walking and bicycling to school; helps prevent sprawl; presents opportunities to create neighborhood centers for education and civic life; and has the potential to reduce air pollution.

City Examples:

- The Moore Square Museums Magnet Middle School, developed as part of a collaboration between the city planning department and the local school district, is a new facility on a four-acre city block on the east side of downtown **Raleigh** (NC). The school is located in the larger Downtown East Residential Redevelopment Area, an area targeted for housing and community development. The site was assembled by removing several blighted and vacant structures. The school's downtown location allows students to walk to school from their homes or from a nearby local transit bus center and to walk to nearby attractions such as museums.²³
- In Milwaukee, the [Neighborhood School Initiative](#) constructed 6 new schools, added on to 19 existing schools, and renovated 15 schools. While adding 750,000 square feet of academic space, all schools remain in walkable neighborhoods, and more students can now go to school in their own neighborhood. The new school designs encourage community use of library, gym, cafeteria, parent center, art and music rooms.²⁴

► **ACTION STEP: Establish additional sources of funding for SRTS efforts.**

Cities that have developed Safe Routes to School programs have learned that the amount of federal funding available from the state DOTs is not enough to create an optimal walking and bicycling environment for school children. Several cities and states have developed additional funding streams to pay for improvements.

City Example:

The city of **Portland** (OR) has received nearly \$1.5 million for its model Safe Routes to School program from fines generated from people who speed and run red lights. The city created a [Community and School Traffic Safety Partnership](#) with local organizations and agencies and launched a comprehensive SRTS pilot program. Due to the popularity of the program after its first year, transportation and development funds were added to expand the full program to 25 schools. The city is augmenting available funding with federal

funds and school district assistance, and is planning limited services to every elementary and middle school in the city.

Acknowledgement: *This section was written with assistance from Deb Hubsmith and Robert Ping of the [Safe Routes to School National Partnership](#).*

Out-of-School Time¹

After-school programs are an ideal setting to address physical activity and nutrition issues, particularly among groups of children most at risk for being overweight—minorities and those from disadvantaged backgrounds. They provide opportunities for physical activity as an alternative to sedentary behavior, and can serve nutritious meals and snacks and educate children about the importance of good nutrition.

► **ACTION STEP:** Promote federal nutrition programs that provide meals and snacks to children in after school and summer programs.

Several federally-funded Child Nutrition Programs provide reimbursement for meals and snacks served in after-school and summer programs located in low-income areas or serving primarily low-income children.^{25,26} Not only do these meals feed children who might otherwise go hungry, they also must follow federal nutrition guidelines, and therefore are likely to be healthier than other alternatives. In addition, many programs that provide federally-subsidized meals also offer physical activity and recreational activities, providing opportunities for children to stay active during out-of-school time. Despite the benefits of federally-subsidized out-of-school nutrition programs, enrollment is often low. For example, less than one in five of the children who rely on free or reduced-price school meals during the school year have access to meals through the child nutrition programs during the summer.²⁷ Mayors are especially well positioned to promote increased participation in these programs given their involvement in after-school and summer programs. Mayors can:

- use their access to the media to raise public awareness about the need to address both hunger and obesity in out-of-school programs;
- use their leadership to convene meetings of public and private stakeholders to work on a common strategy to increase participation in federally-subsidized meals programs in their community;
- require or encourage city-funded departments such as parks and recreation to sponsor the nutrition programs and serve sites throughout the community that are run by both the city and community organizations; and
- direct various city departments to conduct outreach to inform the community of the availability of these programs.

¹ The term “Out-of-School Time” as used in this report includes traditional after-school programs, as well as those that take place on weekends, summers, and holidays.

City example:

- **Cincinnati** Mayor Mark Mallory has been a champion of summer food service programs both as a state legislator and then as mayor. He raised community awareness about the problem of youth hunger and the importance of good nutrition by meeting with stakeholders and adopting an intensive media strategy that kept the issue in the public eye. He worked to expand the number of sponsors and sites offering the [Summer Food Service Program](#) (SFSP) by identifying and recruiting potential new sites. As a result of his efforts, 13 new sites began participating in the summer food program—including city recreation centers and pools, public libraries and community organizations—and the program saw significant increases in the number of meals served.

► **ACTION STEP:** Support policies that promote the offering of nutritious foods and snacks and physical activity opportunities in city-sponsored, after-school and summer programs.

Policies that promote healthier foods and more physical activity in after-school and summer programs support low-income students, who may benefit the most from access to no or low-cost healthy meals and physical activity opportunities when school is not in session.

City Examples:

- The city of [Los Angeles Child Nutrition Policy](#), adopted by the city council in 2005, promotes healthy eating in city-sponsored programs for pre-school and school-aged children in settings such as recreation centers. Some of the elements of the policy include: providing healthy meals and snacks, including fresh fruits and vegetables, in city-funded children’s programs; requiring that at least 25 percent of vending machine offerings in city facilities include healthy items; reducing the promotion of junk foods at city facilities; and providing nutrition education to children participating in city-sponsored meal, snack and child-care programs.²⁸
- In **Somerville** (MA), the school district’s wellness policy applies to after-school programs that receive school department funding or operate on school property. The policy requires that snacks provided by after-school programs adhere to federal guidelines established under the National School Lunch Program, thereby ensuring that they are healthy. In addition, staff at all of the city’s 14 after-school programs has been trained in and has adopted the [Healthy Eating and Active Time](#) (HEAT) after-school curriculum, which is designed to improve eating habits and increase physical activity levels among elementary school students.
- In **San Francisco**, Mayor Gavin Newsom’s [Summer Lunch Program](#), which benefits low-income children, offered an increased amount of locally grown fresh produce in the lunches served in 2006. In addition, participating school and community staff received training on nutrition and how to incorporate more physical activity into their

programming. The program was a partnership that included the city's Departments of Children, Youth, and their Families, Parks and Recreation, and Public Health; San Francisco Food Systems; and the San Francisco Unified School District.²⁹

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⁶ Byrne E., N.S., "Preschool Children's Acceptance of a Novel Vegetable Following Exposure to Messages in a Storybook." *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*, 34(4): p. 211-214, 2002.

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¹⁰ Also known as farm-to-cafeteria programs, these programs involve the purchase of farm-fresh produce from local farmers for school and college cafeterias. Students benefit from the opportunity to eat fresh, nutritious produce on a daily basis and local farmers benefit from increased business.

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2009 Active Living/Healthy Eating National Health Observances Calendar

This calendar is a selective guide to national health observance days, weeks, or months related to active living and healthy eating for families and children. Mayors and their staff can use these special observances to highlight new initiatives and programs, sponsor health promotion events, stimulate awareness of health risks, or focus on disease prevention.

Month	Observance	For more information
January		
February	American Heart Month	www.americanheart.org
March	National Nutrition Month	www.eatright.org
April	School Nutrition Month National Garden Month	www.schoolnutrition.org www.nationalgardenmonth.org
May	American Stroke Month National Physical Education and Sports Week (May 1-7) National Employee Health and Fitness Day (May 20) Bike to Work Week (May 11-15) National Bike Month National Physical Fitness and Sports Month	www.americanheart.org www.aahperd.org www.physicalfitness.org www.bikeleague.org www.bikeleague.org www.fitness.gov
June	National Trails Day (June 6)	http://www.americanhiking.org/events/ntd/
July	National Youth Sports Week Recreation and Parks Month	www.nrpa.org http://www.nrpa.org/content/default.aspx?documentId=2145
September	Family Health and Fitness Day USA (September 26) National TV-Turnoff Week (September 20-26)	http://www.fitnessday.com/family/ http://www.tvturnoff.org/
October	Walk to School Day (October 7) International Walk to School Month	www.iwalktoschool.org www.iwalktoschool.org
November	World Diabetes Day (November 14) American Diabetes Month	http://www.worlddiabetesday.org www.diabetes.org

For a comprehensive listing of other health observances, please visit <http://www.healthfinder.gov/nho/default.aspx>

Source: 2009 National Health Observances, National Health Information Center, Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, DC.

FUNDING RESOURCES

Publications

The publication [Financing Childhood Obesity Prevention Programs: Federal Funding Sources and Other Strategies](#) (The Finance Project, 2004) offers information about federal funding sources that can be used to pay for local childhood obesity prevention programs, as well as a discussion of various strategies to secure such funding.

Grants

A selection of funding opportunities related to active living and healthy eating for the general population and for children and youth is listed below. **While the deadlines for many of the grants may have expired already, the grants may be offered again in future funding cycles.** Most grants are national but a few are regional.

School-based Grants for Children and Youth

[National Gardening Association Youth Garden Grants Program](#)

For more than 25 years, NGA's Youth Garden Grants program has helped more than 1.3 million youngsters reap rewards and vital life lessons from working in gardens and habitats.

[Hidden Valley Love Your Veggies Grant Campaign](#)

Grant awards support elementary schools in developing a program offering fresh vegetables and fruits.

[Highmark Healthy High 5 School Challenge Grant Program.](#)

Grants are awarded on a quarterly basis to schools in 49 Pennsylvania counties served by the foundation for programs addressing nutrition and physical activity, as well as bullying prevention and self-esteem.

[Carol M. White Physical Education Program \(PEP\) Grants.](#)

Federal government grants to initiate, expand, and improve physical education programs for K–12 students. Grants may be used to provide equipment and support to enable students to participate in physical education activities. Funds also may be used to support staff and teacher training and education.

School and/or Community-based Grants for Children and Youth

[Saucony Run For Good Foundation Grants](#)

Grants are provided to nonprofit organizations that initiate and support running and fitness programs for kids.

[General Mills Foundation Champions Healthy Kids Grant Program.](#)

Grants are awarded to nonprofit organizations, park districts, health departments, government agencies, and municipal organizations to develop creative ways to help youth adopt a balanced diet and physically active lifestyle.

[United States Golf Association Offers "For the Good of the Game" Grants](#)

Grants are available to nonprofits and government entities such as schools or municipalities for golf course access and practice range access; golf instruction; golf equipment; transportation provided for participants to attend programming; and certain construction costs of golf courses and golf facilities in areas where there are obstacles to affordable access to the game.

[American Academy of Dermatology Shade Structure Grant Program](#)

Grants are awarded to organizations or educational institutions for the purchase of permanent shade structures designed to provide shade and ultraviolet (UV) ray protection for unshaded outdoor areas such as playgrounds and pools.

[GoGirlGo! Ambassador Team AwardsGoGirlGo](#)

Grants are awarded to girl-serving organizations who strive to provide diverse, underserved populations of girls ages 8 to 18 with a way to get involved in sport and physical activity. The Women's Sports Foundation awards grants nationwide, but places a strong emphasis on Atlanta, Boston, Chicago and San Antonio metropolitan areas via the leadership of our community offices.

[Nike Bowerman Track Renovation Program](#)

Matching grants of up to \$50,000 to community-based, youth-oriented nonprofit organizations that seek to refurbish or construct running tracks.

[Baseball Tomorrow Fund for Youth Baseball/Softball Programs](#)

Grants are available to nonprofit and tax-exempt organizations involved in youth baseball programs to promote youth participation in baseball and softball; supports programs, fields, coaches' training, uniforms and equipment.

[U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Community Development Block Grants \(CDBG\)](#)

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program is a flexible program that provides communities with resources to address a wide range of unique community development needs. Beginning in 1974, the CDBG program is one of the longest

continuously run programs at HUD. The CDBG program provides annual grants on a formula basis to 1,180 general units of local government and States.

[U.S. Department of Justice Community-Oriented Policing Services \(COPS\)](#)

The Community-Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Office is designed to advance the practice of community policing as an effective strategy to improve public safety. The COPS Office awards grants to tribal, state, and local law enforcement agencies to hire and train community policing professionals, acquire and deploy cutting-edge crime-fighting technologies, and develop and test innovative policing strategies. COPS Office funding provides training and technical assistance to advance community policing at all levels of law enforcement, from line officers to law enforcement executives, as well as others in the criminal justice field.

Grants that Promote Biking

[Bikes Belong Offers Funding for Bicycle Advocacy and Facilities](#)

Grants are available to nonprofits and public agencies for bike-related facilities and advocacy projects.

Community Food Grants

[USDA Outreach Grants](#)

Grants are awarded to public and private non-profit community organizations to improve awareness of the Food Stamp Program for low-income households.

[USDA Community Food Projects Competitive Grant Program](#)

Grants are available to community-based food and agriculture projects such as improving access to high-quality, affordable food among low-income households.

[USDA Women, Infants and Children \(WIC\) and WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program](#)

The WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) is associated with the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children, popularly known as WIC. Currently, 46 state agencies operate the FMNP. Each state agency authorizes individual farmers, farmers' markets, or both. Only farmers, farmers' markets, and roadside stands authorized by the state agency may accept and redeem FMNP coupons.

INFORMATIONAL RESOURCES

Following is a selective list of electronic sources of information on childhood obesity and the subject areas discussed in the main sections of the Guide.

Childhood Obesity Prevention

[Leadership for Healthy Communities Action Strategies Toolkit](#)

Developed by 11 policy-maker associations participating in the Leadership for Healthy Communities program, this toolkit provides targeted strategies, stakeholders, policy and program options, directions on how to start programs, resources that can help inform the process, and examples of how other states and localities have achieved progress.

[Overweight and Obesity Among Latino Youths](#)

Developed by [Leadership for Healthy Communities](#), this 2009 fact sheet highlights the prevalence, consequences and causes of overweight and obesity among Latino youths.

[Overweight and Obesity Among African-American Youths](#)

Developed by [Leadership for Healthy Communities](#), this 2009 fact sheet highlights the prevalence, consequences and causes of overweight and obesity among African-American youths.

[New Directions in Obesity Prevention and Treatment: AcademyHealth 25th Annual Research Meeting](#) (PDF)

This document, published by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, summarizes presentations and discussions from a June 2008 conference on the implications of childhood obesity. Among other topics, the conference covered obesity treatment and prevention, the costs and consequences of adult obesity, and restricting food marketing to children.

[National Conference of State Legislatures' 2009 Legislative Report: Promoting Healthy Communities and Reducing Childhood Obesity](#)

This 2009 Legislative Report by the National Conference of State Legislatures provides a summary of recently passed state legislation that supports childhood obesity prevention.

Institute of Medicine (IOM), [Community Perspectives on Obesity Prevention in Children: Workshop Summary](#), September 2008

IOM conducted a workshop in June 2008 about community perspectives on childhood obesity prevention. This workshop featured site-leaders and evaluators representing different locally-based childhood obesity prevention programs. This document summarizes the discussion about the challenges and promising approaches for evaluating and acting on complex policy and programmatic interventions to prevent obesity and its health consequences.

Institute of Medicine, [Preventing Childhood Obesity: Health in the Balance](#), September 2004.

In response to a request from Congress for a prevention-oriented action plan to tackle the alarming rise in childhood obesity, the IOM Committee on Prevention of Obesity in Children and Youth has developed a comprehensive national strategy that recommends specific actions for families, schools, industry, communities, and government. This report describes the committee's findings and recommendations.

Institute of Medicine, [Progress in Preventing Childhood Obesity: How Do We Measure Up?](#), September 2006.

This report examines the progress made by obesity prevention initiatives in the United States over the past two years.

National League of Cities, [Combating Childhood Obesity: Action Kit for Municipal Leaders](#) (Washington DC, 2007).

The information within this Action Kit is based on the latest research and best practices from across the nation and offers a wide-ranging menu of opportunities for municipal leadership to make children, youth, and family issues a community-wide priority. Whether you are ready to launch a major initiative or are just getting started, the ideas in this kit will help you move forward.

Strategic Alliance's [ENACT Local Policy Database](#) is a searchable database of local policies that promote healthy eating and active living in childcare, school, after-school, neighborhood, workplace, government and health care settings.

Community Food Environment

Access to Healthy Foods

[Neighborhood Environments: Disparities in Access to Healthy Foods in the U.S.](#)

People who live in poorer neighborhoods in the U.S. are less likely to have easy access to supermarkets carrying a wide variety of fresh produce and other healthy food, a 2009 analysis of 54 studies published in *the American Journal of Preventive Medicine* confirms.

[Designed for Disease: The Link Between Local Food Environments and Obesity and Diabetes](#)

This policy brief, produced in 2008 by the California Center for Public Health Advocacy, PolicyLink, and the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research examines the relationships between retail food environments, obesity and diabetes and community income.

[Grocery Store Attraction Strategies: A Resource Guide for Community Activists and Local Governments](#)

This policy brief discusses key challenges and potential solutions for attracting more grocery stores to lower-income communities. It was developed by PolicyLink and Bay Area Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) in 2007.

[Improving Access to Healthy Foods: A Guide for Policy-Makers](#)

This guide focuses on healthy eating and highlights why a healthy diet remains out of reach for many Americans. It explores how officials at the state and local levels can facilitate healthy eating by adopting policies that help communities improve access to affordable, healthy foods for all residents. This guide was developed in 2007 by Leadership for Healthy Communities (formerly Active Living Leadership), a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation national program.

[Community Health and Food Access: The Local Government Role](#)

This report examines the need for local government intervention to ensure that all citizens have access to healthy food. According to the report, legislators can intervene by supporting farmers' markets or community gardens, using zoning laws to restrict fast-food restaurants and supporting supermarket development in lower-income areas. This was prepared by the International City/County Management Association in August 2006.

[Healthy Food, Healthy Communities: Improving Access and Opportunities through Food Retailing](#)

This report, by PolicyLink and the California Endowment, addresses the limited access that many residents of low-income communities and communities of color have to affordable, healthy food.

Community Food Assessments

[USDA Community Food Security Assessment Toolkit](#)

This report provides a toolkit of standardized measurement tools for assessing various aspects of community food security.

[What's Cooking in Your Food System: A Guide To Community Food Assessment](#)

Community Food Assessment is a relatively new field, and the approach is still being developed. This guide, by the Community Food Security Coalition, presents case studies as examples of valuable and pioneering work, with the understanding that it is important to learn from each others' experiences, especially in a young field like Community Food Assessment. We encourage you to share the stories and lessons from your assessment, to continue this learning process.

[Community Food Security Coalition, Community Food Assessment Program.](#)

This website serves as a clearinghouse for food assessment-related tools and resources, including reports and information from numerous past and current assessments.

[Community Food Security Coalition](#)

A comprehensive resource on policy, local program profiles, and resources.

Food Policy Councils

[North American Food Policy Council webpage](#)

A comprehensive source of information on food policy councils in North America. Provides a list of food policy councils in the US with contact information (including a list of councils that are affiliated with local or state governments), sample resolutions for founding a council, and examples of documents produced by food policy councils.

Farmers' Markets

[Support the Farm Stand](#)

Developed by the International City/County Management Association (ICMA), this 2009 article provides policy-makers with information on the benefits farmers' markets can bring to a local community's table, both economically and with respect to the health of children and families.

[Farmers Market Policy: An Inventory of Federal, State, and Local Examples,](#)

This study, by the Drake University Agricultural Law Center, is designed to provide an assessment of current farmers market policies found in the U.S. and to use this inventory to evaluate the effect of policies and identify how they can be improved.

[Bridging the Technological Divide: A Guide to Accepting Food Stamps at Farmers' Markets](#)

This guide, a Hunger-Free Community Report, provides tips and steps for becoming an authorized vendor, ideas about how exactly to accept Food Stamps, some information about companies that sell point-of-sale machines and handle the electronic benefit transactions. In addition, some ideas about how this plugs into increasing food security in your community.

[Hot Peppers and Parking Lot Peaches: Evaluating Farmers' Markets in Low Income Communities](#)

This report explores the barriers and provides examples of farmers' markets in low-income communities. It was developed by the Community Food Security Coalition.

[North America Farmers Direct Marketing Association website](#)

This website provides information about the North American Farmers' Direct Marketing Association, is a trade association dedicated to nurturing the farm direct marketing industry.

[Farmers Market Coalition website](#)

This website provides information about the Farmers Market Coalition, which serves a rapidly growing industry with information and representation at state and federal levels.

[Project for Public Spaces website, Public Markets section](#)

This website provides information about public markets, which can revitalize communities, create economic opportunities for small entrepreneurs, increase access to healthy local foods, bridge urban and rural landscapes, and provide safe and sociable public gathering places.

[USDA Agricultural Marketing Service website, Farmers Market section](#)

This website provides state-by-state statistics and other facts about farmers' markets nationwide.

Community Gardens

[American Community Gardening Association website](#)

This organization works to promote community gardening across the United States and Canada. Community gardening allows people to come together while beautifying their neighborhoods, getting physical activity and producing quality fruits and vegetables. This association supports community gardening initiatives, encourages research into the benefits of gardening and hosts educational training programs.

[Cultivating Community Gardens: The Role of Local Government in Creating Healthy, Livable Neighborhoods](#)

This fact sheet, developed by the Local Government Commission, offers case studies, best management practices, resources and tools for policy-makers regarding creative, cost-effective solutions that reduce barriers and facilitate the creation of community garden programs.

Menu Labeling

[Center for Science in the Public Interest, Menu Labeling Webpage](#)

A comprehensive source of information on local and state government efforts to require fast food restaurants to provide calorie and nutrition education, including summaries of local and state bills.

Physical Environment

Active Living

[Connecting Active Living Research and Public Policy: Transdisciplinary Research and Policy Interventions to Increase Physical Activity](#)

An important use of the research is to inform policy debates, but the "translation" of research to policy is an emerging science. The papers in this supplement of the *Journal of Public Health Policy* were presented at the 2008 Active Living Research Conference. The papers include evaluations of policy initiatives and research that suggests promising new policies.

[2008 Outdoor Recreation Participation Report](#)

The *2008 Outdoor Recreation Participation Report* is based on an online survey capturing responses from more than 60,000 Americans ages six and older and covers 114 different outdoor activities, making it the largest survey of its type examining participation in sports and outdoor activities. The report provides important insights into trends in participation in outdoor recreation among all Americans, with focused looks at youth, diversity and gender.

[Active Living by Design](#)

Information on innovative approaches to increase physical activity through community design, public policies and communications strategies. See extensive [Active Living Resources](#) section.

Form-Based Codes

[Form-Based Codes Institute](#)

Resources, articles, and links to local form-based code documents.

[Form-Based Codes: Implementing Smart Growth](#)

This fact sheet by the Local Government Commission provides information on using form-based codes to build healthier communities.

Tax Increment Financing

[Tax Increment Financing: A Tool for Advancing Healthy Eating and Active Living](#)

Developed by Leadership for Healthy Communities, this policy brief examines the promise of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) as a means of funding initiatives that promote healthy kids and healthy communities. Communities have used financing mechanisms such as public-private partnerships, tax incentives and federal grants to help support healthy eating and physical activity projects.

Complete Streets

[National Complete Streets Coalition website](#)

Complete Streets resources and policies.

Non-Motorized Transportation

[The Alliance for Biking and Walking](#)

National coalition of state and local bicycle and pedestrian advocacy organizations working together to promote bicycling and walking in North American communities.

[Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center](#)

National clearinghouse for information about health and safety, engineering, advocacy, education, enforcement, access, and mobility for pedestrians (including transit users) and bicyclists.

[National Center for Bicycling & Walking](#)

A major program of the Bicycle Federation of America, Inc. (BFA), a national, nonprofit whose mission is to create bicycle-friendly and walkable communities.

School and Out-of-School Environment

[Improving Child Nutrition Policy: Insights from National USDA Study of School Food Environments](#)

This 2009 [Robert Wood Johnson Foundation](#) policy brief highlights findings from the third School Nutrition Dietary Assessment, an examination of the food environment in public schools. The brief includes recommendations such as updating the nutrition standards for meals offered through the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program, as well as setting nutrition standards for foods and beverages sold in vending machines.

[School Food Environments and Policies in US Public Schools](#)

The study, supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation through the *Healthy Eating Research* national program, provides one of the most comprehensive examinations of school foods and policies to date, scoring the food environments in nearly 400 schools across 38 states. Published in 2008.

[National Association of State Boards of Education's Preventing Childhood Obesity: A School Health Policy Guide](#)

The guide offers the latest policy updates and recommendations about how to promote physical education and activity and healthy eating policies in schools.

[National School Board Association's Promising District Practices Database](#)

Here you will find stories of local school district successes in developing, implementing and evaluating policies and practices that address health risk behaviors and health promotion issues. These examples were submitted by school districts and schools across the country.

Institute of Medicine, [*Nutrition Standards and Meal Requirements for National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs: Phase I. Proposed Approach for Recommending Revisions*](#) , December 2008

[Action for Healthy Kids, Resources to Improve Schools](#)

Searchable database of programs, policies, curricula, and other resources that support healthy kids in school and out-of-school settings.

[Shaping America's Youth Program Registry](#)

Searchable database of intervention programs throughout the U.S. that provide physical activity and/or nutrition education for young people.

School Wellness Policies

[The State of School Wellness](#)

This publication is an important overview of the current state of school wellness in America. Assessing the progress thus far and the hurdles to be surmounted, the report features the result of original field research, and key contributions from voices of authority in children's health, education and school wellness.

[USDA Healthy Schools Local School Wellness Policy webpage](#)

[School Wellness Policy and Practice: Meeting the Needs of Low-income Students](#) (Food Research and Action Center, 2006).

[Making it Happen! School Nutrition Success Stories](#)

Searchable CDC database of stories of schools and school districts that have implemented innovative strategies to improve the nutritional quality of foods and beverages sold outside of Federal meal programs.

Farm-to-School

[The National Farm to School Program website](#)

This Web site provides resources about the farm-to-school program broken down by state. It includes guides, reports and strategies. The site also includes state and local policy recommendations aimed at fixing the current school meal programs to incorporate fruits and vegetables from local farms.

[Community Food Security Coalition Farm-to-School Program webpage](#)

This website provides publications, tools, case studies and more related to farm-to-

school programs.

[Going Local: Paths to Success for Farm to School Programs](#)

(Anupama Joshi, Marion Kalb, and Moira Beery; National Farm to School Program Center for Food and Justice, Occidental College and Community Food Security Coalition, December 2006)

School Gardens

[Edible Schoolyard](#)

Website of the famous Berkeley, CA school garden with information on how to start a school garden.

[National Gardening Association website, Kids Gardening section](#)

Extensive educational and funding resources for school and youth gardens.

Safe Routes to School

[Active Transportation to School—Trends in Walking and Biking to School](#)

Report from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation that summarizes key findings from an analysis of 1969-2001 data on elementary, junior high, and high school students walking or biking to school and the key factors contributing to the declining trend.

[Federal Highway Administration SRTS Program](#)

The FHWA Office of Safety's mission is to reduce highway fatalities by making our roads safer through a data-driven, systematic approach and addressing all "4Es" of safety: engineering, education, enforcement, and emergency medical services.

[Safe Routes to School National Partnership](#)

The SRTS National Partnership is a network of more than 400 nonprofit organizations, government agencies, schools and professionals working to advance the SRTS movement. The project can help policy-makers and other stakeholders work with state departments of transportation to increase physical activity in schools, make the best use of available federal SRTS funds, and remove policy barriers to walking and bicycling to schools.

[National Center for Safe Routes to School](#)

This Web site provides information about the federal SRTS program and offers a variety of resources, such as marketing and promotional items, education tools, training manuals, evaluation forms and progress reports.

Out-of-School Environment

[Food and Beverage Marketing to Children and Adolescents: What Changes Are Needed to Promote Healthy Eating Habits?](#)

This 2008 research brief provides an overview of research on media use by children and youth, the channels and marketing techniques food and beverage companies use to market to them, and the influence on their diets. Published by Healthy Eating Research, a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the brief also outlines recommendations for improving marketing regulations.

[Afterschool Alliance's Active Hours Afterschool website](#)

Contains links to resources, tools and information to help afterschool providers and advocates promote healthy lifestyles in afterschool programs.

[Promoting Physical Activity and Healthy Nutrition in Afterschool Settings: Strategies for Program Leaders and Policy Makers](#)

This report on childhood obesity was developed by the U.S. Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families, The Finance Project, and the National Governors Association. It was released in August 2006.

USCM ADOPTED POLICY RELATED TO HEALTHY EATING, ACTIVE LIVING, AND CHILDHOOD OBESITY PREVENTION

Urban Farm Land, Farmers Markets

Promoting the Preservation of Urban-Influenced Farmland (2001)

Supports the protection of urban farmland and encourages federal and state governments to promote local farmers markets.

http://usmayors.org/resolutions/69th_conference/ee_6.asp

Funding for Urban Farmers Markets (2005)

Supports congressional appropriation of funds to expand public and farmers markets and expresses USCM support for farmers markets:

http://usmayors.org/resolutions/73rd_conference/chhs_14.asp

Edible Gardens (2009)

Urges mayors to develop, grow, and maintain edible gardens in parks, city hall land, and municipal community gardens.

http://www.usmayors.org/resolutions/77th_conference/tapes13.asp

Homegrown Local Food-Expanding Access and Availability (2009)

Calls upon the Obama Administration to seek out partnerships with Mayors on Local Food initiatives to develop strategies that help urban America develop better access to quality food.

http://www.usmayors.org/resolutions/77th_conference/chhs17.asp

Obesity Prevention

Promoting Physical Fitness Activities in Cities as a Means to Improving Health and Limiting Obesity amongst City Residents throughout the United States (2005)

Supports the promotion of regular physical activity:

http://usmayors.org/resolutions/73rd_conference/chhs_07.asp

Childhood Obesity (2005)

Supports comprehensive policies that address childhood obesity:

http://usmayors.org/resolutions/73rd_conference/chhs_13.asp

In Support of Funding Obesity Prevention (2008)

http://www.usmayors.org/resolutions/76th_conference/chhs_07.asp

In Support of Child Health and Nutrition (2009)

Supports a budget resolution that includes \$20 billion over five years for the Child Nutrition Reauthorization-and investment that will enable school nutrition programs to meet their goal of providing nutritious, balanced meals to children. This should also include a 35 cent per meal increase in reimbursement rates.

http://www.usmayors.org/resolutions/77th_conference/chhs08.asp

Improving Access, Meal Quality, and Nutrition Through the Reauthorization of the Child Nutrition Act (1) (2009)

Urges Congress to make a substantial investment of funding in and simplification of program regulations for Child Nutrition Programs during the reauthorization of the Child Nutrition Act.

http://www.usmayors.org/resolutions/77th_conference/chhs11.asp

Improving Access, Meal Quality, and Nutrition Through the Reauthorization of the Child Nutrition Act (2) (2009)

Urges Congress to make a substantial investment of funding in and simplification of program regulations for Child Nutrition Programs during the reauthorization of the Child Nutrition Act.

http://www.usmayors.org/resolutions/77th_conference/chhs14.asp

Climate Change and Active Living

Ensuring Bicycling Is Integrated Into National Transportation, Climate, Energy And Health Policy Initiatives

http://www.usmayors.org/resolutions/76th_conference/chhs_04.asp

Endorsing the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement (2005)

Endorses the US Mayors Climate Protection Agreement, including the following two suggested actions that promote active living:

- Adopt and enforce land-use policies that reduce sprawl, preserve open space, and create compact, walkable urban communities.
- Promote transportation options such as bicycle trails, commute trip reduction programs, incentives for car pooling and public transit.

http://usmayors.org/resolutions/73rd_conference/en_01.asp

Expanding Green Communities (2009)

Calls on Congress to pass and fully fund legislation that encourages both cities and non-profit partners to implement greening initiatives to improve the environment, economy and stability of neighborhoods.

http://www.usmayors.org/resolutions/77th_conference/tapes18.asp

2007 Farm Bill

Reforming America's Agricultural Policy

Supports the promotion of healthy diets for all residents, including strengthening incentives and infrastructure to encourage more fruit/vegetable production, organic farming, better access to fresh foods and investment in programs promoting healthy food, expansion of programs that help communities invest in retail markets, food-based businesses and increasing access to farmers markets, farm-to-cafeteria programs that bring the freshest, locally grown food into school lunch programs; and developing incentives to encourage food stamp recipients to increase their consumption of fruits and vegetables; and other related measures.

http://usmayors.org/resolutions/75th_conference/chhs_07.asp

USCM Mayors' Healthy Cities Campaign Sign-Up Form

Yes, I want to join the U. S. Conference of Mayors (USCM) Mayors' Healthy Cities Campaign to promote the benefits of healthy eating and active living, and to establish policies and programs that will facilitate physical activity and healthy eating in my community.

Mayor: _____

City: _____ **State:** _____

My staff contact person for this campaign will be:

Name: _____

Title: _____

Agency: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ **State:** _____ **Zip:** _____

Phone: _____ **Fax:** _____

Email: _____

RETURN TO:

Health Programs
U.S. Conference of Mayors
1620 Eye St., NW, 3th Floor
Washington, DC 20006
Fax: 202-293-2352

Or e-mail to Patricia Carter at pcarter@usmayors.org