

Voices for Healthy Kids 2019-2020 Policy Agenda

The Voices for Healthy Kids Policy Agenda highlights the overarching goals and the specific policies of the initiative's work. Voices for Healthy Kids funds and supports policy change at the state and local level, anchored in a commitment to health and equity. Coalitions, technical assistance, training opportunities, media and communications support, research, as well as direct grant funding are some of the ways Voices for Healthy Kids drives communities to be healthier for all.

Healthy, Accessible Food and Beverages: Support state and local policy that increases access to healthy food and beverage, decrease access to unhealthy food and beverages, makes it easier to eat healthy, and drives industry innovation to improve the food and drinks we all need. *Specific policies include:*

- **SNAP Incentives:** Support increasing the ability of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients to use their benefits at markets and/or support funding for programs that significantly increase SNAP benefits when used on fruits and vegetables.
- **Healthy food purchasing:** Support healthy food purchasing policies by government entities where people have a large proportion of their dietary intake from a central organization and where there is the great potential to increase overall demand for more healthy products, drive the reformulation of foods by food manufacturers, and increase the availability of healthier foods to the general public.
- **Healthy restaurant meals:** Ensure all restaurant meals offered to children meet healthy nutrition standards. Ensure the drink offered with a restaurant children's meal is a healthier option.
- **Sugary drink taxes:** Support significant increases in excise taxes on sugary drinks at the state, county, or municipal levels with a portion or all of the tax used to fund initiatives that benefit population health and wellness.

Early Childhood: Supporting early childhood development opportunities at the state and local level with a focus on children most in need, that increase healthy outcomes, set children on a path to life-long health, and support families. *Specific policies include:*

- **Early care and education:** Establish statewide nutrition, physical activity, sugary drink, no-cost water access and screen time standards for early childcare providers (ages 0-3). Support Quality Rating and Improvement Systems as a tool to monitor and implement healthy eating and physical activity (HEPA) standards. Secure public funding for technical assistance. Increase access and affordability to early care and education programs (ages 0-3) in states with strong HEPA standards.
- **Early Head Start/Head Start:** Support policies and funding that increase awareness of and access to Early Head Start/Head Start programs, and advance efforts to promote coordination among providers across the continuum from early care to kindergarten.

Healthy, Equitable Schools: Promote the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) model to support and build broad and inclusive healthy, school environments, particularly in marginalized or under-resourced communities. Work to support and build healthy schools for all children regardless of where they live or go to school. *Specific policies include:*

- **School foods:** Support codifying policies in law that require adherence to strong nutritional guidance as intended by the original school meal nutrition standards established by Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act.
- **Physical education:** Promote more frequent, highly effective, evidence-based, active, and inclusive physical education in schools as the cornerstone of comprehensive physical activity before, during, and after the school day.
- **Physical activity:** Support physical activity opportunities that promote active transportation policy such as safe routes to school programs, recess, classroom physical activity breaks and in other afterschool programs.
- **Wellness policies:** Promote the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) model to support and build broad and inclusive healthy school environments. Establish state law that not only ensures federal requirements are met, but supports districts moving beyond federal requirements and supports stronger, healthier school environments related to the WSCC model, including students' social, emotional, and mental health needs. Establish state level wellness committees that address student needs across the spectrum of health. Support local health councils that go beyond federal requirements in supporting school health issues, including students' social, emotional, and mental health needs. Support the elimination of marketing of unhealthy food and beverages in schools.
- **Water access in schools:** Ensure no-cost, clean water is accessible during the school day or extended hours while children are in programming in school buildings.

Active, Equitable Communities: Support state and local policies and funding, and influence the use of federal dollars in states, that make communities and neighborhoods more livable by ensuring all people can get safely to where they need to go – work, school, the library, grocery stores, or parks, starting where the needs are greatest. *Specific policies include:*

- **Complete streets:** Require that all road construction and reconstruction at the state, regional and community levels create complete streets that are safe and convenient for all users and all modes of transportation.
- **Bike and pedestrian appropriations:** Support state, regional and local financing mechanisms that create equitable, long-term funding for bicycling and walking projects and encourage programs for communities most in need.

Preemption Efforts: Preventing states from blocking local actions that promote health, well-being, and equity. *Specific policies include:*

- **Preemption Repeal:** Support the repeal of existing state laws limiting the ability of cities and counties to regulate, tax or otherwise enact legislation stronger than state law related to building healthy, equitable communities.
- **Preemption Defense:** Oppose legislation limiting the ability of cities and counties to regulate, tax or otherwise enact legislation stronger than state law regarding issues related to building healthy, equitable communities.