



Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) Cities & Towns Campaign for the Mid-Atlantic

Our health is shaped by the places in which we live, learn, work, play, and age.

The conditions in which we live, learn, work, play, and age have a profound impact on how healthy we will be over the course of our lives.

Our day-to-day routines are influenced by our environments. For example,

- When the closest store doesn't sell fresh ingredients, it's more convenient to get takeout than prepare a nutritious dinner.
- When the stairwell is locked, the elevator is the easiest way to get up to the office.
- When playgrounds are closed after school hours, children choose video games rather than playing outside.

These are consequences of policies and practices. These may seem small and subtle, but over time these consequences add up. For example, policies that keep stairwells in City Hall unlocked allow employees to take the stairs. Spending 3 minutes taking the stairs a few times a day may be easier than scheduling a daily 30-minute gym session.

Why is the HEAL Cities, Towns Campaign important for Virginia's local governments?

Local governments work hard to create livable, prosperous communities – places where people want to live, work, raise families, and age. HEAL policies affect livability and prosperity by improving both physical environments and the fiscal health of a community.

Municipal leaders across the United States are now recognizing that healthy eating and active living policies should be part of short- and long-term planning and decision-making in order to:

- reduce health care costs,
- improve health and quality of life, and
- attract economic development.

The HEAL Cities & Towns Campaign actively supports government leaders to adopt and implement local policies and practices that create environments that promote healthy eating and physical activity, in order to help make the healthier choice the easier choice for residents and municipal employees.

HEAL helps municipal leaders:

- see their role in shaping healthy communities,
- assess their municipality's physical activity and food environments,
- identify specific policy goals to improve physical activity and food environments, and
- get recognition for their efforts.

Select Benefits of Joining the HEAL Cities & Towns Campaign (all provided FREE of cost)

- Presentations at City council meetings/work sessions
- Technical assistance on policy work including fact sheets, model policies, policy assessments and menus, strategies for successful policy adoption and implementation
- Trainings and webinars
- HEAL Cities & Towns staff working with municipal staff in-person or over the phone
- Marketing materials, including use of Campaign logo
- Recognition at Virginia Municipal League events

Sample HEAL Policies

Healthy Food Access

- Healthier food retail
- Farmers' markets
- Nutrition standards for city programs / events
- Community gardens

Physical Activity

- Mixed use development
- Walking & biking
- Joint use of facilities: parks, recreation, schools
- Increased open space

Workplace Wellness

- Healthy Meetings
- Physical Activity Breaks
- Nutrition Standards
- Beverage Standards
- Vending Machine Standards
- Breastfeeding Accommodation

HEAL Cities and Towns in Virginia

- Bluefield, Charles City County, Charlottesville, Crewe, Dumfries, Emporia, Galax, Glade Spring, Gordonsville, Greensville County, Haymarket, Hopewell, Lawrenceville, Leesburg, Lovettsville, Middleburg, New Market, Petersburg, Prince George County, Richmond, Roanoke, Staunton, Virginia Beach, Warrenton, Williamsburg, Wytheville

The HEAL Cities & Towns Campaign for the Mid-Atlantic is part of a national campaign that is currently taking place in California, Oregon, and Colorado. The Institute for Public Health Innovation embarked on this initiative in 2012 with funding from Kaiser Permanente of the Mid-Atlantic States and a strategic partnership with the Maryland and Virginia Municipal Leagues.

Contact us. Visit our website www.healcitiesmidatlantic.org and contact Susan DeFrancesco at sdefrancesco@institutephi.org or 202-747-3512 x1059 to learn more.

