



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



HEAL Cities & Towns Campaign

The HEAL Cities & Towns Campaign for the Mid-Atlantic provides free technical assistance to local government leaders to help them create healthy, prosperous communities. HEAL is a project of the Institute for Public Health Innovation, in partnership with the Maryland and Virginia Municipal Leagues, funded by Kaiser Permanente, founding partner.

Institute for Public Health Innovation (IPHI)

IPHI creates partnerships across sectors and cultivates innovative solutions that improve health and well-being for populations and communities across Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia, particularly those most affected by health inequities.

IPHI is one of more than 40 public health institutes within the National Network of Public Health Institutes (NNPHI). Public health institutes work in conjunction with public and private partners to protect and improve the public's health, adding capacity for a range of functions from workforce training to program development to research and evaluation.

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, healthy 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 and practices 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.

The HEAL Cities & Towns Campaign is important for local government leaders.

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

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.

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 helps municipal leaders:

- See their role in shaping healthy communities,
- Assess their municipalities physical activity and food environments,
- Identify specific policy and practice goals to improve physical activity and food environments, and
- Get recognition for their efforts.

Select benefits of joining the Campaign (all provided free of cost)

- Presentations at City Council meetings/work sessions
- Technical assistance including fact sheets, model policies and practices, policy assessments and menus, and strategies for successful policy/practices 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 Municipal League events

Sample HEAL Policies and Practices

Healthy Eating

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

Active Living

- 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



Contact us.

Visit our website at healcitiesmidatlantic.org and contact HEAL staff at 202-747-3455 and at jgroenfeldt@institutephi.org to learn more.

The HEAL Cities & Towns Campaign for the Mid-Atlantic is in partnership with the following:

