



Healthy Communities Toolkit

A SELF-PACED WORKSHOP TO INTRODUCE THE CONNECTIONS AND RESOURCES MAY/JUNE 2021

OVERVIEW and expected outcomes

- **Week 1:** Taking stock // introduction to policy and environmental change, the audit tool & reflection on current status/recent changes in your town
- **Week 2:** Overview of toolkit resources // Understanding what is included in the toolkit and how it applies to rural communities like ours
- **Week 3:** What's Brewing & What's Stewing // Identify what is working well, what's on the agenda and what needs to be on the agenda
- **Week 4:** Taking Steps Forward // Using the toolkit to support change

BACKGROUND

- The Healthy Communities Toolkit is a resource funded by a grant through Plan4Health.
- Plan4Health is an initiative that connects communities across the country, funding work at the intersection of planning and public health. Anchored by the American Planning Association (APA) and the American Public Health Association (APHA), Plan4Health supports creative partnerships to build sustainable, cross-sector coalitions.
- Launched in 2010, the Eastern Highlands Health District (EHHD) Community Health Action Response Team (CHART) focuses on policy and environmental change to support healthy eating and active living among the 10 towns served by the EHHD. Strategies for the Plan4Health project include assessing zoning policies and codes that impact opportunities for healthy eating and active transportation, and developing a rural community toolkit.

HEALTHY EATING AND ACTIVE LIVING



HEALTHY EATING AND ACTIVE LIVING

- Safe, local opportunities for physical activity, play and recreation
- Access to paths, roads, parks, trails that connect people to places

Active
living

Healthy
eating

- Access to fresh foods from all food groups
- Access to affordable minimally processed foods

HEALTHY EATING AND ACTIVE LIVING

RURAL COMMUNITIES HAVE A KEY ROLE

➤ Preserve rural charm

➤ Work with the natural environment

➤ Facilitate land use

➤ Connect growers with residents

Active living

Healthy eating



POLICY AND ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE

- Much of the work the EHHD facilitates in the community focuses on **sustainable change**: working to support updates to policy and the environment where people have choices (or make choices) that impact their health.
- Policy and environmental change in a community (or worksite or household) takes place in incremental steps that start with noticing that there is a situation that can be addressed (changed).
- While the primary focus of this toolkit workshop is to look at the larger community – many aspects can be applied to worksites and households.

Policy	Environment
Policy evaluation, adjustment &/or termination	All elements in place and well developed
Policy implementation	Most elements are in place &/or well developed
Policy formulation	Some elements are in place &/or well developed
Problem identified/ gaining agenda status	Few elements in place and/or well developed
Not identified as a problem	Elements not in place

POLICY AND ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE

Gradual steps to implementing sustainable change:

The lower boxes start with pre-awareness that steps can be taken, and includes the first steps to making improvements in the community, such as the time it takes to research best practices and get on an agenda. This stage is meaningful and should be acknowledged



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POLICY AND ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE

Gradual steps to implementing sustainable change:

The middle boxes represent an issue actively being addressed, but not complete; it can take months or years in this stage



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POLICY AND ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE

Gradual steps to implementing sustainable change:

The top boxes demonstrate successful implementation of policies or changes to the built environment that support healthy living



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POLICY AND ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE

- The main goal of a policy and environmental approach to improving community health is

**TO MAKE THE HEALTHY CHOICE THE
EASY CHOICE!**

POLICY AND ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE

REFLECTION:

1. Can you identify two policies (zoning rules for example) and two aspects of the built environment in your town or a neighboring town that impact a resident's ability to incorporate active living in their daily/weekly routine?
 2. Can you identify two policies (zoning rules for example) and two aspects of the built environment in your town or a neighboring town that impact a resident's ability to access healthy foods?
- These can be either health-promoting or limiting things.
 - Jot them down – we will use these in future sessions!

COMMUNITY QUICK AUDIT

- Take the Community Quick Audit (YOUR perspective and awareness at this time is all that is captured in this questionnaire)
- The audit includes general 'best practice' statements that promote access to healthy food and opportunities for active living

[CLICK HERE TO TAKE THE AUDIT \(ONLINE\)](#)

If you would rather a print version, [email us](#) to get it sent to you today!

Preview for next week (extra time activity)

Access to healthy food can be as close as your back yard

- Do you know your town's rules/regulations on keeping hens (for fresh eggs)?
- If you have time this week:
 - Locate your town's zoning rules on livestock (specifically hens)
 - Review one Connecticut town's approach to permitting hens that enables many families to have their own source of fresh eggs (policies can be found [HERE](#))
 - Compare and contrast your town's policies to the 'best practice' policies referenced above
 - Every town has different needs – but is there room in your zoning rules to be more inclusive?

Next week...

- We will dive into the resources available in the [Healthy Communities Toolkit](#)

Questions or comments? Feel free to email Ande or Cecile at blooma@ehhd.org