

Steps to Develop a Healthy & Sustainable Vending Policy

UC San Diego
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Center for
Community Health

1 DETERMINE YOUR ORGANIZATION'S DEFINITION OF 'HEALTHY'

The needs of each organization are unique and a vending policy should reflect that. Define “healthy” and “sustainable” in ways that work best for your organization and consistently apply these definitions.

- **Consider how your organization will determine healthy and sustainable options.** Kaiser Permanente's policy promotes nutrient-rich foods and local sourcing, while the County of San Diego's policy is based on fat, sugar, salt, and calorie limits. New York City's policy limits artificial flavors, colors and sweeteners in their vending.
- **Think through having tiered definitions of healthy.** King County's policy organizes foods into “Healthiest, Healthy and Limited” categories, with the healthiest categories focusing on unprocessed and minimally processed foods.

2 SET IMPLEMENTATION GOALS

Some organizations may fully implement healthy and sustainable policies, while others may benefit from a more gradual process.

- **Determine the percentage of healthy options that are right for your organization.** The City of Chula Vista's policy requires that 100% of vending options are healthy, while Maricopa County offers 50% healthy vending.
- **Design population-specific goals.** The County of San Diego's policy states that items in facilities serving youth be 100% healthy, and in all other locations 50% of vending be healthy.

3 CONSIDER PRICING, PLACEMENT & ADVERTISEMENT POLICIES

Consider creating guidelines for your organization's vending machines which detail the cost and placement of healthy items, as well as the allowable advertisements on vending machines.

- **Ensure that healthy options are affordable.** Goodwill Industries of San Diego's vending policy requires that food and beverage items meeting the nutrition standards be priced equivalently to or at a lower price than items not in compliance.
- **Place healthy items at eye level.** New York City's beverage policy requires that water bottles be positioned at eye level or in the bestselling spaces, while high calorie beverages must be placed in a space with the lowest selling potential.
- **Require that advertisements be healthy.** Contra Costa County's policy requires that advertisement on vending machines meet their nutritional standards.

4 CREATE ENFORCEMENT PROTOCOLS

Determine how your organization intends to enforce your healthy vending policy and clearly outline this information in your policy.

- **Consider a team approach.** King County's policy suggests utilizing multiple people in order to increase “buy in” and accomplish annual reviews.
- **Include adopted policies in food and beverage bids and contracts.** Create a method or system for monitoring contract compliance.

Sample Healthy Vending Policy

DETERMINE YOUR ORGANIZATION'S DEFINITION OF 'HEALTHY'

Place nutrition standards at the beginning of your policy and reference the standards throughout your guidelines.

CONSIDER PRICING POLICIES

If your organization decides to support healthy options via a pricing policy, include this information in your policy guidelines.

CREATE ENFORCEMENT PROTOCOLS

Plainly state who will be in charge of enforcement and when adherence checks will take place.

Nutrition Standards

1. Beverage Items
 - a. At least 75% of all offered beverages will be one of the following:
 - i. Water
 - ii. Coffee or Tea
 - iii. Reduced Fat Milk
 - iv. 100% Fruit or Vegetable Juice
 - v. Zero Calorie Beverages
 - b. All beverages, with the exception of water, shall be no \leq 12oz
2. Food Items
 - a. 50% of all snacks offered shall meet the following guidelines:
 - i. Contains \leq 200 calories
 - ii. Contain \leq 35% of calories from fat and no trans fat
 - iii. Contain 50% or more whole grains if a grain product
 - iv. Contain \leq 200 mg salt
 - v. Contain \leq 35% of calories from sugar

Pricing and Placement

1. Items meeting the nutrition standards should be priced at or less than products that do not meet the standards.
2. Items meeting the nutrition standards should be displayed in a location in the vending machine with the highest selling potential.
 - a. Items not meeting the nutrition standards should be displayed in a location with the least selling potential.

Sustainability

1. Purchasing preference will be given to items that are sourced locally and/or offered in minimal packaging.

Advertisements

1. Any food or beverage items advertised on the vending machine must meet the nutrition standards.

Adherence

1. Machines will be checked quarterly by department staff and the policy will be reviewed annually and updated as needed.
2. The policy will be easily accessible to employees and customers, in paper and electronic formats.

SET IMPLEMENTATION GOALS

Clearly state the percentage of items or machines that must be in compliance with your policy. If applicable, add a start date.

CONSIDER PLACEMENT POLICIES

If your organization has created rules on where items may be placed, clearly state the guidelines in your policy.

CONSIDER ADVERTISEMENT POLICIES

Consider requiring that advertisements meet nutrition guidelines. Also, consider advertising company or wellness messages on machines.

Resources

- ChangeLab Solutions: Making Change: A Guide to Healthier Vending for Municipalities
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Health and Sustainability Guidelines for Federal Concession Standards
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Healthier Vending Machine Initiatives in State Facilities
- Kaiser Permanente: Healthy Eating at Work Food Policy Toolkit
- King County: Health Vending Implementation Toolkit
- United States Department of Agriculture: Smart Snacks in School