



Evidence-Based Best Practices for Treatment and Prevention of Obesity for Municipalities

Municipal leaders have the opportunity to affect change in their communities. By making the healthy choice the easy choice, municipal leaders can positively affect the “[triple bottom line](#)”, which aims to measure financial, social and environmental performance over a period of time. To make changes within a municipality requires a broad representation of stakeholders; which include people such as:

- Elected official of municipality or other leadership from his/her office
- Community building/wellness expert from a healthy living organization
- School district leader
- Person to serve as a link to a health disparate population (ie Latino, low-income, children, elderly, etc.)
- Park District Representative
- Hospital Representative
- Chamber of Commerce Representative
- Library Representative
- University Representative
- Community Organizations
- Township Representative
- County Representative

Help Residents Make Healthier Choices:

General Recommendation	FORWARD’s Implementation Suggestion
Launch a city website with information for parents and residents on healthy living.	Promote FORWARD’s searchable database . Residents can search for healthy eating and physical activity resources close to their zip code.
Work with childcare providers and after-school programs to implement standards for nutrition, physical activity and screen time within childcare settings.	Consortium to Lower Obesity in Chicago Children, along with an Inter Departmental Task Force developed recommendations for child care standards. The YMCA Physical Activity and Nutrition Standards are currently being used in their afterschool and early childhood programs.
Encourage worksites to implement a wellness program.	Illinois Alliance to Prevent Obesity and the American Heart Association developed a useful toolkit .
Improve food choices for children in public venues.	Focus on Healthy Vending: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model Vending Standards • Model Policy for Healthy Vending • Example Healthy Foods • Revenue Fact Sheet
Improve restaurant meals.	Encourage restaurants to be become FIT City Restaurants .
Form a community coalition tasked with identifying barriers to healthy living.	Many communities in DuPage County already have a local coalition. Contact FORWARD for more information. Use the YMCA CHLI Assessment to determine barriers and identify areas for improvement.

Improve the Health of Schools:

- Support the development of a summer food service program and encourage participation in school lunch and breakfast programs.
- Support exchanges of school cafeteria equipment. For example, swap a deep fryer for a salad bar.
- Promote the expansion or improvement of nutrition education in schools.
- Ensure that school cafeterias are designed to encourage children to choose healthier meals, including free/reduced price lunch or breakfast.
- Promote school gardens and farm-to-school programs and the incorporation of fresh food into school meals.

Increase Opportunities for Physical Activity:

- Earn a [Presidential Active Lifestyle Award](#) and encourage other organizations to earn one as well.
- Break down barriers to children's physical activity through innovative joint-use agreements.
- Promote safe routes to school.
- Establish a local fitness challenge that sets goals for physical activity.
- Encourage daily, high-quality physical education for students. The goal should be 150 minutes per week for elementary schools and 225 minutes per week for secondary schools.
- Build physical activity into classroom lessons.
- Increase options for affordable transportation to parks and open spaces by discounting public transit, altering or expanding school bus routes.
- Incorporate physical activity into the planning and design of every physical improvement to the city — from municipal buildings and new parks to streets and sidewalks.
- Incorporate pedestrian and bicycle lanes into street development.
- Enhance public safety near parks and other public spaces.
- Develop a “park deserts map” that shows the distance to parks and green spaces.
- Offer intramural sports for students of all skill levels and make sure that it is free and affordable.

Make Healthy Food Affordable and Accessible:

- Support the sale of local foods by offering incentives and encouraging the establishment of farmers' markets.
- Promote policies that support and protect community gardens.
- Pass food policies that require food and beverages purchased with government funds to meet certain nutrition standards.
- Require access to free and safe drinking water in public places.
- Ensure that residents can access healthy and affordable food through public transportation—by realigning bus routes, providing free shuttles, or other means.

Helpful Resources:

- [Shape up Sommerville Model](#)
- [Healthy Kids, Healthy Buffalo-Best Practices for Municipalities](#)
- [Action Strategies Toolkit: Leadership for Healthy Communities: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation](#)
- [Purpose Built Communities](#): an example of how wellness can fit into overall community improvement
- Become a [“Let's Move City or Town”](#) and use the [“Let's Move” Tools](#) for Mayors and Local Officials.