



Policy, Systems, and Environmental Change Definitions and Examples

What is Policy Change?

- Policies that affect whether healthy options are available in our community include laws, ordinances, resolutions, mandates, regulations, or rules.
- Policies that affect the availability of healthy choices where people live, work, learn and play are implemented by:
 - Government bodies (federal, state, local level)
 - School districts and schools
 - Park districts
 - Healthcare organizations (hospitals, health systems)
 - Worksites
 - Other community institutions (child care centers, senior living centers, faith-based institutions, and correctional facilities)
- Examples of Policy Change:
 - A company adopting standards for what types of foods and beverages can be served at meetings and events
 - A city passing a law allowing residents to plant community gardens in vacant lots
 - Schools making a policy that eliminates sugary drinks from vending machines.

What is Systems Change?

- Systems change is any change that impacts all aspects of organizations and institutions. Examples of systems are school districts, healthcare systems, recreation and parks systems. Systems change and policy change often go together.
- Examples of Systems Change:
 - The health department reviews all development plans to make recommendations that improve the health impact of the plan (e.g. walkability, location of food resources, etc.)
 - A preschool chain establishes a minimum standard for how many minutes of physical activity will be offered at all sites each day





What is Environmental Change?

- Environmental change is a change made to the physical or social environment where people live, learn, work and play.
- Environmental change can be as simple as adding a water dispenser community rooms or as complex as sidewalk planning and installation.
- Examples of Environmental Change:
 - A faith-based institution adds bike racks to encourage active transportation
 - a preschool provides a new place for children to be active by opening their playground to the community during the hours the center is closed
 - A community center adds cups next to their water fountain to make water more accessible

How is Policy, Systems and Environmental Change Different From a Program?

Setting	Programs/Events	Policy, Systems and Environmental Change
School	Celebrate national nutrition month	Add fruits and vegetables to the a la carte options in schools
Community	Host a community bike ride and parade	Implement a Complete Streets policy to ensure community roads are constructed for safe biking, walking and driving
Worksite	Hold health screenings for staff	Implement a healthy vending machine policy that offers healthy snacks at an affordable price
Hospital	Hold free breastfeeding courses for new moms	Implement the WHO 10 Steps to Successful Breastfeeding and become a baby friendly hospital

Adapted from Cook County Public Health Community Initiative.
<http://www.cookcountypublichealth.org/files/PPP/PSE%20Change.pdf>

