



Healthy Food, Healthy Communities: Making It Happen in California



Strategies To Improve Access To Healthy Food: Action For Change

Community groups and neighborhood leaders can bring about changes that help children and their families have better access to healthy foods like fresh fruits and vegetables. There are many activities you can undertake to increase healthy food in your community.

First, you might want to work together to survey your neighborhood to find out about your food environment. Through a survey you can identify all places that sell food (supermarkets, grocery stores, fast food, for example). You can also find out how easy or how hard it is for residents to travel to places where healthy food is sold. Results from a survey can help you decide which strategy (or action) may be the best one for your community to work on.

Strategies: Action for Change

You have the right to ask city, county and school officials to make changes in your neighborhood to help all families provide healthy food for their children. Below are a few sample strategies to increase healthy food in neighborhoods.

Attend public hearings and meetings, (including neighborhood association meetings) to speak about the need for your city/county officials to:

- adopt zoning ordinances and planning policies that enhance walkability to stores that sell healthy food especially in neighborhoods where there is limited car ownership
- adopt policies that improve bus and other transportation services to ensure that all residents have transportation to healthy food
- adopt zoning ordinances that facilitate establishment of community gardens
- require restaurants to provide nutrition information about the food for sale
- adopt zoning ordinances that limit the number and density of restaurants selling fast food
- adopt vending policies to ensure healthy options in vending machines in city and county facilities and buildings

Testify at school board meetings to urge board members to:

- ensure no child goes hungry at school by fully utilizing the school breakfast program, the summer lunch program during summer breaks and implementing direct certification for the lunch program
- provide healthy food during meals, throughout the school day and after school
- ensure implementation of SB 12 and SB 965 (state law regarding food and beverage nutrition standards)

Testify at planning commission meetings; meet with planning commissioners to urge them to:

- ensure your General Plan (city and county) addresses public health issues
- ensure your General Plan (city and county) establishes policies requiring and encouraging the development of retail stores, farmers markets and other sources of healthy foods in *all* neighborhoods

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