



TOOLKIT

H.E.A.L 101

MISSOURI FOUNDATION FOR HEALTH

Healthy Schools Healthy Communities

LET'S BUILD A HEALTHIER FUTURE

*In 2013, Missouri Foundation for Health established the **Healthy Schools Healthy Communities** (HSHC) initiative to address childhood obesity in select areas. HSHC brought together schools, community organizations, businesses, parents, and other residents to identify and advocate for changes that increase access to healthy food and physical activity where our kids live, learn, and play. This toolkit was originally developed as part of the initiative and has been adapted for statewide use.*

Published July 2021

Promoting Sustainable Changes to Increase Healthy Eating and Active Living in Missouri

A guide with a process for sustaining change, ideas to explore, and “Who’s Who” in Missouri

Health eating and active living, sometimes referred to as “H.E.A.L.” are important drivers of healthy communities and a healthy state. Across Missouri, schools, community organizations, nonprofits, governments, parents, and students are working to build a healthier future by increasing access to healthy food and physical activity.

For people to eat well, they need access to fresh fruits and vegetables and other healthy foods. To get active, they need to have safe spaces where they can walk, run, and play. It’s on all of us, as a community, to make sure that our families, friends, and neighbors have the tools they need to live a healthy life. Policy and environmental changes can bring this to life.

Policy changes include formally updating or adding new rules and regulations so that everyone agrees to and knows which rules to follow. This can help cement your changes for many years to come. Environmental changes include physical changes to a community, building, or specific spaces. For example, this could include new park equipment, safe sidewalks, or water filling stations.

By prioritizing policy and environmental changes that increase access to healthy food and physical activity, you can create positive change in your community today and for the future. Use this guide to see how you can create sustainable changes, explore low- or no-cost ideas that can make a big difference, and get the inside scoop on “Who’s Who” of H.E.A.L. efforts in Missouri.

A Process for Sustaining Change

When trying to make positive changes, one question that usually comes up right away is, “Where do I begin?” Change can be hard to make and even harder to sustain, especially when it comes to improving the health of students, staff, families, and the communities we serve. To help answer the question, “Where do I begin,” and put you on a path to achieving healthy school and community goals, Healthier Generation developed the 6 Step Process. This process can also be followed or adapted for use beyond school buildings and districts!

[The 6 Step Process](#) represents the ongoing journey to create healthier environments. It requires stakeholders to continuously evaluate and improve upon health and wellness initiatives and learn from successes and challenges to create sustainable change. When repeated each year, the 6 Step Process helps solidify healthy policies and practices and strengthens an organization’s culture of health. What follows is a brief description of each step and some supplemental resources to help on your journey.



To login or create your free Healthier Generation Action Center account to gain access to all Healthier Generation content go to, <https://www.healthiergeneration.org/app/account/login>. If you need assistance creating an account or navigating the site, click [Get Help](#), for step-by-step guides and to connect with the Member Engagement and Support Team.

Step 1: Build Support

Build support by formally convening a team of stakeholders. This should be representative of a diverse group of your school community (e.g., teachers, parents, principals, administrators, nurses, food service, students). Check out the on-demand training, [Recruiting the All-Star Team: Tips and Tools for Building Support](#) on ways to get started.

Step 2: Assess Your Policies and Practices

Knowing what needs to improve starts with assessing where you are at in your school health journey. Assess your school by completing Healthier Generation's [online assessment](#) to identify areas for improvement. Check out this [brief tutorial](#) on how to complete an online assessment. You can also view a pdf version [here](#).

Step 3: Develop Your Action Plan

After assessing your school, it's time to develop an Action Plan based on what is important and achievable in your organization. It is crucial during this step to involve your wellness team to select goals you feel would be most beneficial for the year. It can be tempting to select many goals you feel are important but try to stick to 2-5 goals each year that you believe are impactful to help build momentum and make progress. View this [action planning tutorial](#) on how to complete your online action plan.

Step 4: Explore Resources

You've created your Wellness Team, completed your assessment, and selected goals through your Action Plan. Now, it's time to explore and identify resources that can make it easier to implement your Action Plan. View Healthier Generation's [Resource page](#) to search for content covering a wide range of health topics.

Step 5: Take Action

After determining what you want to work on and finding the necessary resources, it's time to implement your Action Plan for a healthier environment. We recommend checking out Healthier Generation's [Wellness Topics page](#) that includes links to supports for Health & Physical Education, Policy, Nutrition Services, Physical Activity, Smart Snacks, Social-Emotional Health, Family Engagement, and Staff Well-Being.

Step 6: Celebrate Success

If you've completed steps 1-5, it's time to acknowledge small victories and big successes along the way by CELEBRATING! This is the one step we sometimes skip over due to time or possibly not thinking the progress made in one year is "big" enough to celebrate. Talk to your wellness team and be sure to find a way to celebrate your work. You can check out Healthier Generation's [Promote Your Program](#) page for several ideas, templates, and resources you can use to highlight your work. Also, [Keep the Ball Rolling: Maintaining Momentum for Wellness Initiatives](#) is a quick, on demand training you can check out to ensure the progress you made over the year continues on.

Sustaining your efforts requires building a great team and following a consistent process year to year. The 6 Step Process is a consistent way you can improve and make incremental progress on your wellness efforts. If you need support in your school-based efforts, reach out to Healthier Generation's [Member Engagement and Support Team](#) and we can connect you to the right resource, training, or person to help you along your journey.

Ideas to Explore

In your community

Sharing Community Resources through a Memorandum of Agreement

In your community there are any number of valuable and sometimes unexpected, available resources. Maybe it's an empty lot that could be used as a community garden or a church facility that's only used on the weekend and would make a great place for an after-school program. Whatever it is, once the idea is agreed upon, a [Memorandum of Agreement](#) (MOA) helps make sure all parties involved clearly know and understand their expectations and roles.

Passing a Complete Streets Policy

One way to ensure that your town is built in a way that is safe for people walking, biking, or using a wheelchair is to pass a [Complete Streets Policy](#). Complete Street Policies ensure that when towns build or renovate a street, decision-makers consider the needs of everyone who uses the street, including people walking, biking, or using transit. These policies make sure that the street design includes transportation infrastructure like sidewalks, crosswalks, and bike lanes.

Healthy Concessions Policy

Many people who attend sports games and events have busy schedules and rely on concession stands as a supplement or substitute for meals. Cities and schools can support their community's health by offering healthy food options to customers. Adopting a [Healthy Concessions Policy](#) ensures that healthy options are always offered, no matter who is operating the concession stand, and provides guidance on choosing healthy food options.

SNAP at the Farmer's Market

Want to take a step toward making your farmer's market more equitable and help give more people access to fresh healthy produce? Consider [establishing a SNAP program](#) at your farmer's market and begin accepting EBT cards.

Establish a Safe Routes to School Program

Kids walking and biking to school has been shown to have enormous benefits! Unfortunately, after about a century of building roads and towns in a way that discourages walking and biking, very few children get to school under their own power. By establishing a [Safe Routes to School program](#) and implementing the 6 E's (Engagement, Equity Engineering, Encouragement, Education, and Evaluation) schools and communities can once again begin to increase opportunities for kids to walk or bike to school.

In your school district/buildings

Establish a Policy for Healthy Celebrations

Schools and afterschool programs play an important role in helping students learn about healthy eating. School celebrations can reinforce messages about good nutrition and health when they include healthy foods and beverages and provide opportunities for youth to be active. [Celebrations that Support Child Health](#) provides steps and ideas on how to implement a Healthy Celebration Policy.

Active Students, Active Minds- Increase Physical Activity During the School Day

Research shows that when kids are physically active, they learn better and perform better. Providing short physical activity breaks and incorporating movement in the classroom helps students get their recommended 60 minutes of PA each day. [Active Students, Active Minds Campaign](#), [PA Break Cards](#), and the [CDC: Classroom Physical Activity Promotion Kit](#) are great resources to get you started.

Encourage Drinking Water and Other Non-Sugar-Sweetened Beverages

Promoting and providing access to water instead of soda and other sugar sweetened beverages is an easy and high impact action that will help improve the health of students, staff, and families. Water helps students think better and aids in the prevention of Type 2 diabetes when selected as an alternative to sugar sweetened beverages. A few resources to review for more steps and actions you can take to improve water consumption are: [Make a Splash with Water!](#), [5 Tips to Drink More Water](#), [Increasing Drinking Water Availability in Schools](#), [CDC Water Access in Schools Toolkit](#).



“We have to do something to make sure all of our children have an equal playing field. We have to make sure that our youth have access to quality education, healthy foods, and recreational opportunities, so they can live and thrive where they are. It shouldn’t matter where they live. Everyone should be able to live their best lives.”

Kelly M., St. Louis, MO

Who's Who in Missouri

When you need support for your community or school's healthy eating and active living needs, *who you going to call...* or in this day and age, text, email or follow on social media? We've got you covered with a listing of key organizations in Missouri you can reach out to engage.

Missouri Healthy Schools (DESE)

<http://www.mohealthyschools.com/>

In partnership with school leaders, Missouri Healthy Schools bolsters health promotion infrastructure, knowledge, and behaviors by: Assisting schools in building a systemic and integrated approach to address health and education outcomes, providing health and wellness education and targeted training to school professionals, promoting and implementing school-wide policies to support a healthy and safe school community, supporting chronic disease management.

MO Healthy Schools Contact: Laura Beckmann, Director, Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, laura.beckmann@dese.mo.gov, (573) 751-7613

Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services

<https://health.mo.gov/living/families/schoolhealth/>

The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services' mission is to be the leader in promoting, protecting, and partnering for health. They partner with public and private entities to improve health for all Missourians and protect seniors and persons with disabilities. [Missouri Team Nutrition](#) implements programs that assist Missouri pre-school and school-age children in making healthy, nutritious choices that result in improved health status.

School Health Program Contact: SHS@health.mo.gov, (573) 522-2822

Team Nutrition Project Contact: info@health.mo.gov, (573) 522-2820

Missouri Coordinated School Health

<https://healthykidsmo.org/MCSHC-About/index.php>

The Missouri Coordinated School Health Coalition is a collaborative of public and private organizations assisting Missouri's schools, families, and communities with their coordinated school health programs. The coalition does this by promoting the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's coordinated school health model.

Contact: info@healthykidsmo.org, (573) 522-6543

University of Missouri Extension

<https://extension.missouri.edu/find-your-interest/youth-and-family/nutrition-and-health-education>

MU Extension improves lives, businesses, and communities by focusing on solving Missouri's grand challenges around economic opportunity, educational access, and health and well-being.

Health & Wellness Experts: [Stephen Ball](#), Professor Human & Environmental Sciences; [Kelsey Weitzel](#), Asst. Extension Professor-Nutrition and Exercise Physiology; [Allison Gunter](#), County Engagement Specialist in Nutrition & Secondary Ed.

Missouri State Alliance of YMCAs

<https://www.moymca.org/>

The Missouri State Alliance of YMCAs is a nonprofit association that represents the 24 YMCA Associations throughout Missouri. Missouri State Alliance of YMCAs is a grassroots driven and governed organization that advocates and educates on behalf of the YMCAs and our mission. They monitor legislative and regulatory issues, as well as educate and advocate to policymakers concerning all of the community services Ys provide.

Contact: Stephanie Smith, stephanie@moymca.org

Missouri AfterSchool Network

<https://moafterschool.org/>

The Missouri AfterSchool Network builds systems across the state that improve, support, and sustain high quality afterschool programs.

Contact: Terri Foulkes, foulkest@missouri.edu, 573-884-2936

Missourians for Responsible Transportation

<https://www.movingmissouri.org/>

Missourians for Responsible Transportation are the leaders in fostering strong communities by aligning advocacy efforts for streets, roads, and trails that work for all Missourians.

Contact: Ron Bentch, Project Coordinator, Ron@MovingMissouri.org, (573) 289-9335

Missouri Association of Councils of Government

<http://macog.org/>

The Missouri Association of Councils of Governments is the statewide organization representing Missouri's 19 regional planning commissions and councils of governments. These professional organizations represent the entire State of Missouri and are committed to enhancing the state's regions. Regional councils are engaged in a myriad of activities, including economic and community

development, housing initiatives, safety and security, transportation planning, environmental issues, and quality-of-life issues.

Contact: Doug Hermes, Planning Coordinator, planning@macog.org, (816) 781-8631

Missouri Council on Activity and Nutrition

<https://extension.missouri.edu/programs/mocan>

The Missouri Council for Activity and Nutrition is a partner-driven council that is housed in Columbia with MU Extension and is composed of professionals across the state from diverse backgrounds (e.g., educators, government officials, healthcare providers, nonprofit representatives). Through statewide networking, organizations work together to implement and support policy changes that will improve the health and quality of life of Missourians.

Contact: Candace Rodman, c.rodman@missouri.edu, (660) 269-9656

Missouri Rural Health Association

<https://mrhassociation.org>

HealthTran

<https://mrhassociation.org/healthtran/>

HealthTran is a volunteer driver program administered by MRHA, with the mission to safeguard and improve the health of rural Missourians. HealthTran closes the transportation gap and empowers communities by allowing rural Missourians to schedule rides to and from their health and wellness visits.

Mobility Management

<https://mrhassociation.org/mobility-management/>

MRHA provides statewide assistance and support to organizations and individuals working on access solutions. Coming soon, the technical center will be the gateway for tools, education opportunities, networking, and chat groups for those working on access solutions. We are dedicated to improving access for all in urban and rural communities.

Contact: Mary Gordon, HealthTran Director, mary@morha.org, (573) 616-2740