



# Food Service Guidelines: *Supporting Healthy Worksites*



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# Overview

While individuals make choices about their diets, their decisions and eating habits are also influenced by the food that is available around them, including at their worksites and places they frequent. **Food service guidelines** can help to increase access to healthy, affordable foods and drive demand for more nutritious products. Implementation of these guidelines and associated strategies will contribute to a culture of health within worksites and community-based organizations.

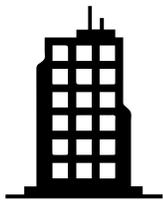
This document was developed by the Obesity Prevention Center for Excellence (OPCE) as part of the New York State Department of Health's Creating Healthy Schools and Communities (CHSC) initiative. It provides practical guidance and resources for use when developing, adopting, implementing, and evaluating food service guidelines. Food service guidelines refer to any "policy officially adopted by an approved organization requiring that the food it purchases, provides, or makes available contains key nutrients at levels that do not exceed standards established by public health authorities."<sup>1</sup>

These guidelines are intended to help CHSC coordinators consider the range of settings where they can influence healthy food options, and to showcase useful resources and tools. Champions within an organization can also use these guidelines to improve their worksite nutritional environments.

<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Improving the Food Environment through Nutrition Standards: A Guide for Government Procurement. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Division for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention. February 2011.

## Where can food service guidelines be established?

Food service guidelines can be implemented in a range of settings. CHSC contractors can work with:



Worksites



Hospitals



Municipalities/  
Municipal Agencies  
(e.g., Parks & Recreation)



Community-based  
Organizations



**Look for resources highlighted in these call-out boxes throughout this document.**

» All resources, including those developed by **CHSC GRANTEES**, can be found on Health-e-Link in the Food Service Guidelines folder.

# Steps for Improving the Food Environment

Regardless of the specific setting/venue being targeted, the following steps provide a framework for improving the food environment. These steps have been informed by best practices and are recommended by leading national organizations, such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

## Step 1

### Identify and engage stakeholders

Obtain buy-in from senior leadership, engage employees, and establish a wellness team.



## Step 2

### Assess site and develop an action plan

Conduct the CHSC Worksite Assessment (pre-survey), assess employee interests, and create an action plan to guide implementation.



## Step 3

### Develop and adopt policy

Adopt policy language to include food standards, along with language regarding pricing, placement, and promotion.



## Step 4

### Implement and communicate changes

Carry out action plan activities and share changes with employees.



## Step 5

### Monitor and evaluate policy

Conduct the CHSC Worksite Assessment (post-survey) and administer follow-up employee surveys.





## Step 1

# Identify and engage stakeholders

### Leadership

Gaining buy-in from senior leadership is imperative, yet frequently challenging. Framing this work to speak to leaders' priorities can help to build their support. Make a business case as to how food service guidelines and a healthy nutrition environment can have benefits beyond improved employee health.

### Tips for speaking with leadership

- Focus on the financial benefits (reduced absenteeism, lower health insurance costs, increased productivity) of having healthier employees, rather than solely on the health benefits.
- Emphasize how wellness efforts can contribute to an improved organizational reputation that will help recruitment.
- Focus on health, not policy. You're "creating a culture of health," rather than "changing policy."
- Emphasize how small, easy changes can make a big difference. Highlight that new strategies can compound already-existing efforts.
- Avoid language about the "crisis" of health conditions like obesity. It triggers a response of "it's not my organization's problem" and "my organization can't fix that."

### Resources highlighting benefits of wellness in the workplace \*

- » [Control Health Care Costs](#) webpage (CDC)
- » [Healthy Worksites one-pager](#) (OPCE—available on Health-e-Link)
- » [Worksite Wellness Toolkit](#), p. 5-8 (Knox County Health Department)

### Sample messages

Employees view worksite wellness efforts to be an investment in their well-being and a reflection of how much their organizations care about them, having a positive impact on job satisfaction and morale.

Employees want to be healthy. Small changes to the environment can provide the healthy options that employees want.

Promoting your organization as a healthy work environment is good for publicity and improves the organization's image in the community.

Employers are uniquely poised to have a big impact on employees' health with relatively small effort.

Healthy employees are key to ensuring a successful corporate bottom line. They require fewer sick days, work at peak productivity on a daily basis, and tend to be happier—all key to retaining economic competitiveness.

### Employees

Employees provide critical input into efforts to promote healthier choices; they also can help to increase buy-in. They are essential to sustaining these efforts and leveraging resources for future change, as well as for sharing them with other employees. A wellness team and/or champion can help to rally employees around changes and create support for food service guidelines. The graphic below was adapted from [Kaiser's Wellness Committee Toolkit](#).





## Step 2

# Assess site and develop an action plan

### Site Assessment

An assessment of the food environment will identify where food is purchased, distributed, or served within the site, as well as help determine what approach, direction, or strategies will work best for a particular site. There are several ways to assess a site:

#### Employee interest surveys

Surveys can identify which strategies might be most accepted and/or desirable among employees and provide an avenue for employee involvement. Below are some examples of general employee interest surveys that can be provided to sites.

#### Survey resources

- » [Designing Surveys webpage](#) (CDC)
- » [Employee Interest Survey Sample Questions](#) (Health-e-Link)
- » [Healthier Food Choices for Public Places Survey](#) (Center for Science in the Public Interest). Questions can be adapted for specific settings.

#### Environmental assessment

The CHSC Worksite Assessment Tool is located on Health-e-Link. As part of grant requirements, coordinators are responsible for conducting the CHSC Worksite Assessment Tool at baseline (years 1-2) and follow-up (years 3-5). See the CHSC Worksite Assessment Guidance document for additional direction. The baseline assessment will gather information to inform an action plan at each site, while the follow-up assessment will capture changes in the environment resulting from implementation efforts. If the site is interested in conducting a more comprehensive assessment, the [CDC Worksite Health Score Card](#) can be used to assess the current environment, identify gaps, and prioritize high-impact strategies.

### Management interviews

Talk with management to find out how ready they are to make healthy changes and how much they are willing to support them. During these conversations, identify the level of organizational and financial support that will be available for employee wellness.

*For suggestions, see the sample Management Interview Questions document on Health-e-Link.*

### Action Planning

The action plan should address opportunities identified during the assessment phase. Use an action plan template to outline activities, champions, and a timeline for implementation.

Wellness teams, champions, and other stakeholders will be able to provide valuable insight as action plans and guidelines are developed; they should be engaged throughout the process. When developing an action plan, consider the following:

- What is the site's level of readiness? Is it appropriate to implement a guideline requiring 100% adherence/compliance or is a phased-in approach more appropriate?
- What resources will be necessary to support implementation? What resources are available?
- Who will oversee implementation?
- Who will ensure compliance, and how often? What are the penalties for non-compliance, if any?
- Further considerations are discussed on page 23 in The Food Trust's [Building and Implementing Healthy Food Services toolkit](#).

*For specific ideas of items to include in the action plan, see the resources below and the Supplemental Activities (p. 18).*

#### Resources (developed by CHSC GRANTEES— available on Health-e-Link)

- » Action plan template (Rockland County Department of Health)
- » Action plan template and sample budget template (St. Lawrence County Health Initiative)
- » T-chart example (Nepperhan Community Center)



### Step 3

## Develop and adopt policy

### Adopt Guidelines

Guidelines should ideally be incorporated into a formal policy to be adopted by the site. Policy language should state the organization’s commitment to serving healthier food and beverage items and include the standards/guidelines (e.g., NYS standards) that the site decides to adopt, as well as language regarding pricing, placement, and promotion of products. Suggested standards for specific settings (healthy meetings/ events, vending, cafeterias/cafés) are included in the New York State Department of Health [Healthy Workplace Food Initiative Toolkit](#). Additional standards are referenced throughout this document.

#### Examples of language for healthy food policies

- » [Healthy Worksite Toolkit sample policies](#), p. 3-7 (BANPAC)
- » [Sample policy language](#) (Eat Well Work Well)
- » [Sample Workplace Healthy Food, Beverage and Wellness Policy](#) (CHSC GRANTEE Clinton County Health Department—available on Health-e-Link)

### Step 4

## Implement and communicate changes

Work with stakeholders at the site to implement the guidelines and related activities outlined in the action plan. Employees should be engaged before, during, and after implementation of food service guidelines, and leadership should communicate changes to bolster acceptance among employees.

#### Ideas for communicating changes include:

Company website	Email from senior management
Newsletters	Signs in common areas
Announcements	Employee handbook

#### Resources for communicating changes

- » [Creating a Healthier Worksite resource](#), p. 12-13 (Vermont Department of Health)
- » [Sample healthy workplace food and beverage pledge and sample email to employees, Healthy Workplace Food and Beverage Toolkit](#), p. 9-10 (American Heart Association)

### Step 5

## Monitor and evaluate

Track implementation and obtain feedback from employees to determine what is working well and where changes need to be made. Conduct baseline and follow-up assessments to monitor changes in policies and practices, and assess employee satisfaction through surveys. Then use these data to adapt and make improvements. More setting-specific evaluation and assessment tools are provided on the following pages. At this stage, wellness teams and/or champions can act as liaisons between leadership and employees.

- Conduct the CHSC Worksite Assessment (grant requirement) at baseline (years 1-2) and after changes have been implemented (years 4-5).
- Administer follow-up employee surveys to measure acceptance and satisfaction, and to solicit feedback for improvements. Surveys should include questions about the specific program being evaluated.
- Disseminate results to continue garnering support.

#### Sample surveys

- » [Employee Satisfaction Survey](#) (Providence Health Plan)
- » [Employee Satisfaction Survey](#) (Work Well NC)

# Fostering a Healthier Food Environment



Ready to foster a healthier food environment? Now take these steps and apply them to:



## Meetings and Events



## Vending and Concessions



## Cafeterias and Cafés

# Meetings and Events

For many sites, meetings and events are an important part of the organizational culture, and often involve food and beverages. It is important to improve the nutrition content of offerings at meetings and events not only to provide access to healthy food, but also to encourage social norms around healthier choices. Consider taking the following steps to improve the nutrition of food and beverages offered at meetings and events.



## 1. Identify and engage stakeholders

	Employees	Organizational	Caterers/Vendors
Concerns/ Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accustomed to traditional offerings</li> <li>May not be concerned with nutrition content of food and beverages served</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May not be concerned with nutrition content of food and beverages served</li> <li>Cost of catering orders</li> <li>Ease of ordering</li> <li>Employee satisfaction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Making a profit</li> <li>Retaining clients/maintaining business relationships</li> </ul>
Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue offering food at meetings, just ensure healthy options</li> <li>Conduct an employee interest survey to gauge satisfaction with current offerings and solicit input on healthier options</li> <li>Conduct taste tests to identify preferred healthy options</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Share information about benefits of healthier options on productivity, presenteeism, morale, etc. to garner buy-in</li> <li>Work with current caterers/vendors to identify low-cost healthy items</li> <li>Explore new caterer/vendor options</li> <li>Conduct an employee interest survey to gauge satisfaction with current offerings and to solicit input on the healthier options most desired</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek input from vendors on the types of healthier products they are able to stock and that have sold well in other sites</li> <li>Share results from employee surveys/taste tests to show demand</li> <li>Share research/information highlighting the market for healthy products</li> </ul> <p><b>Caterer/vendor resource</b>             » <a href="#">Healthy Meeting Toolkit</a>, p. 7 (National Alliance for Nutrition and Activity)</p>

## 2. Assess site and develop an action plan

### Environmental Assessment

Identify whether there is an existing policy/guideline for food and beverages served at meetings and events. Question #11 on the required CHSC Worksite Assessment addresses whether or not a policy exists. Additional examples of questions that could be asked as part of the environmental assessment are provided to the right.

### *If a policy/guideline exists*

- Is it based on best practice/gold standard language?
- How have employees responded to it so far? Are they aware of it?
- Is it followed at all meetings/events? If not, what percentage of meetings/events currently meet the policy/guideline?
- Is it sufficient to ensure healthy options at meetings/events, or would the policy/guideline benefit from being revised?
- How is the policy disseminated/communicated?
- If the site has worked on a healthy meeting/events policy/guideline before, what barriers were encountered?

## 2. Assess site and develop an action plan (continued)

### Seek Employee Input

An employee interest survey can provide information about what healthy items are most desired by employees. When people feel like their opinions matter, they will be more likely to buy in. Listed below are some sample questions that can be included on a survey:

- How important is it to you that workplace meetings and events offer healthy foods and beverages?
- Which of the following types of foods would you like to see offered at workplace meetings and events (provide list of items that meet guidelines)?
- Which of the following types of beverages would you like to see offered at workplace meetings and events (provide list of items that meet guidelines)?

### Develop an Action Plan

Utilize an action plan template to outline activities, champions, and a timeline for implementation (see resources provided on p. 6). Following action plan development, officially adopt the meetings/events guidelines, communicate changes, and begin implementation.

#### *Examples of activities to include in the action plan*

- Identify who is in charge of catering/ordering for meetings/events.
- Create a list of vendors/caterers that can provide healthy options.
- Develop relationships with caterers, suppliers, or local farmers and make clear preferences for healthier ordering. Consider purchasing locally-grown fruits and vegetables when possible.
- Conduct taste tests of healthy options.
- Create a list of approved food/beverage items.
- Provide approved healthy options at meetings/events.
- Pass the healthy meetings/events policy (see Step 3).

## 3. Develop and adopt policy

### Adopt Guidelines

Policy language should state the organization's commitment to serving healthier options in meetings/events. Include the standards/guidelines (e.g. [NYS Meetings and Events standards](#)) that the site decides to adopt, as well as language regarding placement, pricing, and promotion. Adopt an overall healthy food policy with a section for meetings/events or adopt a healthy meetings/events policy.

#### **Sample policy templates**

- » [Healthy Catering Policy](#) (Eat Well Work Well)
- » [Sample Resolution](#) (Center for Science in the Public Interest)
- » [Sample Healthy Foods policy](#) (Eat Smart Move More North Carolina)



### What About Food Banks/Pantries?

A food bank/pantry nutrition policy guides food procurement decisions and promotes consistent decision making to acquire more healthy foods for distribution. Some similar concepts and resources for meetings/events can be applied to food banks/pantries.

#### **Resources for food banks/pantries**

- » [Davenport Community Food Bank Nutrition Guidelines](#)<sup>1</sup> (**CHSC GRANTEE** SUNY Cobleskill—available on Health-e-Link)
- » [Guide to Drafting a Food Bank Nutrition Policy](#) (UC Berkeley Center For Weight and Health)

<sup>1</sup> Davenport Community Food Bank is technically a food pantry.

## 4. Implement and communicate changes

Support stakeholders at the site to implement the guidelines and related activities outlined in the action plan.

### Implementation resources

- » [Healthy Meeting Toolkit](#) (National Alliance for Nutrition and Activity)
- » [Healthy Workplace Food and Beverage Toolkit](#) (American Heart Association)
- » [Webpage](#) and [one-pager](#) (Center for Science in the Public Interest)

## Communicate Changes to Employees

Strategies, ranging from formal announcements to more subtle messages, can be used to communicate new guidelines and changes.

- Send an email to employees announcing the change.
- Make an announcement about the healthier options at the next meeting or event.
- Include the new guidelines as part of the employee handbook.
- Communicate commitment to providing healthy choices at meetings via the organization's website.

### Communications resource

- » [Website](#) (Seattle & King County Public Health Department)



## 5. Monitor and evaluate

Monitoring of compliance, as well as employee satisfaction, will be important to understand the impact of vending guidelines and can be used to garner additional support.

- Conduct the CHSC Worksite Assessment (grant requirement) at baseline and again after changes have been implemented (years 3-5 of grant).
- Administer follow-up employee surveys to measure acceptance and satisfaction and to solicit feedback for improvements.

### Evaluation resources

- » [Guide to Healthy Meetings & Events](#), p. 16-17 (University of California Irvine)
- » [Healthy Meeting Toolkit](#), p. 8 (National Alliance for Nutrition and Activity)



# Vending and Concessions

Vending machines and concession stands are convenient and common sources of food and beverages, yet few contain healthy options. Consider taking the following steps to improve the nutrition content of food and beverages offered in vending machines and at concession stands.



## 1. Identify and engage stakeholders

	Employees	Organizational	Caterers/Vendors
Concerns/ Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easy access to snacks and beverages</li> <li>• Accustomed to traditional offerings</li> <li>• Cost of snacks/beverages</li> <li>• May not be concerned with nutrition content of food and beverages sold</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial sustainability and profitability of contracts</li> <li>• Employee/customer satisfaction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keeping/renewing contract/client</li> <li>• Making a profit</li> <li>• Developing new business</li> </ul>
Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure healthy options in all vending and concessions</li> <li>• Consider a phased-in approach to replacing unhealthy items</li> <li>• Consider pricing structure that incentivizes healthy products</li> <li>• Conduct an interest survey (see next page) to gauge satisfaction with current offerings and solicit input on healthier options</li> <li>• Conduct taste tests to identify preferred healthy options</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with vendors/suppliers to identify and stock lower-cost healthier items</li> <li>• Research existing contract (if one exists) and explore new vendors if they are unable to meet requests</li> <li>• Conduct an employee interest survey and/or taste tests to show demand for healthier options</li> <li>• Track sales of healthier items and share with leadership</li> </ul> <p><b>Resources</b> </p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» <a href="#">Healthier Vending Toolkit</a>, p. 22-25 (Lancaster County)</li> <li>» <a href="#">Healthy Workplace Food and Beverage Toolkit</a>, p.19-20 (American Heart Association)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek input from vendors on the healthier products they are able to stock that sell well</li> <li>• Work with vendor on promotion/placement strategies to increase sales</li> <li>• Show employee demand for healthier products</li> <li>• Be flexible about which health items are introduced</li> <li>• Take time to build a relationship with vendors to earn their cooperation and buy-in</li> <li>• Ensure the healthy items are stocked appropriately and check machines weekly</li> </ul>

## 2. Assess site and develop an action plan

### Environmental Assessment

This includes assessing the existing policies as well as current offerings and supplier. Questions #6-10 on the CHSC Worksite Assessment address the presence of a vending policy, availability of healthy vending offerings, and the promotion and pricing of items.

### Examples of additional assessment tools

- » [Healthy Hospital Food and Beverage Environment Scan](#), p. 14-19 (CDC)
- » [Modified NEMS for National Parks](#)
- » [Nutritional Environment Measures Survey \(NEMS\) – Vending](#)
- » [Vending Machine Assessment and Inventory](#), p. 17-18 (Mid-Atlantic Coalition on Healthcare)
- » [Vending Machine Audit Form](#) (BEAT Institute and Samuel & Associates)

## 2. Assess site and develop an action plan (continued)

### Seek Employee and Customer Input

Implement an employee/customer interest survey to solicit feedback about what types of healthy items they would like offered in vending machines and at concession stands.

#### Sample resources

- » Patron Surveys for Concession Stands (**CHSC GRANTEE** Rockland County Department of Health—available on Health-e-Link)
- » [Employee Vending Survey](#), p. 15 (Mid-Atlantic Coalition on Healthcare)
- » [Healthier Vending Toolkit](#), p. 85-88 (Lancaster County)
- » Employee Survey: Healthier Food Choices Questionnaire (**CHSC GRANTEE** St. Lawrence Health Initiative—available on Health-e-Link)
- » Vending Questions (**CHSC GRANTEE** Orange County Department of Health—available on Health-e-Link)

### Develop an Action Plan

Utilize an action plan template to outline activities, champions, and a timeline for implementation. Following action plan development, formally adopt the vending and concessions guidelines, communicate changes, and begin implementation.

#### Activities

- Determine whether existing vending machines are owned by the site or under contract with a specific vendor and/or if there is a contracted concessions supplier.
- If under contract, work with the vendor/supplier to determine current contract specifics (e.g. products, signage, restrictions), which will inform the action plan.

#### Contracting resources

- » [Best Contracting Practices](#), p. 15 (ChangeLab Solutions)
- » [Model Healthy Municipal Snack and Beverage vending agreement](#) (ChangeLab Solutions)
- » [Sample letter](#) to vendor, p. 98 (Lancaster County's Healthier Vending Toolkit)
- » [Step-by-Step Guide](#) to working with your vending company, p. 23-25 (Lancaster County's Healthier Vending Toolkit)

- Provide the vendor with a list of products that meet the guidelines.

#### Sample lists

- » [List of Snack, Entrée, and Beverage Options](#) that meet NANA, AHA, and GSA/HHS Vending Standards (Center for Science in the Public Interest)
- » Nutritional Environment Measures Survey—Vending [Accepted Products List](#)
- » [Product List](#) (FitPick)

- Start with a phased-in approach to stocking healthier items. Monitor sales and gradually increase the number of healthy items over time.
- Utilize placement strategies to help employees identify healthier items. Strategies to consider:
  - Group together foods from the approved healthier vending/concessions list.
  - Place healthier items in the top half of the vending machine (eye-level).
  - Label and promote healthy options with a symbol or decal.
  - Provide nutrition information on or near the machine/concession stand.
  - Subsidize the cost of healthy options or cross-subsidize healthy and unhealthy options.
  - Conduct taste tests to identify new offerings and encourage employees and customers to try them.
  - Develop a planogram, a picture showing the exact layout and exact items that should be maintained within the vending machine.

#### Sample planograms

- » [Planogram](#), p. 69-72 (Alberta Health Services Healthy Vending Toolkit)
- » [Planogram](#) (Healthy Together Victoria website)

- Pass the healthy vending/concessions policy.

### 3. Develop and adopt policy

Policy language should state the organization's commitment to serving healthier options in vending/concessions. Include the standards/guidelines (e.g., NYS [Food Vending Machine](#) and [Beverage Vending Machine](#) or [HHS/GSA Concessions](#) standards) that the site decides to adopt, as well as language regarding placement, pricing, and promotion. Adopt an overall healthy food policy with a section for vending concessions or adopt a vending/concessions-specific policy.

#### Sample templates

- » [Key Components of Food Procurement & Vending Policies](#) (Public Health Law Center)
- » [Sample Healthier Vending Policy](#), p. 67 of 91 (Lancaster County)
- » Sample vending policy language, [one](#) and [two](#) (Eat Well Work Well)

### 4. Implement and communicate changes

Implement the guidelines and related activities outlined in the action plan.

#### Implementation resources

- » [Beverage Vending Machines Implementation Guide](#) (New York State)
- » [Building and Implementing Healthy Food Services Toolkit](#) (The Food Trust)
- » [Creating Healthy Concessions Resource Guide](#) (Fairmount Park Conservancy)
- » [Fact sheets and background resources](#) (Center for Science in the Public Interest)
- » [Food Vending Machines Implementation Guide](#) (New York State)
- » [Healthier Vending Toolkit](#) (Lancaster County)
- » [Making Change: A Guide to Healthier Vending for Municipalities](#) (ChangeLab Solutions)

### Communicate Changes to Employees

Multiple methods and channels can be used to communicate healthy vending/concession changes. These range from formal announcements to promoting changes with posters and signs to highlighting changes on or near the machines.

- Communicate healthy vending/concession changes via the organization's website.
- Send an email to employees/community members announcing the change.
- Make an announcement at the next meeting or event highlighting the healthier vending/concessions options.
- Include the new guidelines as part of the employee handbook.

#### Communications resources

- » [Employer's toolkit](#) (Choose Healthy Now! Healthy Vending Project Hawaii)
- » Tailored resources for [white-collar worksites](#) and [blue-collar worksites](#) (The Nutritional Environment Measures Survey – Vending website)

### 5. Monitor and evaluate

Monitoring of compliance and employee satisfaction will be important to understanding the impact of vending guidelines and can be used to garner additional support.

- Conduct the CHSC Worksite Assessment (grant requirement) at baseline and again after changes have been implemented (years 3-5 of grant).
- Conduct follow-up employee surveys.
- Obtain sales reports from vendor(s) to demonstrate popularity/acceptance of new, healthier items.
- Disseminate this information to employees to garner further support.

# Cafeterias and Cafés

Many worksites and organizations have cafeterias that allow employees to purchase meals and prepared food on-site. Offering healthier options in these venues helps to ensure convenient access to nutritious food and beverages. Consider taking the following steps to improve the nutrition content of food and beverages offered in cafeterias/cafés.



## 1. Identify and engage stakeholders

	Employees	Organizational	Caterers/Vendors
Concerns/ Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Want a variety of options at a reasonable cost</li> <li>• May be accustomed to traditional offerings</li> <li>• May not be concerned with nutrition content of foods and beverages selected</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food and labor costs</li> <li>• Employee satisfaction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food costs</li> <li>• Knowledge/skills and time required to prepare healthy meals</li> <li>• May not be concerned with nutrition content of food and beverages offered</li> </ul>
Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phase in healthier meals, along with traditional options</li> <li>• Highlight/promote new menu items to increase awareness</li> <li>• Conduct an employee interest survey and/or taste tests to identify preferred healthy items</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with suppliers to choose items that keep costs lower</li> <li>• Implement no-cost changes such as product placement, smaller portion sizes, etc.</li> <li>• Conduct an employee interest survey and/or taste tests to identify preferred healthy items</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with suppliers to choose items that keep costs lower. If necessary, research other suppliers/vendors</li> <li>• Provide training opportunities to enhance culinary skills and nutrition knowledge</li> <li>• Provide sample menus</li> </ul>



## 2. Assess site and develop an action plan (continued)

### Environmental Assessment

This includes not only assessing the existing cafeteria/café offerings, but also existing guidelines and practices. Questions #5, and 7-10 on the CHSC Worksite Assessment address the presence of a policy/guideline for foods served in the cafeteria, availability of healthy food offerings, and the promotion and pricing of items.

#### Examples of additional assessment tools

- » [Food Environment Survey](#) (Eat Well Work Well)
- » [Healthy Hospital Food Beverage Environment Scan](#), p. 4-13 (CDC)
- » [Nutrition Environment Measures Survey - Cafeterias](#)
- » [Employee Interest Survey \(CHSC GRANTEE Onondaga County—available on Health-e-Link\)](#)



### Seek Employee Input

Employee preferences and purchasing patterns can be assessed through an employee interest survey. Utilize a general employee interest survey and supplement it with questions related to potential policy and environmental changes for cafeterias to elicit feedback.

#### Questions could address:

- The types of healthy foods customers would like to see in the cafeteria.
- The types of environmental changes (e.g., water filling station, removal of unhealthy marketing) customers would like to see in the cafeteria.
- The extent to which nutrition information or labeling would influence customer selections.
- The extent to which pricing adjustments to encourage purchase of healthy foods would influence customer selections.
- The types of promotional activities employees would support (e.g., taste tests, punch card/incentives for healthy purchases).

### Develop an Action Plan

Utilize an action plan template to outline activities, champions, and a timeline for implementation. Following action plan development, formally adopt the cafeteria/café guidelines, communicate changes, and begin implementation. Examples of activities to include in the action plan include:

- Identify the current food service vendor (if applicable) and relevant contractual details (e.g. product availability, signage, restrictions, etc.).
- Develop a list of approved meal/menu items that meet guidelines.
- Provide access to free drinking water.
- Label and promote healthy options with a symbol or decal.
- Place healthier items at the front of the line or in another prominent location.
- Remove unhealthy food marketing.
- Reduce portion sizes of less healthy foods.
- Provide nutritional information for foods and beverages.
- Subsidize the cost of healthy options or feature healthy meal specials.
- Taste-test new offerings.
- Pass the healthy cafeterias/cafés policy.

### 3. Develop and adopt policy

#### Adopt Guidelines

Policy language should state the organization's commitment to serving healthier options in cafeterias/cafés, include the standards/guidelines (e.g., [NYS Cafeterias/Cafés standards](#)) that the site decides to adopt, as well as language regarding placement, pricing, and promotion. The site can adopt an overall healthy food policy with a section for cafeterias/cafés, or they can adopt a cafeteria/café-specific policy.

#### Sample template

» [Sample policy](#) (Eat Well Work Well)



### 4. Implement and communicate changes

Implement the guidelines and related activities outlined in the action plan.

#### Implementation resources

- » [Building and Implementing Healthy Food Services Toolkit](#), p. 17 (The Food Trust)
- » [Cafeterias/Cafés Implementation Guide](#) (NYS)
- » [List of Healthy Cafeteria Program Strategies](#) (Eat Well Work Well)
- » [Strategies](#) for Creating a Smarter Workplace Cafeteria (Let's Go)

#### Communicate Changes to Employees

A variety of strategies can be implemented to highlight positive changes.

- Communicate commitment to providing healthy choices at meetings via the organization's website.
- Hang signs/posters and create table tents to draw attention to new options.
- Menu labeling can help to draw attention to new offerings.
- Email or newsletter update may reach employees who do not typically purchase food from the cafeteria.
- Include the new guidelines as part of the employee handbook.

#### Communications resources

- » [Building and Implementing Healthy Food Services Toolkit](#), p. 20 (The Food Trust)
- » [Website](#) (Seattle & King County Public Health Department)

### 5. Monitor and evaluate

Monitoring of compliance and employee satisfaction will be important to understanding the impact of vending guidelines and can be used to garner additional support.

- Conduct the CHSC Worksite Assessment (grant requirement) at baseline and again after changes have been implemented (years 3-5 of grant).
- Conduct follow-up employee surveys.
- If available, obtain data from the cafeteria to track sales of healthier items. Also speak with food service staff about the changes to identify the popularity/acceptance of new, healthier items.
- Disseminate this information to employees to garner further support.

# Supplemental Activities

CHSC aims to increase the adoption and use of food standards and procurement policies, with the ultimate goal of changing the worksite culture to improve health. In addition to establishing these guidelines, other activities can contribute to a healthy nutrition environment. While not specifically aligned with grant objectives, these activities can be used to: 1) garner buy-in and excitement about wellness from employees and senior management, 2) complement existing food service guidelines and/or facilitate the adoption of these guidelines, and 3) provide necessary education to empower staff with awareness about their own health.



» ***Equipment/storage facilities***

Work with management to provide a refrigerator, microwave, or other equipment to make preparing healthy food on-site easier for employees.

» ***Pay-as-you-go open fruit basket***

Suggest this option, giving employees easier access to fresh fruit during the work day.

» ***Mobile market, produce delivery, CSA***

Suggest coordinating a mobile market stop near the site, setting up a produce delivery system, or having a CSA drop-off point at work.

» ***Healthy eating environment***

Encourage worksites to provide time and dedicated space away from the work area for breaks and lunch.

» ***Increase awareness of healthy eating***

Share brochures, videos, posters, pamphlets, newsletters, or other communication that addresses the benefits of healthy eating.

» ***Promote nutrition education***

Suggest local partners to provide a series of educational workshops or classes on nutrition.

» ***Water access***

Make water available through hydration stations, water fountains, or water bottle filling stations.

» ***Support breastfeeding***

Ensure that there is an appropriate place for breastfeeding/pumping.

» ***Self-management programs***

Identify free or subsidized self-management programs, such as those for weight loss or management of a chronic disease, for healthy eating.



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