



Assessing the Quality of Local-Level Obesity Prevention Policies

Lessons from Measuring the Strength and Comprehensiveness of Policy Language

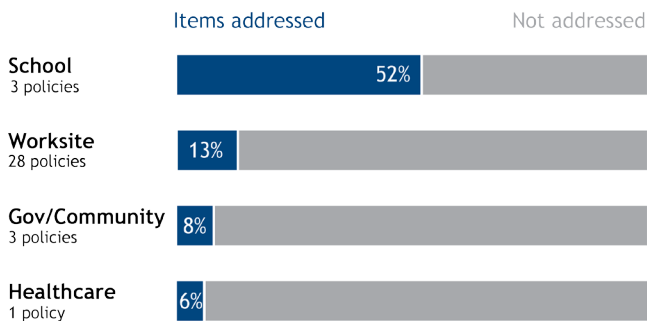
What We Assessed

The Healthy & Active Communities (H&AC) initiative funded by the Missouri Foundation for Health provides funding for projects to promote healthy eating and active living by implementing strategies across three domains: access/environment, engagement/education, and policy/advocacy. As part of the initiative-level evaluation, the content of 35 local-level policies adopted by H&AC projects was assessed using the PolicyLift tool (<http://policylift.wustl.edu>).

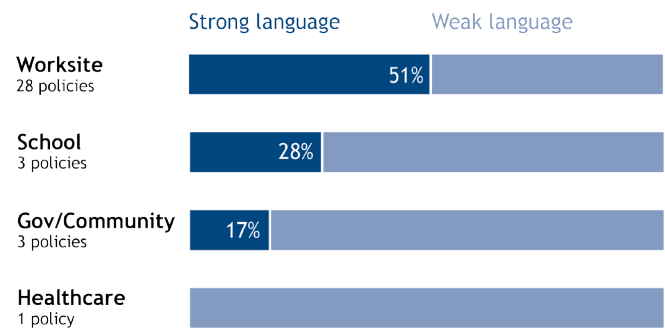
Quality Matters

Research has demonstrated that effective health policies can substantially improve public health. Adopting policies helps to ensure changes have large-scale impact and greater and lasting effects on behavior. However, often the content of policies have room for improvement in comprehensiveness (i.e., percentage of assessment indicators addressed) and strength (i.e., percentage of indicators addressed with strong language), which is consistent with the assessment of H&AC policies.

Comprehensiveness



Strength



What Can Evaluators Do to Support Policy Development?

Examine the Entire Policy Process

- To contribute to the overall understanding of effective policy approaches
- To capture the incremental steps of policy work
- To capture innovative policy work

Assess Content Prior to Adoption

- To increase the capacity of those that develop policies about what makes good policy
- To increase the likelihood that stronger, more comprehensive policies are developed from the beginning

Share Results

- To help identify specific content areas to include in revisions or future policies
- To identify priority areas for potential technical assistance, training, or funding opportunities for those who develop policies