



South Carolina Institute of
Medicine & Public Health



**Healthy People
Healthy Carolinas**

Priority Policy Opportunities for City and County-Level Stakeholders to Promote Healthy Eating and Active Living

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The South Carolina Institute of Medicine & Public Health (IMPH) is an independent entity serving as an informed nonpartisan convener around the important health issues in our state, providing evidence-based information to inform health policy decisions.

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Introduction

The South Carolina Institute of Medicine and Public Health (IMPH) and Healthy People Healthy Carolinas (HPHC) partnered to identify and survey local policy priorities among HPHC coalitions to assist stakeholders in the development of their own policy agendas. To develop this resource, IMPH first documented thirty pertinent evidence-based, emerging or promising city and county level policies from across the country. After compiling the initial list, IMPH developed and disseminated a survey to the network of HPHC coordinators asking them to rank their policy priorities. The results of the ranking activity were used to determine the ten policies included in this analysis.

Program evidence definitions and policy type descriptions are listed in the tables below.¹

Table 1. Policy Type and Descriptions

Policy Type	Description
Plans	Plans are a compilation of policy statements, goals, standards, maps, and action programs for guiding future activities or development. Although plans do not always create enforceable legal requirements, they are an important tool for driving and shaping legal policy decisions. They may also identify laws and policies that need to be created, reviewed or amended to help implement the plan. Examples include comprehensive plans and pedestrian master plans.
Resolution	Resolutions are used to formally express “the sense, will, or action of a deliberative assembly” such as a city council or county board. They may be used to formally adopt an administrative policy.
Ordinance	An ordinance is an authoritative law or decree, at the municipal level, that forbids, authorizes, and/or regulates an activity. Ordinances are typically incorporated into a jurisdiction’s code.
Municipal Code	A municipal code is the systematic compilation or revision of ordinances, laws, rules, or regulations of a town, city, or other local government unit.
Agreements Between Governments	These are memoranda of understanding; joint powers agreements; joint ventures; service contracts; mutual aid agreements; cooperative agreements; and other types of agreements. These agreements create mutual obligations and benefits between the participating governments.
Fiscal	Indicates a policy or plan that is predicated on price or tax adjustments.
Variable	Could be implemented through a variety of these policy types.

Table 2. Definitions and Levels of Program Evidence

Policy Type	Description
Evidence-Based (“Best”) Practices	Supported by strong evidence of effectiveness based on experimental design (i.e. randomized controlled trials) or multiple highly rigorous quasi-experimental design (i.e. non-randomized trials). Although not required to be considered an evidence-based practice, additional considerations included sustained effect of the program, publication of results in a peer-reviewed journal, and multiple site replication.
Promising Practices	Supported by a moderate level of evidence for effectiveness. These programs may be based on a quasi-experimental design of weak to moderate rigor. These practices primarily rely on evidence derived from a literature review (i.e. expert opinion) as well as the program’s manual, logic model, and evaluation plan
Emerging Practices	Supported by a low level of evidence for effectiveness. These programs lack a high or moderate level of external validity, relying exclusively on evidence derived from a literature review (i.e. expert opinion) as well as the program’s manual, logic model, and evaluation plan.

Source: Homeless Hub, 2021

1. Develop Policies that Support Expanded SNAP Acceptance at Online Grocers

Policy Type	Indicator	Level of Evidence
Variable: Resolution, Fiscal	Healthy Eating	Emerging

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) launched the *SNAP Online Purchasing Pilot (OPP)* in April 2019 to expand online grocery services to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) beneficiaries.² Since then, the total number of beneficiaries across the nation has grown by nearly six million, likely as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.³ In South Carolina, the number of beneficiaries increased from approximately 272,000 in October 2019 to 302,000 in September 2021.⁴

The USDA has formally recognized online grocery delivery programs as an opportunity to address the needs of the elderly, disabled and those who lack consistent access to reliable transportation.⁵ During the pandemic, online grocery delivery services also provided a safety net for individuals seeking to minimize their risk of exposure to the virus. The most recent data available demonstrates that 39% of households receiving SNAP benefits include an individual over sixty years old or a non-elderly adult with disabilities. This statistic indicates that, at a minimum, nearly two in every five beneficiaries are at an increased risk of complications from COVID-19.^{6,7}

Unfortunately, access to online grocery delivery among SNAP beneficiaries has been constrained by logistical and administrative barriers.⁸ Currently, South Carolina vendors that accept SNAP Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) payments online are limited to ALDI, Amazon, Earth Fare, Food Lion, Publix and Walmart.⁹ Despite the presence of large grocery chains on the list of approved vendors, authorized retailers do not serve all zip codes in the state.¹⁰ In fact, a 2019 nationwide study found that an excess of 60% of SNAP-participating households in rural food deserts were outside of the delivery range for participating online grocers.¹¹ Expanding the pool of vendors that accept EBT online is an opportunity to further address food insecurity among elderly and disabled South Carolinians and those who live in rural and healthy food priority areas.

Equitable expansion requires multisector partnerships between private industries, such as tech and individual retailers, as well as legislative bodies at the local, state and federal levels. Examples from private industry include Instacart offering temporary, subsidized delivery and pick-up fees for SNAP recipients.¹² Locally, policymakers can help support expansion in a variety of ways including:

- **Provide financial support for independent grocers to develop the technical infrastructure needed to accept EBT online.** There are a variety of regulations governing EBT that require vendors to maintain certain technical specifications to accept SNAP benefits online. The costs associated with updating technology to meet these requirements can range from \$30,000 to \$500,000 dollars depending on the existing technical infrastructure.¹³ Maintaining cost neutrality for retailers is a critical aspect of expanding the number of online vendors, which can be achieved through offering grants funded through municipal appropriations for independent grocers interested in participating in the online SNAP program to offset the cost of technical support, software acquisition, system maintenance and staff training.^{14,15,16} Community farms and grocers across Virginia currently benefit from a similar endeavor, titled the *Virginia Food Access Investment Fund*, which offers grants to small farms and businesses to support business development, equipment upgrades and expansion.¹⁷ [More information on the Virginia Food Access Investment fund can be found here.](#)
- **Subsidize delivery fees for SNAP recipients.** Delivery and gratuity fees can negatively impact equitable utilization of online grocery services. Subsidizing these fees for SNAP recipients ordering from independent grocers could encourage e-commerce integration and may bolster local economies by incentivizing shopping online at local retailers.¹⁸ To address the prohibitive costs of delivery during the COVID pandemic, the city of Boulder, Colorado provided \$75,000 to subsidize deliveries for both the customers and retailers. This effort created sixty jobs across the city and was funded through the city's local American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) allocation.¹⁹ [More information on this local policy can be found by clicking the link here.](#) Local government in South Carolina could duplicate aspects of this initiative to increase access to grocery delivery services in their communities with a focus on rural communities – research shows that online grocery services disproportionately serve urban areas and

are rarely available in rural areas, with little to no available evidence of subsidized delivery in rural areas beyond Instacart’s temporary free delivery for SNAP beneficiaries.²⁰

- Resolve to expand the number of retailers offering online grocery services for SNAP beneficiaries.** Recognizing that supporting local grocers throughout the process of adopting e-commerce could improve access to food, the New York City Council filed a resolution in May 2020 which officially acknowledged the need to expand the number of retailers that are permitted in the SNAP online purchasing program.²¹ [More information on this local policy can be found by clicking the link here.](#) Local policymakers across South Carolina can file similar resolutions seeking to expand the footprint of these services in the state, with a focus on rural and underserved areas.²²

2. Expand the Reach of Mobile Produce Markets

Policy Type	Indicator	Level of Evidence
Variable: Resolution, Fiscal	Healthy Eating	Promising

Mobile produce markets (MPMs) are food vendors that operate out of a vehicle in targeted communities.^{23,24} MPMs that serve healthy food priority areas are often supported by philanthropic sources, local agencies or policy initiatives. Several mobile markets already operate in South Carolina such as the [Lowcountry Street Grocery Mobile Market](#), [the Waccamaw Market Cooperative Mobile Farmers Market](#) and the [Hub City Mobile Market](#).^{25,26,27} When the Hub City Mobile Market (HCMM) was launched in 2010 it was the first of its kind in the state; it currently serves the greater Spartanburg area and is supported by government grants, the United Way, fundraising and revenue generated from produce sales.²⁸

Successful MPMs often rely on existing infrastructure and partnerships to sustain their endeavors. For example, [Sankofa](#), a mobile market in New Orleans, Louisiana, relies almost entirely on volunteers and distributes produce sourced from their own farms.²⁹ Other factors leading to success include convenient locations and the ability to accept SNAP or Women, Infants and Children (WIC) benefits.³⁰ Potential challenges include limited hours of operation and challenges reaching the target demographic due to schedule limitations, limited community engagement or distrust.³¹

Local policy can be used to encourage or, in some cases, restrict the success of MPMs. In Savannah, Georgia municipal policymakers amended zoning ordinances to allow MPMs to operate in all zoning districts, which are areas delineated on a zoning map with uniform regulations.³² Zoning and land use policy can play a significant role in the availability of innovative food outlets. In fact, research demonstrates that lower-income communities are less likely to permit mobile or temporary food outlets such as mobile produce markets than more affluent communities.³³

Other opportunities to support the expansion of MPMs include authorizing funding appropriations for pilot studies. In New Jersey, policymakers passed N.J. Stat. § 4:10-25.6 which developed a MPP pilot program to “promote and facilitate improved access to fresh produce by low-income residents of urban food deserts.”³⁴ This statute required that qualified vendors must accept food vouchers as payment and established a coordinating entity to facilitate partnerships between participating municipalities and vendors.³⁵ [More information on this local policy can be found by clicking the link here.](#)

Local policymakers can help facilitate success by amending existing ordinances that limit potential operating areas, passing statutes to pilot mobile produce markets in their municipalities, providing technical assistance to encourage SNAP acceptance and incentivizing their creation in rural and underserved areas. Several of these opportunities are surveyed in detail below.

- Amend existing ordinances that limit operating areas.** Zoning and land use laws govern the type of food outlets available in a community. County and city leaders can alter or impose zoning ordinances to encourage the creation of healthy food vendors. This authority could be leveraged to increase access to healthy foods in lower-income communities, which are less likely to specifically permit vendors such as farmers’ markets or mobile produce markets.³⁶ For example, policymakers in Abingdon, Virginia amended existing ordinances to allow mobile vendors to sell farm fresh vegetables

without receiving a permit.³⁷ [More information on this local policy can be found by clicking the link here.](#)

- **Develop resolutions to pilot mobile produce markets locally.** In March 2016, the city of Austin, Texas passed Resolution 20160303-020 which outlines strategies to improve access to healthy foods by expanding healthy food retail initiatives, such as mobile produce markets.³⁸ [More information on this local policy can be found by clicking the link here.](#) Local policymakers in South Carolina who are interested in piloting mobile produce market programs in their community could pass resolutions to authorize, fund and evaluate mobile produce market pilot programs in one or more municipalities.³⁹

3. Refine School-Based Screening for Obesity

Policy Type	Indicator	Level of Evidence
Resolution	Healthy Eating/Active Living	Promising

Childhood obesity is associated with increased risk of asthma, orthopedic problems, cardiovascular disease and diabetes later in life.⁴⁰ Traditionally, school-based obesity screening has relied on measures of body mass index (BMI); however, the CDC recommends that BMI should not be used as a diagnostic tool for children and adolescents but instead be used simply as a method to identify children who could benefit from further assessment.⁴¹ In recent years, BMI has received increasing scrutiny as a measure of health. Waist-to-height ratio has since emerged as an alternative, more effective measure of visceral adipose tissue.⁴²

In addition to refining measurement tools, school board administrators and local policymakers interested in mitigating the prevalence of childhood obesity should be prepared to refer students to healthcare providers or offer resources following screening. Referrals are perhaps the most valuable component of school-based screening. In fact, researchers determined that Arkansas Act 1220, which mandates school-based obesity screening in all public schools in the state, did not result in a decrease in the rate of adolescent BMI.⁴³ This study indicates that screening without an intervention is not enough to address the obesity epidemic.

Additionally, research suggests that school-based obesity screening may result in unhealthy caloric restriction or purging in school-aged children.⁴⁴ The potential harms of school-based obesity screening for children and adolescents must be weighed against the potential benefits of identifying and connecting children with the resources to manage their weight in a healthy way.⁴⁵

Schools must also have the capacity to conduct the screenings, which are most effective when performed by a school nurse or other allied health professional.⁴⁶ The shortage of school nurses in South Carolina introduces additional challenges associated with that need. Policymakers and school administrators need to be prepared to address nursing shortages and to develop trauma-informed screening tools and effective referral processes.⁴⁷ In addition to ensuring that screening is completed by qualified professionals, schools must also be prepared to refer students to health care providers or community-based obesity prevention resources.

School-based obesity screening should not be conducted without processes that address student privacy, student safety and support, staff training, accuracy of data collection and partnerships in place to ensure that students are referred to community resources and have access to resources related to healthy eating and physical activity promotion.⁴⁸ Policy focusing on refining obesity screening in schools could potentially manifest as a resolution, discussed below.

- **Resolve to prioritize and implement effective obesity screening in schools.** Although several states across the country have implemented legislation at the state level requiring BMI screening, South Carolina school districts and local policymakers can resolve to modernize and implement effective, trauma-informed screening practices in schools that mitigate the risk of disordered eating and promote effective surveillance and referral practices.⁴⁹ These resolutions should also include language focused on guaranteeing that school districts develop partnerships with local pediatricians so that they may effectively refer students to health care providers to address any weight based health concerns.

4. Build on Existing Policies to Encourage and Enable Breastfeeding

Policy Type	Indicator	Level of Evidence
Variable: Municipal Code, Resolution	Healthy Eating	Promising

The World Health Organization (WHO) describes the myriad of ways that breastfeeding supports maternal and infant health, such as reduced risk of pre-menopausal breast cancer and osteoporosis in mothers and reduced risk of infection among infants.^{50,51} They also explain that breastfeeding rates tend to increase when effective policy and regulatory frameworks exist.⁵² Across the United States, public breastfeeding is both legal and protected by federal law. In South Carolina, several statutes offer additional protections for public breastfeeding such as:

- S.C. Code Ann. § 1-13-80 (2018): Revises the terms because of sex or on the basis of sex used in the context of equal treatment for women affected by pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions, relates to unlawful employment practices of an employer and lactation, provides for certain other unlawful employment practices in regard to failure to provide reasonable accommodations for an applicant for employment or employee.⁵³
- S.C. Code Ann. § 41-1-130 (2020): Provides that employers shall provide employees with reasonable unpaid break time daily or shall permit employees to use paid break time or mealtime to express breast milk; provides that employers shall make reasonable efforts to provide certain areas where employees may express breast milk; provides that employers may not discriminate against employees for choosing to express breast milk in the workplace.⁵⁴

Although legal protections exist, mothers may still encounter barriers to breastfeeding. The South Carolina Breastfeeding Coalition (SCBC) writes that, “adequate support for breastfeeding is not evenly distributed throughout the population, and breastfeeding success for those with less support is much harder to attain.”⁵⁵ Local policymakers can increase breastfeeding equity through implementing assistance programs, creating policies that support breastfeeding, mandating the provision of lactation rooms in public buildings and including those impacted in the decision making process. Locally, policy can be implemented to support breastfeeding through initiatives such as:

- **Require lactation rooms in government buildings.** Federal buildings and state government buildings in selected states are required to provide accessible areas designed for breastfeeding that are not bathrooms.⁵⁶ For example, Puerto Rico requires that all public service and government centers have accessible lactation rooms for breastfeeding mothers.⁵⁷ However, South Carolina does not currently have specific policies requiring lactation rooms in any state government buildings. Local policymakers could commit to developing municipal codes that require all government buildings in a community provide lactation rooms for staff and visitors.⁵⁸
- **Improve outcomes among breastfeeding students.** Under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 included in the Civil Rights Act of 1964, federal regulations require that schools must ensure that a student’s educational opportunities are not diminished due to breastfeeding needs.⁵⁹ However, few states currently have laws requiring schools to provide lactation rooms to students (Illinois, California, Nebraska and Virginia).⁶⁰ [Illinois](#) requires that public schools provide reasonable accommodations for lactating students to pump or breastfeed on campus and [Virginia](#) requires that schools provide a private area that is not a restroom for employees and students to breastfeed.⁶¹ School board officials or other local policy makers can provide lactation rooms and support for breastfeeding students so that they are able to remain engaged in their education without sacrificing the positive health outcomes associated with breastfeeding.

5. Codify Complete Streets Policies

Policy Type	Indicator	Level of Evidence
Variable: Municipal Code, Resolution	Active Living	Evidence-Based

Complete Streets is a paradigm for city planning to promote active living through design.⁶² The Complete Streets model relies on policy change to “develop roads that are safe and comfortable for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders and motorists of all ages and capabilities.”⁶³ State and local policymakers across the country have codified Complete Streets strategies in their communities resulting in over 1,600 Complete Streets policies across the United States.

As of June 2021, cities and counties across South Carolina have enacted a total of fifteen Complete Streets policies.⁶⁴ At time of writing, only three of the fifteen localities which have enacted Complete Street policies are in Healthy People Healthy Carolina communities. The majority of ratified Complete Streets policies are resolutions, and they range in depth from enacting design guidelines in subdivisions to resolutions that endeavor to implement the full suite of complete streets policies in a town, city or county.⁶⁵ Appendix A illustrates the breadth of policies enacted across South Carolina in more detail, [and more information and examples of policies across the country be found at the link here.](#)

In 2009, the North Carolina Board of Transportation (NC DOT) committed to adopting Complete Streets policies and elements through the *Complete Streets Act* (N.C. S.B. 584 and H.R. 1443.)^{66,67} As a result, the NC DOT conducts periodic evaluations on the effectiveness of Complete Streets policies across the state. The most recent evaluation identified several growth opportunities such as strengthening and clarifying policy language, clearly establishing roles and responsibilities for better accountability, improving the process by which Complete Streets elements are integrated into project development, improving communication with internal and external stakeholders and regularly updating the design guidelines.⁶⁸

According to *Smart Growth America*, the most effective Complete Streets policies in the United States can be found in:

- Cleveland Heights, Ohio
- Des Moines, Iowa
- Milwaukee, Wisconsin
- Baltimore, Maryland
- Madison, Connecticut
- Neptune Beach, Florida
- Fairfield, Connecticut
- Huntsville, Alabama
- Amherst, Massachusetts and
- Walpole, Massachusetts.⁶⁹

These communities can serve as examples of effective policy change to create interdependent, multi-modal transportation networks which encourage active living. These and other municipalities can access resources dedicated to designing effective policies including the “Complete Streets: Local Policy Workbook” online - [which can be accessed by clicking this link.](#)⁷⁰ Specific components of the policies and process that stand out among the communities listed above include:

1. Strong Language and Clear Timeframes. Cleveland Heights, Ohio earned the highest score in the *Smart Growth America* rankings due to many distinctive characteristics of their policies such as their dedication to ensuring that policy changes were drafted using strong language and clear timeframes to ensure that the efforts were completed.⁷¹ In Des Moines, Iowa, advocates insisted on using binding language in the policy drafts, setting clear timeframes and identifying action items to ensure that once policy was passed the implementation process was clear.⁷²

2. Diverse Partnerships. In Des Moines, Iowa, Complete Streets advocates used equity as a central pillar in their planning process. Recognizing that the central tenant of equity being that the most vulnerable residents dictate what accessibility looks like, they partnered with disability advocates, the NAACP, the YMCA, AARP and the United Way to ensure that a diverse group of voices were elevated in the planning process.⁷³

3. Policymaker Support. Milwaukee, Wisconsin created a Complete Streets Committee consisting of department leads, council chairs, and advocates across their community. Leaders in their efforts discussed the need to ensure that members are familiar with the policy process and that the committee included policymakers to champion their efforts at the municipal level.⁷⁴ Similarly, Neptune Beach, Florida attributes their success in implementing complete streets policies to the dedication of the current mayor and former City Councilmember who advocated for policy integration.⁷⁵

Each of the factors listed above influences policy success. Local government can implement singular or the complete suite of Complete Streets policies based on need or capacity. For example, Missoula, Montana passed Res. # 7473 to direct staff to develop implementation strategies to increase the usability of streets in the city.⁷⁶ [More information on Missoula Resolution # 7473 can be found by clicking the link here.](#) This and other opportunities to execute Complete Streets policies are listed below.

- **File resolutions to develop and implement Complete Streets policies.** Similar to the example from Missoula, Montana, city council members and other local policymakers can file resolutions dedicating staff, time or financial appropriations to develop and implement Complete Streets policies in their communities.⁷⁷ Resolutions can include material plans for development or simply an acknowledgement of support. For example, in 2013, Montgomery, Alabama passed Resolution # 257-2013, which formally recognized municipal support for Complete Streets policies.⁷⁸ [More information on Montgomery resolution # 257-2013 can be found by clicking the link here.](#)
- **Implement Complete Streets ordinances.** Local policymakers can pass city or county ordinances requiring that streets are designed, operated and maintained to accommodate multimodal transportation networks. For example, city council members in Salt Lake City, Utah, passed a Complete Streets ordinance in 2010 to ensure that city planners and engineers accommodate pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists in forthcoming development.⁷⁹ [More information on the Salt Lake City Complete Streets ordinance can be found by clicking the link here.](#) These ordinances can be used to require specific sidewalk widths, the presence of bicycle lanes, covered bus stops and a myriad of other components related to the built environment.
- **Amend existing municipal codes.** Communities across the country have introduced amendments to existing municipal codes to ensure that all future development meets the Complete Streets standards. For example, local policymakers in DeSoto, Missouri amended the municipal code pertaining to subdivision regulations requiring developers to include, “accommodations for safe and contiguous routes for all users including pedestrians, individuals of all ages and abilities (including individuals with disabilities), bicyclists, transit vehicles and users and motorists.” Local policy makers across South Carolina can consider enacting the same standards in their communities through policy.⁸⁰

6. Educate Providers about *Exercise is Medicine* Reimbursement Policies

Policy Type	Indicator	Level of Evidence
Variable: Resolution, Proclamation	Active Living	Evidence-Based

Exercise is Medicine (EIM) is an approach that encourages providers to assess and promote physical activity as a medical intervention in clinical practice.⁸¹ Under this framework, providers offer counseling and exercise “prescriptions” which outline an exercise plan that can safely meet a patient’s needs based on their current physical condition.^{82,83} Although the program has been evaluated to be effective in reducing the risk of chronic disease, clinicians and their teams have described challenges associated with billing and reimbursement after counseling patients on the benefits of increased physical activity.⁸⁴

Exercise counseling is time intensive and has historically been difficult to code, bill and receive appropriate payment for. However, local government can leverage political capital to ensure that providers are aware of reimbursement strategies.⁸⁵ Because CPT codes are updated annually, EIM advocates should be aware of existing codes and reimbursement policies to encourage physicians to integrate exercise counseling in the clinical encounter.⁸⁶

Likewise, local policy makers can encourage providers in their communities to adopt the EIM framework through resolutions and proclamations. EIM program leaders have drafted language for mayors and governors to proclaim a certain month out of the year as “Exercise is Medicine” month. This resource is provided in Appendix.⁸⁷ An EIM proclamation can be used as a segue for local policymakers to draft language for additional policies to improve the reimbursement and billing process to encourage physicians to incorporate EIM interventions in clinical encounters.

Policy makers can help educate physicians and their team on appropriate reimbursement mechanisms and encourage providers to integrate the Exercise is Medicine approach through:

- **Resolutions to educate providers on reimbursement for exercise counseling.** Physicians and their team may be less hesitant to counsel and prescribe exercise to their patients if they are fully aware of the reimbursement process. Local policymakers may pass a resolution to dedicate staff, time or other resources to encourage physicians to integrate exercise counseling in the clinic.⁸⁸
- **Utilize Proclamations to increase awareness of the Exercise is Medicine framework.** Although proclamations are typically non-binding, they are useful in their ability to increase awareness in a community. The Exercise is Medicine team has developed a proclamation to declare a specific month as “Exercise is Medicine” month, which could be used to increase awareness and improve understanding of reimbursement among providers. In 2021, Vermont Governor Phil Scott issued a proclamation declaring October 2021 as “Exercise is Medicine on Campus Month” across the state of Vermont. [More information on Vermont’s “Exercise is Medicine on Campus” month can be found by clicking the link here.](#) Local policymakers in South Carolina could very easily duplicate this effort in their town, city or county depending on their needs.⁸⁹

7. Embrace Farm to School Policies

Policy Type	Indicator	Level of Evidence
Variable: Fiscal, Resolution	Healthy Eating	Promising

Farm to school programs connect schools with nearby farms in an effort to incorporate locally grown foods into school breakfasts, lunches and snacks. Comprehensive farm to school programs have several additional components including school gardens, recycling, composting and food waste reduction efforts. Schools can implement farm to school programs independently; however, local policies can also support and encourage farm to school programming.⁹⁰ South Carolina Farm to School currently supports a variety of programmatic efforts in the state related to healthy eating, agriculture and food sovereignty.⁹¹ [More information on South Carolina Farm to School can be found by clicking here.](#)

Farm to School programming is an opportunity to increase access to healthy foods, instruct children on agricultural practices and stimulate the local economy through local produce acquisition. According to a 2016 study focused on the economic and health impacts of farm to school programming in South Carolina, expanding programmatic efforts across South Carolina could contribute approximately \$3.5 million annually - assuming that locally grown foods and vegetables are served to half the schools in the state one hundred days out of the year.⁹² The potential health and economic benefits of farm to school program are extensive contingent on widespread adoption, which policymakers and school board officials could encourage through policy, advocacy and collaboration.⁹³

Since 2002, policymakers across the country have passed laws to explore, establish and fund farm to school initiatives. In 2020, Alabama passed H.B. 157 which provides funding for an incentive program offering twenty-five cents per meal that features locally grown products.⁹⁴ [More information on Alabama H.B. 157 can be found by clicking the link here.](#) In 2013, South Carolina codified H.B. 4200 into law titled *Creating a Program for Locally Grown Foods in School Meals* (S.C. Code Ann § 46-3-25). This law created a state Department of Agriculture program to encourage schools to serve locally grown, minimally processed farm food. Requirements listed in the law state that,

“The program must (1) promote local farms to food service programs; (2) establish a structure to facilitate communication between school districts, institutions, farmers, and produce distributors; (3) encourage food service personnel to use locally grown, farm fresh products; (4) assist school districts that participate in the program; and (5) coordinate across state agencies.”⁹⁵

Examples of organizations across the United States dedicated to expanding the farm to school footprint include [Ecotrust](#), [the National Farm to School Network](#), [Seven Generations Ahead](#) and [Vermont Feed](#).⁹⁶ These

organizations have developed a variety of resources to support local organizations in their efforts to develop policies based on the farm to school initiatives including:

- The National Farm to School Network developed an infographic detailing federal funding opportunities for farm to school programs catalyzed by the passage of the American Rescue Plan Act.⁹⁷ This resource can be found in Appendix B or [the link here](#).⁹⁸
- The National Farm to School Network created a USDA-endorsed “State Farm to School Policy Handbook” to assist in the implementation of policies to support farm to school initiatives, which can be accessed by [clicking this link](#).
- The Farm to School Coalition of North Carolina developed a report highlighting opportunities to expand and strengthen farm to school initiatives, which can be accessed by [clicking the link here](#).

Selected strategies outlined by the National Farm to School Network to build support and develop policies geared towards integrating farm to school policies in schools include:

- **Secure permanent funding through local appropriations.** An appropriation is an authorization granted by policymakers to make expenditures for a specific purpose. Most funding for farm to school initiatives usually begin with annual appropriations from the municipal or state government. The National Farm to School Network explains that appropriations may include funding local food procurement, establishing farm to school coordinator positions, funding pilot programs or expanding existing programs.⁹⁹
- **Utilize proclamations to further Farm to School objectives.** According to the National Farm to School Network, “Farm to school proclamations recognize the significance of farm to school in advancing its many benefits. Proclamations generally do not establish any new infrastructure or involve any allocation of resources, which helps them gain broad support and pass relatively easily.”¹⁰⁰ Although proclamations are traditionally non-binding, this type of formal acknowledgment is an asset to inform communities about the existence of a program. For example, county commissioners in Broward County, Florida declared October as National Farm to School Month in Broward County, Florida.¹⁰¹
- **Create databases connecting famers with participating schools.** A central database can be used to connect local farmers with school districts to advance procurement initiatives. Fourteen bills to develop farm to school databases or directories were introduced between 2015 and 2020, indicating that widespread recognition of their utility. [More information on these bills can be found here](#). Policymakers can allocate funding for the development of a local database of farmers available to participate in programmatic efforts.¹⁰² Drafted policy focused on developing state-wide or municipal databases connecting farmers to schools should include content focused on the importance of supporting local and minority owned farms and the potential positive economic impact farm to school programs can have on a community.

8. Expand Resident Food Policy Councils

Policy Type	Indicator	Level of Evidence
Variable: Ordinance, Fiscal	Healthy Eating	Promising

Food policy councils are organized forums created to identify solutions to challenges that negatively impact access to healthy foods in a community. The first local food policy council was established in Knoxville, Tennessee in 1982, and the first state-wide food policy council was established in Connecticut in 1998. Since then, the country has seen a significant increase in the number of councils and breadth of their advocacy.¹⁰³ The South Carolina Food Policy Council was initially established in 2006, and currently possesses a total of 144 members representing twenty-two sectors across the state.¹⁰⁴

Data demonstrates that the presence of active food policy councils is positively associated with the number of local policies that support access to healthy foods in a community. This information suggests that municipalities with active food policy councils are more likely to enact policy designed to enhance the community food environment.¹⁰⁵ Food policy councils are also valuable assets to ensure equitable policy

development. By elevating the voices of community members, food policy councils can establish a forum for people with diverse experiences to weigh in on issues of food access. Since many of the issues of food access intersect with issues such as financial and housing insecurity, community voices are necessary to ensure that interventions and policies are tailored to the needs of the most vulnerable.¹⁰⁶

Effective partnerships between the councils and local governments are also necessary to meet these goals.¹⁰⁷ Policymakers interested in contributing to food security initiatives can support the development and sustainability of food policy councils through funding, prioritization and political capital.¹⁰⁸ For example, Franklin County, Ohio passed Resolution No. 0809-13 in 2013 titled, “Resolution Solidifying Franklin County’s Commitment to a Strong and Resilient Local Food System.”¹⁰⁹ Among other things, this resolution formally acknowledged the Franklin County Local Food Policy Council and resolved that the Board of Commissioners, who are a group of elected officials at the county level, would participate in and support their efforts.¹¹⁰ [More information on this policy can be found here.](#)

Government affiliated food policy councils are often formed through similar policies.¹¹¹ However, despite widespread approval, most food policy councils operate on budgets of less than \$10,000 annually. Policymakers can help sustain existing food policy councils through appropriations dedicated to creating or sustaining food policy councils.¹¹² Examples and suggestions for collaborating with policymakers to create or expand existing food policy councils include:

- **Create resolutions focused on embedding food policy councils in rural areas.** Rural areas benefit from an abundance of natural resources and community investment. Despite this fact, food policy councils are more likely to be based in metropolitan areas. Research suggests that these differences may reflect the differences in financial resources, personnel or political capital.¹¹³ Embedding food policy councils in rural areas that are available to collaborate with metropolitan councils has the potential to increase food equity and provide an opportunity for local food sharing and other innovative solutions to food access.
- **Secure funding for expansion and incorporation.** Food policy councils can be established through ordinances, budget appropriations and resolutions. Current members can work with local policymakers to identify the goals and objectives of the organization to ensure that they align with the political climate and then advocate for the appropriate legislative support.¹¹⁴ For example, in 2014 the mayor of the District of Columbia enacted D.C. Law 20-191, which established a food policy council to identify regulatory burdens on the local food economy and achieve food goals identified in the Sustainable DC plan.¹¹⁵ [More information on D.C. B 821 can be found here.](#)

9. Incentivize Development that Encourages Active Living

Policy Type	Indicator	Level of Evidence
Fiscal	Active Living	Promising

The design and development of the built environment influences active living behaviors. For example, living in mixed-use commercial and residential developments with elevated walkability scores decreases the risk of cardiovascular disease later in life.^{116,117} To encourage development that inspires active living, local governments can offer incentivizes to builders with plans to incorporate green space or other components that promote activity. These incentives can be developed through appropriations, resolutions or tax credits for developers.

Specific examples of incentives for developers include:

- **Financial:** Incentives in the form of reduced development fees, tax credits/exemptions, or subsidies that could be offered in exchange for a developer providing features such as open space or recreation areas. For example, the city of Houston, Texas offers incentives including property tax abatements for “green” development that includes urban forests and constructed wetlands.¹¹⁸

- **In-kind:** When a payment is made in the form of goods or services rather than cash. For example, a government could provide playground equipment to developers who provide a certain amount of open space in the development.
- **Permitting:** Incentives that streamline the review process for a project if the development includes a desirable amenity. For example, the zoning department can expedite the review process for developments that include optional public amenities, such as parks or pedestrian circulation systems.
- **Density or Development Bonuses:** Incentives that grant the allowance of additional density or units in a development in exchange for amenities that promote physical activity. For example, regulations could include provisions that allow for an increase in number of dwelling units in developments in exchange for increased open space.¹¹⁹

In addition to providing incentives for developers, communities can pool resources to develop land banks to be used to establish mixed-use residential and commercial development. Land banks acquire, hold, manage and develop abandoned properties, vacant lots or foreclosures and convert them affordable housing developments, community-focused commercial buildings, community gardens or green spaces.¹²⁰

Local governments can incentivize the creation of land banks by allowing low or no cost purchases of tax foreclosures, clearing titles, forgiving back taxes, holding land tax free or negotiating property transfers that address community needs. Land banks are generally governmental entities created and managed at the local or regional level. Land banks vary in size, managing as few as 10 to over 2,000 parcels a year.¹²¹ The Greenville Housing Fund in Greenville, South Carolina, currently manages a land bank in an effort to preserve affordable housing options in neighborhoods impacted by gentrification. [More information on the Greenville Housing Fund Land Bank can be found here.](#)

The history of land banking is rooted in equitable distribution of property and collective prosperity. Since land banks are often governed and operated by the locality or a non-profit dedicated to housing security, land banks are generally used to meet the needs of the community. For example, the Philadelphia Housing Development Corporation (PHDC) operated landbank in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania directly addresses the impact of gentrification and housing vacancies in the city in their mission statement. Their 2017 strategic plan emphasizes, "returning vacant and underutilized publicly-owned property to productive use, supporting both affordable and mixed-income housing." That same year, the land bank set a goal of dedicating 63% of the buildings it acquires to housing and mixed-use development, with 75% of those developments being affordable or income-restricted housing.¹²²

10. Implement Joint Use Agreements

Policy Type	Indicator	Level of Evidence
Variable: Ordinance, Fiscal	Active Living	Promising

In recent years, joint or shared use agreements have emerged as a strategy to prevent childhood obesity by providing community access to school and other institutional grounds.^{123,124} The Local Board of Education is often required to approve the concept prior to initiation, and as a result are key partners to include in discussions surrounding funding, maintenance, liability and community needs.¹²⁵

In 2014, the South Carolina School Boards Association recommended that all school districts implement joint use agreements based on the open community use model policy provided in [this report, titled "Breaking Physical Activity Barriers through Open Community Use" which can be accessed by clicking this link.](#) The open community use model policy establishes a framework for a joint use agreement in a school district that allows free community access to school recreational areas; however, language can be tailored to suit the individual school district.¹²⁶ The flexibility can be an encouraging factor for property owners, but may create barriers to community use if the operating entity intends to charge fees or utilize prohibitive schedules.

In these instances, joint use policies may play a greater role in raising awareness than in changing physical activity behaviors when school policies limit use of facilities to students and staff and do not give priority to community residents. For example, they often do not allow evening, weekend, or holiday access and are

lacking in low-income communities.¹²⁷ Policy makers interested in implementing or expanding joint use agreements in their community should be prepared to address issues of equitable access.

For example, the Charleston County School District (CCSD) manages joint use of district-operated fields, gyms and other facilities. These agreements are predicated on completion of an application, payment and acquisition of liability insurance.¹²⁸ The fee-for-play structure can function as a barrier in already vulnerable communities, further increasing the risk of health disparities between affluent and working-class communities.

In contrast, Barnwell School District 19 integrated language codifying open community use in their joint use agreements. Wholespire Barnwell County (formally Eat Smart, Move More) worked with the South Carolina School Boards Association and Barnwell County School District 19 to develop, author and pass written policy that ensures that the three schools in Barnwell County School District 19 provide free access to their outdoor recreational facilities before and after school and on weekends and holidays.¹²⁹

Another challenge establishing joint use agreements is the question of liability; to address this concern, and to encourage additional organizations to enter into joint use agreements, the Louisiana legislature passed LA H.B. 358 which transferred liability explicitly to the user during the agreed times.¹³⁰ Similarly, South Carolina offers legal protections for the property owners of shared use recreational spaces through the South Carolina Recreational Use Statute (1962) and the South Carolina Tort Claims Act (1986).¹³¹ More information on the [S.C. Recreational Use Statute can be found here](#) and [more information on the S.C. Tort Claims Act can be found here](#).

- **Mandate free access to joint use spaces.** To ensure equitable access to the grounds, encourage policymakers to develop language barring local school districts from charging fees for use of areas included in the shared use agreement. Indiana and Nevada currently have laws banning local school districts from charging users to access their playgrounds.¹³² However, South Carolina currently has no such language codified in law.
- **Resolve to identify barriers.** Identifying the areas in most need of access to recreational space is a valuable first step in planning advocacy goals. City council members, mayors and school boards can promote the development of a resolution which requires school boards to conduct gap assessments of areas in need of more access to recreational space or they may appropriate funds to a non-governmental agency to conduct the study.¹³³ The CDC recommends using evaluability assessments to assess implementation, outcomes and staff capacity. Evaluability assessments are early evaluations that inform the timing and scope of a full evaluation. Fairfax County, Virginia conducted an evaluability assessment of their county-wide joint use initiatives in 2013 which discovered that the program served 270,963 athletic participants over the course of a year.¹³⁴ [More information on the Fairfax County, Virginia evaluability assessment can be found here.](#)
- **Allocate local funding to maintain joint use spaces.** The cost of maintaining joint-use spaces can fall on the school district or property owner which can dissuade the responsible entity from entering into a joint use agreement. However, incorporating funding from local government through appropriations or taxes may encourage additional organizations to participate.¹³⁵ Dedicated, renewable revenue sources such as allocated tax to maintain facilities is the most reliable funding source.
- **Address liability concerns through policy initiatives.** Policy language can be used to clarify liability concerns. Many recreational facilities limit use due to concerns over the risk of liability in the event of an injury. However, South Carolina provides statutory liability protection for joint and community use of school facilities. To further address this issue, municipal policymakers, local school boards or organizations can integrate language in agreements which clearly transfers liability to the user.¹³⁶

Appendix.

Appendix A: Existing Complete Streets Policies in South Carolina¹³⁷

AGENCY	POLICY	TYPE	LEVEL	YEAR	UPDATE YEAR	POP.
Anderson, SC	Complete Streets Resolution	Resolution	City	2009	-	26,686
Camden, SC	Resolution	Resolution	City	2011	-	6,838
Charleston, SC	RS2008-12	Resolution	City	2008	-	120,083
Columbia, SC	Resolution No. R1020-054	Resolution	City	2010	-	129,272
Conway, SC	United Development Ordinance, Article 7	Legislation	City	2011	2017	17,103
Greenville, SC	Resolution 2008-49	Resolution	City	2008	-	58,409
Greenwood, SC	Resolution	Resolution	City	2012	-	23,222
Myrtle Beach, SC	R2015-35	Resolution	City	2015	-	27,109
Ninety Six, SC	Resolution	Resolution	City	2012	-	1,998
N. Myrtle Beach, SC	Ordinance No. X	Legislation	City	2009	-	13,752
Richland County, SC	Resolution to Endorse and Support a Complete Streets Policy	Resolution	County	2009	-	384,504
Richland County, SC	Complete Streets Program Goals and Objectives	Legislation	County	2010	-	384,504
Richland County, SC	Ordinance No. 017-11HR	Legislation	County	2011	2021	384,504
Spartanburg County, SC	Resolution No. 07-30	Resolution	County	2007	-	284,307
Spartanburg, SC	Complete Streets Resolution	Resolution	City	2006	-	37,013

Source: Smart Growth America, 2021

Appendix B: Emerging Federal Funding Opportunities for Farm to School Programs¹³⁸

Early Care & Education	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: Child Care Stabilization Funding - \$24 Billion
	<p>Uses: Immediate relief for ECE providers (centers and family child care) to cover operating expenses, personnel costs, rent, facility improvements, personal protective equipment, mental health supports, and other pandemic-related needs.</p> <p>Strategies for Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide input into your state CCDF agency's process for distributing stabilization funds to support equitable access by ECE providers, particularly those with the greatest level of need. • Work with state agencies and advocates to ensure ECE providers are allowed and encouraged to use funds in ways that support farm to ECE (e.g., facilities enhancements or as informal mental health supports for children and staff).
	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: Child Care Assistance Funding - \$15 Billion
Early Care & Education	<p>Uses: Funds flow to states through the Child Care and Development Block Grant program to support the comprehensive needs of families, including the child care needs of essential workers. Funds are flexible and can be used to serve families without regards to income eligibility; any portion can be used to support quality improvement activities or to focus on infants and toddlers.</p> <p>Strategies for Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reach out to your state child care agency to share the needs of families and larger community along with strategies that can leverage these resources for quality improvement in the areas of child nutrition, social-emotional health, and professional development for providers.
	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: Head Start & Early Head Start (HS/EHS) - \$1 Billion
Early Care & Education	<p>Uses: These funds will be allocated to local Head Start agencies in a ratio to the proportion available for allocations as the number of enrolled children served by the Head Start agency by the number of enrolled children served by all Head Start agencies. Programs will receive \$400 more per EHS child and \$300 more per HS child.</p> <p>Strategies for Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect directly with HS/EHS grantees in your community about how farm to ECE aligns with their goals for child nutrition, family engagement, and learning in the Performance Standards and Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework. Learn how farm to ECE supports the goals of Head Start. See: Supporting Head Start Programs with Farm to ECE Models; Growing Head Start Success with Farm to Early Care and Education • Locate HS/EHS grantees in your community and build relationships with your State Head Start Collaboration Office.
	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: Head Start & Early Head Start (HS/EHS) - \$1 Billion
Food & Agriculture	U.S. Department of Agriculture: Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP) - \$170 Million
	<p>Uses: Funds can be used for innovative projects that support the specialty crop food sector and explore new market opportunities including farm to ECE activities like outreach and TA to farmers and ECE providers on farm to ECE, building ECE gardens, and connecting specialty crop growers to early childhood settings.</p> <p>Strategies for Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn more about the SCBGP. Reach out to your state contact to apply for funding and encourage them to include farm to ECE initiatives in the state plan. View previously funded SCBGP projects for ideas.
Health & Nutrition	U.S. Department of Agriculture: Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) - \$42 Billion
	<p>Uses: CACFP provides reimbursements to child care providers for nutritious meals and snacks. Funds can be used to procure food directly from producers and to purchase gardening items when produce grown is used in a reimbursable meal. State administrative funds can be used to provide technical assistance and coordination of farm to ECE activities.</p> <p>Strategies for Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn more about CACFP and advocate to your state agency to include farm to ECE in their planned activities. • Area eligibility for family child care homes has been temporarily waived, which expands CACFP access in rural areas. Work with ECE and CACFP partners to encourage child care providers to participate in CACFP.
	U.S. Department of Agriculture: Enhanced WIC Produce Benefits - \$490 Million
Health & Nutrition	<p>Uses: Produce benefits are increasing from \$9/month for children and \$11/month for women to \$35/month each for up to four months. Benefits can be used to purchase produce at any WIC-approved vendor, including farmers markets and roadside stands.</p> <p>Strategies for Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn more about the provision and how much your state can benefit with this guide. • Advocate to your state WIC agency and other stakeholders to create an outreach plan. • Work with farmers markets and roadside stands to become WIC-approved vendors, accepting cash value benefits.
	U.S. Department of Agriculture: Enhanced WIC Produce Benefits - \$490 Million

Source: National Farm to School Network, 2022

Appendix C: Exercise is Medicine Draft Mayoral Proclamation¹³⁹

Draft Mayor's/Governor's Proclamation

WHEREAS, May 2020 is Exercise is Medicine® Month; and

WHEREAS, all citizens are encouraged to speak with their physicians about how physical activity and exercise may help treat or prevent numerous chronic conditions, such as hypertension, cardiac disease and diabetes; and

WHEREAS, all health care providers are encouraged to talk to their patients about the health benefits of exercise and to strongly recommend that their patients engage in appropriate exercise; and

WHEREAS, regular, moderate-intensity exercise has curative and protective health benefits; and

WHEREAS, the health benefits of physical activity and exercise can do so much to improve the quality of life for everyone; and

WHEREAS, a healthier populace means cost savings, greater participation in the workforce and other benefits to society at large; and

WHEREAS, regular physical activity and exercise is indeed a powerful prescription, with great potential to improve the health of all Americans; and

WHEREAS, the American College of Sports Medicine calls on health care organizations, physicians and other professionals, regardless of specialty, to assess, to advocate for and to review every patient's physical activity program during every comprehensive visit;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, _____,

Mayor/Governor of the city/state of _____, do hereby proclaim the month of May 2020 as

EXERCISE IS MEDICINE MONTH

in (CITY/STATE) and encourage all citizens to participate in activities and observances relating to Exercise is Medicine Month in the interests of better health and quality of life for all.

_____, Mayor/Governor

DATED THIS _____ DAY OF _____ 2020



Source: Exercise is Medicine, 2020

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