

# PSE (Policy, Systems and Environmental Change)

## What is Policy Change?

Laws, regulations, rules, protocols, and procedures, designed to guide or influence behavior. Policies can be either legislative or organizational in nature. Policies often mandate environmental changes and increase the likelihood that they will become sustainable.

Examples of legislative policies include:

- taxes on tobacco products
- provision of county or city public land for green spaces or farmers' markets
- regulations governing the National School Lunch Program
- clean indoor air laws

Examples of organizational policies include:

- schools requiring healthy food options for all students
- a district ban on the sale of less than healthy foods throughout the school day
- menu labeling in restaurants
- required quality assurance protocols or practices (e.g., clinical care processes)
- a human resources policy that requires healthy foods to be served at meetings

## What is Systems Change?

Change that impacts all elements, including social norms of an organization, institution, or system; may include a policy or environmental change strategy. Policies are often the driving force behind systems change.

Examples are:

- Implementing the National School Lunch Program across the state school system
- Ensuring a hospital system goes tobacco free

## What is Environmental Change?

Physical, social, or economic factors designed to influence people's practices and behaviors.

Examples of alterations or changes to the environment include:

- **Physical:** Structural changes or the presence of programs or services-
  - a. presence of healthy food choices in restaurants or cafeterias
  - b. improvements in the built environment to promote walking (walking paths)
  - c. the availability of smoking cessation services to patients or workers
  - d. the presence of comprehensive school health education curricula in schools
- **Social:** A positive change in attitudes or behavior about policies that promote health or an increase in supportive attitudes regarding a health practice-
  - a. increase in favorable attitudes of community decision makers about the importance of nonsmoking policies
  - b. increase in nonacceptance of exposure to second-hand smoke from the general public.
- **Economic:** The presence of financial disincentives or incentives to encourage a desired behavior
  - a. charging higher prices for tobacco products to decrease their use
  - b. provision of nonsmoker health insurance discounts

