



AN INITIATIVE OF

the de Beaumont Foundation + Kaiser Permanente

2021 REPORT METHODOLOGY

CityHealth, an initiative of the de Beaumont Foundation and Kaiser Permanente, publishes an annual report rating America's 40 largest cities on nine evidence-based policies that experts say help residents lead healthier lives and make communities thrive. CityHealth awards gold, silver, bronze, or no medal based on the strength and number of policies that cities have in place.

The report is designed to identify which cities are leading the way on policies shown to improve people's health and quality of life. To see the full results of the assessment, please visit cityhealth.org. Below is a detailed description of the methodology for this report.

It should be noted that some cities are limited by state laws from changing policies that are part of this assessment. This practice is called preemption.

This research was conducted in partnership with the Center for Public Health Law Research at Temple University's Beasley School of Law.

OVERALL MEDAL STATUS



 gold cities received **5 or more gold** medals across each of the 9 policies



 silver cities received **5 or more gold or silver** medals across each of the 9 policies



 bronze cities received **4 or more gold, silver, or bronze** medals across each of the 9 policies



cities that received **less than 4** policy medals were not awarded an overall medal



POLICY MEDALS

Affordable Housing/ Inclusionary Zoning



Inclusionary zoning is an affordable housing policy tool that requires developers to set aside a portion of housing units for low- and moderate-income residents.

Cities’ housing markets and the quality of housing stock vary across the United States, which means the best policy approaches will be comprehensive commitments to ensuring affordable, safe, quality options for all. While inclusionary zoning works best in “hot” markets to promote affordable options alongside new development, it’s an important policy for all cities to consider before demand outstrips supply.

CityHealth’s assessment of inclusionary zoning laws includes information about city-specific laws, along with the relevant county- and state-level laws passed by June 1, 2021. For the purpose of this assessment, the existence of an impact fee demonstrates an inclusionary zoning policy. Housing impact fees require a developer to pay a fee in exchange for a building permit approval without receiving any benefit or incentive—developers can waive or reduce this fee if they construct affordable housing.

Measuring affordable housing/inclusionary zoning policies

CATEGORY	BRONZE	SILVER	GOLD
City has a mandatory inclusionary zoning law	Yes	Yes	Yes
Law requires program evaluation	Yes	Yes	Yes
Applies to projects of at least 10 units or less		Yes	Yes
Requires at least 20% of total projects are affordable units			Yes

Complete Streets



Complete Streets policies balance people’s needs and safety across all forms of transportation, including walking, biking, public transit and cars. From street

lighting to bike lanes to crosswalks, these policies ensure that all residents have safe, convenient ways of getting around and staying active—regardless of their age or ability. Although some cities may have stand-alone transportation policies that share the ultimate goals of a complete streets program, only comprehensive programs within a singular area of the law were scored here.

CityHealth’s assessment of complete streets includes information about city-specific laws, along with relevant county- and state-level laws passed by June 1, 2021.

Measuring Complete Streets policies

CATEGORY	BRONZE	SILVER	GOLD
City has a Complete Streets policy	Yes	Yes	Yes
Policy requires compliance	Yes	Yes	Yes
Policy accommodates pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and public transit vehicles	Yes	Yes	Yes
Policy explicitly accommodates all ages		Yes	Yes
Policy explicitly accommodates all abilities		Yes	Yes
Policy assigns a department to oversee implementation			Yes
Policy requires development of performance measures			Yes

Earned Sick Leave



Earned sick leave laws reduce the spread of contagious illnesses, increase employment and income stability, and save cities money in health care costs.

Earned sick leave laws require employers to allow people to take paid time off for illnesses or injury for themselves or their family members. The quality of cities' policies is linked to how many family members and what size employer are covered by the law, as well as the number of hours people can earn.

CityHealth's assessment of earned sick leave laws includes information about city-specific laws along with relevant county- and state-level laws passed by June 1, 2021.

Measuring earned sick leave policies

CATEGORY	BRONZE	SILVER	GOLD
City has an earned sick leave law	Yes	Yes	Yes
Employee can use earned sick leave to care for family members*		Yes	Yes
Employee can use earned sick leave for domestic violence recovery		Yes	Yes
Minimum amount of earned sick leave time employee can earn		≥40 hours	≥48 hours
Smallest business size covered under earned sick leave law			1 employee

* Note: For cities to receive full credit, the earned sick leave law must cover spouses, children, parents, grandparents, grandchildren, siblings, and domestic partners. Cities covering fewer categories of family members receive a lower rating.

Food Safety/Restaurant Rating



Policies requiring food establishments to publicly post food safety inspection "grades" contribute to informing consumers, reducing foodborne illness rates, and cutting down on health care costs. For this assessment, voluntary ratings, or those only displayed on the internet, were deemed out of scope, and therefore received no medal. Inspection reports without a score and/or binary pass/fail systems were also deemed beyond the scope. This assessment specifically addresses policies where an inspection report with a score is required to be posted near the entrance of the restaurant.

CityHealth's assessment of restaurant inspection policies includes information about city-specific laws, along with relevant county- and state-level laws passed by June 1, 2021.

Measuring food safety/restaurant rating policies

CATEGORY	SILVER	GOLD
City uses a mandatory rating system to disclose the restaurant inspection results to the public	Yes	Yes
Restaurants must visibly post on-site ratings/grades	Yes	Yes
Restaurants must post ratings/grades outside before potential customer enters		Yes

Healthy Food Procurement



Policies that ensure healthy food options are available on public property aid city residents in making smart decisions that will help them achieve and maintain a

healthy weight. A city that has a healthy procurement policy applicable to all city contracts for food and drinks served at city venues, meetings, and events earned a gold medal. Otherwise, cities earned silver or bronze medals based on their healthy vending machine policies.

CityHealth’s assessment of healthy procurement policies includes information about city-specific laws, along with relevant county- and state-level laws passed by June 1, 2021.

Measuring healthy procurement policies

CATEGORY	BRONZE	SILVER	GOLD
City has a procurement policy mandating nutrition standards	Yes	Yes	Yes
Policy applies to all city contracts			Yes
More than 75% of food and beverages must meet standards		Yes	
If the policy only applies to vending machines - More than 50% of food and beverages must meet standards	Yes		

High-Quality, Accessible Pre-K



Done right, all children benefit from early childhood education, regardless of family income or zip code. High-quality, accessible pre-K improves children’s school

readiness and success; they enter school better prepared and are less likely to repeat a grade. Long-term benefits include higher high-school graduation rates, lower rates of crime and teen pregnancy, higher lifetime earnings, and better health outcomes.

CityHealth’s assessment of high-quality, accessible pre-K is based on the National Institute of Early Education Research’s 10 research-based quality standard benchmarks, along with an assessment of the level of enrollment in all of the city’s local and state-funded pre-K programs. These benchmarks are consistent with what research suggests as minimums for highly effective programs. Data are based on assessments as of September 30, 2021.

Measuring high-quality, accessible pre-K programs

CATEGORY	BRONZE	SILVER	GOLD
Meets 8 out of 10 quality benchmarks for a Pre-K program*		Yes	Yes
Over 30% of 4-year old children enrolled in Pre-K programs	Yes		Yes

* Note: The quality benchmarks for a pre-K program for the 2021 CityHealth assessment include: early learning and development standards; curriculum supports; teacher has a bachelor’s degree; specialized training in pre-K; assistant teacher has CDA or equivalent; staff professional development; class size of 20 or fewer; staff-child ratio of 1:10 or better; vision, hearing & health screening & referral; and a continuous quality improvement system.

Safer Alcohol Sales



Policies that address a high density of alcohol outlets can reduce crime, increase safety, and reduce spending on health care and criminal justice costs. Most cities

have the authority to limit, suspend, revoke, or deny liquor or business licenses that can affect the number and location of outlets that sell alcohol. Cities can also use other local powers (such as zoning) to affect a wide range of service practices and activities in or near alcohol outlets.

CityHealth’s assessment of alcohol sales laws includes information about city-specific laws, along with the relevant county- and state-level laws that were passed by September 30, 2021.

Measuring safer alcohol sales policies

CATEGORY	SILVER	GOLD
City has a law that applies to <i>all</i> alcohol sales, addresses public health and safety, and authorizes the city to close an alcohol retailer for failing to comply with the law.		Yes
City has a law that applies to <i>some</i> alcohol sales (such as only new retailers, or only retailers selling for off-premises consumption, e.g. grocery or convenience stores), addresses public health and safety, and authorizes the city to close an alcohol retailer for failing to comply with the law.	Yes	

Smoke-Free Indoor Air Laws



Everyone should have access to clean air. Smoke-free indoor air policies protect non-smokers from the harmful effects of tobacco and reduce smokers’ consumption of tobacco at the same time. Tobacco use is the largest preventable cause of death.

CityHealth’s assessment of smoke-free indoor air policies includes information about city-specific laws, along with the relevant county- and state-level laws that were passed by June 1, 2021.

Measuring smoke-free indoor air policies

CATEGORY	BRONZE	SILVER	GOLD
Total number of met criteria*	Total 2 out of 4 criteria listed below	Total 3 out of 4 criteria listed below	Total 4 out of 4 criteria listed below
1. Smoking is banned in non-hospitality workplaces, including workplaces, child care, and long-term care facilities			Yes
2. Smoking is banned in public places			Yes
3. Smoking is banned in restaurants			Yes
4. Smoking is banned in bars			Yes

* Note: For a bronze medal, a city must meet any 2 of the 4 criteria. For a silver medal, a city must meet any 3 of the 4 criteria. For a gold medal, a city must meet all 4 of the criteria.

Tobacco 21



Tobacco use remains the number one preventable cause of death and disease in America. Policies that raise the minimum legal age to 21 for the sale of tobacco products can reduce the number of young people using them. These laws greatly reduce the risk for addiction, disease, and premature death. The assessment also addresses whether the Tobacco 21 law covers e-cigarettes and vapor products.

Locally-driven efforts have pushed Tobacco 21 adoption at the state and federal levels, culminating in the passage of federal Tobacco 21 legislation in December 2019. CityHealth awards credit to cities for laws passed that affect their jurisdiction, even if it is passed at a higher level of government (i.e. county, state, or federal). For this reason, all 40 cities were awarded gold medals in 2020 and have retained their medals in 2021.

Measuring Tobacco 21 policies

CATEGORY	GOLD
Must be at least 21 to purchase tobacco products in the city	Yes
The age restriction explicitly applies to e-cigarettes and vapor products	Yes

CityHealth, an initiative of the de Beaumont Foundation and Kaiser Permanente, works to advance a package of tried and tested policy solutions that ensure all people in our largest cities have access to healthy choices. Together with visionary city leaders, CityHealth helps cities adopt policies that can make their communities healthy and resolve critical health disparities — now and decades down the road. Learn more at cityhealth.org.