



Key Messages — 2023 CityHealth Policy Assessment

Topline Results

- 46 of 75 cities earned an overall medal (61%), up from 37 (49%) in 2022
- 7 cities rose to the top by earning overall gold medals (7% increase): Boston, Denver, Minneapolis, New Orleans, Portland, San Antonio, and St. Louis
- Overall medals include: 7 gold medals, 14 silver medals, and 25 bronze medals. 29 cities did not have strong enough policies to warrant a medal.
- CityHealth awarded 400 individual policy medals (+8%) across all 12 policies, including 150 (+18%) gold medals, 98 (-5%) silver medals, and 152 (+6%) bronze medals.

Policy Movement

- Policies with the highest penetration include:
 1. High-Quality, Accessible Pre-K — 67 medals
 2. Greenspace — 52 medals
 3. Affordable Housing Trusts — 44 medals
- Policies with the lowest penetration (areas for opportunity):
 1. Legal Support for Renters — 16
 2. Flavored Tobacco Restrictions — 21
 3. Healthy Rental Housing — 24
- Areas with the most year-over-year growth:
 1. Affordable Housing Trusts — +8%
 2. Greenspace — +7%
 3. Smoke-Free Indoor Air — +6%

Emerging Trends

- Affordable housing continues to top the priorities for many city leaders, with 59% of cities earning a medal for Affordable Housing Trusts.
 - Affordable Housing Trusts are a key way that cities are helping to address the housing crisis by creating flexible, dedicated funding that can go to a variety of housing projects and initiatives.

- Greenspace is also among top local priorities, with 69% of cities earning medals.
 - Some of this growth has benefitted from investments from federal sources such as the Inflation Reduction Act.
 - There has also been a focus on using Greenspace to combat the effects of climate change, including extreme heat and weather. Many cities are structuring their Greenspace investments in accordance with an equity plan, which is a key part of CityHealth’s Greenspace criteria.

Preemption Threat

- Preemption — when a higher level of government sets a floor or restricts local policymaking — continues to be a barrier for cities adopting health-promoting policies.
- State preemptive threats or actions can hamper cities from responding to urgent community needs, limiting their ability to adopt policies that would otherwise benefit health.
 - Cities in Tennessee, North Carolina, and Arizona are prevented from implementing Healthy Rental Housing programs.
 - Texas enacted a law that included wide-ranging restrictions on local authority, targeting recently passed city ordinances such as Earned Sick Leave.
 - Florida passed a sweeping preemption bill that is estimated to impact roughly 46 tenant protection ordinances.
- In response, cities may try to circumvent potential preemptive action of policies like Legal Support for Renters by implementing policies through non-legislative measures, such as pilot programs or initiatives. However, this would not earn CityHealth credit, as the initiative only examines binding policy.

Opportunities in 2024

- **Housing** — Affordable Housing Trusts, Healthy Rental Housing, and Legal Support for Renters policies present rich opportunities for movement in the year ahead.
- **Greenspace** – Parks and tree canopy investments will likely continue as a way to mitigate extreme heat and weather through tree canopy and ability to handle storm runoff.
- **Procurement** — More attention has focused on forever chemicals like PFAS, found in drinking water and the environment, and similar toxic chemicals that exist in cleaning products and foodware.
 - As cities grapple with reducing exposure to these harmful products, there is an opportunity to make a linkage to their purchasing strategy, and encourage them to acquire green, safe products through Eco-Friendly Purchasing policies.