

2023 POLICY ASSESSMENT

Nearly four years since the COVID-19 pandemic redefined the role of local leadership in public health, mayors and councilmembers are increasingly governing with a health-centric, equitable approach to policymaking. In America's heartland and the South, on its coasts and in its mountains, cities are adopting health-promoting, prevention-oriented policies to address significant challenges from a lack of affordable housing to mitigating the effects of climate change and extreme weather — that can improve health outcomes for all members of their communities.

This is the second annual policy assessment of City-Health's new policy package in its expanded 75-city footprint. With 2022 as a baseline assessment of the new package, it is clear that CityHealth's policy framework continues to resonate with cities — with 7 cities (+7%) earning overall gold medals and 9 cities (+12%) earning their first overall medal of any kind. Cities are also going for gold in individual policy areas, with 150 individual golds (+18%) earned in 2023.

Anecdotally, CityHealth has also seen a shift in the way that city leaders talk about the responsibility of local governments — and the role they play — when it comes to community health. From public forums at national conferences to one-on-one meetings in city halls, mayors and councilmembers talk about how a Health in All Policies (HiAP) approach is critical to addressing health disparities and promoting health equity across all of a city's communities. As New Orleans Mayor LaToya Cantrell was discussing the city's Legal Support for Renters policy in October 2023, she said, "Everything touches public health — and housing is absolutely a part of that."

However, in some jurisdictions, significant challenges to policy adoption remain. Many state legislatures have limited or prevented local ordinances through a practice called preemption. Preemption efforts vary across regions

OVERALL RESULTS

Out of the nation's 75 largest cities, there were:



of America's 75 largest cities (46 of 75) earned an overall medal in 2023

people live in a city that has earned an overall medal

+4 million people compared to 2022

Seven exemplary cities rise to the top by earning overall gold medals: **Boston, Denver, Minneapolis, New Orleans, Portland, San Antonio, and St. Louis.** This remarkable increase includes 5 cities (Minneapolis, New Orleans, Portland, San Antonio, and St. Louis) earning an overall gold medal for the first time under the new policy package.

and policy areas, and while preemption as a tool is not inherently bad, some states have targeted local health-related policies passed during the pandemic. CityHealth only awards medals for ordinances that are currently in place.

KAISER PERMANENTE

de Beaumont

In 2023, America's 75 largest cities earned 400 individual policy medals (+8%) across all 12 policies, including 150 (+18%) gold medals, 98 (-5%) silver medals, and 152 (+6%) bronze medals.

Cities can earn gold, silver, or bronze medals depending on the number and strength of their policies in each individual area. For a full description of how medals are awarded for each policy and to learn about CityHealth's methodology, visit cityhealth.org or see the assessment's accompanying 2023 Report Methodology. The 2023 Report Methodology also contains information on preemption in certain policy areas.

400 TOTAL POLICY MEDALS

98







silver medals



Affordable Housing Trusts

Affordable Housing Trusts are a community-driven way for cities to invest in building and maintaining affordable housing for everyone. These trusts receive ongoing dedicated sources of public funding to support the preservation and production of affordable housing and increase opportunities for families and individuals to access quality affordable homes.

CityHealth assessed cities' Affordable Housing Trusts policies using criteria that include multi-stakeholder oversight requirements, diversity in funding sources, and regular evaluation and public reporting.



44 of 75 cities earned a medal for Affordable Housing Trusts (+8%)

"We must wrap our arms around our communities and create opportunities for everyone to thrive, regardless of their skin color, zip code, or any identity they hold. By using data-driven solutions to address public health issues, we can build a sustainable future where everyone can succeed."

- St. Louis Mayor Tishaura O. Jones



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. All people from all neighborhoods should have access to Complete Streets that help them get where they need to go, live, play, and grow.

CityHealth's assessed cities' Complete Streets policies with criteria that include measures to prioritize vulnerable users, ensure compliance, and collect and publicize equity data.

gold medals



silver medals

bronze medals

26 of 75 cities earned a medal for Complete Streets (+4%)





Earned Sick Leave

Earned Sick Leave policies require employers to allow employees to take paid time off for illness or injury for themselves or their family members. Done well, these policies can reduce the spread of contagious illnesses, increase employment and income stability, and save cities money in health care costs. Cities that require companies to offer Earned Sick Leave ensure that all employees feel secure in their jobs when they fall ill — and keep communities healthy by stopping the spread of contagious illness.

CityHealth assessed cities' Earned Sick Leave policies with criteria that include the ability for workers to use Earned Sick Leave to care for family members or recover from domestic violence, the minimum of sick time a worker can earn, and the size of businesses covered under the local law.



gold medals silver medals bronze medals

36 of 75 cities earned a medal for Earned Sick Leave (no change)



Flavored Tobacco Restrictions

Flavored Tobacco Restrictions policies prohibit all retailers from selling flavored tobacco products — including flavored e-cigarettes and menthol cigarettes — to protect the health of our communities. Prohibiting the sale of flavored tobacco products can reduce use of these dangerous and addictive products and supports the well-being of everyone — especially young people.

CityHealth assessed cities' Flavored Tobacco Restrictions policies with criteria that include prohibiting the sale of three categories of tobacco products: menthol cigarettes; flavored e-cigarettes and vaping devices; and other flavored tobacco products including cigars, cigarillos, dipping tobacco, chew, and hookah.



silver medals bronze medals



21 of 75 cities earned a medal for Flavored Tobacco Restrictions (+1%)

6



Eco-Friendly Purchasing

Eco-Friendly Purchasing policies help to limit exposure to toxic chemicals in city-owned buildings. Since cities collectively spend billions of dollars every year purchasing potentially toxic products, prioritizing the city's selection of less harmful products in three categories — cleaning supplies, foodware, and furnishings — enables leaders to use the power of city procurement to impact health. When city leaders buy eco-friendly products for city buildings, they make it clear that the health of our communities and our environment is worth protecting.

CityHealth assessed cities' Eco-Friendly Purchasing policies with criteria that include annual reporting requirements, adherence to independent standards, and the inclusion of all requests for proposals (RFPs) and contracts.





Greenspace

Public greenspaces, from parks to trails to public commons, help families be healthier in body and mind and keep our environment thriving. Greenspace policies can expand equitable access to parks, increase tree canopy, and reduce pollution. These policies ensure all families, not just a few, have access to public land, nature, and their benefits.

CityHealth assessed cities' Greenspace policies with criteria that include measurable goals to expand park access or tree canopy, park and greenspace spending levels, and the prioritization of underserved and disinvested neighborhoods.



52 of 75 cities earned a medal for Greenspace (+7%)





Healthy Rental Housing

Healthy Rental Housing (also known as "proactive rental inspection") policies have a strong evidence base that shows the link between potential health harms within rental properties and the ability to proactively inspect and remediate these harms. These policies can help detect life-threatening toxins, like mold and asbestos, and have a strong upstream prevention focus that could prevent poor health problems before they start.

CityHealth assessed cities' Healthy Rental Housing policies with criteria that include the interval and location of inspections, landlord payment of registration or inspection fees, and evaluation and reporting requirements.



24 of 75 cities earned a medal for Healthy Rental Housing (+1%)



High-Quality, Accessible Pre-K

Done right, all children benefit from early childhood education, regardless of family income or zip code. CityHealth's assessment of High-Quality, Accessible Pre-K programs evaluates 10 quality benchmarks established by the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER), as well as measures around access, local funding, and data collection. When all families have access to high-quality pre-K, more children have the opportunity to succeed as they begin their educational journeys.

CityHealth assessed cities' High-Quality, Accessible Pre-K policies with criteria that include the number of NIEER quality benchmarks the program meets, access thresholds, collection of equity data, and inclusion of local funding.





Healthy Food Purchasing

Healthy Food Purchasing policies set standards for the food available for purchase on city property. These policies can help ensure that healthy food options are available in city-owned or controlled places and give city residents food choices that can help them achieve and maintain a healthy weight. Cities that prioritize health in their food purchases increase access to healthy choices — and can use their purchasing power to lead by example.

CityHealth assessed cities' Healthy Food Purchasing policies with criteria that include mandating nutrition standards and which venues the policy applies to.



25 of 75 cities earned a medal for Healthy Food Purchasing (+3%)



Legal Support for Renters

Most renters lack the means to obtain legal representation when faced with eviction, preventing them from fully benefiting from the legal protections to which they are entitled. Legal Support for Renters — also known as "right to counsel" policies ensure all eligible tenants have access to full legal representation, which substantially improves the likelihood that residents will stay in their homes; or, if they must move, that they will have more time to find new housing and a lower risk of homelessness. These policies also help renters keep their records free from evictions and can help reduce rent debt.

CityHealth assessed cities' Legal Support for Renters policies with criteria that include eligibility requirements, degree of coverage, and evaluation and reporting.



16 of 75 cities earned a medal for Legal Support for Renters (+2%)



Smoke-Free Indoor Air

Cities can put people's health first by ensuring that businesses and other indoor spaces remain free from the smoke and vapor from tobacco (including e-cigarettes and heated tobacco products) and cannabis. Smoke-Free Indoor Air policies protect non-smokers from the harmful effects of tobacco and reduce smokers' consumption of tobacco at the same time. Casinos, gaming venues, multi-unit housing, and bars — or any other public space we enjoy with family and friends — should have clean air to protect everyone's health.

CityHealth assessed cities' Smoke-Free Indoor Air policies with criteria that include the types of workplaces and venues the policy applies to and the inclusion of vaping and marijuana.



³⁷ out of 75 cities earned a medal for Smoke-Free Indoor Air policies (+6%)



Safer Alcohol Sales

When communities have smart policies and practices around alcohol sales, it helps keep everyone safer — and physically and mentally healthier — by reducing excessive drinking and related violence. Safer Alcohol Sales policies put cities in charge of the location and practices of alcohol retailers. Policies that govern where, when, and how alcohol may be sold in a neighborhood can reduce crime, increase safety, and decrease spending on health care and criminal justice.

CityHealth assessed cities' Safer Alcohol Sales policies with criteria that include coverage of all alcohol sales, ability to address public health and safety, and enforcement.



34 of 75 cities earned a medal for Safer Alcohol Sales (no change)



BACKGROUND

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 America's largest cities have access to healthy choices. This package of 12 equitable policy solutions can help all people have a safe place to live, a healthy body and mind, and a thriving environment. Each policy solution has specific criteria needed to earn a gold, silver, or bronze medal. Policy criteria and additional information can be found at cityhealth.org.

OUR METHODS

To revise CityHealth's policy package, the initiative consulted with local leaders, public health experts, researchers, and members of the business community to select 12 health-related, equitable policies that are proven to benefit people's health, well-being, and quality of life. All policies in the package and their associated criteria were chosen with the following guiding principles in mind: 1) Policies demonstrate evidence of health impact; 2) Policies are largely under city jurisdictional authority; 3) Policies are replicable, having been successfully adopted in at least one of the 75 largest cities; 4) Policies are pragmatic, including a likelihood of gaining bipartisan support; and 5) Policies employ "best practices," with criteria recommended by subject matter experts and implementation partners.

To award medals, the Center for Public Health Law Research at Temple University's Beasley School of Law and other evaluation partners performed policy surveillance, the systematic collection and analysis of laws of public health significance, based on the criteria established for each policy. Medals are awarded for high-achieving policies (gold), good policies (silver), and acceptable policies (bronze). Cities with no policy, or a policy that did not meet the minimum requirements, received no medal. CityHealth's assessment also includes information about relevant county and state level laws impacting city policy adoption. Additional information, including policy criteria, methodology, and city-specific data, is available at cityhealth.org.

EMERGING TRENDS

Two policy areas that saw significant movement in 2023 were Affordable Housing Trusts and Greenspace. As the pandemic worsened the existing housing crisis and accentuated the value of public outdoor space, cities responded by prioritizing access to both. With federal relief funds utilized for related projects winding down, cities are exploring long-term opportunities in these critical policy areas.

Affordable Housing Trusts are flexibly designed local funds that ensure sustained dollars for affordable housing projects. Whether the need is for the production, preservation, or protection of affordable housing, these policies provide cities with guaranteed resources and an opportunity to leverage private dollars. Over half (59%) of cities earned a medal for their Affordable Housing Trusts policies, including four cities that earned a gold medal for the first time (Aurora, Baltimore, Colorado Springs, and Miami).

Access to Greenspace (such as parks and tree canopy) has topped local priority lists as cities have sought to address extreme heat, flooding, and other climate change-related weather events. A desire for safe, outdoor gathering spaces during the pandemic underscored Greenspace's impact on both physical and mental health, and cities are often making Greenspace investments in accordance with equity plans that prioritize access. In Fort Worth, park access is a crucial part of Mayor Mattie Parker's platform, and the city is participating in the Park Equity Accelerator run by the Trust for Public Land. Nearby in Dallas, Mayor Eric Johnson named park equity as one of his top three priorities, created a Parks Coalition, and appointed a "Greening Czar."

Phoenix recently revised an existing tree and shade master plan to ensure that tree canopy is prioritized in neighborhoods that need it most. The city has experienced record-breaking heat waves in recent years and was the first city in the country to create a publicly funded office of heat response and mitigation, demonstrating the commitment to addressing extreme heat and protecting residents. Twenty-four cities earned a CityHealth Greenspace gold medal in 2023, including New Orleans, Phoenix, San Diego, and Seattle, all of which earned gold for the first time.

PREEMPTION EFFORTS GROW

Increasingly, cities must navigate state preemption efforts to restrict local policymaking, particularly in certain policy

Gold medal city Minneapolis



areas like housing and tobacco. For some cities these limitations are longstanding, but for others the preemption barriers are new.

In some cases, state preemption can be protective by setting a baseline upon which cities are permitted to build. Known as "floor preemption," cities have the authority to pass local ordinances that exceed minimum requirements, such as passing a local minimum wage higher than the state's standard. However, an increasingly common form of preemption is known as "ceiling preemption," wherein states restrict local governments from passing ordinances stronger than those set at the state level.

Many recent examples involve states responding to city efforts to address the current housing crisis. Cities in Tennessee, North Carolina, and Arizona are prevented from implementing Healthy Rental Housing programs. Other state preemption efforts are retroactive, with states attempting to invalidate local laws after passage. This year, Texas enacted a law that included wide-ranging restrictions on local authority, targeting recently passed city ordinances such as Earned Sick Leave and mandatory water breaks for construction workers. Similarly, Florida passed "When I think about the measures we have to take to unwind disparities and bring equity into our communities particularly on the most basic of those measures, which is community health — I think that's where the [preemption] battle lines are going to be drawn."

 San Antonio Mayor Ron Nirenberg, speaking at a CityHealth forum on June 4, 2023

a <u>sweeping preemption bill</u> that is estimated to impact roughly 46 tenant protection ordinances.

Cities must consider not only whether they are currently preempted in a particular policy area, but also whether their attempt might prompt preemption efforts from their state legislature. 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. While these programs seek to provide similar benefits to residents, they would not earn CityHealth credit as this assessment only examines binding policy. 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.

OPPORTUNITY IN 2024

Several policy areas present rich opportunities for movement in the year ahead. Policies covering housing — including Affordable Housing Trusts, Healthy Rental Housing, and Legal Support for Renters — and Greenspace are likely to continue to top local priority lists as challenges in those areas persist.

Other policies that saw movement this year may gain momentum in 2024. Flavored Tobacco Restrictions continue to make national headlines following the FDA's 2022 proposal to ban flavored tobacco, including menthol. This momentous action will likely face lengthy court appeals over the coming years, so localities may follow the lead of cities like Columbus to pass their own local bans.

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.

Cities will confront significant challenges in the year ahead, yet there are also opportunities for innovation, creativity, and solutions. As city leaders look to 2024, they do so with the health and vibrancy of their communities in mind.

NEXT STEPS

CityHealth's goal is that all city leaders will use this assessment as a tool to work together and move toward the gold standard for each policy. These data are intended to serve as an accountability framework, giving residents, policymakers, and community leaders the tools to drive health improvements in their cities.



"When you are willing to demonstrate courage and be bold around programs that are aligned with policy ... you can't do the work alone. You need partners like CityHealth who have done their due diligence around the country and understand that while our fabrics of neighborhoods and cities may be different, there are some common threads and common denominators that are rooted and grounded in dignifying people."

New Orleans Mayor LaToya Cantrell, speaking to CityHealth on October 25, 2023

CityHealth works with subject matter experts, technical assistance partners, communications specialists, and government relations professionals to support cities in adopting the policy package and celebrating their achievements. To connect with CityHealth and access the many resources available for cities, we invite you to connect with us at cityhealth.org/join-us.

MEDALS

This is the 2023 assessment of how the nation's 75 largest cities rate in 12 policy areas. Learn more about each city at cityhealth.org

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= city improved overall medal status since 2022.

Flavored Tobacco Restrictions High Quality Accessible Pre-t Legal Support For Renters Affordable Housing Trusts Heathy Food Purchasing Eco-Friendy Purchasine Healthy Rental Housing Snoke-free Indoor Air 2023 Overall Medal safet Alcohol Sales Farred Sick Leave complete streets citvhealth AN INITIATIVE OF the de Beaumont Foundation + Kaiser Permanente \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash Louisville, KY \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash Memphis, TN \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash Mesa, AZ \oslash \oslash Miami, FL \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash Milwaukee, WI \oslash \oslash Minneapolis, MN \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash Nashville, TN \oslash \oslash \oslash New Orleans, LA \oslash \oslash \bigcirc New York, NY \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash Newark, NJ \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash Oakland, CA \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash \bigcirc \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash \bigcirc Oklahoma City, OK \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash Omaha, NE \oslash \oslash Orlando, FL \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash Philadelphia, PA \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash Phoenix, AZ \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash Pittsburgh, PA \oslash \oslash \oslash \bigcirc \oslash \oslash \oslash Plano, TX \oslash \bigcirc \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash Portland, OR \oslash \oslash Raleigh, NC \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash \bigcirc \bigcirc Riverside, CA \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash Sacramento, CA \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash Saint Paul, MN \oslash \oslash \bigcirc \oslash \oslash \oslash San Antonio, TX \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash San Diego, CA \oslash San Francisco, CA \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash San Jose, CA \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash Santa Ana, CA \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash Seattle, WA \oslash \oslash \oslash \bigcirc \oslash St. Louis, MO \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash Stockton, CA \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash \bigcirc \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash Tampa, FL \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash Toledo, OH \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash \bigcirc \oslash Tucson, AZ \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash \bigcirc \oslash \bigcirc \oslash \oslash Tulsa, OK \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash \bigcirc \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash \oslash Virginia Beach, VA \oslash \oslash Washington, DC \bigcirc \bigcirc \bigcirc \bigcirc \bigcirc \oslash \oslash \oslash \bigcirc \bigcirc \bigcirc Wichita, KS

= city improved overall medal status since 2022.

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 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.



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