



About CityHealth

- CityHealth annually assesses America's 75 largest cities based on its package of 12 upstream, prevention-oriented policy solutions. Cities earn gold, silver, bronze or no medal in each of the 12 policies. Additionally, CityHealth awards overall medals based on the number of individual medals a city earns. The results of this assessment are published on cityhealth.org.
- When it comes to your health, it matters where you live. Cities have always been crucial engines of innovation in America, 2024 has been a year of recovery and rebound for our cities. Evidence shows us that policy is one of the most important tools local governments can use to improve their residents' lives.
- CityHealth forms long-term partnerships with cities to work alongside them to help them achieve their policy goals.
- Policy change is watchful work. Cities are continuously watching, working and adjusting to connect with the solution that will provide the transformative policy they want for their residents.
- To award medals, the Center for Public Health Law Research at Temple University's Beasley School of Law and other evaluation partners perform policy surveillance, the systematic collection and analysis of laws of public health significance, based on the criteria established for each policy.
- Information about relevant county and state level laws impacting city policy adoption is also included in CityHealth's assessment.

2024 Assessment Results

- 47 of 75 cities earned an overall medal (63%).
- Approximately 43.6 million people live in a city that has earned an overall medal—an increase of nearly 500,000 people compared to 2023.
- 7 cities rose to the top by earning overall gold medals: Boston, Denver, Minneapolis, New Orleans, Portland, San Antonio, and St. Louis
- Nine cities showed progress by improving their medals this year—including eight cities that moved from overall bronze medals to overall silver medals:

Albuquerque, Aurora, Baltimore, Lincoln, Long Beach, Sacramento, San Diego and Santa Ana. Omaha, earned its first overall medal—a bronze.

- 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 422 individual policy medals (+4%) across all 12 policies, including 161 (+7%) gold medals, 113 (+15%) silver medals, and 148 (-3%) bronze medals.

Policy Movement

- Policies with the highest penetration include:
 1. High-Quality, Accessible Pre-K — 73 medals
 2. Greenspace – 54 medals
 3. Affordable Housing Trusts – 46 medals
- Policies with the lowest penetration (areas for opportunity):
 1. Legal Support for Renters – 17
 2. Eco-Friendly Purchasing – 18
 3. Flavored Tobacco Restrictions – 21
- Areas with the most year-over-year growth:
 1. Complete Streets – +15%
 2. High-Quality, Accessible Pre-K – +9%
 3. Healthy Food Purchasing – +8%

Emerging Trends

- COVID-era policies that proved popular are expanding and becoming permanent. Greenspace policies that grew in popularity as people sought access to nature as a safe way to make connections and improve mental health during the pandemic have continued to gain bipartisan appeal—40% of CityHealth cities earned a medal in 2024. They are not only being used to make connections, but also to support efforts to lower temperatures in cities experiencing extreme heat.
 - This is happening particularly in areas that have seen disinvestment due to unfair zoning or housing policies
 - Fort Worth has an Urban Forest Master Plan with an emphasis on providing equitable access to all residents
 - Dallas and Austin are working to increase investments and reinterpret existing policy
- Earned Sick Leave after pandemic-era protections proved popular, the policy changes became permanent in many cities

Preemption Threat

- Preemption, when a higher level of government sets a floor or restricts local policymaking, continues to be a barrier for cities and local leaders across the country.
- Cities are navigating these state preemption efforts in a number of ways. In the 2024 election cycle alone, we saw two successful efforts:
 - In New Orleans, voters approved a ballot measure to allow the city to adopt Affordable Housing Trusts to bypass the state's preemption measure banning inclusionary zoning.
 - In Missouri, voters approved a referendum to adopt Earned Sick Leave protections—previously preempted under state law.
- Cities are also pursuing temporary pilots or programs instead of permanent ordinances. However, this would not earn CityHealth credit, as the initiative only examines binding policy.

Opportunities in 2025

- Our package of housing policies—Affordable Housing Trusts, Healthy Rental Housing and Legal Support for Renters—will continue to offer city leaders solutions as they look to provide affordability and stability in the face of the ongoing housing crisis.
- Over the years and we believe as will continue to be the case in 2025, Greenspace and Complete Streets policies have also been a boon to cities as they strive to enhance their competitiveness and residents' well-being.

CityHealth's Policy Package

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 public funding to support the preservation and production of affordable housing and increase opportunities for families and individuals to access quality affordable homes.

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.

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.

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 — means that leaders are able 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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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), which include measures around quality, 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.

Legal Support for Renters

Renters have legal protections, but few can access those protections when faced with eviction because most don't have the means to obtain legal representation. Legal Support for Renters 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 lower their risk of homelessness. These policies also help renters keep their records free from evictions and can help reduce rent debt.

Safer Alcohol Sales

When communities have smart policies and practices around alcohol sales, everyone is 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.

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.